# JAMIESON, FAUSSET, BROWN COMMENTARY OLD TESTAMENT VOL. 1

Genesis-Psalms

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## THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED.

## **GENESIS**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

## CHAPTER 1

•000GENESIS 1:1, 2.

#### THE CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

**1.** *In the beginning* — a period of remote and unknown antiquity, hid in the depths of eternal ages; and so the phrase is used in Proverbs 8:22.23.

God — the name of the Supreme Being, signifying in *Hebrew*, "Strong," "Mighty." It is expressive of omnipotent power; and by its use here in the plural form, is obscurely taught at the opening of the Bible, a doctrine clearly revealed in other parts of it, namely, that though God is one, there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead — Father, Son, and Spirit, who were engaged in the creative work (\*\*Proverbs 8:27 \*\*\*John 1:3,10 \*\*\*Ephesians 3:9 \*\*\*Hebrews 1:2 \*\*\*Job 26:13).

*Created* — not formed from any pre-existing materials, but made out of nothing.

the heaven and the earth — the universe. This first verse is a general introduction to the inspired volume, declaring the great and important truth that all things had a beginning; that nothing throughout the wide extent of nature existed from eternity, originated by chance, or from the skill of any inferior agent; but that the whole universe was produced by

the creative power of God (\*\*\*Acts 17:24 \*\*\*Romans 11:36). After this preface, the narrative is confined to the earth.

**2.** the earth was without form and void — or in "confusion and emptiness," as the words are rendered in "said saiah 34:11. This globe, at some undescribed period, having been convulsed and broken up, was a dark and watery waste for ages perhaps, till out of this chaotic state, the present fabric of the world was made to arise.

the Spirit of God moved — literally, continued brooding over it, as a fowl does, when hatching eggs. The immediate agency of the Spirit, by working on the dead and discordant elements, combined, arranged, and ripened them into a state adapted for being the scene of a new creation. The account of this new creation properly begins at the end of this second verse; and the details of the process are described in the natural way an onlooker would have done, who beheld the changes that successively took place.

## **GENESIS** 1:3-5.

#### THE FIRST DAY.

- 3. God said This phrase, which occurs so repeatedly in the account means: willed, decreed, appointed; and the determining will of God was followed in every instance by an immediate result. Whether the sun was created at the same time with, or long before, the earth, the dense accumulation of fogs and vapors which enveloped the chaos had covered the globe with a settled gloom. But by the command of God, light was rendered visible; the thick murky clouds were dispersed, broken, or rarefied, and light diffused over the expanse of waters. The effect is described in the name "day," which in *Hebrew* signifies "warmth," "heat"; while the name "night" signifies a "rolling up," as night wraps all things in a shady mantle.
- **4.** *divided the light from darkness* refers to the alternation or succession of the one to the other, produced by the daily revolution of the earth round its axis.

**5.** *first day* — a natural day, as the mention of its two parts clearly determines; and Moses reckons, according to Oriental usage, from sunset to sunset, saying not day and night as we do, but evening and morning.

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#### SECOND DAY.

**6. firmament** — an expanse — a beating out as a plate of metal: a name given to the atmosphere from its appearing to an observer to be the *vault* of heaven, supporting the weight of the *watery clouds*. By the creation of an atmosphere, the lighter parts of the waters which overspread the earth's surface were drawn up and suspended in the visible heavens, while the larger and heavier mass remained below. The air was thus "in the midst of the waters," that is, separated them; and this being the apparent use of it, is the only one mentioned, although the atmosphere serves other uses, as a medium of life and light.

### **™**GENESIS 1:9-13.

#### THIRD DAY.

- 9. let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place—
  The world was to be rendered a terraqueous globe, and this was effected by a volcanic convulsion on its surface, the upheaving of some parts, the sinking of others, and the formation of vast hollows, into which the waters impetuously rushed, as is graphically described (\*\*\*Psalm 104:6-9)
  [HITCHCOCK]. Thus a large part of the earth was left "dry land," and thus were formed oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers which, though each having its own bed, or channel, are all connected with the sea (\*\*\*\*Job 38:10\*\*\*\*
  Ecclesiastes 1:7).
- **11.** *let the earth bring forth* The bare soil was clothed with verdure, and it is noticeable that the trees, plants, and grasses the three great divisions of the vegetable kingdom here mentioned were not called into existence in the same way as the light and the air; they were made to grow,

and they grew as they do still out of the ground — not, however, by the slow process of vegetation, but through the divine power, without rain, dew, or any process of labor — sprouting up and flourishing in a single day.

### **™**GENESIS 1:14-19.

#### FOURTH DAY.

**14.** *let there be lights in the firmament* — The atmosphere being completely purified, the sun, moon, and stars were for the first time unveiled in all their glory in the cloudless sky; and they are described as "in the firmament" which to the eye they appear to be, though we know they are really at vast distances from it.

16. two great lights — In consequence of the day being reckoned as commencing at sunset — the moon, which would be seen first in the horizon, would appear "a great light," compared with the little twinkling stars; while its pale benign radiance would be eclipsed by the dazzling splendor of the sun; when his resplendent orb rose in the morning and gradually attained its meridian blaze of glory, it would appear "the greater light" that ruled the day. Both these lights may be said to be "made" on the fourth day — not created, indeed, for it is a different word that is here used, but constituted, appointed to the important and necessary office of serving as luminaries to the world, and regulating by their motions and their influence the progress and divisions of time.

## **™**GENESIS 1:20-23.

# FIFTH DAY. THE SIGNS OF ANIMAL LIFE APPEARED IN THE WATERS AND IN THE AIR.

**20.** *moving creature* — all oviparous animals, both among the finny and the feathery tribes — remarkable for their rapid and prodigious increase.

**fowl** — means every flying thing: The word rendered "whales," includes also sharks, crocodiles, etc.; so that from the countless shoals of small fish to the great sea monsters, from the tiny insect to the king of birds, the waters and the air were suddenly made to swarm with creatures formed to live and sport in their respective elements.

### **™**GENESIS 1:24-31.

#### SIXTH DAY.

A farther advance was made by the creation of terrestrial animals, all the various species of which are included in three classes:

(1) cattle, the herbivorous kind capable of labor or domestication.

## 24. beasts of the earth —

- (2) wild animals, whose ravenous natures were then kept in check, and
- (3) all the various forms of

*creeping things* — from the huge reptiles to the insignificant caterpillars.

**26.** The last stage in the progress of creation being now reached — *God said*, *Let us make man* — words which show the peculiar importance of the work to be done, the formation of a creature, who was to be God's representative, clothed with authority and rule as visible head and monarch of the world.

In our image, after our likeness — This was a peculiar distinction, the value attached to which appears in the words being twice mentioned. And in what did this image of God consist? Not in the erect form or features of man, not in his intellect, for the devil and his angels are, in this respect, far superior; not in his immortality, for he has not, like God, a past as well as a future eternity of being; but in the moral dispositions of his soul, commonly called *original righteousness* (\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 7:29). As the new creation is only a restoration of this image, the history of the one throws light on the other; and we are informed that it is renewed after the image of

God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness (\*\*\*Colossians 3:10\*\*Ephesians 4:24).

28. Be fruitful, etc. — The human race in every country and age has been the offspring of the first pair. Amid all the varieties found among men, some black, some copper-colored, others white, the researches of modern science lead to a conclusion, fully accordant with the sacred history, that they are all of one species and of one family (\*\*\*Acts 17:26). What power in the word of God! "He spake and it was done. He commanded and all things stood fast" [\*\*\*Psalm 33:9]. "Great and manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty! in wisdom hast thou made them all" [ Psalm 104:24]. We admire that wisdom, not only in the regular progress of creation, but in its perfect adaptation to the end. God is represented as pausing at every stage to look at His work. No wonder He contemplated it with complacency. Every object was in its right place, every vegetable process going on in season, every animal in its structure and instincts suited to its mode of life and its use in the economy of the world. He saw everything that He had made answering the plan which His eternal wisdom had conceived; and, "Behold it was very good" [ Genesis 1:31].

### OMGENESIS 2:1.

#### THE NARRATIVE OF THE SIX DAYS' CREATION CONTINUED.

The course of the narrative is improperly broken by the division of the chapter.

**1.** *the heavens* — the firmament or atmosphere.

*host* — a multitude, a numerous array, usually connected in Scripture with heaven only, but here with the earth also, meaning all that they contain.

were finished — brought to completion. No permanent change has ever since been made in the course of the world, no new species of animals been formed, no law of nature repealed or added to. They could have been finished in a moment as well as in six days, but the work of creation was gradual for the instruction of man, as well, perhaps, as of higher creatures (\*\*\*\*Job 38:7).

## GENESIS 2:2-7.

#### THE FIRST SABBATH.

- **2.** and he rested on the seventh day not to repose from exhaustion with labor (see Sissiah 40:28), but ceased from working, an example equivalent to a command that we also should cease from labor of every kind.
- **3.** blessed and sanctified the seventh day a peculiar distinction put upon it above the other six days, and showing it was devoted to sacred purposes. The institution of the Sabbath is as old as creation, giving rise to that weekly division of time which prevailed in the earliest ages. It is a wise and beneficent law, affording that regular interval of rest which the physical nature of man and the animals employed in his service requires,

and the neglect of which brings both to premature decay. Moreover, it secures an appointed season for religious worship, and if it was necessary in a state of primeval innocence, how much more so now, when mankind has a strong tendency to forget God and His claims?

- **4.** These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth the history or account of their production. Whence did Moses obtain this account so different from the puerile and absurd fictions of the heathen? Not from any human source, for man was not in existence to witness it; not from the light of nature or reason, for though they proclaim the eternal power and Godhead by the things which are made, they cannot tell *how* they were made. None but the Creator Himself could give this information, and therefore it is through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:3).
- **5, 6. rain, mist** (See on Genesis 1:11).
- **7.** Here the sacred writer supplies a few more particulars about the first pair.

**formed** — had FORMED MAN OUT OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND. Science has proved that the substance of his flesh, sinews, and bones, consists of the very same elements as the soil which forms the crust of the earth and the limestone that lies embedded in its bowels. But from that mean material what an admirable structure has been reared in the human body (\*DNA) (\*DNA)

*the breath of life* — literally, of lives, not only animal but spiritual life. If the body is so admirable, how much more the soul with all its varied faculties.

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life — not that the Creator literally performed this act, but respiration being the medium and sign of life, this phrase is used to show that man's life originated in a different way from his body — being implanted directly by God (\*\*Ecclesiastes 12:7), and hence in the new creation of the soul Christ breathed on His disciples (\*\*Dohn 20:22).

## GENESIS 8-17.

#### THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

- **8.** *Eden* was probably a very extensive region in Mesopotamia, distinguished for its natural beauty and the richness and variety of its produce. Hence its name, signifying "pleasantness." God planted a garden eastward, an extensive park, a paradise, in which the man was put to be trained under the paternal care of his Maker to piety and usefulness.
- **9.** *tree of life* so called from its symbolic character as a sign and seal of immortal life. Its prominent position where it must have been an object of daily observation and interest, was admirably fitted to keep man habitually in mind of God and futurity.

*tree of the knowledge of good and evil* — so called because it was a *test* of obedience by which our first parents were to be tried, whether they would be good or bad, obey God or break His commands.

- **15.** put the man into the garden of Eden to dress it not only to give him a pleasant employment, but to place him on his probation, and as the title of this garden, the garden of the Lord (\*\*Genesis 13:10 \*\*Ezekiel 28:13), indicates, it was in fact a temple in which he worshipped God, and was daily employed in offering the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise.
- 17. thou shalt not eat of it ... thou shalt surely die no reason assigned for the prohibition, but death was to be the punishment of disobedience. A positive command like this was not only the simplest and easiest, but the only trial to which their fidelity could be exposed.

**○0028**GENESIS 2:18-25.

## THE MAKING OF WOMAN, AND INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.

**18.** it is not good for the man to be alone — In the midst of plenty and delights, he was conscious of feelings he could not gratify. To make him sensible of his wants,

**19.** *God brought unto Adam* — not all the animals in existence, but those chiefly in his immediate neighborhood to be subservient to his use.

## whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof

- His powers of perception and intelligence were supernaturally enlarged to know the characters, habits, and uses of each species that was brought to him.
- **20.** but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him The design of this singular scene was to show him that none of the living creatures he saw were on an equal footing with himself, and that while each class came with its mate of the same nature, form, and habits, he alone had no companion. Besides, in giving names to them he was led to exercise his powers of speech and to prepare for social intercourse with his partner, a creature yet to be formed.
- **21.** *deep sleep* probably an ecstasy or trance like that of the prophets, when they had visions and revelations of the Lord, for the whole scene was probably visible to the mental eye of Adam, and hence his rapturous exclamation.

*took one of his ribs* — "She was not made out of his head to surpass him, nor from his feet to be trampled on, but from his side to be equal to him, and near his heart to be dear to him."

- 23. Woman in Hebrew, "man-ess."
- **24.** *one flesh* The human pair differed from all other pairs, that by peculiar formation of Eve, they were one. And this passage is appealed to by our Lord as the divine institution of marriage (\*\*\*Matthew 19:4,5\*\*Ephesians 5:28). Thus Adam appears as a creature formed after the image of God showing his *knowledge* by giving names to the animals, his *righteousness* by his approval of the marriage relation, and his *holiness* by his principles and feelings, and finding gratification in the service and enjoyment of God.

## **GENESIS** 3:1-5.

#### THE TEMPTATION.

1. the serpent — The fall of man was effected by the seductions of a serpent. That it was a real serpent is evident from the plain and artless style of the history and from the many allusions made to it in the New Testament. But the material serpent was the instrument or tool of a higher agent, Satan or the devil, to whom the sacred writers apply from this incident the reproachful name of "the dragon, that old serpent" [\*\*Revelation 20:2]. Though Moses makes no mention of this wicked spirit — giving only the history of the visible world — yet in the fuller discoveries of the Gospel, it is distinctly intimated that Satan was the author of the plot (\*\*\*John 8:44 \*\*\*\*In 2\*\* Corinthians 11:3 \*\*\*\*\* I John 3:8 \*\*\*\*I Timothy 2:14 \*\*\*\*Revelation 20:2).

*more subtile* — Serpents are proverbial for wisdom (Matthew 10:16). But these reptiles were at first, probably, far superior in beauty as well as in sagacity to what they are in their present state.

He said — There being in the pure bosoms of the first pair no principle of evil to work upon, a solicitation to sin could come only from "without," as in the analogous case of Jesus Christ (\*\*Matthew 4:3); and as the tempter could not assume the human form, there being only Adam and Eve in the world, the agency of an inferior creature had to be employed. The dragon-serpent [Bochart] seemed the fittest for the vile purpose; and the devil was allowed by Him who permitted the trial, to bring articulate sounds from its mouth.

unto the woman — the object of attack, from his knowledge of her frailty, of her having been but a short time in the world, her limited experience of the animal tribes, and, above all, her being alone, unfortified by the presence and counsels of her husband. Though sinless and holy, she was a free agent, liable to be tempted and seduced.

yea, hath God said? — Is it true that He has restricted you in using the fruits of this delightful place? This is not like one so good and kind. Surely there is some mistake. He insinuated a doubt as to her sense of the divine will and appeared as an angel of light (\*\*Corinthians 11:14), offering to lead her to the true interpretation. It was evidently from her regarding him as specially sent on that errand, that, instead of being startled by the reptile's speaking, she received him as a heavenly messenger.

- 2. the woman said, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden In her answer, Eve extolled the large extent of liberty they enjoyed in ranging at will amongst all the trees one only excepted, with respect to which, she declared there was no doubt, either of the prohibition or the penalty. But there is reason to think that she had already received an injurious impression; for in using the words "lest ye die," instead of "ye shall surely die" [Genesis 2:17], she spoke as if the tree had been forbidden because of some poisonous quality of its fruit. The tempter, perceiving this, became bolder in his assertions.
- **4.** Ye shall not surely die He proceeded, not only to assure her of perfect impunity, but to promise great benefits from partaking of it.
- **5.** your eyes shall be opened His words meant more than met the ear. In one sense her eyes were opened; for she acquired a direful experience of "good and evil" of the happiness of a holy, and the misery of a sinful, condition. But he studiously concealed this result from Eve, who, fired with a generous desire for knowledge, thought only of rising to the rank and privileges of her angelic visitants.

GENESIS 3:6-9.

#### THE FALL.

**6.** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food — Her imagination and feelings were completely won; and the fall of Eve was soon followed by that of Adam. The history of every temptation, and of every sin, is the same; the outward object of attraction, the inward commotion of mind, the increase and triumph of passionate desire; ending

in the degradation, slavery, and ruin of the soul (\*\*James 1:15 \*\*James 1:15 \*\*Jame

**8.** they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden — The divine Being appeared in the same manner as formerly — uttering the well-known tones of kindness, walking in some visible form (not running hastily, as one impelled by the influence of angry feelings). How beautifully expressive are these words of the familiar and condescending manner in which He had hitherto held intercourse with the first pair.

in the cool of the day — literally, "the breeze of the day," the evening.

hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden — Shame, remorse, fear — a sense of guilt — feelings to which they had hitherto been strangers disordered their minds and led them to shun Him whose approach they used to welcome. How foolish to think of eluding His notice (\*\*P\*Psalm 139:1-12).

## **○0080**GENESIS 3:10-13.

#### THE EXAMINATION.

- **10.** *afraid*, *because* ... *naked* apparently, a confession the language of sorrow; but it was evasive no signs of true humility and penitence each tries to throw the blame on another.
- **12.** *The woman ... gave me* He blames God [CALVIN]. As the woman had been given him for his companion and help, he had eaten of the tree from love to her; and perceiving she was ruined, was determined not to survive her [M'KNIGHT].
- **13.** *beguiled* cajoled by flattering lies. This sin of the first pair was heinous and aggravated it was not simply eating an apple, but a love of self, dishonor to God, ingratitude to a benefactor, disobedience to the best of Masters a preference of the creature to the Creator.

## **GENESIS 3:14-24.**

#### THE SENTENCE.

**14.** And the Lord God said unto the serpent — The Judge pronounces a doom: first, on the material serpent, which is cursed above all creatures. From being a model of grace and elegance in form, it has become the type of all that is odious, disgusting, and low [Le Clerc, Rosenmuller]; or the curse has converted its natural condition into a punishment; it is now branded with infamy and avoided with horror; next, on the spiritual serpent, the seducer. Already fallen, he was to be still more degraded and his power wholly destroyed by the offspring of those he had deceived.

**15.** *thy seed* — not only evil spirits, but wicked men.

**seed of the woman** — the Messiah, or His Church [CALVIN, HENGSTENBERG].

*I will put enmity between thee and the woman* — God can only be said to do so by leaving "the serpent and his seed to the influence of their own corruption; and by those measures which, pursued for the salvation of men, fill Satan and his angels with envy and rage."

*thou shalt bruise his heel* — The serpent wounds the heel that crushes him; and so Satan would be permitted to afflict the humanity of Christ and bring suffering and persecution on His people.

it shall bruise thy head — The serpent's poison is lodged in its head; and a bruise on that part is fatal. Thus, fatal shall be the stroke which Satan shall receive from Christ, though it is probable he did not at first understand the nature and extent of his doom.

**16.** unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow — She was doomed as a wife and mother to suffer pain of body and distress of mind. From being the help meet of man and the partner of his affections [\*\*Genesis 2:18,23], her condition would henceforth be that of humble subjection.

- **17-19.** *unto Adam he said* made to gain his livelihood by tilling the ground; but what before his fall he did with ease and pleasure, was not to be accomplished after it without painful and persevering exertion.
- 19. *till thou return unto the ground* Man became mortal; although he did not die the moment he ate the forbidden fruit, his body underwent a change, and that would lead to dissolution; the union subsisting between his soul and God having already been dissolved, he had become liable to all the miseries of this life and to the pains of hell for ever. What a mournful chapter this is in the history of man! It gives the only true account of the origin of all the physical and moral evils that are in the world; upholds the moral character of God; shows that man, made upright, fell from not being able to resist a slight temptation; and becoming guilty and miserable, plunged all his posterity into the same abyss (\*\*TRO\*Romans 5:12). How astonishing the grace which at that moment gave promise of a Savior and conferred on her who had the disgrace of introducing sin the future honor of introducing that Deliverer (\*\*TRO\*IT\*).
- **20.** Adam called his wife's name Eve probably in reference to her being a mother of the promised Savior, as well as of all mankind.
- **22.** And God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us not spoken in irony as is generally supposed, but in deep compassion. The words should be rendered, "Behold, what has become [by sin] of the man who was as one of us"! Formed, at first, in our image to know good and evil how sad his condition now.
- and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life This tree being a pledge of that immortal life with which obedience should be rewarded, man lost, on his fall, all claim to this tree; and therefore, that he might not eat of it or delude himself with the idea that eating of it would restore what he had forfeited, the Lord sent him forth from the garden.

**24.** *placed* ... *cherbim* — The passage should be rendered thus: "And he dwelt between the cherubim at the East of the Garden of Eden and a fierce fire, or Shekinah, unfolding itself to preserve the way of the tree of life." This was the mode of worship now established to show God's anger at sin and teach the mediation of a promised Savior as the way of life, as well as of access to God. They were the same figures as were afterwards in the tabernacle and temple; and now, as then, God said, "I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims" (\*\*Exodus 25:22).

### **™**GENESIS 4:1-26.

#### BIRTH OF CAIN AND ABEL.

- **1.** Eve said, I have gotten a man from the Lord that is, "by the help of the Lord" an expression of pious gratitude and she called him Cain, that is, "a possession," as if valued above everything else; while the arrival of another son reminding Eve of the misery she had entailed on her offspring, led to the name Abel, that is, either weakness, vanity (\*\*\*Psalm 39:5), or grief, lamentation. Cain and Abel were probably twins; and it is thought that, at this early period, children were born in pairs (\*\*\*Genesis 5:4) [Calvin].
- **2.** *Abel was a keeper of sheep* literally, "a feeder of a flock," which, in Oriental countries, always includes goats as well as sheep. Abel, though the younger, is mentioned first, probably on account of the pre-eminence of his religious character.
- **3.** *in process of time Hebrew*, "at the end of days," probably on the Sabbath.
- brought ... an offering unto the Lord Both manifested, by the very act of offering, their faith in the being of God and in His claims to their reverence and worship; and had the kind of offering been left to themselves, what more natural than that the one should bring "of the fruits of the ground," and that the other should bring "of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof" [\*\*Genesis 4:4].
- **4.** the Lord had respect unto Abel, not unto Cain, etc. The words, "had respect to," signify in Hebrew, "to look at any thing with a keen earnest glance," which has been translated, "kindle into a fire," so that the divine approval of Abel's offering was shown in its being consumed by fire (see "IST" Genesis 15:17 "TET" Judges 13:20).

**7.** If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? — A better rendering is, "Shalt thou not have the excellency"? which is the true sense of the words referring to the high privileges and authority belonging to the first-born in patriarchal times.

sin lieth at the door — sin, that is, a sin offering — a common meaning of the word in Scripture (as in Hosea 4:8 Those 4:8 Those 2 Corinthians 5:21 The purport of the divine rebuke to Cain was this, "Why art thou angry, as if unjustly treated? If thou doest well (that is, wert innocent and sinless) a thank offering would have been accepted as a token of thy dependence as a creature. But as thou doest not well (that is, art a sinner), a sin offering is necessary, by bringing which thou wouldest have met with acceptance and retained the honors of thy birthright." This language implies that previous instructions had been given as to the mode of worship; Abel offered through faith (Hebrews 11:4).

unto thee shall be his desire — The high distinction conferred by priority of birth is described (Genesis 27:29); and it was Cain's conviction, that this honor had been withdrawn from him, by the rejection of his sacrifice, and conferred on his younger brother — hence the secret flame of jealousy, which kindled into a settled hatred and fell revenge.

- **8.** And Cain talked with Abel his brother Under the guise of brotherly familiarity, he concealed his premeditated purpose till a convenient time and place occurred for the murder (\*\*III\*) Juhn 3:12 \*\*\* Jude 1:11).
- **9.** *I know not* a falsehood. One sin leads to another.
- **10.** *the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me* Cain, to lull suspicion, had probably been engaging in the solemnities of religion when he was challenged directly from the Shekinah itself.
- **11, 12.** *now art thou cursed from the earth* a curse superadded to the general one denounced on the ground for Adam's sin.
- **12.** *a fugitive* condemned to perpetual exile; a degraded outcast; the miserable victim of an accusing conscience.

- **13, 14.** And Cain said ... My punishment is greater than I can bear—What an overwhelming sense of misery; but no sign of penitence, nor cry for pardon.
- **14.** *every one that findeth me shall slay me* This shows that the population of the world was now considerably increased.
- **15.** whosoever slayeth Cain By a special act of divine forbearance, the *life* of Cain was to be spared in the then small state of the human race.
- **set a mark** not any visible mark or brand on his forehead, but some *sign* or *token* of assurance that his life would be preserved. This sign is thought by the best writers to have been a wild ferocity of aspect that rendered him an object of universal horror and avoidance.
- **16.** *presence of the Lord* the appointed place of worship at Eden. Leaving it, he not only severed himself from his relatives but forsook the ordinances of religion, probably casting off all fear of God from his eyes so that the last end of this man is worse than the first (\*\*\*Matthew 12:45).
- **land of Nod** of flight or exile thought by many to have been Arabia-Petræa which was cursed to sterility on his account.
- **17-22.** *builded a city* It has been in cities that the human race has ever made the greatest social progress; and several of Cain's descendants distinguished themselves by their inventive genius in the arts.
- **19.** *Lamech took unto him two wives* This is the first transgression of the law of marriage on record, and the practice of polygamy, like all other breaches of God's institutions, has been a fruitful source of corruption and misery.
- **23, 24.** *Lamech said unto his wives* This speech is in a poetical form, probably the fragment of an old poem, transmitted to the time of Moses. It seems to indicate that Lamech had slain a man in self-defense, and its drift is to assure his wives, by the preservation of Cain, that an *unintentional* homicide, as he was, could be in no danger.
- **26.** *men began to call upon the name of the Lord* rather, by the name of the Lord. God's people, a name probably applied to them in contempt by the world.

### **™**GENESIS 5:1-32.

#### GENEALOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS.

**1.** book of the generations — (See Genesis 11:4).

**Adam** — used here either as the name of the first man, or of the human race generally.

- **5.** all the days ... Adam lived The most striking feature in this catalogue is the longevity of Adam and his immediate descendants. Ten are enumerated (\*\*Genesis 5:5-32) in direct succession whose lives far exceed the ordinary limits with which we are familiar — the shortest being three hundred sixty-five, [ Genesis 5:23] and the longest nine hundred sixtynine years [ Genesis 5:27]. It is useless to inquire whether and what secondary causes may have contributed to this protracted longevity vigorous constitutions, the nature of their diet, the temperature and salubrity of the climate; or, finally — as this list comprises only the true worshippers of God — whether their great age might be owing to the better government of their passions and the quiet, even tenor of their lives. Since we cannot obtain satisfactory evidence on these points, it is wise to resolve the fact into the sovereign will of God. We can, however, trace some of the important uses to which, in the early economy of Providence, it was subservient. It was the chief means of reserving a knowledge of God, of the great truths of religion, as well as the influence of genuine piety. So that, as their knowledge was obtained by tradition, they would be in a condition to preserve it in the greatest purity.
- **21.** *Enoch* ... *begat Methuselah* This name signifies, "He dieth, and the sending forth," so that Enoch gave it as prophetical of the flood. It is computed that Methuselah died in the year of that catastrophe.
- **24.** *And Enoch walked with God* a common phrase in Eastern countries denoting constant and familiar intercourse.

was not; for God took him — In Hebrews 11:5, we are informed that he was translated to heaven — a mighty miracle, designed to effect what ordinary means of instruction had failed to accomplish, gave a palpable proof to an age of almost universal unbelief that the doctrines which he had taught (Hude 1:14,15) were true and that his devotedness to the cause of God and righteousness in the midst of opposition was highly pleasing to the mind of God.

- **26.** *Lamech* a different person from the one mentioned in the preceding chapter [Genesis 4:18]. Like his namesake, however, he also spoke in numbers on occasion of the birth of Noah that is, "rest" or "comfort" [Genesis 5:29, *Margin*]. "The allusion is, undoubtedly, to the penal consequences of the fall in earthly toils and sufferings, and to the hope of a Deliverer, excited by the promise made to Eve. That this expectation was founded on a divine communication we infer from the importance attached to it and the confidence of its expression" [Peter Smith].
- **32.** Noah was five hundred years old: and ... begat That he and the other patriarchs were advanced in life before children were born to them is a difficulty accounted for probably from the circumstance that Moses does not here record their first-born sons, but only the succession from Adam through Seth to Abraham.

## **™**GENESIS 6:1-22.

#### WICKEDNESS OF THE WORLD.

- **2.** the sons of God saw the daughters of men By the former is meant the family of Seth, who were professedly religious; by the latter, the descendants of apostate Cain. Mixed marriages between parties of opposite principles and practice were necessarily sources of extensive corruption. The women, religious themselves, would as wives and mothers exert an influence fatal to the existence of religion in their household, and consequently the people of that later age sank to the lowest depravity.
- **3.** *flesh* utterly, hopelessly debased.

yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years — It is probable that the corruption of the world, which had now reached its height, had been long and gradually increasing, and this idea receives support from the long respite granted.

- **4.** *giants* The term in *Hebrew* implies not so much the idea of great stature as of reckless ferocity, impious and daring characters, who spread devastation and carnage far and wide.
- **5, 6.** God saw it ... repented ... grieved God cannot change (\*\*\*Malachi 3:6 \*\*\*James 1:17); but, by language suited to our nature and experience, He is described as about to alter His visible procedure towards mankind from being merciful and long-suffering, He was about to show Himself a God of judgment; and, as that impious race had filled up the measure of

their iniquities, He was about to introduce a terrible display of His justice (\*\*Ecclesiastes 8:11).

- **8.** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord favor. What an awful state of things when only one man or one family of piety and virtue was now existing among the professed sons of God!
- 9. Noah ... just ... and perfect not absolutely; for since the fall of Adam no man has been free from sin except Jesus Christ. But as living by faith he was just (\*\*\*\*Galatians 3:2 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:7) and perfect that is, sincere in his desire to do God's will.
- **11.** *the earth was filled with violence* In the absence of any well-regulated government it is easy to imagine what evils would arise. Men did what was right in their own eyes, and, having no fear of God, destruction and misery were in their ways.
- **13.** And God said unto Noah How startling must have been the announcement of the threatened destruction! There was no outward indication of it. The course of nature and experience seemed against the probability of its occurrence. The public opinion of mankind would ridicule it. The whole world would be ranged against him. Yet, persuaded the communication was from God, through faith (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:7), he set about preparing the means for preserving himself and family from the impending calamity.
- **14.** *Make thee an ark* ark, a hollow chest (\*\*Exodus 2:3).

**gopher wood** — probably cypress, remarkable for its durability and abounding on the Armenian mountains.

*pitch it within and without* — mineral pitch, asphalt, naphtha, or some bituminous substance, which, when smeared over and become hardened, would make it perfectly watertight.

**15.** And this is the fashion — According to the description, the ark was not a ship, but an immense house in form and structure like the houses in the East, designed not to sail, but only to float. Assuming the cubit to be 21.888 inches, the ark would be five hundred forty-seven feet long, ninety-one feet two inches wide, and forty-seven feet two inches high.

**16.** *A window* — probably a skylight, formed of some transparent substance unknown.

*in a cubit shalt thou finish it above* — a direction to raise the roof in the middle, seemingly to form a gentle slope for letting the water run off.

- **17-22.** And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood The repetition of the announcement was to establish its certainty (Genesis 41:32). Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the operation of natural laws and agencies in the deluge, it was brought on the world by God as a punishment for the enormous wickedness of its inhabitants.
- **18.** But with thee will I establish my covenant a special promise of deliverance, called a covenant, to convince him of the confidence to be reposed in it. The substance and terms of this covenant are related at Genesis 6:19-21.
- **22.** *Thus did Noah* He began without delay to prepare the colossal fabric, and in every step of his progress faithfully followed the divine directions he had received.

### **™**GENESIS 7:1-24.

#### ENTRANCE INTO THE ARK.

- 1. And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark The ark was finished; and Noah now, in the spirit of implicit faith, which had influenced his whole conduct, waited for directions from God.
- **2,3.** Of every clean beast ... fowls Pairs of every species of animals, except the tenants of the deep, were to be taken for the preservation of their respective kinds. This was the general rule of admission, only with regard to those animals which are styled "clean," three pairs were to be taken, whether of beasts or birds; and the reason was that their rapid multiplication was a matter of the highest importance, when the earth should be renovated, for their utility either as articles of food or as employed in the service of man. But what was the use of the seventh? It was manifestly reserved for sacrifice; and so that both during Noah's residence in the ark, and after his return to dry land, provision was made for celebrating the rites of worship according to the religion of fallen man. He did not, like many, leave religion behind. He provided for it during his protracted voyage.
- **4.** For yet seven days A week for a world to repent! What a solemn pause! Did they laugh and ridicule his folly still? He whose eyes saw and whose heart felt the full amount of human iniquity and perverseness has told us of their reckless disregard (\*277).
- **9.** There went in two and two Doubtless they were led by a divine impulse. The number would not be so large as at first sight one is apt to imagine. It has been calculated that there are not more than three hundred distinct species of beasts and birds, the immense varieties in regard to form, size, and color being traceable to the influence of climate and other circumstances.

- **16.** and the Lord shut him in literally, "covered him round about." The "shutting him in" intimated that Noah had become the special object of divine care and protection, and that to those without the season of grace was over (\*\*D\*\*Matthew 25:10).
- **17.** *the waters increased, and bare up the ark* It seems to have been raised so gradually as to be scarcely perceptible to its occupants.
- **20.** Fifteen cubits upward ... and the mountains were covered twenty-two and a half feet above the summits of the highest hills. The language is not consistent with the theory of a partial deluge.
- 21. all flesh died ... fowl ... cattle, and ... creeping thing It has been a uniform principle in the divine procedure, when judgments were abroad on the earth, to include every thing connected with the sinful objects of His wrath (\*\*Genesis 19:25 \*\*Exodus 9:6). Besides, now that the human race was reduced to one single family, it was necessary that the beasts should be proportionally diminished, otherwise by their numbers they would have acquired the ascendancy and overmastered the few that were to repeople the world. Thus goodness was mingled with severity; the Lord exercises judgment in wisdom and in wrath remembers mercy.
- **24.** *an hundred and fifty days* a period of five months. Though long before that every living creature must have been drowned, such a lengthened continuance of the flood was designed to manifest God's stern displeasure at sin and sinners. Think of Noah during such a crisis. We learn (\*\*Ezekiel 14:14) that he was a man who lived and breathed habitually in an atmosphere of devotion; and having in the exercise of this high-toned faith made God his refuge, he did not fear "though the waters roared and were troubled; though the mountains shook with the swelling thereof" [\*\*Psalm 46:3].

### **GENESIS** 8:1-14.

#### ASSUAGING OF THE WATERS.

**1.** And God remembered Noah — The divine purpose in this awful dispensation had been accomplished, and the world had undergone those changes necessary to fit it for becoming the residence of man under a new economy of Providence.

and every living thing ... in the ark — a beautiful illustration of Matthew 10:29.

and God made a wind to pass over the earth — Though the divine will could have dried up the liquid mass in an instant, the agency of a wind was employed (\*\*\*Psalm 104:4) — probably a hot wind, which, by rapid evaporation, would again absorb one portion of the waters into the atmosphere; and by which, the other would be gradually drained off by outlets beneath.

**4.** seventh month — of the year — not of the flood — which lasted only five months.

**rested** — evidently indicating a calm and gentle motion.

upon the mountains of Ararat — or Armenia, as the word is rendered (\*\*25 Kings 19:37 \*\*\* Isaiah 37:38). The mountain which tradition points to as the one on which the ark rested is now called Ara Dagh, the "finger mountain." Its summit consists of two peaks, the higher of which is 17,750 feet and the other 13,420 above the level of the sea.

**5.** And the waters decreased continually — The decrease of the waters was for wise reasons exceedingly slow and gradual — the period of their return being nearly twice as long as that of their rise.

- **6.** at the end of forty days It is easy to imagine the ardent longing Noah and his family must have felt to enjoy again the sight of land as well as breathe the fresh air; and it was perfectly consistent with faith and patience to make inquiries whether the earth was yet ready.
- **7.** And he sent forth a raven The smell of carrion would allure it to remain if the earth were in a habitable state. But it kept hovering about the spot, and, being a solitary bird, probably perched on the covering.
- **8-11.** *Also he sent forth a dove* a bird flying low and naturally disposed to return to the place of her abode.
- **10.** *again he sent forth the dove* Her flight, judging by the time she was abroad, was pursued to a great distance, and the newly plucked olive leaf, she no doubt by supernatural impulse brought in her bill, afforded a welcome proof that the declivities of the hills were clear.
- **12.** he ... sent forth the dove: which returned not ... any more In these results, we perceive a wisdom and prudence far superior to the inspiration of instinct we discern the agency of God guiding all the movements of this bird for the instruction of Noah, and reviving the hopes of his household.

*other seven days* — a strong presumptive proof that Noah observed the Sabbath during his residence in the ark.

**13, 14.** *Noah removed the covering of the ark* — probably only as much of it as would afford him a prospect of the earth around. Yet for about two months he never stirred from his appointed abode till he had received the express permission of God. We should watch the leading of Providence to direct us in every step of the journey of life.

**™GENESIS** 8:15-22.

#### DEPARTURE FROM THE ARK.

**15, 16.** And God spake ... Go forth — They went forth in the most orderly manner — the human occupants first, then each species "after

their kinds" [ Genesis 8:19], literally, "according to their families," implying that there had been an increase in the ark.

**20.** *Noah builded an altar* — literally, "a high place" — probably a mound of earth, on which a sacrifice was offered. There is something exceedingly beautiful and interesting to know that the first care of this devout patriarch was to return thanks for the signal instance of mercy and goodness which he and his family had experienced.

*took of every clean beast ... fowl* — For so unparalleled a deliverance, a special acknowledgment was due.

**21.** And the Lord smelled a sweet savor — The sacrifice offered by a righteous man like Noah in faith was acceptable as the most fragrant incense.

**Lord said in his heart** — same as "I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth" (\*\*\*\*Tsaiah 54:9).

*for* — that is, "though the imagination is evil"; instead of inflicting another destructive flood, I shall spare them — to enjoy the blessings of grace, through a Savior.

**22.** While the earth remaineth — The consummation, as intimated in <sup>and</sup>2 Peter 3:7, does not frustrate a promise which held good only during the continuance of that system. There will be no flood between this and that day, when the earth therein shall be burnt up [CHALMERS].

## **GENESIS** 9:1-7.

#### COVENANT.

- **1.** *And God blessed Noah* Here is republished the law of nature that was announced to Adam, consisting as it originally did of several parts.
- **Be fruitful**, etc. The first part relates to the transmission of life, the original blessing being reannounced in the very same words in which it had been promised at first [\*\*Genesis 1:28].
- **2.** And the fear of you and the dread of you The second part reestablishes man's dominion over the inferior animals; it was now founded not as at first in love and kindness, but in terror; this dread of man prevails among all the stronger as well as the weaker members of the animal tribes and keeps away from his haunts all but those employed in his service.
- **3.** Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you The third part concerns the means of sustaining life; man was for the first time, it would seem, allowed the use of animal food, but the grant was accompanied with one restriction.
- **4.** But flesh ... the blood ... shall ye not eat The sole intention of this prohibition was to prevent these excesses of cannibal ferocity in eating flesh of living animals, to which men in the earlier ages of the world were liable.
- **5.** surely your blood of your lives will I require The fourth part establishes a new power for protecting life the institution of the civil magistrate (\*\*Romans 13:4), armed with public and official authority to repress the commission of violence and crime. Such a power had not previously existed in patriarchal society.
- 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood ... for in the image of God made he man
  It is true that image has been injured by the fall, but it is not lost. In

this view, a high value is attached to the life of every man, even the poorest and humblest, and an awful criminality is involved in the destruction of it.

### **GENESIS** 9:8-29.

#### RAINBOW.

- **13.** *I* do set my bow in the cloud set, that is, constitute or appoint. This common and familiar phenomenon being made the pledge of peace, its appearance when showers began to fall would be welcomed with the liveliest feelings of joy.
- **20.** *And Noah ... planted a vineyard* Noah had been probably bred to the culture of the soil, and resumed that employment on leaving the ark.
- **21.** And he drank of the wine, and was drunken perhaps at the festivities of the vintage season. This solitary stain on the character of so eminently pious a man must, it is believed, have been the result of age or inadvertency.
- **24.** This incident could scarcely have happened till twenty years after the flood; for Canaan, whose conduct was more offensive than that even of his father, was not born till after that event. It is probable that there is a long interval included between these verses and that this prophecy, like that of Jacob on his sons, was not uttered till near the close of Noah's life when the prophetic spirit came upon him; this presumption is strengthened by the mention of his death immediately after.
- **25.** *Cursed be Canaan* This doom has been fulfilled in the destruction of the Canaanites in the degradation of Egypt and the slavery of the Africans, the descendants of Ham.
- **26.** Blessed be the Lord God of Shem rather, "Blessed of Jehovah, my God, be Shem," an intimation that the descendants of Shem should be peculiarly honored in the service of the true God, His Church being for ages established among them (the Jews), and of them, concerning the flesh, Christ came. They got possession of Canaan, the people of that land being

made their "servants" either by conquest, or, like the Gibeonites, by submission [\*\*\*\*Joshua 9:25].

**27.** *God shall enlarge Japheth* — pointing to a vast increase in posterity and possessions. Accordingly his descendants have been the most active and enterprising, spread over the best and largest portion of the world, all Europe and a considerable part of Asia.

he shall dwell in the tents of Shem — a prophecy being fulfilled at the present day, as in India British Government is established and the Anglo-Saxons being in the ascendancy from Europe to India, from India over the American continent. What a wonderful prophecy in a few verses (\*\*\*Isaiah 46:10 \*\*\*\*IP Peter 1:25)!

## **™**GENESIS 10:1-32.

#### GENEALOGIES.

**1.** sons of Noah — The historian has not arranged this catalogue according to seniority of birth; for the account begins with the descendants of Japheth, and the line of Ham is given before that of Shem though he is expressly said to be the youngest or younger son of Noah; and Shem was the elder brother of Japheth (\*\*Genesis 10:21), the true rendering of that passage.

generations, etc. — the narrative of the settlement of nations existing in the time of Moses, perhaps only the principal ones; for though the list comprises the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, *all their descendants* are not enumerated. Those descendants, with one or two exceptions, are described by names indicative of tribes and nations and ending in the *Hebrew im*, or the English "-ite."

- 5. the isles of the Gentiles a phrase by which the Hebrews described all countries which were accessible by sea ( Isaiah 11:11 Isaiah
- **6.** sons of Ham emigrated southward, and their settlements were: Cush in Arabia, Canaan in the country known by his name, and Mizraim in Egypt, Upper and Lower. It is generally thought that his father accompanied him and personally superintended the formation of the settlement, whence Egypt was called "the land of Ham" [\*\*\*Psalm 105:23,27 \*\*\*\*\*] 106:22].
- **8.** *Nimrod* mentioned as eclipsing all his family in renown. He early distinguished himself by his daring and successful prowess in hunting wild

beasts. By those useful services he earned a title to public gratitude; and, having established a permanent ascendancy over the people, he founded the first kingdom in the world [am Genesis 10:10].

- **10.** *the beginning of his kingdom* This kingdom, of course, though then considered great, would be comparatively limited in extent, and the towns but small forts.
- **11.** Out of that land went forth Asshur or, as the Margin has it, "He [Nimrod] at the head of his army went forth into Assyria," that is, he pushed his conquests into that country.

and builded Nineveh — opposite the town of Mosul, on the Tigris, and the other towns near it. This raid into Assyria was an invasion of the territories of Shem, and hence the name "Nimrod," signifying "rebel," is supposed to have been conferred on him from his daring revolt against the divine distribution.

- **21.** *Unto Shem* The historian introduces him with marked distinction as "the father of Eber," the ancestor of the Hebrews.
- **23.** *Aram* In the general division of the earth, the countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, fell to his descendants.
- **24.** *Arphaxad* The settlement of his posterity was in the extensive valley of Shinar, on the Tigris, towards the southern extremity of Mesopotamia, including the country of Eden and the region on the east side of the river.
- **25.** *Peleg*; *for in his days was the earth divided* After the flood (\*\*Genesis 11:10-16) the descendants of Noah settled at pleasure and enjoyed the produce of the undivided soil. But according to divine instruction, made probably through Eber, who seems to have been distinguished for piety or a prophetic character, the earth was divided and his son's name, "Peleg," was given in memory of that event (see \*\*Deuteronomy 32:8 \*\*TS\*Acts 17:26).
- **32.** These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations, etc. This division was made in the most orderly manner; and the inspired historian evidently intimates that the sons of Noah were

ranged according to their nations, and every nation ranked by its families, so that every nation had its assigned territory, and in every nation the tribes, and in every tribe the families, were located by themselves.

## **○IIII** GENESIS 11:1-32.

## CONFUSION OF TONGUES.

- **1.** *the whole earth was of one language*. The descendants of Noah, united by the strong bond of a common language, had not separated, and notwithstanding the divine command to replenish the earth, were unwilling to separate. The more pious and well-disposed would of course obey the divine will; but a numerous body, seemingly the aggressive horde mentioned (am Genesis 10:10), determined to please themselves by occupying the fairest region they came to.
- **2.** *land of Shinar* The fertile valley watered by the Euphrates and Tigris was chosen as the center of their union and the seat of their power.
- **3.** *brick* There being no stone in that quarter, brick is, and was, the only material used for building, as appears in the mass of ruins which at the Birs Nimroud may have been the very town formed by those ancient rebels. Some of these are sun-dried others burnt in the kiln and of different colors.
- *slime* bitumen, a mineral pitch, which, when hardened, forms a strong cement, commonly used in Assyria to this day, and forming the mortar found on the burnt brick remains of antiquity.
- **4.** a tower whose top may reach unto heaven a common figurative expression for great height (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 1:28 9:1-6).
- *lest we be scattered* To build a city and a town was no crime; but to do this to defeat the counsels of heaven by attempting to prevent emigration was foolish, wicked, and justly offensive to God.
- **6.** and now nothing will be restrained from them an apparent admission that the design was practicable, and would have been executed but for the divine interposition.

- 7. confound their language literally, "their lip"; it was a failure in utterance, occasioning a difference in dialect which was intelligible only to those of the same tribe. Thus easily by God their purpose was defeated, and they were compelled to the dispersion they had combined to prevent. It is only from the Scriptures we learn the true origin of the different nations and languages of the world. By one miracle of tongues men were dispersed and gradually fell from true religion. By another, national barriers were broken down that all men might be brought back to the family of God.
- **28.** *Ur* now Orfa; that is, "light, or "fire." Its name probably derived from its being devoted to the rites of fire-worship. Terah and his family were equally infected with that idolatry as the rest of the inhabitants ("Toshua 24:15).
- **31.** *Sarai his daughter-in-law* the same as Iscah [\*Genesis 11:29], granddaughter of Terah, probably by a second wife, and by early usages considered marriageable to her uncle, Abraham.

*they came unto Haran* — two days' journey south-southeast from Ur, on the direct road to the ford of the Euphrates at Rakka, the nearest and most convenient route to Palestine.

## **○IIII**GENESIS 12:1-20.

## CALL TO ABRAM.

**1.** Now the Lord had said unto Abram — It pleased God, who has often been found of them who sought Him not, to reveal Himself to Abraham perhaps by a miracle; and the conversion of Abraham is one of the most remarkable in Bible history.

Get thee out of thy country — His being brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God had probably been a considerable time before. This call included two promises: the first, showing the land of his future posterity; and the second, that in his posterity all the earth was to be blessed (\*\*Genesis 12:2). Abraham obeyed, and it is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as a striking instance of his faith (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:8).

- **5.** *into the land of Canaan ... they came* with his wife and an orphan nephew. Abram reached his destination in safety, and thus the first promise was made good.
- **6.** *the place of Sichem* or Shechem, a pastoral valley then unoccupied (compare Genesis 33:18).
- *plain of Moreh* rather, the "terebinth tree" of Moreh, very common in Palestine, remarkable for its wide-spreading branches and its dark green foliage. It is probable that in Moreh there was a grove of these trees, whose inviting shade led Abram to choose it for an encampment.
- 7. Unto thy seed will I give this land God was dealing with Abram not in his private and personal capacity merely, but with a view to high and important interests in future ages. That land his posterity was for centuries to inhabit as a peculiar people; the seeds of divine knowledge were to be sown there for the benefit of all mankind; and considered in its geographical situation, it was chosen in divine wisdom as the fittest of all

lands to serve as the cradle of a divine revelation designed for the whole world.

and there builded he an altar unto the Lord — By this solemn act of devotion Abram made an open profession of his religion, established the worship of the true God, and declared his faith in the promise.

- **10.** there was a famine ... and Abram went down into Egypt He did not go back to the place of his nativity, as regretting his pilgrimage and despising the promised land (\*\*Hebrews 11:15), but withdrew for a while into a neighboring country.
- 11-13. Sarai's complexion, coming from a mountainous country, would be fresh and fair compared with the faces of Egyptian women which were sallow. The counsel of Abram to her was true in words, but it was a deception, intended to give an impression that she was no more than his sister. His conduct was culpable and inconsistent with his character as a servant of God: it showed a reliance on worldly policy more than a trust in the promise; and he not only sinned himself, but tempted Sarai to sin also.
- **14.** when Abram was come into Egypt It appears from the monuments of that country that at the time of Abram's visit a monarchy had existed for several centuries. The seat of government was in the Delta, the most northern part of the country, the very quarter in which Abram must have arrived. They were a race of shepherd-kings, in close alliance with the people of Canaan.
- **15.** *the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house* Eastern kings have for ages claimed the privilege of taking to their harem an unmarried woman whom they like. The father or brother may deplore the removal as a calamity, but the royal right is never resisted nor questioned.
- **16.** *he entreated Abram well for her sake* The presents are just what one pastoral chief would give to another.
- **18-20.** Here is a most humiliating rebuke, and Abram deserved it. Had not God interfered, he might have been tempted to stay in Egypt and forget the promise (\*\*\*Psalm 105:13,15). Often still does God rebuke His people and remind them through enemies that this world is not their rest.

## GENESIS 13:1-18.

### RETURN FROM EGYPT.

- **1.** went up ... south Palestine being a highland country, the entrance from Egypt by its southern boundary is a continual ascent.
- **2.** *very rich* compared with the pastoral tribes to which Abraham belonged. An Arab sheik is considered rich who has a hundred or two hundred tents, from sixty to a hundred camels, a thousand sheep and goats respectively. And Abram being very rich, must have far exceeded that amount of pastoral property. "Gold and silver" being rare among these peoples, his probably arose from the sale of his produce in Egypt.
- **3.** went on his journeys His progress would be by slow marches and frequent encampments as Abram had to regulate his movements by the prospect of water and pasturage.
- unto the place ... between Beth-el and Hai "a conspicuous hill its topmost summit resting on the rocky slopes below, and distinguished by its olive groves offering a natural base for the altar and a fitting shade for the tent of the patriarch" [STANLEY].
- **4.** *there Abram called on the name of the Lord* He felt a strong desire to reanimate his faith and piety on the scene of his former worship: it might be to express humility and penitence for his misconduct in Egypt or thankfulness for deliverance from perils to embrace the first opportunity on returning to Canaan of leading his family to renew allegiance to God and offer the typical sacrifices which pointed to the blessings of the promise.
- **7.** And there was a strife Abraham's character appears here in a most amiable light. Having a strong sense of religion, he was afraid of doing anything that might tend to injure its character or bring discredit on its

name, and he rightly judged that such unhappy effects would be produced if two persons whom nature and grace had so closely connected should come to a rupture [\*\*Genesis 13:8]. Waiving his right to dictate, he gave the freedom of choice to Lot. The conduct of Abraham was not only disinterested and peaceable, but generous and condescending in an extraordinary degree, exemplifying the Scripture precepts (\*\*\*Matthew 6:32 \*\*\*Romans 12:10,11 \*\*\*\* Philippians 2:4).

- **11.** Then Lot chose him all the plain a choice excellent from a worldly point of view, but most inexpedient for his best interests. He seems, though a good man, to have been too much under the influence of a selfish and covetous spirit: and how many, alas! imperil the good of their souls for the prospect of worldly advantage.
- **14, 15.** *Lift up now thine eyes ... all the land which thou seest* So extensive a survey of the country, *in all directions*, can be obtained from no other point in the neighborhood; and those plains and hills, then lying desolate before the eyes of the solitary patriarch, were to be peopled with a mighty nation "like the dust of the earth in number," as they were in Solomon's time (\*\*IND)\*1 Kings 4:20).
- **18.** *the plain of Mamre ... built ... an altar* the renewal of the promise was acknowledged by Abram by a fresh tribute of devout gratitude.

## **©HO**GENESIS 14:1-24.

### WAR.

- **1.** And it came to pass This chapter presents Abram in the unexpected character of a warrior. The occasion was this: The king of Sodom and the kings of the adjoining cities, after having been tributaries for twelve years to the king of Elam, combined to throw off his yoke. To chastise their rebellion, as he deemed it, Chedorlaomer, with the aid of three allies, invaded the territories of the refractory princes, defeated them in a pitched battle where the nature of the ground favored his army (and Genesis 14:10), and hastened in triumph on his homeward march, with a large amount of captives and booty, though merely a stranger.
- **12.** they took Lot ... and his goods, and departed How would the conscience of that young man now upbraid him for his selfish folly and ingratitude in withdrawing from his kind and pious relative! Whenever we go out of the path of duty, we put ourselves away from God's protection, and cannot expect that the choice we make will be for our lasting good.
- **13.** *there came one that had escaped* Abram might have excused himself from taking any active concern in his "brother," that is, nephew, who little deserved that he should incur trouble or danger on *his* account. But Abram, far from rendering evil for evil, resolved to take immediate measures for the rescue of Lot.
- **14.** And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants domestic slaves, such as are common in Eastern countries still and are considered and treated as members of the family. If Abram could spare three hundred and eighteen slaves and leave a sufficient number to take care of the flocks, what a large establishment he must have had.

- **15, 16.** *he divided himself* ... *by night* This war between the petty princes of ancient Canaan is exactly the same as the frays and skirmishes between Arab chiefs in the present day. When a defeated party resolves to pursue the enemy, they wait till they are fast asleep; then, as they have no idea of posting sentinels, they rush upon them from different directions, strike down the tent poles if there is any fight at all, it is the fray of a tumultuous mob a panic commonly ensues, and the whole contest is ended with little or no loss on either side.
- **18.** *Melchizedek* This victory conferred a public benefit on that part of the country; and Abram, on his return, was treated with high respect and consideration, particularly by the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, who seems to have been one of the few native princes, if not the only one, who knew and worshipped, "the most high God," whom Abram served. This king who was a type of the Savior (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 7:1), came to bless God for the victory which had been won, and in the name of God to bless Abram, by whose arms it had been achieved a pious acknowledgment which we should imitate on succeeding in any lawful enterprise.
- **20.** *he gave him tithes of all* Here is an evidence of Abram's piety, as well as of his valor; for it was to a priest or official mediator between God and him that Abram gave a tenth of the spoil a token of his gratitude and in honor of a divine ordinance (\*\*Proverbs 3:9).
- **21.** *the king of Sodom said ... Give me the persons* According to the war customs still existing among the Arab tribes, Abram might have retained the recovered goods, and his right was acknowledged by the king of Sodom. But with honest pride, and a generosity unknown in that part of the world, he replied with strong phraseology common to the East, "I have lifted up mine hand" [that is, I have sworn] unto the Lord that I will not take from a thread even to a sandal-thong, and that that I will not take any thing that [is] thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich" [\*\*Genesis\* 14:22,23].

## **○IIO**GENESIS 15:1-21.

### DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT.

**1.** After these things — the conquest of the invading kings.

*the word of the Lord* — a phrase used, when connected with a vision, to denote a prophetic message.

Fear not, Abram — When the excitement of the enterprise was over, he had become a prey to despondency and terror at the probable revenge that might be meditated against him. To dispel his fear, he was favored with this gracious announcement. Having such a promise, how well did it become him (and all God's people who have the same promise) to dismiss fears, and cast all burdens on the Lord (\*\*Psalm 27:3).

- **2.** Lord God, what wilt thou give? To his mind the declaration, "I am thy exceeding great reward" [\*\*Genesis 15:1], had but one meaning, or was viewed but in one particular light, as bearing on the fulfillment of the promise, and he was still experiencing the sickness of hope deferred.
- 3. Eliezer of Damascus ... one born in my house is mine heir According to the usage of nomadic tribes, his chief confidential servant, would be heir to his possessions and honors. But this man could have become his son only by adoption; and how sadly would that have come short of the parental hopes he had been encouraged to entertain! His language betrayed a latent spirit of fretfulness or perhaps a temporary failure in the very virtue for which he is so renowned and absolute submission to God's time, as well as way, of accomplishing His promise.
- **4.** This shall not be thine heir To the first part of his address no reply was given; but having renewed it in a spirit of more becoming submission, "whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it" [\*\*Genesis 15:8], he was

delighted by a most explicit promise of Canaan, which was immediately confirmed by a remarkable ceremony.

9-21. Take me an heifer, etc. — On occasions of great importance, when two or more parties join in a compact, they either observe precisely the same rites as Abram did, or, where they do not, they invoke the lamp as their witness. According to these ideas, which have been from time immemorial engraven on the minds of Eastern people, the Lord Himself condescended to enter into covenant with Abram. The patriarch did not pass between the sacrifice and the reason was that in this transaction he was bound to nothing. He asked a sign, and God was pleased to give him a sign, by which, according to Eastern ideas, He bound Himself. In like manner God has entered into covenant with us; and in the glory of the only-begotten Son, who passed through between God and us, all who believe have, like Abram, a sign or pledge in the gift of the Spirit, whereby they may know that they shall inherit the heavenly Canaan.

## **™**GENESIS 16:1-16.

## BESTOWMENT OF HAGAR.

- **1.** *Now*, *Sarai* ... *had a handmaid* a female slave one of those obtained in Egypt.
- 3. Sarai ... gave her to ... Abram to be his wife "Wife" is here used to describe an inferior, though not degrading, relation, in countries where polygamy prevails. In the case of these female slaves, who are the personal property of his lady, being purchased before her marriage or given as a special present to her, no one can become the husband's secondary wife without her mistress consent or permission. This usage seems to have prevailed in patriarchal times; and Hagar, Sarai's slave, of whom she had the entire right of disposing, was given by her mistress' spontaneous offer, to be the secondary wife of Abram, in the hope of obtaining the long-looked-for heir. It was a wrong step indicating a want of simple reliance on God and Sarai was the first to reap the bitter fruits of her device.
- **5.** And Sarai said ... My wrong be upon thee Bursts of temper, or blows, as the original may bear, took place till at length Hagar, perceiving the hopelessness of maintaining the unequal strife, resolved to escape from what had become to her in reality, as well as in name, a house of bondage.
- **7.** And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain This well, pointed out by tradition, lay on the side of the caravan road, in the midst of Shur, a sandy desert on the west of Arabia-Petræa, to the extent of a hundred fifty miles, between Palestine and Egypt. By taking that direction, she seems to have intended to return to her relatives in that country. Nothing but pride, passion, and sullen obstinacy, could have driven any solitary person to brave the dangers of such an inhospitable wild; and she would have died, had not the timely appearance and words of the angel recalled her to reflection and duty.

- **11.** *Ishmael* Like other Hebrew names, this had a signification, and it is made up of two words "God hears." The reason is explained.
- **12.** *he will be a wild man* literally, "a wild ass man," expressing how the wildness of Ishmael and his descendants resembles that of the wild ass.

*his hand will be against every man* — descriptive of the rude, turbulent, and plundering character of the Arabs.

**dwell in the presence of all his brethren** — dwell, that is, pitch tents; and the meaning is that they maintain their independence in spite of all attempts to extirpate or subdue them.

**13.** *called the name* — common in ancient times to name places from circumstances; and the name given to this well was a grateful recognition of God's gracious appearance in the hour of Hagar's distress.

## **○ITO**GENESIS 17:1-27.

## RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT.

**1.** Abram ... ninety years old and nine — thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael [Genesis 16:16]. During that interval he had enjoyed the comforts of communion with God but had been favored with no special revelation as formerly, probably on account of his hasty and blameable marriage with Hagar.

*the Lord appeared* — some visible manifestation of the divine presence, probably the Shekinah or radiant glory of overpowering effulgence.

I am the Almighty God — the name by which He made Himself known to the patriarchs (\*\*Exodus 6:3), designed to convey the sense of "allsufficient" (\*\*Psalm 16:5,6\*\*73:25).

walk ... and ... perfect — upright, or sincere (\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:6) in heart, speech, and behavior.

- **3.** Abram fell on his face the attitude of profoundest reverence assumed by Eastern people. It consists in the prostrate body resting on the hands and knees, with the face bent till the forehead touches the ground. It is an expression of conscious humility and profound reverence.
- **4.** *my covenant is with thee* Renewed mention is made of it as the foundation of the communication that follows. It is the covenant of grace made with all who believe in the Savior.
- **5.** but thy name shall be Abraham In Eastern countries a change of name is an advertisement of some new circumstance in the history, rank, or religion of the individual who bears it. The change is made variously, by the old name being entirely dropped for the new, or by conjoining the new with the old; or sometimes only a few letters are inserted, so that the altered form may express the difference in the owner's state or prospects.

It is surprising how soon a new name is known and its import spread through the country. In dealing with Abraham and Sarai, God was pleased to adapt His procedure to the ideas and customs of the country and age. Instead of Abram, "a high father," he was to be called Abraham, "father of a multitude of nations" (see \*\*GPTRevelation 2:17).

- **8.** *I will give unto thee* ... *the land* It had been previously promised to Abraham and his posterity (\*\*Genesis 15:18). Here it is promised as an "everlasting possession," and was, therefore, a type of heaven, "the better country" (\*\*\*UbHebrews 11:16).
- **10.** Every man child among you shall be circumcised This was the sign in the Old Testament Church as baptism is in the New, and hence the covenant is called "covenant of circumcision" (\*\*Acts 7:8 \*\*TROMANS 4:11). The terms of the covenant were these: on the one hand Abraham and his seed were to observe the right of circumcision; and on the other, God promised, in the event of such observance, to give them Canaan for a perpetual possession, to be a God to him and his posterity, and that in him and his seed all nations should be blessed.
- **15, 16.** As for Sarai ... I will ... give thee a son also of her God's purposes are gradually made known. A son had been long ago promised to Abraham. Now, at length, for the first time he is informed that it was to be a child of Sarai.
- **17.** Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed It was not the sneer of unbelief, but a smile of delight at the improbability of the event ( Romans 4:20).
- **18.** *O that Ishmael might live before thee* natural solicitude of a parent. But God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts [2008] Isaiah 55:8].
- **19, 20.** The blessings of the covenant are reserved for Isaac, but common blessings were abundantly promised to Ishmael; and though the visible Church did not descend from his family, yet personally he might, and it is to be hoped *did*, enjoy its benefits.

## **GENESIS** 18:1-8.

## ENTERTAINMENT OF ANGELS.

**1.** *the Lord appeared* — another manifestation of the divine presence, more familiar than any yet narrated; and more like that in the fullness of time, when the Word was made flesh.

*plains of Mamre* — rather, terebinth or oak of Mamre; a tall-spreading tree or grove of trees.

*sat in the tent door* — The tent itself being too close and sultry at noon, the shaded open front is usually resorted to for the air that may be stirring.

**2.** *lift up his eyes ... and, lo, three men* — Travellers in that quarter start at sunrise and continue till midday when they look out for some restingplace.

he ran to meet them — When the visitor is an ordinary person, the host merely rises; but if of superior rank, the custom is to advance a little towards the stranger, and after a very low bow, turn and lead him to the tent, putting an arm round his waist, or tapping him on the shoulder as they go, to assure him of welcome.

- **3.** My Lord, if now I have found favor The hospitalities offered are just of the kind that are necessary and most grateful, the refreshment of water, for feet exposed to dust and heat by the sandals, being still the first observed among the pastoral people of Hebron.
- **5.** for therefore are ye come No questions were asked. But Abraham knew their object by the course they took approaching directly in front of the chief sheik's tent, which is always distinguishable from the rest and thus showing their wish to be his guests.

- **6.** Abraham hastened ... unto Sarah ... make cakes upon the hearth Bread is baked daily, no more than is required for family use, and always by the women, commonly the wife. It is a short process. Flour mixed with water is made into dough, and being rolled out into cakes, it is placed on the earthen floor, previously heated by a fire. The fire being removed, the cakes are laid on the ground, and being covered over with hot embers, are soon baked, and eaten the moment they are taken off.
- **7.** Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf Animal food is never provided, except for visitors of a superior rank when a kid or lamb is killed. A calf is still a higher stretch of hospitality, and it would probably be cooked as is usually done when haste is required either by roasting it whole or by cutting it up into small pieces and broiling them on skewers over the fire. It is always eaten along with boiled corn swimming in butter or melted fat, into which every morsel of meat, laid upon a piece of bread, is dipped, before being conveyed by the fingers to the mouth.
- **8.** *milk* A bowl of camel's milk ends the repast.

he stood by them under the tree — The host himself, even though he has a number of servants, deems it a necessary act of politeness to stand while his guests are at their food, and Abraham evidently did this before he was aware of the real character of his visitors.

## **GENESIS** 18:9-15.

## REPROOF OF SARAH.

An inquiry about his wife, so surprising in strangers, the subject of conversation, and the fulfillment of the fondly cherished promise within a specified time, showed Abraham that he had been entertaining more than ordinary travelers (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 13:2).

**10.** Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him — The women's apartment is in the back of the tent, divided by a thin partition from the men's.

**12.** Therefore Sarah laughed within herself — Long delay seems to have weakened faith. Sarah treated the announcement as incredible, and when taxed with the silent sneer, she added falsehood to distrust. It was an aggravated offense (\*\*\*Acts 5:4), and nothing but grace saved her (\*\*\*Romans 9:18).

## **™GENESIS** 18:16-22.

## DISCLOSURE OF SODOM'S DOOM.

- **16.** the men rose ... Abraham went with them It is customary for a host to escort his guests a little way.
- **17.** *the Lord said*, *Shall I hide* The chief stranger, no other than the Lord, disclosed to Abraham the awful doom about to be inflicted on Sodom and the cities of the plain for their enormous wickedness.
- **21.** *I will go down ... and see* language used after the manner of men. These cities were to be made examples to all future ages of God's severity; and therefore ample proof given that the judgment was neither rash nor excessive (\*\*Ezekiel 18:23\*\*Jeremiah 18:7).

## **□EO**GENESIS 18:23-33.

### ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION.

- **23.** Abraham drew near, and said, etc. The scene described is full of interest and instruction showing in an unmistakable manner the efficacy of prayer and intercession. (See also Proverbs 18:15:8 James 5:16). Abraham reasoned justly as to the rectitude of the divine procedure (Romans 3:5,6), and many guilty cities and nations have been spared on account of God's people (Matthew 5:13 24:22).
- 33. the Lord ... left communing ... and Abraham returned unto his place

   Why did Abraham cease to carry his intercessions farther? Either because he fondly thought that he was now sure of the cities being preserved (\*\*D\*Luke 13:9), or because the Lord restrained his mind from

further intercession (\*\* Geremiah 7:16 11:14). But there were not ten "righteous persons." There was only one, and he might without injustice have perished in the general overthrow (\*\* Ecclesiastes 9:2). But a difference is sometimes made, and on this occasion the grace of God was manifested in a signal manner for the sake of Abraham. What a blessing to be connected with a saint of God!

## **□□**GENESIS 19:1-38.

### LOT'S ENTERTAINMENT.

**1.** *there came two angels* — most probably two of those that had been with Abraham, commissioned to execute the divine judgment against Sodom.

**Lot sat in the gate of Sodom** — In Eastern cities it is the market, the seat of justice, of social intercourse and amusement, especially a favorite lounge in the evenings, the arched roof affording a pleasant shade.

**2.** *turn in*, *I pray you ... tarry all night* — offer of the same generous hospitalities as described in Genesis 18:2-8, and which are still spontaneously practiced in the small towns.

And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night — Where there are no inns and no acquaintance, it is not uncommon for travelers to sleep in the street wrapped up in their cloaks.

- **3.** *entered into his house* On removing to the plain, Lot intended at first to live in his tent apart from the people [\*\*Genesis 13:12]. But he was gradually drawn in, dwelt in the city, and he and his family were connected with the citizens by marriage ties.
- **4.** *men of Sodom, compassed the house* Appalling proofs are here given of their wickedness. It is evident that evil communications had corrupted good manners; otherwise Lot would never have acted as he did.
- 12, 13. Hast thou here any besides? ... we will destroy this place Apostolic authority has declared Lot was "a righteous man" (\*\*\* Peter 2:8), at bottom good, though he contented himself with lamenting the sins that he saw, instead of acting on his own convictions, and withdrawing himself and family from such a sink of corruption. But favor was shown

him: and even his bad relatives had, for his sake, an offer of deliverance, which was ridiculed and spurned (\*\*\*2 Peter 3:4).

- **15-17.** The kindly interest the angels took in the preservation of Lot is beautifully displayed. But he "lingered." Was it from sorrow at the prospect of losing all his property, the acquisition of many years? Or was it that his benevolent heart was paralyzed by thoughts of the awful crisis? This is the charitable way of accounting for a delay that would have been fatal but for the friendly urgency of the angel.
- **18, 19.** Lot said ... Oh, not so, my Lord ... I cannot escape to the mountain What a strange want of faith and fortitude, as if He who had interfered for his rescue would not have protected Lot in the mountain solitude.
- **21.** See, I have accepted thee concerning this ... also His request was granted him, the prayer of faith availed, and to convince him, from his own experience, that it would have been best and safest at once to follow implicitly the divine directions.
- **22.** Haste ... for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither The ruin of Sodom was suspended till he was secure. What care God does take of His people (\*\*Revelation 7:3)! What a proof of the love which God bore to a good though weak man!
- **24.** Then the Lord rained ... brimstone and fire from ... heaven God, in accomplishing His purposes, acts immediately or mediately through the agency of means; and there are strong grounds for believing that it was in the latter way He effected the overthrow of the cities of the plain that it was, in fact, by a volcanic eruption. The raining down of fire and brimstone from heaven is perfectly accordant with this idea since those very substances, being raised into the air by the force of the volcano, would fall in a fiery shower on the surrounding region. This view seems countenanced by Job [ \*\*\*\*Job 1:16 \*\*\*\*\*18:15]. Whether it was miraculously produced, or the natural operation employed by God, it is not of much consequence to determine: it was a divine judgment, foretold and designed for the punishment of those who were sinners exceedingly.

- **26.** Lot was accompanied by his wife and two daughters. But whether it was from irresistible curiosity or perturbation of feeling, or that she was about to return to save something, his wife lingered, and while thus disobeying the parting counsel, "to look not back, nor stay in all the plain" [\*\*Genesis 19:17], the torrent of liquid lava enveloped her so that she became the victim of her supine indolence or sinful rashness.
- 27. Abraham gat up early in the morning, etc. Abraham was at this time in Mamre, near Hebron, and a traveler last year verified the truth of this passage. "From the height which overlooks Hebron, where the patriarch stood, the observer at the present day has an extensive view spread out before him towards the Dead Sea. A cloud of smoke rising from the plain would be visible to a person at Hebron now, and could have been, therefore, to Abraham as he looked toward Sodom on the morning of its destruction by God" [HACKETT]. It must have been an awful sight, and is frequently alluded to in Scripture (Deuteronomy 29:23 Isaiah 13:19 Inde 1:7). "The plain which is now covered by the Salt or Dead Sea shows in the great difference of level between the bottoms of the northern and southern ends of the lake the latter being thirteen feet and the former thirteen hundred that the southern end was of recent formation, and submerged at the time of the fall of the cities" [Lynch].
- **29.** when God destroyed the cities, etc. This is most welcome and instructive after so painful a narrative. It shows if God is a "consuming fire" to the wicked [\*\*Deuteronomy 4:24 \*\*\*\* Hebrews 12:29], He is the friend of the righteous. He "remembered" the intercessions of Abraham, and what confidence should not this give us that He will remember the intercessions of a greater than Abraham in our behalf.

# **GENESIS** 20:1-18.

## ABRAHAM'S DENIAL OF HIS WIFE.

- **1.** Abraham journeyed from thence ... and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur Leaving the encampment, he migrated to the southern border of Canaan. In the neighborhood of Gerar was a very rich and well-watered pasture land.
- **2.** Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister Fear of the people among whom he was, tempted him to equivocate. His conduct was highly culpable. It was deceit, deliberate and premeditated there was no sudden pressure upon him it was the second offense of the kind [see on Genesis 12:13] it was a distrust of God every way surprising, and it was calculated to produce injurious effects on the heathen around. Its mischievous tendency was not long in being developed.

**Abimelech** (father-king) ... sent and took Sarah — to be one of his wives, in the exercise of a privilege claimed by Eastern sovereigns, already explained (see on ODE Genesis 12:15).

- **3.** But God came to Abimelech in a dream In early times a dream was often made the medium of communicating important truths; and this method was adopted for the preservation of Sarah.
- 9. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said ... What hast thou done?

   In what a humiliating plight does the patriarch now appear he, a servant of the true God, rebuked by a heathen prince. Who would not rather be in the place of Abimelech than of the honored but sadly offending patriarch! What a dignified attitude is that of the king calmly and justly reproving the sin of the patriarch, but respecting his person and

heaping coals of fire on his head by the liberal presents made to him.

- 11. And Abraham said ... I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place From the horrible vices of Sodom he seems to have taken up the impression that all other cities of Canaan were equally corrupt. There might have been few or none who feared God, but what a sad thing when men of the world show a higher sense of honor and a greater abhorrence of crimes than a true worshipper!
- **12.** *yet indeed she is my sister* (See on Genesis 11:31). What a poor defense Abraham made. The statement absolved him from the charge of direct and absolute falsehood, but he had told a moral untruth because there was an intention to deceive (compare Genesis 12:11-13). "Honesty is always the best policy." Abraham's life would have been as well protected without the fraud as with it: and what shame to himself, what distrust to God, what dishonor to religion might have been prevented! "Let us speak truth every man to his neighbor" [Sechariah 8:16 Genesis 12:13].

## **○1201**GENESIS 21:1-13.

## BIRTH OF ISAAC.

- **1.** *the Lord visited Sarah* The language of the historian seems designedly chosen to magnify the power of God as well as His faithfulness to His promise. It was God's grace that brought about that event, as well as the raising of spiritual children to Abraham, of which the birth of this son was typical [Calvin].
- **3, 4.** Abraham called the name of his son ... Isaac ... and circumcised God was acknowledged in the name which, by divine command, was given for a memorial (compare Genesis 17:19), and also in the dedication of the child by administering the seal of the covenant (compare Genesis 17:10-12).
- **8.** *the child grew, and was weaned* children are suckled longer in the East than in the Occident boys usually for two or three years.
- **Abraham made a great feast**, etc. In Eastern countries this is always a season of domestic festivity, and the newly weaned child is formally brought, in presence of the assembled relatives and friends, to partake of some simple viands. Isaac, attired in the symbolic robe, the badge of birthright, was then admitted heir of the tribe [ROSENMULLER].
- **9.** Sarah saw the son of Hagar ... mocking Ishmael was aware of the great change in his prospects, and under the impulse of irritated or resentful feelings, in which he was probably joined by his mother, treated the young heir with derision and probably some violence (\*\*Galatians 4:29).
- **10.** Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman Nothing but the expulsion of both could now preserve harmony in the household. Abraham's perplexity was relieved by an announcement of the

divine will, which in everything, however painful to flesh and blood, all who fear God and are walking in His ways will, like him, promptly obey. This story, as the apostle tells us, in "an allegory" [-4002 Galatians 4:24], and the "persecution" by the son of the *Egyptian* was the commencement of the four hundred years' affliction of Abraham's seed by the *Egyptians*.

- **12.** *in all that Sarah hath said* it is called the Scripture (\*\*Galatians 4:30).
- **13.** *also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation* Thus Providence overruled a family brawl to give rise to two great and extraordinary peoples.

## **©ENESIS** 21:14-21.

## EXPULSION OF ISHMAEL.

**14.** Abraham rose up early, etc. — early, that the wanderers might reach an asylum before noon. Bread includes all sorts of victuals — bottle, a leathern vessel, formed of the entire skin of a lamb or kid sewed up, with the legs for handles, usually carried over the shoulder. Ishmael was a lad of seventeen years, and it is quite customary for Arab chiefs to send out their sons at such an age to do for themselves: often with nothing but a few days' provisions in a bag.

wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba — in the southern border of Palestine, but out of the common direction, a wide extending desert, where they lost their way.

- **15.** *the water was spent*, etc. Ishmael sank exhausted from fatigue and thirst his mother laid his head under one of the bushes to smell the damp while she herself, unable to witness his distress, sat down at a little distance in hopeless sorrow.
- **19.** God opened her eyes Had she forgotten the promise (\*\*Genesis 16:11)? Whether she looked to God or not, He regarded her and directed her to a fountain close beside her, but probably hid amid brushwood, by the waters of which her almost expiring son was revived.

**20, 21.** *God was with the lad*, etc. — Paran (that is, Arabia), where his posterity has ever dwelt (compare Genesis 16:12; also Saiah 48:19 Peter 1:25).

*his mother took him a wife* — On a father's death, the mother looks out for a wife for her son, however young; and as Ishmael was now virtually deprived of his father, his mother set about forming a marriage connection for him, it would seem, among her relatives.

## GENESIS 21:22-34.

### COVENANT.

- **22.** *Abimelech and Phichol* Here a proof of the promise ( Genesis 12:2) being fulfilled, in a native prince wishing to form a solemn league with Abraham. The proposal was reasonable, and agreed to [Genesis 21:24].
- **25-31.** And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well Wells were of great importance to a pastoral chief and on the successful operation of sinking a new one, the owner was solemnly informed in person. If, however, they were allowed to get out of repair, the restorer acquired a right to them. In unoccupied lands the possession of wells gave a right of property in the land, and dread of this had caused the offense for which Abraham reproved Abimelech. Some describe four, others five, wells in Beer-sheba.
- **33.** *Abraham planted a grove Hebrew*, "of tamarisks," in which sacrificial worship was offered, as in a roofless temple.
- **34.** *Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land* a picture of pastoral and an emblem of Christian life.

# **○1201**GENESIS 22:1-19.

## OFFERING ISAAC.

- **1.** God did tempt Abraham not incite to sin (\*\*III\*) ames 1:13), but try, prove give occasion for the development of his faith (\*\*III\*) Peter 1:7).
- and he said, ... Here I am ready at a moment's warning for God's service.
- **2.** *Take now thy son*, etc. Every circumstance mentioned was calculated to give a deeper stab to the parental bosom. To lose his only son, and by an act of his own hand, too! what a host of conflicting feelings must the order have raised! But he heard and obeyed without a murmur (\*\*\*\*Galatians 1:16 \*\*\*Luke 14:26).
- **3.** Abraham rose ... early, etc. That there might be no appearance of delay or reluctance on his part, he made every preparation for the sacrifice before setting out the materials, the knife, and the servants to convey them. From Beer-sheba to Moriah, a journey of two days, he had the painful secret pent up in his bosom. So distant a place must have been chosen for some important reason. It is generally thought that this was one the hills of Jerusalem, on which the Great Sacrifice was afterwards offered.
- **4.** on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, etc. Leaving the servants at the foot [\*\*Genesis 22:5], the father and son ascended the hill, the one bearing the knife, and the other the wood for consuming the sacrifice [\*\*\*Genesis 22:6]. But there was no victim; and to the question so naturally put by Isaac [\*\*\*Genesis 22:7], Abraham contented himself by replying, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." It has been supposed that the design of this extraordinary transaction was to show him, by action instead of words, the way in which all the families of the earth should be blessed; and that in his answer to Isaac, he anticipated some substitution. It is more likely that his words were

spoken evasively to his son in ignorance of the issue, yet in unbounded confidence that that son, though sacrificed, would, in some miraculous way, be restored (\*\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:19).

- **9.** Abraham built an altar, etc. Had not the patriarch been sustained by the full consciousness of acting in obedience to God's will, the effort would have been too great for human endurance; and had not Isaac, then upwards of twenty years of age displayed equal faith in submitting, this great trial could not have gone through.
- 11, 12. the angel ... called, etc. The sacrifice was virtually offered the intention, the purpose to do it, was shown in all sincerity and fullness. The Omniscient witness likewise declared His acceptance in the highest terms of approval; and the apostle speaks of it as actually made (\*\*III\*Hebrews 11:17 \*\*III\*James 2:21).
- **13-19.** Abraham lifted up his eyes ... and behold ... a ram, etc. No method was more admirably calculated to give the patriarch a distinct idea of the purpose of grace than this scenic representation: and hence our Lord's allusion to it (\*\*\*John 8:56).

# **GENESIS** 23:1,2.

## AGE AND DEATH OF SARAH.

- **1.** Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old, etc. Sarah is the only woman in Scripture whose age, death, and burial are mentioned, probably to do honor to the venerable mother of the Hebrew people.
- **2.** Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, etc. He came from his own tent to take his station at the door of Sarah's. The "mourning" describes his conformity to the customary usage of sitting on the ground for a time; while the "weeping" indicates the natural outburst of his sorrow.

## **©ENESIS** 23:3-20.

## PURCHASE OF A BURYING-PLACE.

- **3.** Abraham stood up, etc. Eastern people are always provided with family burying-places; but Abraham's life of faith his pilgrim state had prevented him acquiring even so small a possession (\*\*\*\*Acts 7:5).
- *spake unto the sons of Heth* He bespoke their kind offices to aid him in obtaining possession of a cave that belonged to Ephron a wealthy neighbor.
- **9.** *Machpelah* the "double case."
- **10.** *Ephron dwelt* literally, was "sitting" among the children of Heth in the gate of the city where all business was transacted. But, though a chief man among them, he was probably unknown to Abraham.
- **11-15.** *Ephron answered*, *Nay*, *my lord*, etc. Here is a great show of generosity, but it was only a show; for while Abraham wanted only the cave, he joins "the field and the cave"; and though he offered them both as

free gifts, he, of course, expected some costly presents in return, without which, he would not have been satisfied. The patriarch, knowing this, wished to make a purchase and asked the terms.

- **15.** the land is worth four hundred shekels, etc. as if Ephron had said, "Since you wish to know the value of the property, it is so and so; but that is a trifle, which you may pay or not as it suits you." They spoke in the common forms of Arab civility, and this indifference was mere affectation.
- **16.** Abraham weighed ... the silver The money, amounting to æ50 (about \$1,000) was paid in presence of the assembled witnesses; and it was weighed. The practice of weighing money, which is often in lumps or rings, each stamped with their weight, is still common in many parts of the East; and every merchant at the gates or the bazaar has his scales at his girdle.
- **19.** Abraham buried Sarah Thus he got possession of Machpelah and deposited the remains of his lamented partner in a family vault which was the only spot of ground he owned.

## **©ENESIS** 24:1-9.

## A MARRIAGE COMMISSION.

- **1.** And Abraham was old ... take a wife His anxiety to see his son married was natural to his position as a pastoral chief interested in preserving the honor of his tribe, and still more as a patriarch who had regard to the divine promise of a numerous posterity.
- **2.** *said unto his eldest servant* Abraham being too old, and as the heir of the promise not being at liberty to make even a temporary visit to his native land, was obliged to intrust this delicate mission to Eliezer, whom, although putting entire confidence in him, he on this occasion bound by a solemn oath. A pastoral chief in the present day would follow the same course if he could not go himself.
- 3. thou shalt not take a wife, etc. Among pastoral tribes the matrimonial arrangements are made by the parents, and a youth must marry, not among strangers, but in his own tribe custom giving him a claim, which is seldom or never resisted, to the hand of his first cousin. But Abraham had a far higher motive a fear lest, if his son married into a Canaanitish family, he might be gradually led away from the true God.

**○D240**GENESIS 24:10-67.

### THE JOURNEY.

**10.** the servant took ten camels, etc. — So great an equipage was to give the embassy an appearance worthy of the rank and wealth of Abraham; to carry provisions; to bear the marriage presents, which as usual would be distributed over several beasts; besides one or two spare camels in case of emergency.

- went to Mesopotamia, etc. A stranger in those regions, who wishes to obtain information, stations himself at one of the wells in the neighborhood of a town, and he is sure to learn all the news of the place from the women who frequent them every morning and evening. Eliezer followed this course, and letting his camels rest, he waited till the evening time of water drawing.
- **12.** And he said, O Lord God of my master The servant appears worthy of the master he served. He resolves to follow the leading of Providence; and while he shows good sense in the tokens he fixes upon of ascertaining the temper and character of the future bride, he never doubts but that in such a case God will direct him.
- **15-21.** *before he had done speaking ... behold*, *Rebekah came out* As he anticipated, a young woman unveiled, as in pastoral regions, appeared with her pitcher on her shoulder. Her comely appearance, her affable manners, her obliging courtesy in going down the steps to fetch water not only to him but to pour in into the trough for his camels, afforded him the most agreeable surprise. She was the very person his imagination had pictured, and he proceeded to reward her civility.
- **22.** the man took a golden earring, etc. The ring was not for the ear, but the nose; the armlets, such as young women in Syria and Arabia still appear daily at wells decked in. They are worn from the elbow to the wrist, commonly made of silver, copper, brass, or horn.
- **23-27.** *And said*, *Whose daughter art thou*? After telling her name and family, the kind-hearted damsel hastened home to give notice of a stranger's arrival.
- **28.** *and told them of her mother's house these things* the female apartments. This family was in an advanced stage of pastoral life, dwelling in a settled place and a fixed habitation.
- **29-31.** *Rebekah had a brother* ... *Laban ran out* From what we know of his character, there is reason to believe that the sight of the dazzling presents increased both his haste and his invitation.

- **32-49.** *the man came into the house*, etc. What a beautiful picture of piety, fidelity, and disinterestedness in a servant! He declined all attention to his own comforts till he had told his name and his errand.
- **50.** *Then Laban and Bethuel answered* The brothers conduct all the marriage negotiations, their father being probably dead, and without consulting their sister. Their language seems to indicate they were worshippers of the true God.
- **53.** And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and ... gold These are the usual articles, with money, that form a woman's dowry among the pastoral tribes. Rebekah was betrothed and accompanied the servant to Canaan.
- **64.** *she lighted off the camel* If Isaac were walking, it would have been most unmannerly for her to have continued seated; an inferior, if riding, always alights in presence of a person of rank, no exception being made for women.
- **65.** *she took a veil*, *and covered herself* The veil is an essential part of female dress. In country places it is often thrown aside, but on the appearance of a stranger, it is drawn over the face, as to conceal all but the eyes. In a bride it was a token of her reverence and subjection to her husband.
- **67.** And Isaac brought her into his mother's ... tent thus establishing her at once in the rights and honors of a wife before he had seen her features. Disappointments often take place, but when Isaac saw his wife, "he loved her."

**©**GENESIS 25:1-6.

## SONS OF ABRAHAM.

- **1.** Abraham took a wife rather, "had taken"; for Keturah is called Abraham's concubine, or secondary wife (Thronicles 1:32); and as, from her bearing six sons to him, it is improbable that he married after Sarah's death; and also as he sent them all out to seek their own independence, during his lifetime, it is clear that this marriage is related here out of its chronological order, merely to form a proper winding up of the patriarch's history.
- **5, 6.** Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac ... unto the sons of the concubines ... Abraham gave gifts While the chief part of the inheritance went to Isaac; the other sons (Ishmael included) migrated to "the East country," that is, Arabia, but received each a portion of the patrimony, perhaps in cattle and other things; and this settlement of Abraham's must have given satisfaction, since it is still the rule followed among the pastoral tribes.

**™**GENESIS 25:7-11.

### DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

7. these are the days of ... Abraham — His death is here related, though he lived till Jacob and Esau were fifteen years, just one hundred years after coming to Canaan; "the father of the faithful," "the friend of God" ["James 2:23], died; and even in his death, the promises were fulfilled (compare "Genesis 15:15). We might have wished some memorials of his deathbed experience; but the Spirit of God has withheld them — nor was it necessary; for (see "Matthew 7:16) from earth he passed into heaven ("Luke 16:22). Though dead he yet liveth ("Matthew 22:32).

**9, 10.** *his sons* ... *buried him* — Death often puts an end to strife, reconciles those who have been alienated, and brings rival relations, as in this instance, to mingle tears over a father's grave.

## **™GENESIS 25:12-18.**

## DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL.

Before passing to the line of the promised seed, the historian gives a brief notice of Ishmael, to show that the promises respecting that son of Abraham were fulfilled — first, in the greatness of his posterity (compare Genesis 17:20); and, secondly, in their independence.

**18.** *he died* — rather, "it [their lot] fell" in the presence of his brethren (compare Genesis 16:12).

# **©ENESIS 25:19-35.**

### HISTORY OF ISAAC.

- **19.** *these are the generations* account of the leading events in his life.
- 21. Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife Though tried in a similar way to his father, he did not follow the same crooked policy. Twenty years he continued unblessed with offspring, whose seed was to be "as the stars" ("Genesis 26:4). But in answer to their mutual prayers ("1 Peter 3:7), Rebekah was divinely informed that she was to be the mother of twins, who should be the progenitors of two independent nations; that the descendants of the younger should be the more powerful and subdue those of the other ("Romans 9:12") Chronicles 21:8).
- **27.** *the boys grew* from the first, opposite to each other in character, manners, and habits.
- **28.** The parents were divided in their affection; and while the grounds, at least of the father's partiality, were weak, the distinction made between the children led, as such conduct always does, to unhappy consequences.

- **29.** *Jacob sod pottage* made of lentils or small beans, which are common in Egypt and Syria. It is probable that it was made of Egyptian beans, which Jacob had procured as a dainty; for Esau was a stranger to it. It is very palatable; and to the weary hunter, faint with hunger, its odor must have been irresistibly tempting.
- **31.** *Jacob said*, *Sell me* ... *thy birthright* that is, the rights and privileges of the first-born, which were very important, the chief being that they were the family priests (\*\*Exodus 4:22) and had a double portion of the inheritance (\*\*Deuteronomy 21:17).
- **32.** Esau said ... I am at the point to die that is, I am running daily risk of my life; and of what use will the birthright be to me: so he despised or cared little about it, in comparison with gratifying his appetite he threw away his religious privileges for a trifle; and thence he is styled "a profane person" (\*\*\*\*Phebrews 12:16; also \*\*\*\*\*Job 31:7,16 \*\*\*\*\*6:13 \*\*\*\*\*Philippians 3:19). "There was never any meat, except the forbidden fruit, so dear bought, as this broth of Jacob" [BISHOP HALL].

**©ENESIS** 26:1-35.

### SOJOURN IN GERAR.

- **1.** And there was a famine in the land ... And Isaac went unto ... Gerar The pressure of famine in Canaan forced Isaac with his family and flocks to migrate into the land of the Philistines, where he was exposed to personal danger, as his father had been on account of his wife's beauty; but through the seasonable interposition of Providence, he was preserved (\*\*PSAP\*Psalm 105:14,15).
- **12.** Then Isaac sowed in that land During his sojourn in that district he farmed a piece of land, which, by the blessing of God on his skill and industry, was very productive (Fisaiah 65:13 Fisaiah 37:19); and by his plentiful returns he increased so rapidly in wealth and influence that the Philistines, afraid or envious of his prosperity, obliged him to leave the place (Froverbs 27:4 Ecclesiastes 4:4). This may receive illustration from the fact that many Syrian shepherds at this day settle for a year or two in a place, rent some ground, in the produce of which they trade with the neighboring market, till the owners, through jealousy of their growing substance, refuse to renew their lease and compel them to remove elsewhere.
- **15.** all the wells which his father's servants had digged ... the Philistines had stopped, etc. The same base stratagem for annoying those against whom they have taken an umbrage is practiced still by choking the wells with sand or stones, or defiling them with putrid carcasses.
- **17.** *valley of Gerar* torrent-bed or wady, a vast undulating plain, unoccupied and affording good pasture.
- **18-22.** *Isaac digged again the wells of water* The naming of wells by Abraham, and the hereditary right of his family to the property, the change of the names by the Philistines to obliterate the traces of their

origin, the restoration of the names by Isaac, and the contests between the respective shepherds to the exclusive possession of the water, are circumstances that occur among the natives in those regions as frequently in the present day as in the time of Isaac.

26-33. Then Abimelech went to him — As there was a lapse of ninety years between the visit of Abraham and of Isaac, the Abimelech and Phichol spoken of must have been different persons' official titles. Here is another proof of the promise (\*\*Genesis 12:2) being fulfilled, in an overture of peace being made to him by the king of Gerar. By whatever motive the proposal was dictated — whether fear of his growing power, or regret for the bad usage they had given him, the king and two of his courtiers paid a visit to the tent of Isaac (\*\*\*Proverbs 16:7). His timid and passive temper had submitted to the annoyances of his rude neighbors; but now that they wish to renew the covenant, he evinces deep feeling at their conduct, and astonishment at their assurance, or artifice, in coming near him. Being, however, of a pacific disposition, Isaac forgave their offense, accepted their proposals, and treated them to the banquet by which the ratification of a covenant was usually crowned.

34. Esau ... took to wife — If the pious feelings of Abraham recoiled from the idea of Isaac forming a matrimonial connection with a Canaanitish woman [400]Genesis 24:3], that devout patriarch himself would be equally opposed to such a union on the part of his children; and we may easily imagine how much his pious heart was wounded, and the family peace destroyed, when his favorite but wayward son brought no less than two idolatrous wives among them — an additional proof that Esau neither desired the blessing nor dreaded the curse of God. These wives never gained the affections of his parents, and this estrangement was overruled by God for keeping the chosen family aloof from the dangers of heathen influence.

## **○ENESIS** 27:1-27.

### INFIRMITY OF ISAAC.

- **1.** when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim He was in his hundred thirty-seventh year; and apprehending death to be near, Isaac prepared to make his last will an act of the gravest importance, especially as it included the conveyance through a prophetic spirit of the patriarchal blessing.
- **4.** *make* ... *savory meat* perhaps to revive and strengthen him for the duty; or rather, "as eating and drinking" were used on all religious occasions, he could not convey the right, till he had eaten of the meat provided for the purpose by him who was to receive the blessing [ADAM CLARKE] (compare \*\*OLARKE\*\*] (compare \*\*OLARKE\*\*) (compare \*\*OLARKE\*\*] (compare \*\*OLARKE\*\*) (compar
- that my soul may bless thee It is difficult to imagine him ignorant of the divine purpose (compare Genesis 25:23). But natural affection, prevailing through age and infirmity, prompted him to entail the honors and powers of the birthright on his elder son; and perhaps he was not aware of what Esau had done (Genesis 25:34).
- **6-10.** *Rebekah spake unto Jacob* She prized the blessing as invaluable; she knew that God intended it for the younger son [\*\*Constant Constant Constant
- **11.** *Jacob said*, *Esau my brother is a hairy man* It is remarkable that his scruples were founded, not on the evil of the act, but on the risk and consequences of deception.

- 13-17. and his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse His conscience being soothed by his mother, preparations were hastily made for carrying out the device; consisting, first, of a kid's flesh, which, made into a ragout, spiced with salt, onions, garlic, and lemon juice, might easily be passed off on a blind old man, with blunted senses, as game; second, of pieces of goat's skin bound on his hands and neck, its soft silken hair resembling that on the cheek of a young man; third, of the long white robe the vestment of the first-born, which, transmitted from father to son and kept in a chest among fragrant herbs and perfumed flowers used much in the East to keep away moths his mother provided for him.
- **18-27.** *he came unto his father* The scheme planned by the mother was to be executed by the son in the father's bedchamber; and it is painful to think of the deliberate falsehoods, as well as daring profanity, he resorted to. The disguise, though wanting in one thing, which had nearly upset the whole plot, succeeded in misleading Isaac; and while giving his paternal embrace, the old man was roused into a state of high satisfaction and delight.
- **27.** *the smell of my son is as of a field* The aromatic odors of the Syrian fields and meadows, often impart a strong fragrance to the person and clothes, as has been noticed by many travelers.

GENESIS 27:28-46.

### THE BLESSING.

**28.** God give thee of the dew of heaven — To an Oriental mind, this phraseology implied the highest flow of prosperity. The copious fall of dew is indispensable to the fruitfulness of lands, which would be otherwise arid and sterile through the violent heat; and it abounds most in hilly regions, such as Canaan, hence called the "fat land" (\*\*\*Nehemiah 9:25,35).

*plenty of corn and wine* — Palestine was famous for vineyards, and it produced varieties of corn, namely, wheat, barley, oats, and rye.

- **29.** Let people serve thee fulfilled in the discomfiture of the hostile tribes that opposed the Israelites in the wilderness; and in the preeminence and power they attained after their national establishment in the promised land. This blessing was not realized to Jacob, but to his descendants; and the temporal blessings promised were but a shadow of those spiritual ones, which formed the grand distinction of Jacob's posterity.
- **30-35.** Esau came in from his hunting Scarcely had the former scene been concluded, when the fraud was discovered. The emotions of Isaac, as well as Esau, may easily be imagined the astonishment, alarm, and sorrow of the one; the disappointment and indignation of the other. But a moment's reflection convinced the aged patriarch that the transfer of the blessing was "of the Lord," and now irrevocable. The importunities of Esau, however, overpowered him; and as the prophetic afflatus was upon the patriarch, he added what was probably as pleasing to a man of Esau's character as the other would have been.
- **39, 40.** *Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth* The first part is a promise of temporal prosperity, made in the same terms as Jacob's [\*\*Genesis 27:28] the second part refers to the roving life of hunting freebooters, which he and his descendants should lead. Though Esau was not personally subject to his brother, his posterity were tributary to the Israelites, till the reign of Joram when they revolted and established a kingdom of their own (\*\*\*\* Kings 8:20 \*\*\*\* Chronicles 21:8-10).
- **41.** *Esau hated Jacob* It is scarcely to be wondered at that Esau resented the conduct of Jacob and vowed revenge.

*The days of mourning for my father are at hand* — a common Oriental phrase for the death of a parent.

**42-45.** *these words of Esau were told Rebekah* — Poor woman! she now early begins to reap the bitter fruits of her fraudulent device; she is obliged to part with her son, for whom she planned it, never, probably, seeing him again; and he felt the retributive justice of heaven fall upon him heavily in his own future family.

- **45.** Why should I be deprived of you both? This refers to the law of Goelism, by which the nearest of kin would be obliged to avenge the death of Jacob upon his brother.
- **46.** *Rebekah said to Isaac* Another pretext Rebekah's cunning had to devise to obtain her husband's consent to Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia; and she succeeded by touching the aged patriarch in a tender point, afflicting to his pious heart the proper marriage of their younger son.

### GENESIS 28:1-19.

### JACOB'S DEPARTURE.

- **1.** Isaac called Jacob and blessed him He entered fully into Rebekah's feelings, and the burden of his parting counsel to his son was to avoid a marriage alliance with any but the Mesopotamian branch of the family. At the same time he gave him a solemn blessing pronounced before unwittingly, now designedly, and with a cordial spirit. It is more explicitly and fully given, and Jacob was thus acknowledged "the heir of the promise."
- **6-9.** when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, etc. Desirous to humor his parents and, if possible, get the last will revoked, he became wise when too late (see Matthew 25:10), and hoped by gratifying his parents in one thing to atone for all his former delinquencies. But he only made bad worse, and though he did not marry a "wife of the daughters of Canaan," he married into a family which God had rejected. It showed a partial reformation, but no repentance, for he gave no proofs of abating his vindictive purposes against his brother, nor cherishing that pious spirit that would have gratified his father he was like Micah (see Till) Judges 17:13).
- **10.** *Jacob went out*, etc. His departure from his father's house was an ignominious flight; and for fear of being pursued or waylaid by his vindictive brother, he did not take the common road, but went by lonely and unfrequented paths, which increased the length and dangers of the journey.
- **11.** *he lighted upon a certain place* By a forced march he had reached Beth-el, about forty-eight miles from Beer-sheba, and had to spend the night in the open field.

**he took of the stones** — "The nature of the soil is an existing comment on the record of the stony territory where Jacob lay" [CLARKE'S *Travels*].

12. he dreamed ... and behold a ladder — Some writers are of opinion that it was not a literal ladder that is meant, as it is impossible to conceive any imagery stranger and more unnatural than that of a ladder, whose base was on earth, while its top reached heaven, without having any thing on which to rest its upper extremity. They suppose that the little heap of stones, on which his head reclined for a pillow, being the miniature model of the object that appeared to his imagination, the latter was a gigantic mountain pile, whose sides, indented in the rock, gave it the appearance of a scaling ladder. There can be no doubt that this use of the original term was common among the early Hebrews; as Josephus, describing the town of Ptolemais (Acre), says it was bounded by a mountain, which, from its projecting sides, was called "the ladder," and the stairs that led down to the city are, in the original, termed a ladder (\*\*Nehemiah 3:15) thought they were only a flight of steps cut in the side of the rock. But whether the image presented to the mental eye of Jacob were a common ladder, or such a mountain pile as has been described, the design of this vision was to afford comfort, encouragement, and confidence to the lonely fugitive, both in his present circumstances and as to his future prospects. His thoughts during the day must have been painful — he would be his own self-accuser that he had brought exile and privation upon himself — and above all, that though he had obtained the forgiveness of his father, he had much reason to fear lest God might have forsaken him. Solitude affords time for reflection; and it was now that God began to bring Jacob under a course of religious instruction and training. To dispel his fears and allay the inward tumult of his mind, nothing was better fitted than the vision of the gigantic ladder, which reached from himself to heaven, and on which the angels were continually ascending and descending from God Himself on their benevolent errands (\*\*\*John 1:51).

**13.** The Lord stood above it, and said — That Jacob might be at no loss to know the purport of the vision, he heard the divine voice; and the announcement of His name, together with a renewal of the covenant, and an assurance of personal protection, produced at once the most solemnizing and inspiriting effect on his mind.

- **16.** *Jacob awaked out of his sleep* His language and his conduct were alike that of a man whose mind was pervaded by sentiments of solemn awe, of fervent piety, and lively gratitude (\*\*\* Jeremiah 31:36).
- **18, 19.** *Jacob set up a stone* The mere setting up of the stone might have been as a future memorial to mark the spot; and this practice is still common in the East, in memory of a religious vow or engagement. But the pouring oil upon it was a consecration. Accordingly he gave it a new name, Beth-el, "the house of God" (\*\*\*\*Hosea 12:4); and it will not appear a thing forced or unnatural to call a stone a house, when one considers the common practice in warm countries of sitting in the open air by or on a stone, as are those of this place, "broad sheets of bare rock, some of them standing like the cromlechs of Druidical monuments" [Stanley].

### GENESIS 28:20-22.

### JACOB'S VOW.

**20.** *Jacob vowed a vow* — His words are not to be considered as implying a doubt, far less as stating the condition or terms on which he would dedicate himself to God. Let "if" be changed into "since," and the language will appear a proper expression of Jacob's faith — an evidence of his having truly embraced the promise. How edifying often to meditate on Jacob at Beth-el.

**™**GENESIS 29:1-35.

### THE WELL OF HARAN.

- **1.** Then Jacob went, etc. Hebrew, "lifted up his feet." He resumed his way next morning with a light heart and elastic step after the vision of the ladder; for tokens of the divine favor tend to quicken the discharge of duty (\*\*Nehemiah 8:10).
- and came into the land, etc. Mesopotamia and the whole region beyond the Euphrates are by the sacred writers designated "the East" (\*\*TIB\*\*Judges 6:3 \*\*TIB\*\*Judges 6:3 \*\*TI
- **2.** *And he looked*, etc. As he approached the place of his destination, he, according to custom, repaired to the well adjoining the town where he would obtain an easy introduction to his relatives.
- **3.** thither were all the flocks gathered; and a stone, etc. In Arabia, owing to the shifting sands and in other places, owing to the strong evaporation, the mouth of a well is generally covered, especially when it is private property. Over many is laid a broad, thick, flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole is covered with a heavy stone which it would require two or three men to roll away. Such was the description of the well at Haran.
- **4.** *Jacob said*, *My brethren* Finding from the shepherds who were reposing there with flocks and who all belonged to Haran, that his relatives in Haran were well and that one of the family was shortly expected, he enquired why they were idling the best part of the day there instead of watering their flocks and sending them back to pasture.
- **8.** They said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered In order to prevent the consequences of too frequent exposure in places where water

is scarce, the well is not only covered, but it is customary to have all the flocks collected round it before the covering is removed in presence of the owner or one of his representatives; and it was for this reason that those who were reposing at the well of Haran with the three flocks were waiting the arrival of Rachel.

- **9-11.** While he yet spake with them, Rachel came Among the pastoral tribes the young unmarried daughters of the greatest sheiks tend the flocks, going out at sunrise and continuing to watch their fleecy charges till sunset. Watering them, which is done twice a day, is a work of time and labor, and Jacob rendered no small service in volunteering his aid to the young shepherdess. The interview was affecting, the reception welcome, and Jacob forgot all his toils in the society of his Mesopotamian relatives. Can we doubt that he returned thanks to God for His goodness by the way?
- **12.** *Jacob told Rachel*, etc. According to the practice of the East, the term "brother" is extended to remote degrees of relationship, as uncle, cousin, or nephew.
- **14-20.** *he abode a month* Among pastoral people a stranger is freely entertained for three days; on the fourth day he is expected to tell his name and errand; and if he prolongs his stay after that time, he must set his hand to work in some way, as may be agreed upon. A similar rule obtained in Laban's establishment, and the wages for which his nephew engaged to continue in his employment was the hand of Rachel.
- **17.** *Leah tender-eyed* that is, soft blue eyes thought a blemish.

**Rachel beautiful and well-favored** — that is, comely and handsome in form. The latter was Jacob's choice.

**18.** I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy daughter — A proposal of marriage is made to the father without the daughter being consulted, and the match is effected by the suitor either bestowing costly presents on the family, or by giving cattle to the value the father sets upon his daughter, or else by giving personal services for a specified period. The last was the course necessity imposed on Jacob; and there for seven years he submitted to the drudgery of a hired shepherd, with the view of obtaining Rachel.

The time went rapidly away; for even severe and difficult duties become light when love is the spring of action.

- 21. Jacob said, Give me my wife At the expiry of the stipulated term the marriage festivities were held. But an infamous fraud was practiced on Jacob, and on his showing a righteous indignation, the usage of the country was pleaded in excuse. No plea of kindred should ever be allowed to come in opposition to the claim of justice. But this is often overlooked by the selfish mind of man, and fashion or custom rules instead of the will of God. This was what Laban did, as he said, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born." But, then, if that were the prevailing custom of society at Haran, he should have apprized his nephew of it at an early period in an honorable manner. This, however, is too much the way with the people of the East still. The duty of marrying an elder daughter before a younger, the tricks which parents take to get off an elder daughter that is plain or deformed and in which they are favored by the long bridal veil that entirely conceals her features all the wedding day, and the prolongation for a week of the marriage festivities among the greater sheiks, are accordant with the habits of the people in Arabia and Armenia in the present day.
- **28.** gave him Rachel also It is evident that the marriage of both sisters took place nearly about the same time, and that such a connection was then allowed, though afterwards prohibited (\*\*\*Leviticus 18:18).
- **29.** *gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah to be her maid* A father in good circumstances still gives his daughter from his household a female slave, over whom the young wife, independently of her husband, has the absolute control.
- **31.** *Leah* ... *hated* that is, not loved so much as she ought to have been. Her becoming a mother ensured her rising in the estimation both of her husband and of society.
- **32-35.** *son* ... *his name Reuben* Names were also significant; and those which Leah gave to her sons were expressive of her varying feelings of thankfulness or joy, or allusive to circumstances in the history of the family. There was piety and wisdom in attaching a signification to names,

as it tended to keep the bearer in remembrance of his duty and the claims of God.

GENESIS 30:1-24.

### DOMESTIC JEALOUSIES.

**1.** Rachel envied her sister — The maternal relation confers a high degree of honor in the East, and the want of that status is felt as a stigma and deplored as a grievous calamity.

Give me children, or else I die — either be reckoned as good as dead, or pine away from vexation. The intense anxiety of Hebrew women for children arose from the hope of giving birth to the promised seed. Rachel's conduct was sinful and contrasts unfavorably with that of Rebekah (compare Genesis 25:22) and of Hannah (GOILL) Samuel 1:11).

- **3-9.** *Bilhah* ... *Zilpah* Following the example of Sarah with regard to Hagar, an example which is not seldom imitated still, she adopted the children of her maid. Leah took the same course. A bitter and intense rivalry existed between them, all the more from their close relationship as sisters; and although they occupied separate apartments, with their families, as is the uniform custom where a plurality of wives obtains, and the husband and father spends a day with each in regular succession, that did not allay their mutual jealousies. The evil lies in the system, which being a violation of God's original ordinance, cannot yield happiness.
- **20.** And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry The birth of a son is hailed with demonstrations of joy, and the possession of several sons confers upon the mother an honor and respectability proportioned to their number. The husband attaches a similar importance to the possession, and it forms a bond of union which renders it impossible for him ever to forsake or to be cold to a wife who has borne him sons. This explains the happy anticipations Leah founded on the possession of her six sons.

**21.** *afterwards*, *she bare a daughter* — The inferior value set on a daughter is displayed in the bare announcement of the birth.

## GENESIS 30:25-43.

### JACOB'S COVENANT WITH LABAN.

- **25.** when Rachel had born Joseph Shortly after the birth of this son, Jacob's term of servitude expired, and feeling anxious to establish an independence for his family, he probably, from knowing that Esau was out of the way, announced his intention of returning to Canaan (\*\*\*Hebrews 13:14). In this resolution the faith of Jacob was remarkable, for as yet he had nothing to rely on but the promise of God (compare \*Genesis 28:15).
- 27. Laban said ... I have learned His selfish uncle was averse to a separation, not from warmth of affection either for Jacob or his daughters, but from the damage his own interests would sustain. He had found, from long observation, that the blessing of heaven rested on Jacob, and that his stock had wonderfully increased under Jacob's management. This was a remarkable testimony that good men are blessings to the places where they reside. Men of the world are often blessed with temporal benefits on account of their pious relatives, though they have not always, like Laban, the wisdom to discern, or the grace to acknowledge it.
- **28.** *appoint me thy wages, and I will give it* The Eastern shepherds receive for their hire not money, but a certain amount of the increase or produce of the flock; but Laban would at the time have done anything to secure the continued services of his nephew, and make a show of liberality, which Jacob well knew was constrained.
- **31.** *Jacob said*, *Thou shalt not give me any thing* A new agreement was made, the substance of which was, that he was to receive remuneration in the usual way, but on certain conditions which Jacob specified.
- **32.** *I will pass through all thy flock to-day* Eastern sheep being generally white, the goats black, and spotted or speckled ones

comparatively few and rare, Jacob proposed to remove all existing ones of that description from the flock, and to be content with what might appear at the next lambing time. The proposal *seemed* so much in favor of Laban, that he at once agreed to it. But Jacob has been accused of taking advantage of his uncle, and though it is difficult to exculpate him from practising some degree of dissimulation, he was only availing himself of the results of his great skill and experience in the breeding of cattle. But it is evident from the next chapter (\*\*Genesis 31:5-13) that there was something miraculous and that the means he had employed had been suggested by a divine intimation.

**37.** *Jacob took rods*, etc. — There are many varieties of the hazel, some of which are more erect than the common hazel, and it was probably one of these varieties Jacob employed. The styles are of a bright red color, when peeled; and along with them he took wands of other shrubs, which, when stripped of the bark, had white streaks. These, kept constantly before the eyes of the female at the time of gestation, his observation had taught him would have an influence, through the imagination, on the future offspring.

**38.** watering troughs — usually a long stone block hollowed out, from which several sheep could drink at once, but sometimes so small as to admit of only one drinking at a time.

## **©ENESIS** 31:1-21.

#### ENVY OF LABAN AND SONS.

- **1.** he heard the words of Laban's sons It must have been from rumor that Jacob got knowledge of the invidious reflections cast upon him by his cousins; for they were separated at the distance of three days' journey.
- **2.** And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban literally, "was not the same as yesterday, and the day before," a common Oriental form of speech. The insinuations against Jacob's fidelity by Laban's sons, and the sullen reserve, the churlish conduct, of Laban himself, had made Jacob's situation, in his uncle's establishment, most trying and painful. It is always one of the vexations attendant on worldly prosperity, that it excites the envy of others (\*\*DECclesiastes 4:4); and that, however careful a man is to maintain a good conscience, he cannot always reckon on maintaining a good name, in a censorious world. This, Jacob experienced; and it is probable that, like a good man, he had asked direction and relief in prayer.

## 3. the Lord said ... Return unto the land of thy fathers —

Notwithstanding the ill usage he had received, Jacob might not have deemed himself at liberty to quit his present sphere, under the impulse of passionate fretfulness and discontent. Having been conducted to Haran by God (\*\*Genesis 28:15) and having got a promise that the same heavenly Guardian would bring him again into the land of Canaan, he might have thought he ought not to leave it, without being clearly persuaded as to the path of duty. So ought we to set the Lord before us, and to acknowledge Him in all our ways, our journeys, our settlements, and plans in life.

**4.** Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah — His wives and family were in their usual residence. Whether he wished them to be present at the festivities of sheep shearing, as some think; or, because he could not leave his flock, he called them both to come to him, in order that, having

resolved on immediate departure, he might communicate his intentions. Rachel and Leah only were called, for the other two wives, being secondary and still in a state of servitude, were not entitled to be taken into account. Jacob acted the part of a dutiful husband in telling them his plans; for husbands that love their wives should consult with them and trust in them (\*\*INII)\*Proverbs 31:11).

- **6.** *ye know that* ... *I have served your father* Having stated his strong grounds of dissatisfaction with their father's conduct and the ill requital he had got for all his faithful services, he informed them of the blessing of God that had made him rich notwithstanding Laban's design to ruin him; and finally, of the command from God he had received to return to his own country, that they might not accuse him of caprice, or disaffection to their family; but be convinced, that in resolving to depart, he acted from a principle of religious obedience.
- **14.** Rachel and Leah answered Having heard his views, they expressed their entire approval; and from grievances of their own, they were fully as desirous of a separation as himself. They display not only conjugal affection, but piety in following the course described "whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (\*\*\*Genesis 31:16). "Those that are really their husbands' helpmeets will never be their hindrances in doing that to which God calls them" [Henry].
- 17. Then Jacob rose up Little time is spent by pastoral people in removing. The striking down the tents and poles and stowing them among their other baggage; the putting their wives and children in houdas like cradles, on the backs of camels, or in panniers on asses; and the ranging of the various parts of the flock under the respective shepherds; all this is a short process. A plain that is covered in the morning with a long array of tents and with browsing flocks, may, in a few hours, appear so desolate that not a vestige of the encampment remains, except the holes in which the tent poles had been fixed.
- **18.** he carried the cattle of his getting that is, his own and nothing more. He did not indemnify himself for his many losses by carrying off any thing of Laban's, but was content with what Providence had given him. Some may think that due notice should have been given; but when a

man feels himself in danger — the law of self-preservation prescribes the duty of immediate flight, if it can be done consistently with conscience.

**20.** *Jacob stole away* — The result showed the prudence and necessity of departing secretly; otherwise, Laban might have detained him by violence or artifice.

## GENESIS 31:22-55.

### LABAN PURSUES JACOB — THEIR COVENANT AT GILEAD.

**22-24.** *it was told Laban on the third day* — No sooner did the news reach Laban than he set out in pursuit, and he being not encumbered, advanced rapidly; whereas Jacob, with a young family and numerous flocks, had to march slowly, so that he overtook the fugitives after seven days' journey as they lay encamped on the brow of mount Gilead, an extensive range of hills forming the eastern boundary of Canaan. Being accompanied by a number of his people, he might have used violence had he not been divinely warned in a dream to give no interruption to his nephew's journey. How striking and sudden a change! For several days he had been full of rage, and was now in eager anticipation that his vengeance would be fully wreaked, when lo! his hands are tied by invisible power (\*\*Psalm 76:10). He did not dare to touch Jacob, but there was a war of words.

**26-30.** Laban said ... What hast thou done? — Not a word is said of the charge (Genesis 31:1). His reproaches were of a different kind. His first charge was for depriving him of the satisfaction of giving Jacob and his family the usual salutations at parting. In the East it is customary, when any are setting out to a great distance, for their relatives and friends to accompany them a considerable way with music and valedictory songs. Considering the past conduct of Laban, his complaint on this ground was hypocritical cant. But his second charge was a grave one — the carrying off his gods — Hebrew, "teraphim," small images of human figures, used not as idols or objects of worship, but as talismans, for superstitious purposes.

- **31, 32.** Jacob said, ... With whomsoever thou findest thy gods let him not live Conscious of his own innocence and little suspecting the misdeed of his favorite wife, Jacob boldly challenged a search and denounced the heaviest penalty on the culprit. A personal scrutiny was made by Laban, who examined every tent [Genesis 31:33]; and having entered Rachel's last, he would have infallibly discovered the stolen images had not Rachel made an appeal to him which prevented further search [Genesis 31:34,35].
- **34.** Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them The common pack saddle is often used as a seat or a cushion, against which a person squatted on the floor may lean.
- **36, 37.** *Jacob was wroth* Recrimination on his part was natural in the circumstances, and, as usual, when passion is high, the charges took a wide range. He rapidly enumerated his grievances for twenty years and in a tone of unrestrained severity described the niggard character and vexatious exactions of his uncle, together with the hardships of various kinds he had patiently endured.
- **38.** *The rams of thy flock have I not eaten* Eastern people seldom kill the females for food except they are barren.
- **39.** That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee The shepherds are strictly responsible for losses in the flock, unless they can prove these were occasioned by wild beasts.
- 40. in the day the drought ... and the frost by night The temperature changes often in twenty-four hours from the greatest extremes of heat and cold, most trying to the shepherd who has to keep watch by his flocks. Much allowance must be made for Jacob. Great and long-continued provocations ruffle the mildest and most disciplined tempers. It is difficult to "be angry and sin not" [\*\*Dephesians 4:26]. But these two relatives, after having given utterance to their pent-up feelings, came at length to a mutual understanding, or rather, God influenced Laban to make reconciliation with his injured nephew (\*\*Dephesians 16:7).
- **44.** *Come thou*, *let us make a covenant* The way in which this covenant was ratified was by a heap of stones being laid in a circular pile,

to serve as seats, and in the center of this circle a large one was set up perpendicularly for an altar. It is probable that a sacrifice was first offered, and then that the feast of reconciliation was partaken of by both parties seated on the stones around it. To this day heaps of stones, which have been used as memorials, are found abundantly in the region where this transaction took place.

**52.** *This heap be witness* — Objects of nature were frequently thus spoken of. But over and above, there was a solemn appeal to God; and it is observable that there was a marked difference in the religious sentiments of the two. Laban spake of the God of Abraham and Nahor, their common ancestors; but Jacob, knowing that idolatry had crept in among that branch of the family, swore by the "fear of his father Isaac." They who have one God should have one heart: they who are agreed in religion should endeavor to agree in everything else.

## **GENESIS** 32:1,2.

### VISION OF ANGELS.

- **1.** angels of God met him It is not said whether this angelic manifestation was made in a vision by day, or a dream by night. There is an evident allusion, however, to the appearance upon the ladder (compare Genesis 28:12), and this occurring to Jacob on his return to Canaan, was an encouraging pledge of the continued presence and protection of God (SET) Psalm 34:7 Thebrews 1:14).
- **2.** *Mahanaim* "two hosts," or "camps." The place was situated between mount Gilead and the Jabbok, near the banks of that brook.

## **GENESIS** 32:3-32.

### MISSION TO ESAU.

**3.** Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau — that is, "had sent." It was a prudent precaution to ascertain the present temper of Esau, as the road, on approaching the eastern confines of Canaan, lay near the wild district where his brother was now established.

land of Seir — a highland country on the east and south of the Dead Sea, inhabited by the Horites, who were dispossessed by Esau or his posterity (\*\*Deuteronomy 11:12). When and in what circumstances he had emigrated thither, whether the separation arose out of the undutiful conduct and idolatrous habits of his wives, which had made them unwelcome in the tent of his parents, or whether his roving disposition had sought a country from his love of adventure and the chase, he was living in a state of power and affluence, and this settlement on the outer

borders of Canaan, though made of his own free will, was overruled by Providence to pave the way for Jacob's return to the promised land.

**4.** Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau — The purport of the message was that, after a residence of twenty years in Mesopotamia, he was now returning to his native land, that he did not need any thing, for he had abundance of pastoral wealth, but that he could not pass without notifying his arrival to his brother and paying the homage of his respectful obeisance. Acts of civility tend to disarm opposition and soften hatred (\*\*DECclesiastes 10:4).

Thy servant Jacob — He had been made *lord* over his brethren (compare Genesis 27:29). But it is probable he thought this referred to a spiritual superiority; or if to temporal, that it was to be realized only to his posterity. At all events, leaving it to God to fulfill that purpose, he deemed it prudent to assume the most kind and respectful bearing.

- **6.** The messengers returned to Jacob Their report left Jacob in painful uncertainty as to what was his brother's views and feelings. Esau's studied reserve gave him reason to dread the worst. Jacob was naturally timid; but his conscience told him that there was much ground for apprehension, and his distress was all the more aggravated that he had to provide for the safety of a large and helpless family.
- **9-12.** *Jacob said*, *O God of my father Abraham* In this great emergency, he had recourse to prayer. This is the first recorded example of prayer in the Bible. It is short, earnest, and bearing directly on the occasion. The appeal is made to God, as standing in a covenant relation to his family, just as we ought to put our hopes of acceptance with God in Christ. It pleads the special promise made to him of a safe return; and after a most humble and affecting confession of unworthiness, it breathes an earnest desire for deliverance from the impending danger. It was the prayer of a kind husband, an affectionate father, a firm believer in the promises.
- 13-23. took ... a present for Esau Jacob combined active exertions with earnest prayer; and this teaches us that we must not depend upon the aid and interposition of God in such a way as to supersede the exercise of prudence and foresight. Superiors are always approached with presents, and the respect expressed is estimated by the quality and amount of the

gift. The present of Jacob consisted of five hundred fifty head of cattle, of different kinds, such as would be most prized by Esau. It was a most magnificent present, skilfully arranged and proportioned. The milch camels alone were of immense value; for the she camels form the principal part of Arab wealth; their milk is a chief article of diet; and in many other respects they are of the greatest use.

- **16.** *every drove by themselves* There was great prudence in this arrangement; for the present would thus have a more imposing appearance; Esau's passion would have time to cool as he passed each successive company; and if the first was refused, the others would hasten back to convey a timely warning.
- **17.** *he commanded the foremost* The messengers were strictly commanded to say the same words [Genesis 32:18,20], that Esau might be more impressed and that the uniformity of the address might appear more clearly to have come from Jacob himself.
- **21.** *himself lodged* not the whole night, but only a part of it.
- **22.** *ford Jabbok* now the *Zerka* a stream that rises among the mountains of Gilead, and running from east to west, enters the Jordan, about forty miles south of the Sea of Tiberias. At the ford it is ten yards wide. It is sometimes forded with difficulty; but in summer it is very shallow.

*he rose up and took* — Unable to sleep, Jacob waded the ford in the night time by himself; and having ascertained its safety, he returned to the north bank and sent over his family and attendants, remaining behind, to seek anew, in silent prayer, the divine blessing on the means he had set in motion.

**24, 25.** There wrestled a man with him — This mysterious person is called an angel (\*\*\*Hosea 12:4) and God (\*\*\*Genesis 32:28,30 \*\*\*\*Hosea 12:5); and the opinion that is most supported is that he was "the angel of the covenant," who, in a visible form, appeared to animate the mind and sympathize with the distress of his pious servant. It has been a subject of much discussion whether the incident described was an actual conflict or a visionary scene. Many think that as the narrative makes no mention in

express terms either of sleep, or dream, or vision, it was a real transaction; while others, considering the bodily exhaustion of Jacob, his great mental anxiety, the kind of aid he supplicated, as well as the analogy of former manifestations with which he was favored — such as the ladder — have concluded that it was a vision [Calvin, Hessenberg, Hengstenberg]. The moral design of it was to revive the sinking spirit of the patriarch and to arm him with confidence in God, while anticipating the dreaded scenes of the morrow. To us it is highly instructive; showing that, to encourage us valiantly to meet the trials to which we are subjected, God allows us to ascribe to the efficacy of our faith and prayers, the victories which His grace alone enables us to make.

- **26.** *I* will not let thee go, except thou bless me It is evident that Jacob was aware of the character of Him with whom he wrestled; and, believing that His power, though by far superior to human, was yet limited by His promise to do him good, he determined not to lose the golden opportunity of securing a blessing. And nothing gives God greater pleasure than to see the hearts of His people firmly adhering to Him.
- **28.** Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel The old name was not to be abandoned; but, referring as it did to a dishonorable part of the patriarch's history, it was to be associated with another descriptive of his now sanctified and eminently devout character.
- **29.** *Jacob asked*, *Tell me* ... *thy name* The request was denied that he might not be too elated with his conquest nor suppose that he had obtained such advantage over the angel as to make him do what he pleased.
- 31. halted upon his thigh As Paul had a thorn in the flesh given to humble him, lest he should be too elevated by the abundant revelations granted him [4722] Corinthians 12:7], so Jacob's lameness was to keep him mindful of this mysterious scene, and that it was in gracious condescension the victory was yielded to him. In the greatest of these spiritual victories which, through faith, any of God's people obtain, there is always something to humble them.
- **32.** *the sinew which shrank* the nerve that fastens the thigh bone in its socket. The practice of the Jews in abstaining from eating this in the flesh of animals, is not founded on the law of Moses, but is merely a traditional

usage. The sinew is carefully extracted; and where there are no persons skilled enough for that operation, they do not make use of the hind legs at all.

### **GENESIS 33:1-11.**

### KINDNESS OF JACOB AND ESAU.

- **1.** behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men Jacob having crossed the ford and ranged his wives and children in order the dearest last, that they might be the least exposed to danger awaited the expected interview. His faith was strengthened and his fears gone (\*\*\*Psalm 27:3). Having had power to prevail with God, he was confident of the same power with man, according to the promise (compare Genesis 32:28).
- 3. he bowed himself ... seven times The manner of doing this is by looking towards a superior and bowing with the upper part of the body brought parallel to the ground, then advancing a few steps and bowing again, and repeating his obeisance till, at the seventh time, the suppliant stands in the immediate presence of his superior. The members of his family did the same. This was a token of profound respect, and, though very marked, it would appear natural; for Esau being the elder brother, was, according to the custom of the East, entitled to respectful treatment from his younger brother. His attendants would be struck by it, and according to Eastern habits, would magnify it in the hearing of their master.
- **4.** Esau ran to meet him What a sudden and surprising change! Whether the sight of the princely present and the profound homage of Jacob had produced this effect, or it proceeded from the impulsive character of Esau, the cherished enmity of twenty years in a moment disappeared; the weapons of war were laid aside, and the warmest tokens of mutual affection reciprocated between the brothers. But doubtless, the efficient cause was the secret, subduing influence of grace (\*\*Proverbs 21:1), which converted Esau from an enemy into a friend.

- **5.** Who are those with thee? It might have been enough to say, They are my children; but Jacob was a pious man, and he could not give even a common answer but in the language of piety (\*\*C\*\*\*Psalm 127:3 113:9 107:41).
- **11.** He urged him and he took it In the East the acceptance by a superior is a proof of friendship, and by an enemy, of reconciliation. It was on both accounts Jacob was so anxious that his brother should receive the cattle; and in Esau's acceptance he had the strongest proofs of a good feeling being established that Eastern notions admit of.

## **GENESIS 33:12-20.**

#### THE PARTING.

- 12. And he said, Let us take our journey Esau proposed to accompany Jacob and his family through the country, both as a mark of friendship and as an escort to guard them. But the proposal was prudently declined. Jacob did not need any worldly state or equipage. Notwithstanding the present cordiality, the brothers were so different in spirit, character, and habits the one so much a man of the world, and the other a man of God, that there was great risk of something occurring to disturb the harmony. Jacob having alleged a very reasonable excuse for the tardiness of his movements, the brothers parted in peace.
- **14.** *until I come unto my lord* It seems to have been Jacob's intention, passing round the Dead Sea, to visit his brother in Seir, and thus, without crossing the Jordan, go to Beer-sheba to Isaac; but he changed his plan, and whether the intention was carried out then or at a future period has not been recorded.
- 17. Jacob journeyed to Succoth that is, "booths," that being the first station at which Jacob halted on his arrival in Canaan. His posterity, when dwelling in houses of stone, built a city there and called it Succoth, to commemorate the fact that their ancestor, "a Syrian ready to perish" [ Deuteronomy 26:5], was glad to dwell in booths.

- 18. Shalem that is, "peace"; and the meaning may be that Jacob came into Canaan, arriving safe and sound at the city Shechem a tribute to Him who had promised such a return (compare Genesis 28:15). But most writers take Shalem as a proper name a city of Shechem, and the site is marked by one of the little villages about two miles to the northeast. A little farther in the valley below Shechem "he bought a parcel of a field," thus being the first of the patriarchs who became a proprietor of land in Canaan.
- **19.** *an hundred pieces of money* literally, "lambs"; probably a coin with the figure of a lamb on it.
- **20.** *and he erected* ... *an altar* A beautiful proof of his personal piety, a most suitable conclusion to his journey, and a lasting memorial of a distinguished favor in the name "God, the God of Israel." Wherever we pitch a tent, God shall have an altar.

## **GENESIS** 34:1-31.

### THE DISHONOR OF DINAH.

- 1-4. Though freed from foreign troubles, Jacob met with a great domestic calamity in the fall of his only daughter. According to JOSEPHUS, she had been attending a festival; but it is highly probable that she had been often and freely mixing in the society of the place and that she, being a simple, inexperienced, and vain young woman, had been flattered by the attentions of the ruler's son. There must have been time and opportunities of acquaintance to produce the strong attachment that Shechem had for her.
- **5.** Jacob held his peace Jacob, as a father and a good man, must have been deeply distressed. But he could do little. In the case of a family by different wives, it is not the father, but the full brothers, on whom the protection of the daughters devolves they are the guardians of a sister's welfare and the avengers of her wrongs. It was for this reason that Simeon and Levi, the two brothers of Dinah by Leah [\*\*Genesis 34:25], appear the chief actors in this episode; and though the two fathers would have probably brought about an amicable arrangement of the affair, the hasty arrival of these enraged brothers introduced a new element into the negotiations.
- **6. Hamor** that is, "ass"; and it is a striking proof of the very different ideas which, in the East, are associated with that animal, which there appears sprightly, well proportioned, and of great activity. This chief is called Emmor (\*\*Acts 7:16).
- 7. the men were grieved, and ... very wroth Good men in such a case could not but grieve; but it would have been well if their anger had been less, or that they had known the precept "let not the sun go down upon your wrath" [\*\*Ephesians 4:26]. No injury can justify revenge (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:35 \*\*Romans 12:9); but Jacob's sons planned a scheme of revenge in the most deceitful manner.

- **8-10.** Hamor communed with them The prince and his son seem at first sight to have acted honestly, and our feelings are enlisted on their side. They betray no jealousy of the powerful shepherds; on the contrary, they show every desire to establish friendly intercourse. But their conduct was unjustifiable in neither expressing regret nor restoring Dinah to her family; and this great error was the true cause of the negotiations ending in so unhappy a manner.
- **11.** Shechem said unto her father ... and brethren The consideration of the proposal for marriage belonged to Jacob, and he certainly showed great weakness in yielding so much to the fiery impetuosity of his sons. The sequel shows the unhappy consequences of that concession.
- **12.** Ask me never so much dowry and gift The gift refers to the presents made at betrothal, both to the bride elect and her relations (compare Genesis 24:53), the dowry to a suitable settlement upon her.
- 13. The sons of Jacob answered The honor of their family consisted in having the sign of the covenant. Circumcision was the external rite by which persons were admitted members of the ancient Church. But that outward rite could not make the Shechemites true Israelites; and yet it does not appear that Jacob's sons required anything more. Nothing is said of their teaching the people to worship the true God, but only of their insisting on their being circumcised; and it is evident that they did not seek to convert Shechem, but only made a show of religion a cloak to cover their diabolical design. Hypocrisy and deceit, in all cases vicious, are infinitely more so when accompanied with a show of religion; and here the sons of Jacob, under the pretense of conscientious scruples, conceal a scheme of treachery as cruel and diabolical as was, perhaps, ever perpetrated.
- **20.** Hamor and Shechem ... came unto the gate of their city That was the place where every public communication was made; and in the ready obsequious submission of the people to this measure we see an evidence either of the extraordinary affection for the governing family, or of the abject despotism of the East, where the will of a chief is an absolute command.

**30.** Jacob said ... Ye have troubled me — This atrocious outrage perpetrated on the defenseless citizens and their families made the cup of Jacob's affliction overflow. We may wonder that, in speaking of it to his sons, he did not represent it as a heinous sin, an atrocious violation of the laws of God and man, but dwelt solely on the present consequences. It was probably because that was the only view likely to rouse the coldblooded apathy, the hardened consciences of those ruffian sons. Nothing but the restraining power of God saved him and his family from the united vengeance of the people (compare Genesis 35:5). All his sons had not been engaged in the massacre. Joseph was a boy, Benjamin not yet born, and the other eight not concerned in it. Simeon and Levi alone, with their retainers, had been the guilty actors in the bloody tragedy. But the Canaanites would not be discriminating in their vengeance; and if all the Shechemites were put to death for the offense of their chief's son, what wonder if the natives should extend their hatred to all the family of Jacob; and who probably equalled, in number, the inhabitants of that village.

**GENESIS** 35:1-15.

### REMOVAL TO BETHEL.

1. God said unto Jacob, Arise, etc. — This command was given seasonably in point of time and tenderly in respect of language. The disgraceful and perilous events that had recently taken place in the patriarch's family must have produced in him a strong desire to remove without delay from the vicinity of Shechem. Borne down by an overwhelming sense of the criminality of his two sons — of the offense they had given to God and the dishonor they had brought on the true faith; distracted, too, with anxiety about the probable consequences which their outrage might bring upon himself and family, should the Canaanite people combine to extirpate such a band of robbers and murderers; he must have felt this call as affording a great relief to his afflicted feelings. At the same time it conveyed a tender rebuke.

go up to Beth-el — Beth-el was about thirty miles south of Shechem and was an ascent from a low to a highland country. There, he would not only be released from the painful associations of the latter place but be established on a spot that would revive the most delightful and sublime recollections. The pleasure of revisiting it, however, was not altogether unalloyed.

make there an altar unto God, that appeared — It too frequently happens that early impressions are effaced through lapse of time, that promises made in seasons of distress, are forgotten; or, if remembered on the return of health and prosperity, there is not the same alacrity and sense of obligation felt to fulfill them. Jacob was lying under that charge. He had fallen into spiritual indolence. It was now eight or ten years since his return to Canaan. He had effected a comfortable settlement and had acknowledged the divine mercies, by which that return and settlement had been signally distinguished (compare Genesis 33:19). But for some

unrecorded reason, his early vow at Beth-el [ Genesis 28:20-22], in a great crisis of his life, remained unperformed. The Lord appeared now to remind him of his neglected duty, in terms, however, so mild, as awakened less the memory of his fault, than of the kindness of his heavenly Guardian; and how much Jacob felt the touching nature of the appeal to that memorable scene at Beth-el, appears in the immediate preparations he made to *arise* and *go up* thither ( Psalm 66:13).

2. Then Jacob said unto his household ... Put away the strange gods that are among you — Hebrew, "gods of the stranger," of foreign nations. Jacob had brought, in his service, a number of Mesopotamian retainers, who were addicted to superstitious practices; and there is some reason to fear that the same high testimony as to the religious superintendence of his household could not have been borne of him as was done of Abraham ("Genesis 18:19). He might have been too negligent hitherto in winking at these evils in his servants; or, perhaps, it was not till his arrival in Canaan, that he had learnt, for the first time, that one nearer and dearer to him was secretly infected with the same corruption ("Genesis 31:34). Be that as it may, he resolved on an immediate and thorough reformation of his household; and in commanding them to put away the strange gods, he added.

be clean, and change your garments — as if some defilement, from contact with idolatry, should still remain about them. In the law of Moses, many ceremonial purifications were ordained and observed by persons who had contracted certain defilements, and without the observance of which, they were reckoned unclean and unfit to join in the social worship of God. These bodily purifications were purely figurative; and as sacrifices were offered before the law, so also were external purifications, as appears from the words of Jacob; hence it would seem that types and symbols were used from the fall of man, representing and teaching the two great doctrines of revealed truth — namely, the atonement of Christ and the sanctification of our nature.

**4.** they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods ... and earrings — Strange gods, the "seraphim" (compare Genesis 31:30), as well, perhaps, as other idols acquired among the Shechemite spoil — earrings of various forms, sizes, and materials, which are universally worn in the East, and,

then as now, connected with incantation and idolatry (compare \*\*\*Hosea 2:13). The decided tone which Jacob now assumed was the probable cause of the alacrity with which those favorite objects of superstition were surrendered.

Jacob hid them under the oak — or terebinth — a towering tree, which, like all others of the kind, was a striking object in the scenery of Palestine; and beneath which, at Shechem, the patriarch had pitched his tent. He hid the images and amulets, delivered to him by his Mesopotamian dependents, at the root of this tree. The oak being deemed a consecrated tree, to bury them at its root was to deposit them in a place where no bold hand would venture to disturb the ground; and hence it was called from this circumstance — "the plain of Meonenim" — that is, "the oak of enchantments" (\*\*\*Judges 9:37); and from the great stone which Joshua set up — "the oak of the pillar" (\*\*\*Judges 9:6).

- **5.** the terror of God was upon the cities There was every reason to apprehend that a storm of indignation would burst from all quarters upon Jacob's family, and that the Canaanite tribes would have formed one united plan of revenge. But a supernatural panic seized them; and thus, for the sake of the "heir of the promise," the protecting shield of Providence was specially held over his family.
- **6.** So Jacob came to Luz ... that is, Beth-el It is probable that this place was unoccupied ground when Jacob first went to it; and that after that period [Calvin], the Canaanites built a town, to which they gave the name of Luz [Genesis 28:19], from the profusion of almond trees that grew around. The name of Beth-el, which would, of course, be confined to Jacob and his family, did not supersede the original one, till long after. It is now identified with the modern Beitin and lies on the western slope of the mountain on which Abraham built his altar (Genesis 12:8).
- 7. *El-Beth-el* that is, "the God of Beth-el."
- **8.** *Deborah*, *Rebekah's nurse*, *died* This event seems to have taken place before the solemnities were commenced. Deborah (*Hebrew*, a "bee"), supposing her to have been fifty years on coming to Canaan, had attained the great age of a hundred eighty. When she was removed from Isaac's household to Jacob's, is unknown. But it probably was on his return from

Mesopotamia; and she would have been of invaluable service to his young family. Old nurses, like her, were not only honored, but loved as mothers; and, accordingly, her death was the occasion of great lamentation. She was buried under *the* oak — hence called "the terebinth of tears" (compare dissection of the solemn rites of devotion were over. By this manifestation of His presence, God testified His acceptance of Jacob's sacrifice and renewed the promise of the blessings guaranteed to Abraham and Isaac [dissection of His presence, and the patriarch observed the ceremony with which he had formerly consecrated the place, comprising a sacramental cup, along with the oil that he poured on the pillar, and reimposing the memorable name [dissection of the patriarchal dispensation, in which the great truths of religion were exhibited to the senses, and "the world's grey fathers" taught in a manner suited to the weakness of an infantile condition.

**13.** God went up from him — The presence of God was indicated in some visible form and His acceptance of the sacrifice shown by the miraculous descent of fire from heaven, consuming it on the altar.

**GENESIS 35:16-27.** 

### BIRTH OF BENJAMIN — DEATH OF RACHEL, ETC.

**16.** And they journeyed from Beth-el — There can be no doubt that much enjoyment was experienced at Beth-el, and that in the religious observances solemnized, as well as in the vivid recollections of the glorious vision seen there, the affections of the patriarch were powerfully animated and that he left the place a better and more devoted servant of God. When the solemnities were over, Jacob, with his family, pursued a route directly southward, and they reached Ephrath, when they were plunged into mourning by the death of Rachel, who sank in childbirth, leaving a posthumous son [Genesis 35:18]. A very affecting death, considering how ardently the mind of Rachel had been set on offspring (compare Genesis 30:1).

- **18.** She called his name Ben-oni The dying mother gave this name to her child, significant of her circumstances; but Jacob changed his name into Benjamin. This is thought by some to have been originally Benjamin, "a son of days," that is, of old age. But with its present ending it means "son of the right hand," that is, particularly dear and precious.
- **19.** *Ephrath*, *which is Beth-lehem* The one, the old name; the other, the later name, signifying "house of bread."
- **20.** and Jacob set a pillar on her grave ... unto this day The spot still marked out as the grave of Rachel exactly agrees with the Scriptural record, being about a mile from Beth-lehem. Anciently it was surmounted by a pyramid of stones, but the present tomb is a Mohammedan erection.
- **26.** Sons of Jacob ... born to him in Padan-aram It is a common practice of the sacred historian to say of a company or body of men that which, though true of the majority, may not be applicable to every individual. (See \*\*Matthew 19:28 \*\*\*John 20:24 \*\*\*Hebrews 11:13). Here is an example, for Benjamin was born in Canaan [\*\*\*Genesis 35:16-18].

GENESIS 35:28,29.

#### DEATH OF ISAAC.

**29.** *Isaac gave up the ghost* — The death of this venerable patriarch is here recorded by anticipation for it did not take place till fifteen years after Joseph's disappearance. Feeble and blind though he was, he lived to a very advanced age; and it is a pleasing evidence of the permanent reconciliation between Esau and Jacob that they met at Mamre to perform the funeral rites of their common father.

GENESIS 36:1-43.

#### POSTERITY OF ESAU.

**1.** *these are the generations* — history of the leading men and events (compare Genesis 2:4).

**Esau who is Edom** — A name applied to him in reference to the peculiar color of his skin at birth [\*\*Genesis 25:25], rendered more significant by his inordinate craving for the *red* pottage [\*\*\*Genesis 25:30], and also by the fierce sanguinary character of his descendants (compare \*\*\*Ezekiel 25:12 \*\*\*Obadiah 1:10).

- 2, 3. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan There were three, mentioned under different names; for it is evident that Bashemath is the same as Mahalath (Genesis 28:9), since they both stand in the relation of daughter to Ishmael and sister to Nebajoth; and hence it may be inferred that Adah is the same as Judith, Aholibamah as Bathsemath (Genesis 26:34). It was not unusual for women, in that early age, to have two names, as Sarai was also Iscah [Genesis 11:29]; and this is the more probable in the case of Esau's wives, who of course would have to take new names when they went from Canaan to settle in mount Seir.
- 6, 7. Esau ... went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob literally, "a country," without any certain prospect of a settlement. The design of this historical sketch of Esau and his family is to show how the promise (\*\*Genesis 27:39,40) was fulfilled. In temporal prosperity he far exceeds his brother; and it is remarkable that, in the overruling providence of God, the vast increase of his worldly substance was the occasion of his leaving Canaan and thus making way for the return of Jacob.
- **8.** Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir This was divinely assigned as his possession ( decol Joshua 24:4 decol Deuteronomy 2:5).

- **15-19.** *dukes* The Edomites, like the Israelites, were divided into tribes, which took their names from his sons. The head of each tribe was called by a term which in our version is rendered "duke" not of the high rank and wealth of a British peer, but like the sheiks or emirs of the modern East, or the chieftains of highland clans. Fourteen are mentioned who flourished contemporaneously.
- **20-30.** *Sons of Seir the Horite land* native dukes, who were incorporated with those of the Edomite race.
- **24.** This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness The word "mules" is, in several ancient versions, rendered "water springs"; and this discovery of some remarkable fountain was sufficient, among a wandering or pastoral people, to entitle him to such a distinguishing notice.
- **31-39.** *kings of Edom* The royal power was not built on the ruins of the dukedoms, but existed at the same time.
- **40-43.** Recapitulation of the dukes according to their residences.

### **650**GENESIS 37:1-4.

#### PARENTAL PARTIALITY.

- **1.** Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger that is, "a sojourner"; "father" used collectively. The patriarch was at this time at Mamre, in the valley of Hebron (compare described Genesis 35:27); and his dwelling there was continued in the same manner and prompted by the same motives as that of Abraham and Isaac (\*\*Hebrews 11:13).
- **2.** *generations* leading occurrences, in the domestic history of Jacob, as shown in the narrative about to be commenced.

Joseph ... was feeding the flock — literally, "Joseph being seventeen years old was a shepherd over the flock" — he a lad, with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Oversight or superintendence is evidently implied. This post of chief shepherd in the party might be assigned him either from his being the son of a principal wife or from his own superior qualities of character; and if invested with this office, he acted not as a gossiping telltale, but as a "faithful steward" in reporting the scandalous conduct of his brethren.

**3.** son of his old age — Benjamin being younger, was more the son of his old age and consequently on that ground might have been expected to be the favorite. Literally rendered, it is "son of old age to him" — Hebrew phrase, for "a wise son" — one who possessed observation and wisdom above his years — an old head on young shoulders.

made him a coat of many colors — formed in those early days by sewing together patches of colored cloth, and considered a dress of distinction (\*\*Tudges 5:30\*\*\*2 Samuel 13:18). The passion for various colors still reigns among the Arabs and other people of the East, who are fond of dressing their children in this gaudy attire. But since the art of interweaving various patterns was introduced, "the coats of colors" are

different now from what they seem to have been in patriarchal times, and bear a close resemblance to the varieties of tartan.

**4.** could not speak peaceably unto him — did not say "peace be to thee" [ Genesis 43:23, etc.], the usual expression of good wishes among friends and acquaintances. It is deemed a sacred duty to give all this form of salutation; and the withholding of it is an unmistakable sign of dislike or secret hostility. The habitual refusal of Joseph's brethren, therefore, to meet him with "the salaam," showed how ill-disposed they were towards him. It is very natural in parents to love the youngest, and feel partial to those who excel in talents or amiableness. But in a family constituted as Jacob's — many children by different mothers — he showed great and criminal indiscretion.

**GENESIS 37:5-36.** 

#### THE DREAMS OF JOSEPH.

- **5.** Joseph dreamed a dream Dreams in ancient times were much attended to, and hence the dream of Joseph, though but a mere boy, engaged the serious consideration of his family. But this dream was evidently symbolical. The meaning was easily discerned, and, from its being repeated under different emblems, the fulfillment was considered certain (compare decrease 41:32), whence it was that "his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying" [decrease 37:11].
- **12.** his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem The vale of Shechem was, from the earliest mention of Canaan, blest with extraordinary abundance of water. Therefore did the sons of Jacob go from Hebron to this place, though it must have cost them near twenty hours' travelling that is, at the shepherd rate, a little more than fifty miles. But the herbage there was so rich and nutritious that they thought it well worth the pains of so long a journey, to the neglect of the grazing district of Hebron [VAN DE VELDE].
- 13-17. Israel said, ... Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Anxious to learn how his sons were doing in their distant encampment,

Jacob despatched Joseph; and the youth, accepting the mission with alacrity, left the vale of Hebron, sought them at Shechem, heard of them from a man in "the field" (the wide and richly cultivated plain of Esdraelon), and found that they had left that neighborhood for Dothan, probably being compelled by the detestation in which, from the horrid massacre, their name was held.

- 17. Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan Hebrew, Dothaim, or "two wells," recently discovered in the modern "Dothan," situated a few hours' distance from Shechem.
- **18.** when they saw him afar off on the level grass field, where they were watching their cattle. They could perceive him approaching in the distance from the side of Shechem, or rather, Samaria.
- **19.** *Behold*, *this dreamer cometh* literally, "master of dreams" a bitterly ironical sneer. Dreams being considered suggestions from above, to make false pretensions to having received one was detested as a species of blasphemy, and in this light Joseph was regarded by his brethren as an artful pretender. They already began to form a plot for Joseph's assassination, from which he was rescued only by the address of Reuben, who suggested that he should rather be cast into one of the wells, which are, and probably were, completely dried up in summer.
- **23.** they stripped Joseph out of his coat ... of many colors Imagine him advancing in all the unsuspecting openness of brotherly affection. How astonished and terrified must he have been at the cold reception, the ferocious aspect, the rough usage of his unnatural assailants! A vivid picture of his state of agony and despair was afterwards drawn by themselves (compare \*\*Genesis 42:21).
- **25.** *they sat down to eat bread* What a view does this exhibit of those hardened profligates! Their common share in this conspiracy is not the only dismal feature in the story. The rapidity, the almost instantaneous manner in which the proposal was followed by their joint resolution, and the cool indifference, or rather the fiendish satisfaction, with which they sat down to regale themselves, is astonishing. It is impossible that mere envy at his dreams, his gaudy dress, or the doting partiality of their common father, could have goaded them on to such a pitch of frenzied

resentment or confirmed them in such consummate wickedness. Their hatred to Joseph must have had a far deeper seat. It must have been produced by dislike to his piety and other excellencies, which made his character and conduct a constant censure upon theirs, and on account of which they found that they could never be at ease till they had rid themselves of his hated presence. This was the true solution of the mystery, just as it was in the case of Cain (\*\*\*TI John 3:12).

they lifted up their eyes, ... and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites — They are called Midianites (Genesis 37:28), and Medanites, in Hebrew (Genesis 37:36), being a travelling caravan composed of a mixed association of Arabians. Those tribes of Northern Arabia had already addicted themselves to commerce, and long did they enjoy a monopoly, the carrying trade being entirely in their hands. Their approach could easily be seen; for, as their road, after crossing the ford from the transjordanic district, led along the south side of the mountains of Gilboa, a party seated on the plain of Dothan could trace them and their string of camels in the distance as they proceeded through the broad and gently sloping valley that intervenes. Trading in the produce of Arabia and India, they were in the regular course of traffic on their way to Egypt: and the chief articles of commerce in which this clan dealt were

spicery from India, that is, a species of resinous gum, called storax, balm
"balm of Gilead," the juice of the balsam tree, a native of Arabia-Felix, and myrrh
an Arabic gum of a strong, fragrant smell. For these articles there must have been an enormous demand in Egypt as they were constantly used in the process of embalming.

**26-28.** Judah said, ... What profit is it if we slay our brother? — The sight of these travelling merchants gave a sudden turn to the views of the conspirators; for having no wish to commit a greater degree of crime than was necessary for the accomplishment of their end, they readily approved of Judah's suggestion to dispose of their obnoxious brother as a slave. The proposal, of course, was founded on their knowledge that the Arabian merchants trafficked in slaves; and there is the clearest evidence furnished by the monuments of Egypt that the traders who were in the habit of bringing slaves from the countries through which they passed, found a ready market in the cities of the Nile.

*they* ... *lifted up Joseph out of the pit*, *and sold him* — Acting impulsively on Judah's advice, they had their poor victim ready by the time the merchants reached them; and money being no part of their object, they sold him for

*twenty pieces of silver* — The money was probably in rings or pieces (shekels), and silver is always mentioned in the records of that early age before gold, on account of its rarity. The whole sum, if in shekel weight, did not exceed \$20.

they brought Joseph into Egypt — There were two routes to Egypt: the one was overland by Hebron, where Jacob dwelt, and by taking which, the fate of his hapless son would likely have reached the paternal ears; the other was directly westward across the country from Dothan to the maritime coast, and in this, the safest and most expeditious way, the merchants carried Joseph to Egypt. Thus did an overruling Providence lead this murderous conclave of brothers, as well as the slave merchants both following their own free courses — to be parties in an act by which He was to work out, in a marvellous manner, the great purposes of His wisdom and goodness towards His ancient Church and people.

**29, 30.** *Reuben returned unto the pit* — He seems to have designedly taken a circuitous route, with a view of secretly rescuing the poor lad from a lingering death by starvation. His intentions were excellent, and his feelings no doubt painfully lacerated when he discovered what had been done in his absence. But the thing was of God, who had designed that Joseph's deliverance should be accomplished by other means than his.

**31-33.** *they took Joseph's coat* — The commission of one sin necessarily leads to another to conceal it; and the scheme of deception which the sons of Jacob planned and practiced on their aged father was a necessary consequence of the atrocious crime they had perpetrated. What a wonder that their cruel sneer, "thy son's coat," and their forced efforts to comfort him, did not awaken suspicion! But extreme grief, like every other passion, is blind, and Jacob, great as his affliction was, did allow himself to indulge his sorrow more than became one who believed in the government of a supreme and all-wise Disposer.

- **34.** Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins the common signs of Oriental mourning. A rent is made in the skirt more or less long according to the afflicted feelings of the mourner, and a coarse rough piece of black sackcloth or camel's hair cloth is wound round the waist.
- **35.** and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son not the earth, for Joseph was supposed to be torn in pieces, but the unknown place the place of departed souls, where Jacob expected at death to meet his beloved son.

### **GENESIS** 38:1-30.

#### JUDAH AND FAMILY.

- **1.** at that time a formula frequently used by the sacred writers, not to describe any precise period, but an interval near about it.
- **2.** And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite Like Esau [\*\*Genesis 26:34], this son of Jacob, casting off the restraints of religion, married into a Canaanite family; and it is not surprising that the family which sprang from such an unsuitable connection should be infamous for bold and unblushing wickedness.
- **8.** Judah said unto Onan ... marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother

   The first instance of a custom, which was afterwards incorporated among the laws of Moses, that when a husband died leaving a widow, his brother next of age was to marry her, and the issue, if any, was to be served heir to the deceased (compare ODeuteronomy 25:5).
- **12.** Judah ... went up unto his sheep-shearers This season, which occurs in Palestine towards the end of March, was spent in more than usual hilarity, and the wealthiest masters invited their friends, as well as treated their servants, to sumptuous entertainments. Accordingly, it is said, Judah was accompanied by his friend Hirah.

**Timnath** — in the mountains of Judah.

**18.** *signet*, etc. — Bracelets, including armlets, were worn by men as well as women among the Hebrews. But the *Hebrew* word here rendered "bracelets," is everywhere else translated "lace" or "ribbon"; so that as the signet alone was probably more than an equivalent for the kid, it is not easy to conjecture why the other things were given in addition, except by supposing the perforated seal was attached by a ribbon to the staff.

**24.** Bring her forth, and let her be burnt — In patriarchal times fathers seem to have possessed the power of life and death over the members of their families. The crime of adultery was anciently punished in many places by burning (\*\*D\*Leviticus 21:9\*\*D\*Judges 15:6\*\*D\*Jeremiah 29:22). This chapter contains details, which probably would never have obtained a place in the inspired record, had it not been to exhibit the full links of the chain that connects the genealogy of the Savior with Abraham; and in the disreputable character of the ancestry who figure in this passage, we have a remarkable proof that "He made himself of no reputation" [\*\*D\*Philippians 2:7].

### **GENESIS** 39:1-23.

#### JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE.

**1.** *Potiphar* — This name, Potiphar, signifies one "devoted to the sun," the local deity of On or Heliopolis, a circumstance which fixes the place of his residence in the Delta, the district of Egypt bordering on Canaan.

*officer* — literally, "prince of the Pharoah" — that is, in the service of government.

captain of the guard — The import of the original term has been variously interpreted, some considering it means "chief cook," others, "chief inspector of plantations"; but that which seems best founded is "chief of the executioners," the same as the captain of the watch, the *zabut* of modern Egypt [WILKINSON].

bought him ... of the Ishmaelites — The age, appearance, and intelligence of the Hebrew slave would soon cause him to be picked up in the market. But the unseen, unfelt influence of the great Disposer drew the attention of Potiphar towards him, in order that in the house of one so closely connected with the court, he might receive that previous training which was necessary for the high office he was destined to fill, and in the school of adversity learn the lessons of practical wisdom that were to be of greatest utility and importance in his future career. Thus it is that when God has any important work to be done, He always prepares fitting agents to accomplish it.

**2.** he was in the house of his master — Those slaves who had been war captives were generally sent to labor in the field and subjected to hard treatment under the "stick" of taskmasters. But those who were bought with money were employed in domestic purposes, were kindly treated, and enjoyed as much liberty as the same class does in modern Egypt.

- **3.** his master saw that the Lord was with him Though changed in condition, Joseph was not changed in spirit; though stripped of the gaudy coat that had adorned his person, he had not lost the moral graces that distinguished his character; though separated from his father on earth, he still lived in communion with his Father in heaven; though in the house of an idolater, he continued a worshipper of the true God.
- **5.** the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, etc. It might be it probably was that a special, a miraculous blessing was poured out on a youth who so faithfully and zealously served God amid all the disadvantages of his place. But it may be useful to remark that such a blessing usually follows in the ordinary course of things; and the most worldly, unprincipled masters always admire and respect religion in a servant when they see that profession supported by conscientious principle and a consistent life.
- made him overseer in his house We do not know in what capacity Joseph entered into the service of Potiphar; but the observant eye of his master soon discovered his superior qualities and made him his chief, his confidential servant (compare Ephesians 6:7 Colossians 3:23). The advancement of domestic slaves is not uncommon, and it is considered a great disgrace not to raise one who has been a year or two in the family. But this extraordinary advancement of Joseph was the doing of the Lord, though on the part of Potiphar it was the consequence of observing the astonishing prosperity that attended him in all that he did.
- 7. his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph Egyptian women were not kept in the same secluded manner as females are in most Oriental countries now. They were treated in a manner more worthy of a civilized people in fact, enjoyed much freedom both at home and abroad. Hence Potiphar's wife had constant opportunity of meeting Joseph. But the ancient women of Egypt were very loose in their morals. Intrigues and intemperance were vices very prevalent among the them, as the monuments too plainly attest [WILKINSON]. Potiphar's wife was probably not worse than many of the same rank, and her infamous advances made to Joseph arose from her superiority of station.
- **9.** How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? This remonstrance, when all inferior arguments had failed, embodied the

true principle of moral purity — a principle always sufficient where it exists, and alone sufficient.

**14.** Then she called unto the men of her house — Disappointed and affronted, she vowed revenge and accused Joseph, first to the servants of the house, and on his return to her lord.

**See**, **he hath brought in an Hebrew ... to mock us** — an affected and blind aspersion of her husband for keeping in his house an **Hebrew**, the very abomination of Egyptians.

**20.** Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison — the roundhouse, from the form of its construction, usually attached to the dwelling of such an officer as Potiphar. It was partly a subterranean dungeon (Genesis 41:14), though the brick-built walls rose considerably above the surface of the ground, and were surmounted by a vaulted roof somewhat in the form of an inverted bowl. Into such a dungeon Potiphar, in the first ebullition of rage, threw Joseph and ordered him to be subjected further to as great harshness of treatment (GPNS Psalm 105:18) as he dared; for the power of masters over their slaves was very properly restrained by law, and the murder of a slave was a capital crime.

a place where the king's prisoners were bound — Though prisons seem to have been an inseparable appendage of the palaces, this was not a common jail — it was the receptacle of state criminals; and, therefore, it may be presumed that more than ordinary strictness and vigilance were exercised over the prisoners. In general, however, the Egyptian, like other Oriental prisons, were used solely for the purposes of detention. Accused persons were cast into them until the charges against them could be investigated; and though the jailer was responsible for the appearance of those placed under his custody, yet, provided they were produced when called, he was never interrogated as to the way in which he had kept them.

21-23. The Lord ... gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison, etc. — It is highly probable, from the situation of this prison (Genesis 40:3), that the keeper might have been previously acquainted with Joseph and have had access to know his innocence of the crime laid to his charge, as well as with all the high integrity of his character. That may partly account for his showing so much kindness and confidence to his prisoner.

But there was a higher influence at work; for "the Lord was with Joseph, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

### **™**GENESIS 40:1-8.

#### TWO STATE PRISONERS.

**1.** *the butler* — not only the cup-bearer, but overseer of the royal vineyards, as well as the cellars; having, probably, some hundreds of people under him.

**baker** — or cook, had the superintendence of every thing relating to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table. Both officers, especially the former, were, in ancient Egypt, always persons of great rank and importance; and from the confidential nature of their employment, as well as their access to the royal presence, they were generally the highest nobles or princes of the blood.

- **3.** *Pharaoh put them in ward*, etc. Whatever was their crime, they were committed, until their case could be investigated, to the custody of the captain of the guard, that is, Potiphar, in an outer part of whose house the royal prison was situated.
- **4.** The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them not the keeper, though he was most favorably disposed; but Potiphar himself, who, it would seem, was by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebrew; though, probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement (see \*\*\*\*Psalm 37:5).

**They continued a season in ward** — literally, "days," how long, is uncertain; but as they were called to account on the king's birthday, it has been supposed that their offense had been committed on the preceding anniversary [Calvin].

**5-8.** *they dreamed a dream* — Joseph, influenced by the spirit of true religion, could feel for others (\*\*DECclesiastes 4:1 \*\*Romans 12:15 \*\*Philippians 2:4). Observing them one day extremely depressed, he

inquired the cause of their melancholy; and being informed it was owing to a dream they had respectively dreamed during the previous night, after piously directing them to God (Daniel 2:30 Said 26:10), he volunteered to aid them, through the divine help, in discovering the import of their vision. The influence of Providence must be seen in the remarkable fact of both officers dreaming such dreams in one night. He moves the spirits of men.

### **□**GENESIS 40:9-15.

#### THE BUTLER'S DREAM.

9-11. In my dream, behold, a vine was before me — The visionary scene described seems to represent the king as taking exercise and attended by his butler, who gave him a cooling draught. On all occasions, the kings of ancient Egypt were required to practice temperance in the use of wine [Wilkinson]; but in this scene, it is a prepared beverage he is drinking, probably the sherbet of the present day. Everything was done in the king's presence — the cup was washed, the juice of the grapes pressed into it; and it was then handed to him — not grasped; but lightly resting on the tips of the fingers.

**12-15.** *Joseph said*, ... *This is the interpretation* — Speaking as an inspired interpreter, he told the butler that within three days he would be restored to all the honors and privileges of his office; and while making that joyful announcement, he earnestly bespoke the officer's influence for his own liberation. Nothing has hitherto met us in the record indicative of Joseph's feelings; but this earnest appeal reveals a sadness and impatient longing for release, which not all his piety and faith in God could dispel.

## GENESIS 40:16-23.

#### THE BAKER'S DREAM.

**16.** *I had three white baskets* — The circumstances mentioned exactly describe his duties, which, notwithstanding numerous assistants, he performed with his own hands.

white — literally, "full of holes"; that is, wicker baskets. The meats were carried to table upon the head in three baskets, one piled upon the other; and in the uppermost, the bakemeats. And in crossing the open courts, from the kitchen to the dining rooms, the removal of the viands by a vulture, eagle, ibis, or other rapacious bird, was a frequent occurrence in the palaces of Egypt, as it is an everyday incident in the hot countries of the East still. The risk from these carnivorous birds was the greater in the cities of Egypt, where being held sacred, it was unlawful to destroy them; and they swarmed in such numbers as to be a great annoyance to the people.

- **18, 19.** Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation The purport was that in three days his execution should be ordered. The language of Joseph describes minutely one form of capital punishment that prevailed in Egypt; namely, that the criminal was decapitated and then his headless body gibbeted on a tree by the highway till it was gradually devoured by the ravenous birds.
- 20-22. it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday—
  This was a holiday season, celebrated at court with great magnificence and honored by a free pardon to prisoners. Accordingly, the issue happened to the butler and baker, as Joseph had foretold. Doubtless, he felt it painful to communicate such dismal tidings to the baker; but he could not help announcing what God had revealed to him; and it was for the honor of the true God that he should speak plainly.
- **23.** *yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph* This was human nature. How prone are men to forget and neglect in prosperity, those who have been their companions in adversity (\*\*Amos 6:6)! But although reflecting no credit on the butler, it was wisely ordered in the providence

of God that he should forget him. The divine purposes required that Joseph should obtain his deliverance in another way, and by other means.

**○HO**GENESIS 41:1-24.

#### PHARAOH'S DREAM.

1. at the end of two full years — It is not certain whether these years are reckoned from the beginning of Joseph's imprisonment, or from the events described in the preceding chapter — most likely the latter. What a long time for Joseph to experience the sickness of hope deferred! But the time of his enlargement came when he had sufficiently learned the lessons of God designed for him; and the plans of Providence were matured.

Pharaoh dreamed — "Pharaoh," from an Egyptian word Phre, signifying the "sun," was the official title of the kings of that country. The prince, who occupied the throne of Egypt, was Aphophis, one of the Memphite kings, whose capital was On or Heliopolis, and who is universally acknowledged to have been a patriot king. Between the arrival of Abraham and the appearance of Joseph in that country, somewhat more than two centuries had elapsed. Kings sleep and dream, as well as their subjects. And this Pharaoh had two dreams in one night so singular and so similar, so distinct and so apparently significant, so coherent and vividly impressed on his memory, that his spirit was troubled.

**8.** he called for all the magicians of Egypt — It is not possible to define the exact distinction between "magicians" and "wise men"; but they formed different branches of a numerous body, who laid claim to supernatural skill in occult arts and sciences, in revealing mysteries, explaining portents, and, above all, interpreting dreams. Long practice had rendered them expert in devising a plausible way of getting out of every difficulty and framing an answer suitable to the occasion. But the dreams of Pharaoh baffled their united skill. Unlike their Assyrian brethren (Daniel 2:4), they did not pretend to know the meaning of the symbols contained in them, and the providence of God had determined that they

should all be nonplussed in the exercise of their boasted powers, in order that the inspired wisdom of Joseph might appear the more remarkable.

- 9-13. then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults This public acknowledgment of the merits of the young Hebrew would, tardy though it was, have reflected credit on the butler had it not been obviously made to ingratiate himself with his royal master. It is right to confess our faults against God, and against our fellow men when that confession is made in the spirit of godly sorrow and penitence. But this man was not much impressed with a sense of the fault he had committed against Joseph; he never thought of God, to whose goodness he was indebted for the prophetic announcement of his release, and in acknowledging his former fault against the king, he was practising the courtly art of pleasing his master.
- **14.** Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph Now that God's set time had come (\*\*Psalm 105:19), no human power nor policy could detain Joseph in prison. During his protracted confinement, he might have often been distressed with perplexing doubts; but the mystery of Providence was about to be cleared up, and all his sorrows forgotten in the course of honor and public usefulness in which his services were to be employed.
- shaved himself The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin. All slaves and foreigners who were reduced to that condition, were obliged, on their arrival in that country, to conform to the cleanly habits of the natives, by shaving their beards and heads, the latter of which were covered with a close cap. Thus prepared, Joseph was conducted to the palace, where the king seemed to have been anxiously waiting his arrival.
- **15, 16.** *Pharaoh said*, ... *I have dreamed a dream* The king's brief statement of the service required brought out the genuine piety of Joseph; disclaiming all merit, he ascribed whatever gifts or sagacity he possessed to the divine source of all wisdom, and he declared his own inability to penetrate futurity; but, at the same time, he expressed his confident persuasion that God would reveal what was necessary to be known.
- **17.** *Pharaoh said*, *In my dream*, *behold*, *I stood upon the bank of the river* The dreams were purely Egyptian, founded on the productions of

that country and the experience of a native. The fertility of Egypt being wholly dependent on the Nile, the scene is laid on the banks of that river; and oxen being in the ancient hieroglyphics symbolical of the earth and of food, animals of that species were introduced in the first dream.

**18.** there came up out of the river seven kine — Cows now, of the buffalo kind, are seen daily plunging into the Nile; when their huge form is gradually emerging, they seem as if rising "out of the river."

and they fed in a meadow — Nile grass, the aquatic plants that grow on the marshy banks of that river, particularly the lotus kind, on which cattle were usually fattened.

- **19.** behold, seven other kine ... poor and ill-favored The cow being the emblem of fruitfulness, the different years of plenty and of famine were aptly represented by the different condition of those kine the plenty, by the cattle feeding on the richest fodder; and the dearth, by the lean and famishing kine, which the pangs of hunger drove to act contrary to their nature.
- **22.** *I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears* that is, of Egyptian wheat, which, when "full and good," is remarkable in size (a single seed sprouting into seven, ten, or fourteen stalks) and each stalk bearing an ear.
- **23.** blasted with the east wind destructive everywhere to grain, but particularly so in Egypt; where, sweeping over the sandy deserts of Arabia, it comes in the character of a hot, blighting wind, that quickly withers all vegetation (compare Ezekiel 19:12 Hosea 13:15).
- **24.** *the thin ears devoured the seven good ears devoured* is a different word from that used in Genesis 41:4 and conveys the idea of destroying, by absorbing to themselves all the nutritious virtue of the soil around them.

## **©**GENESIS 41:25-36.

#### JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

- **25.** Joseph said, ... The dream ... is one They both pointed to the same event a remarkable dispensation of seven years of unexampled abundance, to be followed by a similar period of unparalleled dearth. The repetition of the dream in two different forms was designed to show the absolute certainty and speedy arrival of this public crisis; the interpretation was accompanied by several suggestions of practical wisdom for meeting so great an emergency as was impending.
- **33.** Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man The explanation given, when the key to the dreams was supplied, appears to have been satisfactory to the king and his courtiers; and we may suppose that much and anxious conversation arose, in the course of which Joseph might have been asked whether he had anything further to say. No doubt the providence of God provided the opportunity of his suggesting what was necessary.
- **34.** and let him appoint officers over the land overseers, equivalent to the beys of modern Egypt.

*take up the fifth part of the land* — that is, of the land's produce, to be purchased and stored by the government, instead of being sold to foreign corn merchants.

**○MES**GENESIS 41:37-57.

#### JOSEPH MADE RULER OF EGYPT.

**38.** *Pharaoh said unto his servants* — The kings of ancient Egypt were assisted in the management of state affairs by the advice of the most distinguished members of the priestly order; and, accordingly, before admitting Joseph to the new and extraordinary office that was to be created, those ministers were consulted as to the expediency and propriety of the appointment.

- *a man in whom the Spirit of God is* An acknowledgment of the being and power of the true God, though faint and feeble, continued to linger amongst the higher classes long after idolatry had come to prevail.
- **40.** Thou shalt be over my house This sudden change in the condition of a man who had just been taken out of prison could take place nowhere, except in Egypt. In ancient as well as modern times, slaves have often risen to be its rulers. But the special providence of God had determined to make Joseph governor of Egypt; and the way was paved for it by the deep and universal conviction produced in the minds both of the king and his councillors, that a divine spirit animated his mind and had given him such extraordinary knowledge.

according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled — literally, "kiss." This refers to the edict granting official power to Joseph, to be issued in the form of a firman, as in all Oriental countries; and all who should receive that order would kiss it, according to the usual Eastern mode of acknowledging obedience and respect for the sovereign [WILKINSON].

- **41.** *Pharaoh said*, ... *See*, *I have set thee over all the land* These words were preliminary to investiture with the insignia of office, which were these: the signet-ring, used for signing public documents, and its impression was more valid than the sign-manual of the king; the *khelaat* or dress of honor, a coat of finely wrought linen, or rather cotton, worn only by the highest personages; the gold necklace, a badge of rank, the plain or ornamental *form* of it indicating the degree of rank and dignity; the privilege of riding in a state carriage, the second chariot; and lastly —
- **43.** they cried before him, Bow the knee abrech, an Egyptian term, not referring to prostration, but signifying, according to some, "father" (compare designation of the signifying to others, "native prince" that is, proclaimed him naturalized, in order to remove all popular dislike to him as a foreigner.
- **44.** These ceremonies of investiture were closed in usual form by the king in council solemnly ratifying the appointment.

*I am Pharaoh*, *and without thee*, etc. — a proverbial mode of expression for great power.

**45. Zaphnath-paaneah** — variously interpreted, "revealer of secrets"; "saviour of the land"; and from the hieroglyphics, "a wise man fleeing from pollution" — that is, adultery.

gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of — His naturalization was completed by this alliance with a family of high distinction. On being founded by an Arab colony, Poti-pherah, like Jethro, priest of Midian, might be a worshipper of the true God; and thus Joseph, a pious man, will be freed from the charge of marrying an idolatress for worldly ends.

On — called Aven (\*\*\*Ezekiel 30:17) and also Beth-shemesh (\*\*\*Jeremiah 43:13). In looking at this profusion of honors heaped suddenly upon Joseph, it cannot be doubted that he would humbly yet thankfully acknowledge the hand of a special Providence in conducting him through all his checkered course to almost royal power; and we, who know more than Joseph did, cannot only see that his advancement was subservient to the most important purposes relative to the Church of God, but learn the great lesson that a Providence directs the minutest events of human life.

**46.** *Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh* — seventeen when brought into Egypt, probably three in prison, and thirteen in the service of Potiphar.

went out ... all the land — made an immediate survey to determine the site and size of the storehouses required for the different quarters of the country.

- **47.** *the earth brought forth by handfuls* a singular expression, alluding not only to the luxuriance of the crop, but the practice of the reapers grasping the ears, which alone were cut.
- **48.** he gathered up all the food of the seven years It gives a striking idea of the exuberant fertility of this land, that, from the superabundance of the seven plenteous years, corn enough was laid up for the subsistence, not only of its home population, but of the neighboring countries, during the seven years of dearth.
- **50-52.** *unto Joseph were born two sons* These domestic events, which increased his temporal happiness, develop the piety of his character in the names conferred upon his children.

**53-56.** The seven years of plenteousness ... ended — Over and above the proportion purchased for the government during the years of plenty, the people could still have husbanded much for future use. But improvident as men commonly are in the time of prosperity, they found themselves in want, and would have starved by thousands had not Joseph anticipated and provided for the protracted calamity.

**57.** *The famine was sore in all lands* — that is, the lands contiguous to Egypt — Canaan, Syria, and Arabia.

**○IOO**GENESIS 42:1-38.

#### JOURNEY INTO EGYPT.

- **1.** Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt learned from common rumor. It is evident from Jacob's language that his own and his sons' families had suffered greatly from the scarcity; and through the increasing severity of the scourge, those men, who had formerly shown both activity and spirit, were sinking into despondency. God would not interpose miraculously when natural means of preservation were within reach.
- **5.** the famine was in the land of Canaan The tropical rains, which annually falling swell the Nile, are those of Palestine also; and their failure would produce the same disastrous effects in Canaan as in Egypt. Numerous caravans of its people, therefore, poured over the sandy desert of Suez, with their beasts of burden, for the purchase of corn; and among others, "the sons of Israel" were compelled to undertake a journey from which painful associations made them strongly averse.
- **6.** Joseph was the governor in the zenith of his power and influence.

**he it was that sold** — that is, directed the sales; for it is impossible that he could give attendance in every place. It is probable, however, that he may have personally superintended the storehouses near the border of Canaan, both because that was the most exposed part of the country and because he must have anticipated the arrival of some messengers from his father's house.

Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him — His prophetic dreams [Genesis 37:5-11] were in the course of being fulfilled, and the atrocious barbarity of his brethren had been the means of bringing about the very issue they had planned to prevent (Revelation 3:9, last clause).

7, 8. Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, ... but they knew not him — This is not strange. They were full-grown men — he was but a lad at parting. They were in their usual garb — he was in his official robes. They never dreamt of him as governor of Egypt, while he had been expecting them. They had but one face; he had ten persons to judge by.

made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly — It would be an injustice to Joseph's character to suppose that this stern manner was prompted by any vindictive feelings — he never indulged any resentment against others who had injured him. But he spoke in the authoritative tone of the governor in order to elicit some much-longed-for information respecting the state of his father's family, as well as to bring his brethren, by their own humiliation and distress, to a sense of the evils they had done to him.

- **9-14.** *Ye are spies* This is a suspicion entertained regarding strangers in all Eastern countries down to the present day. Joseph, however, who was well aware that his brethren were not spies, has been charged with cruel dissimulation, with a deliberate violation of what he knew to be the truth, in imputing to them such a character. But it must be remembered that he was sustaining the part of a ruler; and, in fact, acting on the very principle sanctioned by many of the sacred writers, and our Lord Himself, who spoke parables (fictitious stories) to promote a good end.
- **15.** By the life of Pharaoh It is a very common practice in Western Asia to swear by the life of the king. Joseph spoke in the style of an Egyptian and perhaps did not think there was any evil in it. But we are taught to regard all such expressions in the light of an oath (\*\*Matthew 5:34\*\* James 5:12).
- 17-24. put them ... into ward three days Their confinement had been designed to bring them to salutary reflection. And this object was attained, for they looked upon the retributive justice of God as now pursuing them in that foreign land. The drift of their conversation is one of the most striking instances on record of the power of conscience (\*\*Genesis 42:21,22).
- **24.** *took* ... *Simeon*, *and bound him* He had probably been the chief instigator the most violent actor in the outrage upon Joseph; and if so,

his selection to be the imprisoned and fettered hostage for their return would, in the present course of their reflections, have a painful significance.

**25-28.** Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money — This private generosity was not an infringement of his duty — a defrauding of the revenue. He would have a discretionary power — he was daily enriching the king's exchequer — and he might have paid the sum from his own purse.

**27.** *inn* — a mere station for baiting beasts of burden.

he espied his money — The discovery threw them into greater perplexity than ever. If they had been congratulating themselves on escaping from the ruthless governor, they perceived that now he would have a handle against them; and it is observable that they looked upon this as a judgment of heaven. Thus one leading design of Joseph was gained in their consciences being roused to a sense of guilt.

35. as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's ... money was in his sack — It appears that they had been silent about the money discovery at the resting-place, as their father might have blamed them for not instantly returning. However innocent they knew themselves to be, it was universally felt to be an unhappy circumstance, which might bring them into new and greater perils.

- **36.** *Me have ye bereaved* This exclamation indicates a painfully excited state of feeling, and it shows how difficult it is for even a good man to yield implicit submission to the course of Providence. The language does not imply that his missing sons had got foul play from the hands of the rest, but he looks upon Simeon as lost, as well as Joseph, and he insinuates it was by some imprudent statements of theirs that he was exposed to the risk of losing Benjamin also.
- **37.** Reuben spake, ... Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee This was a thoughtless and unwarrantable condition one that he never seriously expected his father would accept. It was designed only to give assurance of the greatest care being taken of Benjamin. But unforeseen circumstances might arise to render it impossible for all of them to

preserve that young lad (\*\*\*\*James 4:13), and Jacob was much pained by the prospect. Little did he know that God was dealing with him severely, but in kindness (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 12:7,8), and that all those things he thought against Him were working together for his good.

### **○MOI**GENESIS 43:1-14.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT.

- 2. their father said, ... Go again, buy us a little food It was no easy matter to bring Jacob to agree to the only conditions on which his sons could return to Egypt (Genesis 42:15). The necessity of immediately procuring fresh supplies for the maintenance of themselves and their families overcame every other consideration and extorted his consent to Benjamin joining in a journey, which his sons entered on with mingled feelings of hope and anxiety of hope, because having now complied with the governor's demand to bring down their youngest brother, they flattered themselves that the alleged ground of suspecting them would be removed; and of apprehension that some ill designs were meditated against them.
- **11.** *take of the best fruits* ... *a present* It is an Oriental practice never to approach a man of power without a present, and Jacob might remember how he pacified his brother (\*\*Proverbs 21:14) balm, spices, and myrrh (see on \*\*Genesis 37:25),

**honey** — which some think was *dibs*, a syrup made from ripe dates [BOCHART]; but others, the honey of Hebron, which is still valued as far superior to that of Egypt;

*nuts* — pistachio nuts, of which Syria grows the best in the world;

*almonds* — which were most abundant in Palestine.

**12.** *take double money* — the first sum to be returned, and another sum for a new supply. The restored money in the sacks' mouth was a perplexing circumstance. But it might have been done inadvertently by one of the servants — so Jacob persuaded himself — and happy it was for his own peace and the encouragement of the travelers that he took this view.

Besides the duty of restoring it, honesty in their case was clearly the best, the safest policy.

**14.** God Almighty give you mercy before the man — Jacob is here committing them all to the care of God and, resigned to what appears a heavy trial, prays that it may be overruled for good.

### **GENESIS** 43:15-30.

#### ARRIVAL IN EGYPT.

- **15.** *stood before Joseph* We may easily imagine the delight with which, amid the crowd of other applicants, the eye of Joseph would fix on his brethren and Benjamin. But occupied with his public duties, he consigned them to the care of a confidential servant till he should have finished the business of the day.
- **16.** *ruler of his house* In the houses of wealthy Egyptians one upper man servant was intrusted with the management of the house (compare Genesis 39:5).

slay, and make ready — Hebrew, "kill a killing" — implying preparations for a grand entertainment (compare Genesis 31:54 Genesis

*dine* ... at noon — The hour of dinner was at midday.

**18.** *the men were afraid* — Their feelings of awe on entering the stately mansion, unaccustomed as they were to houses at all, their anxiety at the reasons of their being taken there, their solicitude about the restored money, their honest simplicity in communicating their distress to the

steward and his assurances of having received their money in "full weight," the offering of their fruit present, which would, as usual, be done with some parade, and the Oriental salutations that passed between their host and them — are all described in a graphic and animated manner.

### **GENESIS** 43:31-34.

#### THE DINNER.

- **31.** Joseph said, Set on bread equivalent to having dinner served, "bread" being a term inclusive of all victuals. The table was a small stool, most probably the usual round form, "since persons might even then be seated according to their rank or seniority, and the modern Egyptian table is not without its post of honor and a fixed gradation of place" [WILKINSON]. Two or at most three persons were seated at one table. But the host being the highest in rank of the company had a table to himself; while it was so arranged that an Egyptian was not placed nor obliged to eat from the same dish as a Hebrew.
- **32.** Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination The prejudice probably arose from the detestation in which, from the oppressions of the shepherd-kings, the nation held all of that occupation.
- **34.** took and sent messes ... Benjamin's mess was five times In Egypt, as in other Oriental countries, there were, and are, two modes of paying attention to a guest whom the host wishes to honor either by giving a choice piece from his own hand, or ordering it to be taken to the stranger. The degree of respect shown consists in the quantity, and while the ordinary rule of distinction is a double mess, it must have appeared a very distinguished mark of favor bestowed on Benjamin to have no less than five times any of his brethren.

they drank, and were merry with him — Hebrew, "drank freely" (same as Song of Solomon 5: 1 John 2:10). In all these cases the idea of intemperance is excluded. The painful anxieties and cares of Joseph's brethren were dispelled, and they were at ease.

**©HOIGENESIS** 44:1-34.

#### POLICY TO STAY HIS BRETHREN.

- **1.** And Joseph commanded the steward The design of putting the cup into the sack of Benjamin was obviously to bring that young man into a situation of difficulty or danger, in order thereby to discover how far the brotherly feelings of the rest would be roused to sympathize with his distress and stimulate their exertions in procuring his deliverance. But for what purpose was the money restored? It was done, in the first instance, from kindly feelings to his father; but another and further design seems to have been the prevention of any injurious impressions as to the character of Benjamin. The discovery of the cup in his possession, if there had been nothing else to judge by, might have fastened a painful suspicion of guilt on the youngest brother; but the sight of the money in each man's sack would lead all to the same conclusion, that Benjamin was just as innocent as themselves, although the additional circumstance of the cup being found in his sack would bring him into greater trouble and danger.
- **2.** put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth It was a large goblet, as the original denotes, highly valued by its owner, on account of its costly material or its elegant finish and which had probably graced his table at the sumptuous entertainment of the previous day.
- **3.** As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away They commenced their homeward journey at early dawn (see on Genesis 18:2); and it may be readily supposed in high spirits, after so happy an issue from all their troubles and anxieties.
- **4.** When they were gone out of the city ... Joseph said unto his steward They were brought to a sudden halt by the stunning intelligence that an article of rare value was missing from the governor's house. It was a silver cup; so strong suspicions were entertained against them that a special messenger was despatched to search them.

- **5.** Is not this it in which my lord drinketh not only kept for the governor's personal use, but whereby he divines. Divination by cups, to ascertain the course of futurity, was one of the prevalent superstitions of ancient Egypt, as it is of Eastern countries still. It is not likely that Joseph, a pious believer in the true God, would have addicted himself to this superstitious practice. But he might have availed himself of that popular notion to carry out the successful execution of his stratagem for the last decisive trial of his brethren.
- 6, 7. he overtook them, and he spake ... these words The steward's words must have come upon them like a thunderbolt, and one of their most predominant feelings must have been the humiliating and galling sense of being made so often objects of suspicion. Protesting their innocence, they invited a search. The challenge was accepted [\*\*Genesis\* 44:10,11]. Beginning with the eldest, every sack was examined, and the cup being found in Benjamin's [\*\*Genesis\* 44:12], they all returned in an indescribable agony of mind to the house of the governor [\*\*Genesis\* 44:13], throwing themselves at his feet [\*\*Genesis\* 44:14], with the remarkable confession, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" [\*\*Genesis\* 44:16].
- **16-34.** *Judah said*, *What shall we say?* This address needs no comment — consisting at first of short, broken sentences, as if, under the overwhelming force of the speaker's emotions, his utterance were choked, it becomes more free and copious by the effort of speaking, as he proceeds. Every word finds its way to the heart; and it may well be imagined that Benjamin, who stood there speechless like a victim about to be laid on the altar, when he heard the magnanimous offer of Judah to submit to slavery for his ransom, would be bound by a lifelong gratitude to his generous brother, a tie that seems to have become hereditary in his tribe. Joseph's behavior must not be viewed from any single point, or in separate parts, but as a whole — a well-thought, deep-laid, closely connected plan; and though some features of it do certainly exhibit an appearance of harshness, yet the pervading principle of his conduct was real, genuine, brotherly kindness. Read in this light, the narrative of the proceedings describes the continuous, though secret, pursuit of one end; and Joseph exhibits, in his management of the scheme, a very high order of intellect, a warm and susceptible heart, united to a judgment that exerted a

complete control over his feelings — a happy invention in devising means towards the attainment of his ends and an inflexible adherence to the course, however painful, which prudence required.

### **GENESIS** 45:1-28.

#### JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN.

**1.** Then Joseph could not refrain himself — The severity of the inflexible magistrate here gives way to the natural feelings of the man and the brother. However well he had disciplined his mind, he felt it impossible to resist the artless eloquence of Judah. He saw a satisfactory proof, in the return of *all* his brethren on such an occasion, that they were affectionately united to one another; he had heard enough to convince him that time, reflection, or grace had made a happy improvement on their characters; and he would probably have proceeded in a calm and leisurely manner to reveal himself as prudence might have dictated. But when he heard the heroic self-sacrifice of Judah [\*\*Genesis 44:33] and realized all the affection of that proposal — a proposal for which he was totally unprepared — he was completely unmanned; he felt himself forced to bring this painful trial to an end.

he cried, Cause every man to go out from me — In ordering the departure of witnesses of this last scene, he acted as a warm-hearted and real friend to his brothers — his conduct was dictated by motives of the highest prudence — that of preventing their early iniquities from becoming known either to the members of his household, or among the people of Egypt.

- **2.** *he wept aloud* No doubt, from the fullness of highly excited feelings; but to indulge in vehement and long-continued transports of sobbing is the usual way in which the Orientals express their grief.
- **3. I am Joseph** or, "terrified at his presence." The emotions that now rose in his breast as well as that of his brethren and chased each other in rapid succession were many and violent. He was agitated by sympathy and joy; they were astonished, confounded, terrified; and betrayed their terror, by shrinking as far as they could from his presence. So "troubled" were they, that he had to repeat his announcement of himself; and what

kind, affectionate terms he did use. He spoke of their having sold him — not to wound their feelings, but to convince them of his identity; and then, to reassure their minds, he traced the agency of an overruling Providence, in his exile and present honor [feelings] 35:5-7]. Not that he wished them to roll the responsibility of their crime on God; no, his only object was to encourage their confidence and induce them to trust in the plans he had formed for the future comfort of their father and themselves.

- **6.** and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest "Ear" is an old English word, meaning "to plough" (compare \*\* Samuel 8:12 \*\* Isaiah 30:24). This seems to confirm the view given (\*\* Genesis 41:57) that the famine was caused by an extraordinary drought, which prevented the annual overflowing of the Nile; and of course made the land unfit to receive the seed of Egypt.
- **14, 15.** And he fell upon ... Benjamin's neck The sudden transition from a condemned criminal to a fondled brother, might have occasioned fainting or even death, had not his tumultuous feelings been relieved by a torrent of tears. But Joseph's attentions were not confined to Benjamin. He affectionately embraced every one of his brothers in succession; and by those actions, his forgiveness was demonstrated more fully than it could be by words.
- 17-20. Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren As Joseph might have been prevented by delicacy, the king himself invited the patriarch and all his family to migrate into Egypt; and he made most liberal arrangements for their removal and their subsequent settlement. It displays the character of this Pharaoh to advantage, that he was so kind to the relatives of Joseph; but indeed the greatest liberality he could show could never recompense the services of so great a benefactor of his kingdom.
- **21.** *Joseph gave them wagons* which must have been novelties in Palestine; for wheeled carriages were almost unknown there.
- **22.** *changes of raiment* It was and is customary, with great men, to bestow on their friends dresses of distinction, and in places where they are of the same description and quality, the value of these presents consists in their number. The great number given to Benjamin bespoke the warmth of his brother's attachment to him; and Joseph felt, from the amiable temper

they now all displayed, he might, with perfect safety, indulge this fond partiality for his mother's son.

- **23.** *to his father he sent* a supply of everything that could contribute to his support and comfort the large and liberal scale on which that supply was given being intended, like the five messes of Benjamin, as a token of his filial love [see on Genesis 43:34].
- **24.** *so he sent his brethren away* In dismissing them on their homeward journey, he gave them this particular admonition:

See that ye fall not out by the way — a caution that would be greatly needed; for not only during the journey would they be occupied in recalling the parts they had respectively acted in the events that led to Joseph's being sold into Egypt, but their wickedness would soon have to come to the knowledge of their venerable father.

### **GENESIS** 46:1-4.

#### SACRIFICE AT BEER-SHEBA.

**1.** Israel took his journey with all that he had — that is, his household; for in compliance with Pharaoh's recommendation, he left his heavy furniture behind. In contemplating a step so important as that of leaving Canaan, which at his time of life he might never revisit, so pious a patriarch would ask the guidance and counsel of God. With all his anxiety to see Joseph, he would rather have died in Canaan without that highest of earthly gratifications than leave it without the consciousness of carrying the divine blessing along with him.

came to Beer-sheba — That place, which was in his direct route to Egypt, had been a favorite encampment of Abraham (\*\*\*Genesis 21:33) and Isaac (\*\*\*Genesis 26:25), and was memorable for their experience of the divine goodness; and Jacob seems to have deferred his public devotions till he had reached a spot so consecrated by covenant to his own God and the God of his fathers.

**2.** *God spake unto Israel* — Here is a virtual renewal of the covenant and an assurance of its blessings. Moreover, here is an answer on the chief subject of Jacob's prayer and a removal of any doubt as to the course he was meditating. At first the prospect of paying a personal visit to Joseph had been viewed with unmingled joy. But, on calmer consideration, many difficulties appeared to lie in the way. He may have remembered the prophecy to Abraham that his posterity was to be afflicted in Egypt and also that his father had been expressly told *not* to go [arts Genesis 15:13 26:2]; he may have feared the contamination of idolatry to his family and their forgetfulness of the land of promise. These doubts were removed by the answer of the oracle, and an assurance given him of great and increasing prosperity.

- **3.** I will there make of thee a great nation How truly this promise was fulfilled, appears in the fact that the seventy souls who went down into Egypt increased (\*\*Exodus 1:5-7), in the space of two hundred fifteen years, to one hundred eighty thousand.
- **4.** *I* will also surely bring thee up [again] As Jacob could not expect to live till the former promise was realized, he must have seen that the latter was to be accomplished only to his posterity. To himself it was literally verified in the removal of his remains to Canaan; but, in the large and liberal sense of the words, it was made good only on the establishment of Israel in the land of promise.

Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes — shall perform the last office of filial piety; and this implied that he should henceforth enjoy, without interruption, the society of that favorite son.

### **○MEGENESIS** 46:5-27.

#### IMMIGRATION TO EGYPT.

- **5.** And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba to cross the border and settle in Egypt. However refreshed and invigorated in spirit by the religious services at Beer-sheba, he was now borne down by the infirmities of advanced age; and, therefore, his sons undertook all the trouble and toil of the arrangements, while the enfeebled old patriarch, with the wives and children, was conveyed by slow and leisurely stages in the Egyptian vehicles sent for their accommodation.
- **6.** *goods*, *which they had gotten in the land* not furniture, but substance precious things.
- **7.** *daughters* As Dinah was his only daughter, this must mean daughters-in-law.
- *all his seed brought he with him* Though disabled by age from active superintendence, yet, as the venerable sheik of the tribe, he was looked upon as their common head and consulted in every step.

8-27. all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten — Strictly speaking, there were only sixty-six went to Egypt; but to these add Joseph and his two sons, and Jacob the head of the clan, and the whole number amounts to seventy. In the speech of Stephen (\*\*TACTS\*7:14) the number is stated to be seventy-five; but as that estimate includes five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh (\*\*TATS\*114-20), born in Egypt, the two accounts coincide.

### **™GENESIS** 46:28-34.

#### ARRIVAL TO EGYPT.

- **28.** *he sent Judah before him unto Joseph* This precautionary measure was obviously proper for apprising the king of the entrance of so large a company within his territories; moreover, it was necessary in order to receive instruction from Joseph as to the *locale* of their future settlement.
- **29, 30.** *Joseph made ready his chariot* The difference between chariot and wagon was not only in the lighter and more elegant construction of the former, but in the one being drawn by horses and the other by oxen. Being a public man in Egypt, Joseph was required to appear everywhere in an equipage suitable to his dignity; and, therefore, it was not owing either to pride or ostentatious parade that he drove his carriage, while his father's family were accommodated only in rude and humble wagons.
- presented himself unto him in an attitude of filial reverence (compare Exodus 22:17). The interview was a most affecting one the happiness of the delighted father was now at its height; and life having no higher charms, he could, in the very spirit of the aged Simeon, have departed in peace [\*\*Luke 2:25,29].
- **31-34.** *Joseph said*, ... *I will go up*, *and show Pharaoh* It was a tribute of respect due to the king to inform him of their arrival. And the instructions which he gave them were worthy of his character alike as an affectionate brother and a religious man.

### **○M70**GENESIS 47:1-31.

#### JOSEPH'S PRESENTATION AT COURT.

- **1.** Joseph ... told Pharaoh, My father and my brethren Joseph furnishes a beautiful example of a man who could bear equally well the extremes of prosperity and adversity. High as he was, he did not forget that he had a superior. Dearly as he loved his father and anxiously as he desired to provide for the whole family, he would not go into the arrangements he had planned for their stay in Goshen until he had obtained the sanction of his royal master.
- **2.** *he took some of his brethren* probably the five eldest brothers: seniority being the least invidious principle of selection.
- **4.** For to sojourn ... are we come The royal conversation took the course which Joseph had anticipated (Genesis 46:33), and they answered according to previous instructions manifesting, however, in their determination to return to Canaan, a faith and piety which affords a hopeful symptom of their having become all, or most of them, religious men.
- **7.** Joseph brought in Jacob his father There is a pathetic and most affecting interest attending this interview with royalty; and when, with all the simplicity and dignified solemnity of a man of God, Jacob signalized his entrance by imploring the divine blessing on the royal head, it may easily be imagined what a striking impression the scene would produce (compare \*\*\*\*Hebrews 7:7).
- **8.** Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? The question was put from the deep and impressive interest which the appearance of the old patriarch had created in the minds of Pharaoh and his court. In the low-lying land of Egypt and from the artificial habits of its society, the age of man was far shorter among the inhabitants of that country than it had yet

become in the pure bracing climate and among the simple mountaineers of Canaan. The Hebrews, at least, still attained a protracted longevity.

- **9.** The days of the years of my pilgrimage, etc. Though a hundred thirty years, he reckons by days (compare \*\*\*Psalm 90:12), which he calls few, as they appeared in retrospect, and evil, because his life had been one almost unbroken series of trouble. The answer is remarkable, considering the comparative darkness of the patriarchal age (compare \*\*\*Timothy 1:10).
- 11. Joseph placed his father and his brethren ... in the best of the land best pasture land in lower Egypt. Goshen, "the land of verdure," lay along the Pelusiac or eastern branch of the Nile. It included a part of the district of Heliopolis, or "On," the capital, and on the east stretched out a considerable length into the desert. The ground included within these boundaries was a rich and fertile extent of natural meadow, and admirably adapted for the purposes of the Hebrew shepherds (compare "Genesis 49:24" Psalm 34:10; "78:72).
- **13-15.** *there was no bread in all the land* This probably refers to the second year of the famine (<sup>080</sup>Genesis 45:6) when any little stores of individuals or families were exhausted and when the people had become universally dependent on the government. At first they obtained supplies for payment. Before long "money failed.
- **16.** And Joseph said, Give your cattle "This was the wisest course that could be adopted for the preservation both of the people and the cattle, which, being bought by Joseph, was supported at the royal expense, and very likely returned to the people at the end of the famine, to enable them to resume their agricultural labors."
- **21.** *as for the people*, *he removed them to cities* obviously for the convenience of the country people, who were doing nothing, to the cities where the corn stores were situated.
- **22.** Only the land of the priests bought he not These lands were inalienable, being endowments by which the temples were supported. The priests for themselves received an annual allowance of provision from the state, and it would evidently have been the height of cruelty to withhold that allowance when their lands were incapable of being tilled.

- **23-28.** *Joseph said*, *Behold*, etc. The lands being sold to the government (\*\*Genesis 47:19,20), seed would be distributed for the first crop after the famine; and the people would occupy them as tenants-at-will on the payment of a produce rent, almost the same rule as obtains in Egypt in the present day.
- **29-31.** *the time drew nigh that Israel must die* One only of his dying arrangements is recorded; but that one reveals his whole character. It was the disposal of his remains, which were to be carried to Canaan, not from a mere romantic attachment to his native soil, nor, like his modern descendants, from a superstitious feeling for the soil of the Holy Land, but from faith in the promises. His address to Joseph "if now I have found grace in thy sight," that is, as the vizier of Egypt his exacting a solemn oath that his wishes would be fulfilled and the peculiar form of that oath, all pointed significantly to the promise and showed the intensity of his desire to enjoy its blessings (compare "Numbers 10:29).
- **31.** *Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head* Oriental beds are mere mats, having no head, and the translation should be "the top of his staff," as the apostle renders it (\*\*Hebrews 11:21).

### **©HO**GENESIS 48:1-22.

#### JOSEPH'S VISIT TO HIS SICK FATHER.

- **1.** *one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick* Joseph was hastily sent for, and on this occasion he took with him his two sons.
- **2.** *Israel strengthened himself*, *and sat upon the bed* In the chamber where a good man lies, edifying and spiritual discourse may be expected.
- **3, 4.** God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz The object of Jacob, in thus reverting to the memorable vision at Beth-el (Genesis 28:10-15) one of the great landmarks in his history was to point out the splendid promises in reserve for his posterity to engage Joseph's interest and preserve his continued connection with the people of God, rather than with the Egyptians.
- **4. Behold**, **I** will make thee fruitful This is a repetition of the covenant (Genesis 28:13-15 Genesis 28:13-15). Whether these words are to be viewed in a limited sense, as pointing to the many centuries during which the Jews were occupiers of the Holy Land, or whether the words bear a wider meaning and intimate that the scattered tribes of Israel are to be reinstated in the land of promise, as their "everlasting possession," are points that have not yet been satisfactorily determined.
- **5.** thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh It was the intention of the aged patriarch to adopt Joseph's sons as his own, thus giving him a double portion. The reasons for this procedure are stated ( Chronicles 5:1,2).
- are mine Though their connections might have attached them to Egypt and opened to them brilliant prospects in the land of their nativity, they willingly accepted the adoption (\*\*\*EHebrews 11:25).
- **9.** Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them The apostle (\*\*BD\*Hebrews 11:21) selected the blessing of Joseph's son as the chief,

because the most comprehensive, instance of the patriarch's faith which his whole history furnishes.

- **13.** *Joseph took them both* The very act of pronouncing the blessing was remarkable, showing that Jacob's bosom was animated by the spirit of prophecy.
- **21.** *Israel said unto Joseph*, *Behold*, *I die* The patriarch could speak of death with composure, but he wished to prepare Joseph and the rest of the family for the shock.

but God shall be with you — Jacob, in all probability, was not authorized to speak of their bondage — he dwelt only on the certainty of their restoration to Canaan.

**22.** moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren — This was near Shechem (\*\*Genesis 33:18 \*\*OTS\*\*\*\* John 4:5; also \*\*OTS\*\*\* John 4:5; also \*\*OTS\*\*\* John 4:5: also \*\*OTS\*\* Joh

**□**GENESIS 49:1-33.

#### PATRIARCHAL BLESSING.

**1.** Jacob called unto his sons — It is not to the sayings of the dying saint, so much as of the inspired prophet, that attention is called in this chapter. Under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit he pronounced his prophetic benediction and described the condition of their respective descendants in the last days, or future times.

**GENESIS** 49:3,4.

#### REUBEN

forfeited by his crime the rights and honors of primogeniture. His posterity never made any figure; no judge, prophet, nor ruler, sprang from this tribe.

**™**GENESIS 49:5-7.

#### SIMEON AND LEVI

were associate in wickedness, and the same prediction would be equally applicable to both their tribes. Levi had cities allotted to them (\*\*Toshua 21:1-45) in every tribe. On account of their zeal against idolatry, they were honorably "divided in Jacob"; whereas the tribe of Simeon, which was guilty of the grossest idolatry and the vices inseparable from it, were ignominiously "scattered."

## **□ GENESIS** 49:8-12.

#### JUDAH

— A high pre-eminence is destined to this tribe (\*\*Numbers 10:14\*\*) Judges 1:2). Besides the honor of giving name to the Promised Land, David, and a greater than David — the Messiah — sprang from it. Chief among the tribes, "it grew up from a lion's whelp" — that is, a little power — till it became "an old lion" — that is, calm and quiet, yet still formidable.

10. until Shiloh come — Shiloh — this obscure word is variously interpreted to mean "the sent" (\*\*TJohn 17:3), "the seed" (\*\*Tsaiah 11:1), the "peaceable or prosperous one" (\*\*Ephesians 2:14) — that is, the Messiah (\*\*Isaiah 11:10 \*\*Romans 15:12); and when He should come, "the tribe of Judah should no longer boast either an independent king or a judge of their own" [Calvin]. The Jews have been for eighteen centuries without a ruler and without a judge since Shiloh came, and "to Him the gathering of the people has been."

**©GENESIS** 49:13.

#### **ZEBULUN**

was to have its lot on the seacoast, close to Zidon, and to engage, like that state, in maritime pursuits and commerce.

GENESIS 49:14,15.

#### **ISSACHAR**

**14.** a strong ass couching down between two burdens — that is, it was to be active, patient, given to agricultural labors. It was established in lower Galilee — a "good land," settling down in the midst of the Canaanites,

where, for the sake of quiet, they "bowed their shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

## **○NOTION SERVICE SERV**

#### **DAN**

— though the son of a secondary wife, was to be "as one of the tribes of Israel."

**17.** *Daniel* — "a judge."

*a serpent* ... *an adder* — A serpent, an adder, implies subtlety and stratagem; such was pre-eminently the character of Samson, the most illustrious of its judges.

## **□100**GENESIS 49:19.

#### GAD

— This tribe should be often attacked and wasted by hostile powers on their borders (\*\*\* Judges 10:8 \*\*\* Jeremiah 49:1). But they were generally victorious in the close of their wars.

## GENESIS 49:20.

#### **ASHER**

— "Blessed." Its allotment was the seacoast between Tyre and Carmel, a district fertile in the production of the finest corn and oil in all Palestine.

## **□102** GENESIS 49:21.

#### **NAPHTALI**

— The best rendering we know is this, "Naphtali is a deer roaming at liberty; he shooteth forth goodly branches," or majestic antlers [TAYLOR, *Scripture Illustrations*], and the meaning of the prophecy seems to be that the tribe of Naphtali would be located in a territory so fertile and peaceable, that, feeding on the richest pasture, he would spread out, like a deer, branching antlers.

## GENESIS 49:22-26.

#### JOSEPH

**22.** *a fruitful bough*, etc. — denotes the extraordinary increase of that tribe (compare Numbers 1:33-35 Inches 1:33-35 Inch

## GENESIS 49:27-33.

#### **BENJAMIN**

**27.** *shall ravin like a wolf* — This tribe in its early history spent its energies in petty or inglorious warfare and especially in the violent and unjust contest ( Judges 19:1-20:48), in which it engaged with the other tribes, when, notwithstanding two victories, it was almost exterminated.

- **28.** *all these are the twelve tribes of Israel* or ancestors. Jacob's prophetic words obviously refer not so much to the sons as to the tribes of Israel.
- **29.** *he charged them* The charge had already been given and solemnly undertaken (Genesis 47:31). But in mentioning his wishes now and rehearsing all the circumstances connected with the purchase of Machpelah, he wished to declare, with his latest breath, before all his family, that he died in the same faith as Abraham.
- **33.** when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons It is probable that he was supernaturally strengthened for this last momentous office of the patriarch, and that when the divine afflatus ceased, his exhausted powers giving way, he yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

GENESIS 50:1-26.

#### MOURNING FOR JACOB.

- **1.** Joseph fell upon his father's face, etc. On him, as the principal member of the family, devolved the duty of closing the eyes of his venerable parent (compare Genesis 46:4) and imprinting the farewell kiss.
- **2.** Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father, etc. In ancient Egypt the embalmers were a class by themselves. The process of embalmment consisted in infusing a great quantity of resinous substances into the cavities of the body, after the intestines had been removed, and then a regulated degree of heat was applied to dry up the humors, as well as decompose the tarry materials which had been previously introduced. Thirty days were alloted for the completion of this process; forty more were spent in anointing it with spices; the body, tanned from this operation, being then washed, was wrapped in numerous folds of linen cloth the joinings of which were fastened with gum, and then it was deposited in a wooden chest made in the form of a human figure.
- **3.** *the Egyptians mourned*, etc. It was made a period of public mourning, as on the death of a royal personage.
- **4, 5.** *Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh*, etc. Care was taken to let it be known that the family sepulcher was provided before leaving Canaan and that an oath bound his family to convey the remains thither. Besides, Joseph deemed it right to apply for a special leave of absence; and being unfit, as a mourner, to appear in the royal presence, he made the request through the medium of others.

- **7-9.** *Joseph went up to bury his father* a journey of three hundred miles. The funeral cavalcade, composed of the nobility and military, with their equipages, would exhibit an imposing appearance.
- **10.** they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, etc. "Atad" may be taken as a common noun, signifying "the plain of the thorn bushes." It was on the border between Egypt and Canaan; and as the last opportunity of indulging grief was always the most violent, the Egyptians made a prolonged halt at this spot, while the family of Jacob probably proceeded by themselves to the place of sepulture.
- **15-21.** When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, etc. Joseph was deeply affected by this communication. He gave them the strongest assurances of his forgiveness and thereby gave both a beautiful trait of his own pious character, as well as appeared an eminent type of the Savior.
- **22, 23.** *Joseph dwelt in Egypt* He lived eighty years after his elevation to the chief power [see on Genesis 41:46] witnessing a great increase in the prosperity of the kingdom, and also of his own family and kindred the infant Church of God.
- **24.** Joseph said unto his brethren, I die The national feelings of the Egyptians would have been opposed to his burial in Canaan; but he gave the strongest proof of the strength of his faith and full assurance of the promises, by "the commandment concerning his bones" [\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:22].
- **26.** and they embalmed him [See on Genesis 50:2]. His funeral would be conducted in the highest style of Egyptian magnificence and his mummied corpse carefully preserved till the Exodus.

### THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES CALLED.

# **EXODUS**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

**EXODUS** 1:1-22.

#### INCREASE OF THE ISRAELITES.

- **1.** Now these are the names (See Genesis 46:8-26).
- **7.** *children of Israel were fruitful* They were living in a land where, according to the testimony of an ancient author, mothers produced three and four sometimes at a birth; and a modern writer declares "the females in Egypt, as well among the human race as among animals, surpass all others in fruitfulness." To this natural circumstance must be added the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham.
- **8.** Now there arose up a new king About sixty years after the death of Joseph a revolution took place by which the old dynasty was overthrown, and upper and lower Egypt were united into one kingdom. Assuming that the king formerly reigned in Thebes, it is probable that he would know nothing about the Hebrews; and that, as foreigners and shepherds, the new government would, from the first, regard them with dislike and scorn.
- **9, 10.** he said ... Behold, the ... children of Israel are more and mightier than we They had risen to great prosperity as during the lifetime of Joseph and his royal patron, they had, probably, enjoyed a free grant of the land. Their increase and prosperity were viewed with jealousy by the

new government; and as Goshen lay between Egypt and Canaan, on the border of which latter country were a number of warlike tribes, it was perfectly conformable to the suggestions of worldly policy that they should enslave and maltreat them, through apprehension of their joining in any invasion by those foreign rovers. The new king, who neither knew the name nor cared for the services of Joseph, was either Amosis, or one of his immediate successors [OSBURN].

11. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters — Having first obliged them, it is thought, to pay a ruinous rent and involved them in difficulties, that new government, in pursuance of its oppressive policy, degraded them to the condition of serfs — employing them exactly as the laboring people are in the present day (driven in companies or bands), in rearing the public works, with taskmasters, who anciently had sticks — now whips — to punish the indolent, or spur on the too languid. All public or royal buildings, in ancient Egypt, were built by captives; and on some of them was placed an inscription that no free citizen had been engaged In this servile employment.

they built for Pharaoh treasure cities — These two store-places were in the land of Goshen; and being situated near a border liable to invasion, they were fortified cities (compare Chronicles 11:1-12:16). Pithom (Greek, Paturnos), lay on the eastern Pelusiac branch of the Nile, about twelve Roman miles from Heliopolis; and Raamses, called by the Septuagint Heroopolis, lay between the same branch of the Nile and the Bitter Lakes. These two fortified cities were situated, therefore, in the same valley; and the fortifications, which Pharaoh commanded to be built around both, had probably the same common object, of obstructing the entrance into Egypt, which this valley furnished the enemy from Asia [HENGSTENBERG].

13, 14. The Egyptians ... made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick — Ruins of great brick buildings are found in all parts of Egypt. The use of crude brick, baked in the sun, was universal in upper and lower Egypt, both for public and private buildings; all but the temples themselves were of crude brick. It is worthy of remark that more bricks bearing the name of Thothmes III, who is supposed to have been the king of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, have been discovered than of any other

period [WILKINSON]. Parties of these brickmakers are seen depicted on the ancient monuments with "taskmasters," some standing, others in a sitting posture beside the laborers, with their uplifted sticks in their hands.

- **15.** the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives Two only were spoken to either they were the heads of a large corporation [LABORDE], or, by tampering with these two, the king designed to terrify the rest into secret compliance with his wishes [CALVIN].
- **16.** *if it be a son*, *then ye shall kill him* Opinions are divided, however, what was the method of destruction which the king did recommend. Some think that the "stools" were low seats on which these obstetric practitioners sat by the bedside of the Hebrew women; and that, as they might easily discover the sex, so, whenever a boy appeared, they were to strangle it, unknown to its parents; while others are of opinion that the "stools" were stone troughs, by the river side into which, when the infants were washed, they were to be, as it were, accidentally dropped.
- **17.** But the midwives feared God Their faith inspired them with such courage as to risk their lives, by disobeying the mandate of a cruel tyrant; but it was blended with weakness, which made them shrink from speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
- **20, 21.** *God dealt well with the midwives* This represents God as rewarding them for telling a lie. This difficulty is wholly removed by a more correct translation. To "make" or "build up a house" in *Hebrew* idiom, means to have a numerous progeny. The passage then should be rendered thus: "God protected the midwives, and the people waxed very mighty; and because the midwives feared, the Hebrews grew and prospered."

### **EXODUS** 2:1-10.

#### BIRTH AND PRESERVATION OF MOSES.

- **1.** *there went a man of the house of Levi*, etc. Amram was the husband and Jochebed the wife (compare Exodus 6:2 Numbers 26:59). The marriage took place, and two children, Miriam and Aaron, were born some years before the infanticidal edict.
- **2.** *the woman ... bare a son*, etc. Some extraordinary appearance of remarkable comeliness led his parents to augur his future greatness. Beauty was regarded by the ancients as a mark of the divine favor.

*hid him three months* — The parents were a pious couple, and the measures they took were prompted not only by parental attachment, but by a strong faith in the blessing of God prospering their endeavors to save the infant.

**3.** *she took for him an ark of bulrushes* — papyrus, a thick, strong, and tough reed.

*slime* — the mud of the Nile, which, when hardened, is very tenacious.

**pitch** — mineral tar. Boats of this description are seen daily floating on the surface of the river, with no other caulking than Nile mud (compare Isaiah 18:2), and they are perfectly watertight, unless the coating is forced off by stormy weather.

*flags* — a general term for sea or river weed. The chest was not, as is often represented, committed to the bosom of the water but laid on the bank, where it would naturally appear to have been drifted by the current and arrested by the reedy thicket. The spot is traditionally said to be the Isle of Rodah, near Old Cairo.

- **4.** *his sister* Miriam would probably be a girl of ten or twelve years of age at the time.
- **5.** the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river The occasion is thought to have been a religious solemnity which the royal family opened by bathing in the sacred stream. Peculiar sacredness was attached to those portions of the Nile which flowed near the temples. The water was there fenced off as a protection from the crocodiles; and doubtless the princess had an enclosure reserved for her own use, the road to which seems to have been well known to Jochebed.

walked along — in procession or in file.

**she sent her maid** — her immediate attendant. The term is different from that rendered "maidens."

- **6-9.** when she had opened it, she saw the child The narrative is picturesque. No tale of romance ever described a plot more skilfully laid or more full of interest in the development. The expedient of the ark, the slime and pitch, the choice of the time and place, the appeal to the sensibilities of the female breast, the stationing of the sister as a watch of the proceedings, her timely suggestion of a nurse, and the engagement of the mother herself — all bespeak a more than ordinary measure of ingenuity as well as intense solicitude on the part of the parents. But the origin of the scheme was most probably owing to a divine suggestion, as its success was due to an overruling Providence, who not only preserved the child's life, but provided for his being trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Hence it is said to have been done by faith Hebrews 11:23), either in the general promise of deliverance, or some special revelation made to Amram and Jochebed — and in this view, the pious couple gave a beautiful example of a firm reliance on the word of God, united with an active use of the most suitable means.
- **10.** she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter Though it must have been nearly as severe a trial for Jochebed to part with him the second time as the first, she was doubtless reconciled to it by her belief in his high destination as the future deliverer of Israel. His age when removed to the palace is not stated; but he was old enough to be well instructed in the

principles of the true religion; and those early impressions, deepened by the power of divine grace, were never forgotten or effaced.

*he became her son* — by adoption, and his high rank afforded him advantages in education, which in the Providence of God were made subservient to far different purposes from what his royal patroness intended.

she called his name Moses — His parents might, as usual, at the time of his circumcision, have given him a name, which is traditionally said to have been Joachim. But the name chosen by the princess, whether of Egyptian or Hebrew origin, is the only one by which he has ever been known to the church; and it is a permanent memorial of the painful incidents of his birth and infancy.

### **EXODUS** 2:11-25.

#### HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE HEBREWS.

11. in those days, when Moses was grown — not in age and stature only, but in power as well as in renown for accomplishments and military prowess (\*\*\*PActs 7:22). There is a gap here in the sacred history which, however, is supplied by the inspired commentary of Paul, who has fully detailed the reasons as well as extent of the change that took place in his worldly condition; and whether, as some say, his royal mother had proposed to make him coregent and successor to the crown, or some other circumstances, led to a declaration of his mind, he determined to renounce the palace and identify himself with the suffering people of God (\*\*\*EHE) The descent of some great sovereigns, like Diocletian and Charles V, from a throne into private life, is nothing to the sacrifice which Moses made through the power of faith.

he went out unto his brethren — to make a full and systematic inspection of their condition in the various parts of the country where they were dispersed (\*\*\*Acts 7:23), and he adopted this proceeding in pursuance of the patriotic purpose that the faith, which is of the operation of God, was even then forming in his heart.

he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew — one of the taskmasters scourging a Hebrew slave without any just cause (\*\*Acts 7:24), and in so cruel a manner, that he seems to have died under the barbarous treatment — for the conditions of the sacred story imply such a fatal issue. The sight was new and strange to him, and though pre-eminent for meekness (\*\*Numbers 12:3), he was fired with indignation.

- 12. he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand This act of Moses may seem and indeed by some has been condemned as rash and unjustifiable in plain terms, a deed of assassination. But we must not judge of his action in such a country and age by the standard of law and the notions of right which prevail in our Christian land; and, besides, not only is it not spoken of as a crime in Scripture or as distressing the perpetrator with remorse, but according to existing customs among nomadic tribes, he was bound to avenge the blood of a brother. The person he slew, however, being a government officer, he had rendered himself amenable to the laws of Egypt, and therefore he endeavored to screen himself from the consequences by concealment of the corpse.
- 13, 14. two men of the Hebrews strove together His benevolent mediation in this strife, though made in the kindest and mildest manner, was resented, and the taunt of the aggressor showing that Moses' conduct on the preceding day had become generally known, he determined to consult his safety by immediate flight (\*\*\*Phebrews 11:27). These two incidents prove that neither were the Israelites yet ready to go out of Egypt, nor Moses prepared to be their leader (\*\*\*Dames 1:20). It was by the staff and not the sword by the meekness, and not the wrath of Moses that God was to accomplish that great work of deliverance. Both he and the people of Israel were for forty years more to be cast into the furnace of affliction, yet it was therein that He had chosen them (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 48:10).
- **15.** *Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh* His flight took place in the second year of Thothmes I.

dwelt in the land of Midian — situated on the eastern shore of the gulf of the Red Sea and occupied by the posterity of Midian the son of Cush. The territory extended northward to the top of the gulf and westward far across the desert of Sinai. And from their position near the sea, they early

combined trading with pastoral pursuits (\*\*\*Genesis 37:28). The headquarters of Jethro are supposed to have been where Dahab-Madian now stands; and from Moses coming direct to that place, he may have traveled with a caravan of merchants. But another place is fixed by tradition in Wady Shuweib, or Jethro's valley, on the east of the mountain of Moses.

sat down by a well — (See on Genesis 29:3).

**16-22.** *the priest of Midian* — or, "prince of Midian." As the officers were usually conjoined, he was the ruler also of the people called Cushites or Ethiopians, and like many other chiefs of pastoral people in that early age, he still retained the faith and worship of the true God.

seven daughters — were shepherdesses to whom Moses was favorably introduced by an act of courtesy and courage in protecting them from the rude shepherds of some neighboring tribe at a well. He afterwards formed a close and permanent alliance with this family by marrying one of the daughters, Zipporah, "a little bird," called a Cushite or Ethiopian (\*\*\*Numbers 12:1), and whom Moses doubtless obtained in the manner of Jacob by service [see \*\*\*Exodus 3:1]. He had by her two sons, whose names were, according to common practice, commemorative of incidents in the family history [\*\*\*Exodus 18:3,4].

23. the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage — The language seems to imply that the Israelites had experienced a partial relaxation, probably through the influence of Moses' royal patroness; but in the reign of her father's successor the persecution was renewed with increased severity.

### **EXODUS** 3:1-22.

#### DIVINE APPEARANCE AND COMMISSION TO MOSES.

**1.** Now Moses kept the flock — This employment he had entered on in furtherance of his matrimonial views (see on Exodus 2:21), but it is probable he was continuing his service now on other terms like Jacob during the latter years of his stay with Laban (Genesis 30:28).

he led the flock to the backside of the desert — that is, on the west of the desert [Gesenius], assuming Jethro's headquarters to have been at Dahab. The route by which Moses led his flock must have been west through the wide valley called by the Arabs, Wady-es-Zugherah [Robinson], which led into the interior of the wilderness.

**Mountain of God** — so named either according to *Hebrew* idiom from its great height, as "great mountains," *Hebrew*, "mountains of God" (\*\*\*Psalm 36:6); "goodly cedars," *Hebrew*, "cedars of God" (\*\*\*Psalm 80:10); or some think from its being the old abode of "the glory"; or finally from its being the theater of transactions most memorable in the history of the true religion to Horeb — rather, "Horeb-ward."

Horeb — that is, "dry," "desert," was the general name for the mountainous district in which Sinai is situated, and of which it is a part. (See on Exodus 19:2). It was used to designate the region comprehending that immense range of lofty, desolate, and barren hills, at the base of which, however, there are not only many patches of verdure to be seen, but almost all the valleys, or wadys, as they are called, show a thin coating of vegetation, which, towards the south, becomes more luxuriant. The Arab shepherds seldom take their flocks to a greater distance than one day's journey from their camp. Moses must have gone at least two days' journey, and although he seems to have been only following his pastoral course, that region, from its numerous springs in the

clefts of the rocks being the chief resort of the tribes during the summer heats, the Providence of God led him thither for an important purpose.

**2, 3.** the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire — It is common in Scripture to represent the elements and operations of nature, as winds, fires, earthquakes, pestilence, everything enlisted in executing the divine will, as the "angels" or messengers of God. But in such cases God Himself is considered as really, though invisibly, present. Here the preternatural fire may be primarily meant by the expression "angel of the Lord"; but it is clear that under this symbol, the Divine Being was present, whose name is given (\*\*TEX\*\*Codus 3:4,6), and elsewhere called the angel of the covenant, Jehovah-Jesus.

out of the midst of a bush — the wild acacia or thorn, with which that desert abounds, and which is generally dry and brittle, so much so, that at certain seasons, a spark might kindle a district far and wide into a blaze. A fire, therefore, being in the midst of such a desert bush was a "great sight." It is generally supposed to have been emblematic of the Israelites condition in Egypt — oppressed by a grinding servitude and a bloody persecution, and yet, in spite of the cruel policy that was bent on annihilating them, they continued as numerous and thriving as ever. The reason was "God was in the midst of them." The symbol may also represent the present state of the Jews, as well as of the Church generally in the world.

- **4.** when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see The manifestations which God anciently made of Himself were always accompanied by clear, unmistakable signs that the communications were really from heaven. This certain evidence was given to Moses. He saw a fire, but no human agent to kindle it; he heard a voice, but no human lips from which it came; he saw no living Being, but One was in the bush, in the heat of the flames, who knew him and addressed him by name. Who could this be but the Divine Being?
- **5.** put off thy shoes The direction was in conformity with a usage which was well known to Moses, for the Egyptian priests observed it in their temples, and it is observed in all Eastern countries where the people take off their shoes or sandals, as we do our hats. But the Eastern idea is not precisely the same as the Western. With us, the removal of the hat is an

expression of reverence for the place we enter, or rather of Him who is worshipped there. With them the removal of the shoes is a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness.

- 6-8. I am the God ... come down to deliver The reverential awe of Moses must have been relieved by the divine Speaker (see Matthew 22:32), announcing Himself in His covenant character, and by the welcome intelligence communicated. Moreover, the time, as well as all the circumstances of this miraculous appearance, were such as to give him an illustrious display of God's faithfulness to His promises. The period of Israel's journey and affliction in Egypt had been predicted (Genesis 15:13), and it was during the last year of the term which had still to run that the Lord appeared in the burning bush.
- **10-22.** *Come now therefore, and I will send thee* Considering the patriotic views that had formerly animated the breast of Moses, we might have anticipated that no mission could have been more welcome to his heart than to be employed in the national emancipation of Israel. But he evinced great reluctance to it and stated a variety of objections [\*\*Exodus 3:11,13 \*\*\*1,10] all of which were successfully met and removed and the happy issue of his labors was minutely described.

### **™EXODUS** 4:1-31.

#### MIRACULOUS CHANGE OF THE ROD, ETC.

- **1.** *But*, *behold Hebrew*, "If," "perhaps," "they will not believe me." What evidence can I produce of my divine mission? There was still a want of full confidence, not in the character and divine power of his employer, but in His presence and power always accompanying him. He insinuated that his communication might be rejected and he himself treated as an impostor.
- **2.** *the Lord said*, ... *What is that in thine hand*? The question was put not to elicit information which God required, but to draw the particular attention of Moses.
- *A rod* probably the shepherd's crook among the Arabs, a long staff, with a curved head, varying from three to six feet in length.
- **6.** Put now thine hand into thy bosom the open part of his outer robe, worn about the girdle.
- **9.** *take of the water of the river* Nile. Those miracles, two of which were wrought then, and the third to be performed on his arrival in Goshen, were at first designed to encourage him as satisfactory proofs of his divine mission, and to be repeated for the special confirmation of his embassy before the Israelites.
- **10-13.** *I am not eloquent* It is supposed that Moses labored under a natural defect of utterance or had a difficulty in the free and fluent expression of his ideas in the Egyptian language, which he had long disused. This new objection was also overruled, but still Moses, who foresaw the manifold difficulties of the undertaking, was anxious to be freed from the responsibility.

- 14. the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses The Divine Being is not subject to ebullitions of passion; but His displeasure was manifested by transferring the honor of the priesthood, which would otherwise have been bestowed on Moses, to Aaron, who was from this time destined to be the head of the house of Levi ( Chronicles 23:13). Marvellous had been His condescension and patience in dealing with Moses; and now every remaining scruple was removed by the unexpected and welcome intelligence that his brother Aaron was to be his colleague. God knew from the beginning what Moses would do, but He reserves this motive to the last as the strongest to rouse his languid heart, and Moses now fully and cordially complied with the call. If we are surprised at his backwardness amidst all the signs and promises that were given him, we must admire his candor and honesty in recording it.
- **18.** *Moses* ... *returned to Jethro* Being in his service, it was right to obtain his consent, but Moses evinced piety, humility, and prudence, in not divulging the special object of his journey.
- **19.** *all the men are dead which sought thy life* The death of the Egyptian monarch took place in the four hundred and twenty-ninth year of the Hebrew sojourn in that land, and that event, according to the law of Egypt, took off his proscription of Moses, if it had been publicly issued.
- **20.** Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass—
  Septuagint, "asses." Those animals are not now used in the desert of Sinai except by the Arabs for short distances.

returned — entered on his journey towards Egypt.

he took the rod of God — so called from its being appropriated to His service, and because whatever miracles it might be employed in performing would be wrought not by its inherent properties, but by a divine power following on its use. (Compare Acts 3:12).

**24.** *inn* — *Hebrew*, "a halting place for the night."

the Lord met him, and sought to kill him — that is, he was either overwhelmed with mental distress or overtaken by a sudden and dangerous malady. The narrative is obscure, but the meaning seems to be, that, led during his illness to a strict self-examination, he was deeply pained and

grieved at the thought of having, to please his wife, postponed or neglected the circumcision of one of his sons, probably the younger. To dishonor that sign and seal of the covenant was criminal in any Hebrew, peculiarly so in one destined to be the leader and deliverer of the Hebrews; and he seems to have felt his sickness as a merited chastisement for his sinful omission. Concerned for her husband's safety, Zipporah overcomes her maternal feelings of aversion to the painful rite, performs herself, by means of one of the sharp flints with which that part of the desert abounds, an operation which her husband, on whom the duty devolved, was unable to do, and having brought the bloody evidence, exclaimed in the painful excitement of her feelings that from love to him she had risked the life of her child [Calvin, Bullinger, Rosenmuller].

- **26.** So he let him go Moses recovered; but the remembrance of this critical period in his life would stimulate the Hebrew legislator to enforce a faithful attention to the rite of circumcision when it was established as a divine ordinance in Israel, and made their peculiar distinction as a people.
- **27.** Aaron met him in the mount of God, and kissed him After a separation of forty years, their meeting would be mutually happy. Similar are the salutations of Arab friends when they meet in the desert still; conspicuous is the kiss on each side of the head.
- **29-31.** *Moses and Aaron went* towards Egypt, Zipporah and her sons having been sent back. (Compare \*Exodus 18:2).

gathered ... all the elders — Aaron was spokesman, and Moses performed the appointed miracles — through which "the people" (that is, the elders) believed (\*\*1724\*\* Kings 17:24\*\* Joshua 3:2) and received the joyful tidings of the errand on which Moses had come with devout thanksgiving. Formerly they had slighted the message and rejected the messenger. Formerly Moses had gone in his own strength; now he goes leaning on God, and strong only through faith in Him who had sent him. Israel also had been taught a useful lesson, and it was good for both that they had been afflicted.

**EXODUS** 5:1-23.

#### FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH.

- **1.** *Moses and Aaron went in* As representatives of the Hebrews, they were entitled to ask an audience of the king, and their thorough Egyptian training taught them how and when to seek it.
- and told Pharaoh When introduced, they delivered a message in the name of the God of Israel. This is the first time He is mentioned by that national appellation in Scripture. It seems to have been used by divine direction (\*\*Exodus 4:2) and designed to put honor on the Hebrews in their depressed condition (\*\*Hebrews 11:16).
- **2.** And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord rather "Jehovah." Lord was a common name applied to objects of worship; but Jehovah was a name he had never heard of. Pharaoh estimated the character and power of this God by the abject and miserable condition of the worshippers and concluded that He held as low a rank among the gods as His people did in the nation. To demonstrate the supremacy of the true God over all the gods of Egypt, was the design of the plagues.
- *I know not the Lord*, *neither will I let Israel go* As his honor and interest were both involved he determined to crush this attempt, and in a tone of insolence, or perhaps profanity, rejected the request for the release of the Hebrew slaves.
- **3.** The God of the Hebrews hath met with us Instead of being provoked into reproaches or threats, they mildly assured him that it was not a proposal originating among themselves, but a duty enjoined on them by their God. They had for a long series of years been debarred from the privilege of religious worship, and as there was reason to fear that a continued neglect of divine ordinances would draw down upon them the judgments of offended heaven, they begged permission to go three days'

journey into the desert — a place of seclusion — where their sacrificial observances would neither suffer interruption nor give umbrage to the Egyptians. In saying this, they concealed their ultimate design of abandoning the kingdom, and by making this partial request at first, they probably wished to try the king's temper before they disclosed their intentions any farther. But they said only what God had put in their mouths (\*\*PPD\*\*Exodus 3:12,18), and this "legalizes the specific act, while it gives no sanction to the general habit of dissimulation" [Chalmers].

- **4.** Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? etc. Without taking any notice of what they had said, he treated them as ambitious demagogues, who were appealing to the superstitious feelings of the people, to stir up sedition and diffuse a spirit of discontent, which spreading through so vast a body of slaves, might endanger the peace of the country.
- **6.** *Pharaoh commanded* It was a natural consequence of the high displeasure created by this interview that he should put additional burdens on the oppressed Israelites.

*taskmasters* — Egyptian overseers, appointed to exact labor of the Israelites.

- *officers* Hebrews placed over their brethren, under the taskmasters, precisely analogous to the Arab officers set over the Arab Fellahs, the poor laborers in modern Egypt.
- 7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick The making of bricks appears to have been a government monopoly as the ancient bricks are nearly all stamped with the name of a king, and they were formed, as they are still in Lower Egypt, of clay mixed with chopped straw and dried or hardened in the sun. The Israelites were employed in this drudgery; and though they still dwelt in Goshen and held property in flocks and herds, they were compelled in rotation to serve in the brick quarries, pressed in alternating groups, just as the *fellaheen*, or peasants, are marched by press gangs in the same country still.

*let them go and gather straw for themselves* — The enraged despot did not issue orders to do an impracticable thing. The Egyptian reapers in the corn

harvest were accustomed merely to cut off the ears and leave the stalk standing.

- **8.** *tale* an appointed number of bricks. The materials of their labor were to be no longer supplied, and yet, as the same amount of produce was exacted daily, it is impossible to imagine more aggravated cruelty a perfect specimen of Oriental despotism.
- **12.** So the people were scattered It was an immense grievance to the laborers individually, but there would be no hindrance from the husbandmen whose fields they entered, as almost all the lands of Egypt were in the possession of the crown (\*\*Genesis 47:20).
- 13-19. And the taskmasters hasted them ... officers ... beaten As the nearest fields were bared and the people had to go farther for stubble, it was impossible for them to meet the demand by the usual tale of bricks. "The beating of the officers is just what might have been expected from an Eastern tyrant, especially in the valley of the Nile, as it appears from the monuments, that ancient Egypt, like modern China, was principally governed by the stick" [TAYLOR]. "The mode of beating was by the offender being laid flat on the ground and generally held by the hands and feet while the chastisement was administered" [WILKINSON].
- **20, 21.** they met Moses ... The Lord look upon you, and judge Thus the deliverer of Israel found that this patriotic interference did, in the first instance, only aggravate the evil he wished to remove, and that instead of receiving the gratitude, he was loaded with the reproaches of his countrymen. But as the greatest darkness is immediately before the dawn, so the people of God are often plunged into the deepest affliction when on the eve of their deliverance; and so it was in this case.

### **EXODUS** 6:1-13.

#### RENEWAL OF THE PROMISE.

- **1.** *the Lord said unto Moses* The Lord, who is long-suffering and indulgent to the errors and infirmities of His people, made allowance for the mortification of Moses as the result of this first interview and cheered him with the assurance of a speedy and successful termination to his embassy.
- **2.** And God spake unto Moses For his further encouragement, there was made to him an emphatic repetition of the promise (\*\*\*Exodus 3:20).
- **3.** *I* ... *God Almighty* All enemies must fall, all difficulties must vanish before My omnipotent power, and the patriarchs had abundant proofs of this.

but by my name, etc. — rather, interrogatively, by My name Jehovah was I not known to them? Amos not I, the Almighty God, who pledged My honor for the fulfillment of the covenant, also the self-existent God who lives to accomplish it? Rest assured, therefore, that I shall bring it to pass. This passage has occasioned much discussion; and it has been thought by many to intimate that as the name Jehovah was not known to the patriarchs, at least in the full bearing or practical experience of it, the honor of the disclosure was reserved to Moses, who was the first sent with a message in the name of Jehovah, and enabled to attest it by a series of public miracles.

9-11. *Moses spake so unto the children of Israel* — The increased severities inflicted on the Israelites seem to have so entirely crushed their spirits, as well as irritated them, that they refused to listen to any more communications (\*Exodus 14:12). Even the faith of Moses himself was faltering; and he would have abandoned the enterprise in despair had he not received a positive command from God to revisit the people without

delay, and at the same time renew their demand on the king in a more decisive and peremptory tone.

12. how then shall ... who am of uncircumcised lips? — A metaphorical expression among the Hebrews, who, taught to look on the circumcision of any part as denoting perfection, signified its deficiency or unsuitableness by uncircumcision. The words here express how painfully Moses felt his want of utterance or persuasive oratory. He seems to have fallen into the same deep despondency as his brethren, and to be shrinking with nervous timidity from a difficult, if not desperate, cause. If he had succeeded so ill with the people, whose dearest interests were all involved, what better hope could he entertain of his making more impression on the heart of a king elated with pride and strong in the possession of absolute power? How strikingly was the indulgent forbearance of God displayed towards His people amid all their backwardness to hail His announcement of approaching deliverance! No perverse complaints or careless indifference on their part retarded the development of His gracious purposes. On the contrary, here, as generally, the course of His providence is slow in the infliction of judgments, while it moves more quickly, as it were, when misery is to be relieved or benefits conferred.

EXODUS 6:14-30.

## THE GENEALOGY OF MOSES.

14, 15. These be the heads of their fathers' houses — chiefs or governors of their houses. The insertion of this genealogical table in this part of the narrative was intended to authenticate the descent of Moses and Aaron. Both of them were commissioned to act so important a part in the events transacted in the court of Egypt and afterwards elevated to so high offices in the government and Church of God, that it was of the utmost importance that their lineage should be accurately traced. Reuben and Simeon being the oldest of Jacob's sons, a passing notice is taken of them, and then the historian advances to the enumeration of the principal persons in the house of Levi [\*\*Texodus 6:16-19].

- **20.** Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it "his cousin."
- **23.** *Elisheba* that is, Elizabethan. These minute particulars recorded of the family of Aaron, while he has passed over his own, indicate the real modesty of Moses. An ambitious man or an impostor would have acted in a different manner.

## **EXODUS** 7:1-25.

### SECOND INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH.

**1.** *the Lord said unto Moses* — He is here encouraged to wait again on the king — not, however, as formerly, in the attitude of a humble suppliant, but now armed with credentials as God's ambassador, and to make his demand in a tone and manner which no earthly monarch or court ever witnessed

*I have made thee a god* — "made," that is, set, appointed; "a god"; that is, he was to act in this business as God's representative, to act and speak in His name and to perform things beyond the ordinary course of nature. The Orientals familiarly say of a man who is eminently great or wise, "he is a god" among men.

**Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet** — that is, "interpreter" or "spokesman." The one was to be the vicegerent of God, and the other must be considered the speaker throughout all the ensuing scenes, even though his name is not expressly mentioned.

- **3.** *I will harden Pharaoh's heart* This would be the *result*. But the divine message would be the *occasion*, not the *cause* of the king's impenitent obduracy.
- **4, 5.** *I may lay mine hand upon Egypt*, etc. The succession of terrible judgments with which the country was about to be scourged would fully demonstrate the supremacy of Israel's God.
- **7.** Moses was fourscore years old This advanced age was a pledge that they had not been readily betrayed into a rash or hazardous enterprise, and that under its attendant infirmities they could not have carried through the work on which they were entering had they not been supported by a divine hand

- **9.** When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, etc. The king would naturally demand some evidence of their having been sent from God; and as he would expect the ministers of his own gods to do the same works, the contest, in the nature of the case, would be one of miracles. Notice has already been taken of the rod of Moses (\*\*DE\*xodus 4:2), but rods were carried also by all nobles and official persons in the court of Pharaoh. It was an Egyptian custom, and the rods were symbols of authority or rank. Hence God commanded His servants to use a rod.
- **10.** Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, etc. It is to be presumed that Pharaoh had demanded a proof of their divine mission.
- **11.** Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers, etc. His object in calling them was to ascertain whether this doing of Aaron's was really a work of divine power or merely a feat of magical art. The magicians of Egypt in modern times have been long celebrated adepts in charming serpents, and particularly by pressing the nape of the neck, they throw them into a kind of catalepsy, which renders them stiff and immovable thus seeming to change them into a rod. They conceal the serpent about their persons, and by acts of legerdemain produce it from their dress, stiff and straight as a rod. Just the same trick was played off by their ancient predecessors, the most renowned of whom, Jannes and Jambres (\*\*TRO\*2 Timothy 3:8), were called in on this occasion. They had time after the summons to make suitable preparations and so it appears they succeeded by their "enchantments" in practising an illusion on the senses.
- **12.** but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods This was what they could not be prepared for, and the discomfiture appeared in the loss of their rods, which were probably real serpents.
- **14.** *Pharaoh's heart is hardened* Whatever might have been his first impressions, they were soon dispelled; and when he found his magicians making similar attempts, he concluded that Aaron's affair was a magical deception, the secret of which was not known to his wise men.
- **15.** *Get thee unto Pharaoh* Now began those appalling miracles of judgment by which the God of Israel, through His ambassadors, proved His sole and unchallengeable supremacy over all the gods of Egypt, and which were the natural phenomena of Egypt, at an unusual season, and in

a miraculous degree of intensity. The court of Egypt, whether held at Rameses, or Memphis, or Tanis in the field of Zoan (\*\*Psalm 78:12), was the scene of those extraordinary transactions, and Moses must have resided during that terrible period in the immediate neighborhood.

in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water — for the purpose of ablutions or devotions perhaps; for the Nile was an object of superstitious reverence, the patron deity of the country. It might be that Moses had been denied admission into the palace; but be that as it may, the river was to be the subject of the first plague, and therefore, he was ordered to repair to its banks with the miracle-working rod, now to be raised, not in demonstration, but in judgment, if the refractory spirit of the king should still refuse consent to Israel's departure for their sacred rites.

17-21. Aaron lifted up the rose and smote the waters, etc. — Whether the water was changed into real blood, or only the appearance of it (and Omnipotence could effect the one as easily as the other), this was a severe calamity. How great must have been the disappointment and disgust throughout the land when the river became of a blood red color, of which they had a national abhorrence; their favorite beverage became a nauseous draught, and the fish, which formed so large an article of food, were destroyed. [See on Numbers 11:5.] The immense scale on which the plague was inflicted is seen by its extending to "the streams," or branches of the Nile — to the "rivers," the canals, the "ponds" and "pools," that which is left after an overflow, the reservoirs, and the many domestic vessels in which the Nile water was kept to filter. And accordingly the sufferings of the people from thirst must have been severe. Nothing could more humble the pride of Egypt than this dishonor brought on their national god.

**22.** And the magicians ... did so with their enchantments, etc. — Little or no pure water could be procured, and therefore their imitation must have been on a small scale — the only drinkable water available being dug among the sands. It must have been on a sample or specimen of water dyed red with some coloring matter. But it was sufficient to serve as a pretext or command for the king to turn unmoved and go to his house.

**EXODUS** 8:1-15.

### PLAGUE OF FROGS.

- **1.** *the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh* The duration of the first plague for a whole week must have satisfied all that it was produced not by any accidental causes, but by the agency of omnipotent power. As a judgment of God, however, it produced no good effect, and Moses was commanded to wait on the king and threaten him, in the event of his continued obstinacy, with the infliction of a new and different plague. As Pharaoh's answer is not given, it may be inferred to have been unfavorable, for the rod was again raised.
- **2.** *I* will smite all thy borders with frogs Those animals, though the natural spawn of the river, and therefore objects familiar to the people, were on this occasion miraculously multiplied to an amazing extent, and it is probable that the ova of the frogs, which had been previously deposited in the mire and marshes, were miraculously brought to perfection at once.
- **3.** *bedchamber* ... *bed* mats strewed on the floor as well as more sumptuous divans of the rich.

*ovens* — holes made in the ground and the sides of which are plastered with mortar.

- **kneading-troughs** Those used in Egypt were bowls of wicker or rush work. What must have been the state of the people when they could find no means of escape from the cold, damp touch and unsightly presence of the frogs, as they alighted on every article and vessel of food!
- **5, 6.** Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, etc. The miracle consisted in the reptiles leaving their marshes at the very time he commanded them.

**7.** the magicians did so with their enchantments — required no great art to make the offensive reptiles appear on any small spot of ground. What they undertook to do already existed in abundance all around. They would better have shown their power by removing the frogs.

8-15. Pharaoh called, ... Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me — The frog, which was now used as an instrument of affliction, whether from reverence or abhorrence, was an object of national superstition with the Egyptians, the god Ptha being represented with a frog's head. But the vast numbers, together with their stench, made them an intolerable nuisance so that the king was so far humbled as to promise that, if Moses would intercede for their removal, he would consent to the departure of Israel, and in compliance with this appeal, they were withdrawn at the very hour named by the monarch himself. But many, while suffering the consequences of their sins, make promises of amendment and obedience which they afterwards forget; and so Pharaoh, when he saw there was a respite, was again hardened [ADNS] Exodus 8:15].

**™**EXODUS 8:16-19.

#### PLAGUE OF LICE.

16. smite the dust of the land, etc. — Aaron's rod, by the direction of Moses, who was commanded by God, was again raised, and the land was filled with gnats, mosquitoes — that is the proper meaning of the original term. In ordinary circumstances they embitter life in Eastern countries, and therefore the terrible nature of this infliction on Egypt may be imagined when no precautions could preserve from their painful sting. The very smallness and insignificance of these fierce insects made them a dreadful scourge. The magicians never attempted any imitation, and what neither the blood of the river nor the nuisance of the frogs had done, the visitation of this tiny enemy constrained them to acknowledge "this is the finger of God" — properly "gods," for they spoke as heathens.

## **EXODUS** 8:20-32.

### PLAGUE OF FLIES.

20-24. Rise up early ... Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water, etc. — Pharaoh still appearing obdurate, Moses was ordered to meet him while walking on the banks of the Nile and repeat his request for the liberation of Israel, threatening in case of continued refusal to cover every house from the palace to the cottage with swarms of flies — while, as a proof of the power that accomplished this judgment, the land of Goshen should be exempted from the calamity. The appeal was equally vain as before, and the predicted evil overtook the country in the form of what was not "flies," such as we are accustomed to, but divers sorts of flies (\*\*Psalm 78:45), the gad fly, the cockroach, the Egyptian beetle, for all these are mentioned by different writers. They are very destructive, some of them inflicting severe bites on animals, others destroying clothes, books, plants, every thing. The worship of flies, particularly of the beetle, was a prominent part of the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The employment of these winged deities to chastise them must have been painful and humiliating to the Egyptians while it must at the same time have strengthened the faith of the Israelites in the God of their fathers as the only object of worship.

25-32. Pharaoh called for Moses, ... Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land, etc. — Between impatient anxiety to be freed from this scourge and a reluctance on the part of the Hebrew bondsmen, the king followed the course of expediency; he proposed to let them free to engage in their religious rites within any part of the kingdom. But true to his instructions, Moses would accede to no such arrangement; he stated a most valid reason to show the danger of it, and the king having yielded so far as to allow them a brief holiday across the border, annexed to this concession a request that Moses would entreat with Jehovah for the removal of the plague. He promised to do so, and it was removed the following day. But no sooner was the pressure over than the spirit of Pharaoh, like a bent bow, sprang back to its wonted obduracy, and, regardless of his promise, he refused to let the people depart.

**EXODUS** 9:1-7.

### MURRAIN OF BEASTS.

3-5. Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle — A fifth application was made to Pharaoh in behalf of the Israelites by Moses, who was instructed to tell him that, if he persisted in opposing their departure, a pestilence would be sent among all the flocks and herds of the Egyptians, while those of the Israelites would be spared. As he showed no intention of keeping his promise, he was still a mark for the arrows of the Almighty's quiver, and the threatened plague of which he was forewarned was executed. But it is observable that in this instance it was not inflicted through the instrumentality or waving of Aaron's rod, but directly by the hand of the Lord, and the fixing of the precise time tended still further to determine the true character of the calamity (and Jeremiah 12:4).

**6.** all the cattle of Egypt died — not absolutely every beast, for we find (\*\*Exodus 9:19,21) that there were still some left; but a great many died of each herd — the mortality was frequent and widespread. The adaptation of this judgment consisted in Egyptians venerating the more useful animals such as the ox, the cow, and the ram; in all parts of the country temples were reared and divine honors paid to these domesticated beasts, and thus while the pestilence caused a great loss in money, it also struck a heavy blow at their superstition.

7. Pharaoh sent ... there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead — The despatch of confidential messengers indicates that he would not give credit to vague reports, and we may conclude that some impression had been made on his mind by that extraordinary exemption, but it was neither a good nor a permanent impression. His pride and obstinacy were in no degree subdued.

## **EXODUS** 9:8-17.

### PLAGUE OF BOILS.

- 8. Take to you handfuls of ashes, etc. The next plague assailed the persons of the Egyptians, and it appeared in the form of ulcerous eruptions upon the skin and flesh (\*\*\*Leviticus 13:20 \*\*\*2\*\*2 Kings 20:7\*\* Job 2:7). That this epidemic did not arise from natural causes was evident from its taking effect from the particular action of Moses done in the sight of Pharaoh. The attitude he assumed was similar to that of Eastern magicians, who, "when they pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, take the ashes of cows' dung (that is, from a common fire) and throw them in the air, saying to the objects of their displeasure, such a sickness or such a curse shall come upon you" [ROBERTS].
- **10.** Moses took ashes from the furnace Hebrew, "brick-kiln." The magicians, being sufferers in their own persons, could do nothing, though they had been called; and as the brick-kiln was one of the principal instruments of oppression to the Israelites [\*\*Deuteronomy 4:20 \*\*IKings 8:51 \*\*ID\*\*Jeremiah 11:4], it was now converted into a means of chastisement to the Egyptians, who were made to read their sin in their punishment.

**™EXODUS** 9:18-35.

### PLAGUE OF HAIL.

**18.** *I* will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, etc. — The seventh plague which Pharaoh's hardened heart provoked was that of hail, a phenomenon which must have produced the greatest astonishment and consternation in Egypt as rain and hailstones, accompanied by thunder and lightning, were very rare occurrences.

*such as hath not been in Egypt* — In the Delta, or lower Egypt, where the scene is laid, rain occasionally falls between January and March — hail is not unknown, and thunder sometimes heard. But a storm, not only

exhibiting all these elements, but so terrific that hailstones of immense size fell, thunder pealed in awful volleys, and lightning swept the ground like fire, was an unexampled calamity.

- 20, 21. He that feared the word of the Lord ... regarded not, etc. Due premonition, it appears, had been publicly given of the impending tempest the cattle seem to have been sent out to graze, which is from January to April, when alone pasturage can be obtained, and accordingly the cattle were in the fields. This storm occurring at that season, not only struck universal terror into the minds of the people, but occasioned the destruction of all people and cattle which, in neglect of the warning, had been left in the fields, as well as of all vegetation [\*\*Exodus 9:25]. It was the more appalling because hailstones in Egypt are small and of little force; lightning also is scarcely ever known to produce fatal effects; and to enhance the wonder, not a trace of any storm was found in Goshen [\*\*Exodus 9:26].
- **27-35.** *Pharaoh sent*, *and called for Moses and Aaron*, *and said unto them*, *I have sinned* This awful display of divine displeasure did seriously impress the mind of Pharaoh, and, under the weight of his convictions, he humbles himself to confess he has done wrong in opposing the divine will. At the same time he calls for Moses to intercede for cessation of the calamity. Moses accedes to his earnest wishes, and this most awful visitation ended. But his repentance proved a transient feeling, and his obduracy soon became as great as before.
- 31, 32. the flax and the barley was smitten, etc. The peculiarities that are mentioned in these cereal products arise from the climate and physical constitution of Egypt. In that country flax and barley are almost ripe when wheat and rye (spelt) are green. And hence the flax must have been "bolled" that is, risen in stalk or podded in February, thus fixing the particular month when the event took place. Barley ripens about a month earlier than wheat. Flax and barley are generally ripe in March, wheat and rye (properly, spelt) in April.

**EXODUS** 10:1-20.

### PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS.

- **1.** *show these my signs*, etc. Sinners even of the worst description are to be admonished even though there may be little hope of amendment, and hence those striking miracles that carried so clear and conclusive demonstration of the being and character of the true God were performed in lengthened series before Pharaoh to leave him without excuse when judgment should be finally executed.
- **2.** And that thou mayest tell ... of thy son, and of thy son's son, etc. There was a further and higher reason for the infliction of those awful judgments, namely, that the knowledge of them there, and the permanent record of them still, might furnish a salutary and impressive lesson to the Church down to the latest ages. Worldly historians might have described them as extraordinary occurrences that marked this era of Moses in ancient Egypt. But we are taught to trace them to their cause: the judgments of divine wrath on a grossly idolatrous king and nations.
- **4.** *to-morrow will I bring the locusts* Moses was commissioned to renew the request, so often made and denied, with an assurance that an unfavorable answer would be followed on the morrow by an invasion of locusts. This species of insect resembles a large, spotted, red and black, double-winged grasshopper, about three inches or less in length, with the two hind legs working like hinged springs of immense strength and elasticity. Perhaps no more terrible scourge was ever brought on a land than those voracious insects, which fly in such countless numbers as to darken the land which they infest; and on whatever place they alight, they convert it into a waste and barren desert, stripping the ground of its verdure, the trees of their leaves and bark, and producing in a few hours a degree of desolation which it requires the lapse of years to repair.

- **7-11.** *Pharaoh's servants said* Many of his courtiers must have suffered serious losses from the late visitations, and the prospect of such a calamity as that which was threatened and the magnitude of which former experience enabled them to realize, led them to make a strong remonstrance with the king. Finding himself not seconded by his counsellors in his continued resistance, he recalled Moses and Aaron, and having expressed his consent to their departure, inquired who were to go. The prompt and decisive reply, "all," neither man nor beast shall remain, raised a storm of indignant fury in the breast of the proud king. He would permit the grown-up men to go away; but no other terms would be listened to.
- **11.** *they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence* In the East, when a person of authority and rank feels annoyed by a petition which he is unwilling to grant, he makes a signal to his attendants, who rush forward and, seizing the obnoxious suppliant by the neck, drag him out of the chamber with violent haste. Of such a character was the impassioned scene in the court of Egypt when the king had wrought himself into such a fit of uncontrollable fury as to treat ignominiously the two venerable representatives of the Hebrew people.
- 13-19. the Lord brought an east wind The rod of Moses was again raised, and the locusts came. They are natives of the desert and are only brought by an east wind into Egypt, where they sometimes come in sun-obscuring clouds, destroying in a few days every green blade in the track they traverse. Man, with all his contrivances, can do nothing to protect himself from the overwhelming invasion. Egypt has often suffered from locusts. But the plague that followed the wave of the miraculous rod was altogether unexampled. Pharaoh, fearing irretrievable ruin to his country, sent in haste for Moses, and confessing his sin, implored the intercession of Moses, who entreated the Lord, and a "mighty strong west wind took away the locusts."

## EXODUS 10:21-29.

### PLAGUE OF DARKNESS.

## 21-23. Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness

— Whatever secondary means were employed in producing it, whether thick clammy fogs and vapors, according to some; a sandstorm, or the *chamsin*, according to others; it was such that it could be almost perceived by the organs of touch, and so protracted as to continue for three days, which the *chamsin* does [HENGSTENBERG]. The appalling character of this calamity consisted in this, that the sun was an object of Egyptian idolatry; that the pure and serene sky of that country was never marred by the appearance of a cloud. And here, too, the Lord made a marked difference between Goshen and the rest of Egypt.

**24-26.** *Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord* — Terrified by the preternatural darkness, the stubborn king relents, and proposes another compromise — the flocks and herds to be left as hostages for their return. But the crisis is approaching, and Moses insists on every iota of his demand. The cattle would be needed for sacrifice — how many or how few could not be known till their arrival at the scene of religious observance. But the emancipation of Israel from Egyptian bondage was to be complete.

**28.** *Pharaoh said*, ... *Get thee from me* — The calm firmness of Moses provoked the tyrant. Frantic with disappointment and rage, with offended and desperate malice, he ordered him from his presence and forbade him ever to return. "Moses said, Thou hast spoken well" (\*Exodus 10:29).

## **EXODUS** 11:1-10.

### DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN THREATENED.

- **1.** *the Lord said* rather, "*had* said unto Moses." It may be inferred, therefore, that he had been apprised that the crisis had now arrived, that the next plague would so effectually humble and alarm the mind of Pharaoh, that he would "thrust them out thence altogether"; and thus the word of Moses ("Exodus 10:29), must be regarded as a prediction.
- **2, 3.** *Speak now in the ears of the people* These verses, describing the communication which had been made in private to Moses, are inserted here as a parenthesis, and will be considered (\*\*DZE\*Exodus 12:35).
- **4.** Thus saith the Lord, About midnight Here is recorded the announcement of the last plague made in the most solemn manner to the king, on whose hardened heart all his painful experience had hitherto produced no softening, at least no permanently good effect.

will I go out into the midst of Egypt — language used after the manner of men.

**5.** And all the first-born in the land ... shall die — The time, the suddenness, the dreadful severity of this coming calamity, and the peculiar description of victims, among both men and beasts, on whom it was to fall, would all contribute to aggravate its character.

the maid-servant that is behind the mill — The grinding of the meal for daily use in every household is commonly done by female slaves and is considered the lowest employment. Two portable millstones are used for the purpose, of which the uppermost is turned by a small wooden handle, and during the operation the maid sits behind the mill.

**6.** *shall be a great cry throughout all the land* — In the case of a death, people in the East set up loud wailings, and imagination may conceive

what "a great cry" would be raised when death would invade every family in the kingdom.

## 7. against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue

— No town or village in Egypt or in the East generally is free from the nuisance of dogs, who prowl about the streets and make the most hideous noise at any passers-by at night. What an emphatic significance does the knowledge of this circumstance give to this fact in the sacred record, that on the awful night that was coming, when the air should be rent with the piercing shrieks of mourners, so great and universal would be the panic inspired by the hand of God, that not a dog would move his tongue against the children of Israel!

**8.** all these thy servants shall come down themselves unto me — This would be the effect of the universal terror; the hearts of the proudest would be humbled and do reverential homage to God, in the person of His representative.

went out ... in a great anger — Holy and righteous indignation at the duplicity, repeated falsehood, and hardened impenitence of the king; and this strong emotion was stirred in the bosom of Moses, not at the ill reception given to himself, but the dishonor done to God (\*\*Matthew 19:8\*\* Ephesians 4:26).

## **EXODUS** 12:1-10.

### THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED.

- **1.** *the Lord spake unto Moses* rather, "*had* spoken unto Moses and Aaron"; for it is evident that the communication here described must have been made to them on or before the tenth of the month.
- **2.** this month shall be unto you the beginning of months the first not only in order but in estimation. It had formerly been the seventh according to the reckoning of the civil year, which began in September, and continued unchanged, but it was thenceforth to stand first in the national religious year which began in March, April.
- **3.** Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel The recent events had prepared the Israelitish people for a crisis in their affairs, and they seem to have yielded implicit obedience at this time to Moses. It is observable that, amid all the hurry and bustle of such a departure, their serious attention was to be given to a solemn act of religion.
- a lamb for an house a kid might be taken (\*\*Exodus 12:5). The service was to be a domestic one, for the deliverance was to be from an evil threatened to every house in Egypt.
- **4.** if the household be too little for the lamb, etc. It appears from Josephus that ten persons were required to make up the proper paschal communion.
- *every man according to his eating* It is said that the quantity eaten of the paschal lamb, by each individual, was about the size of an olive.

a male of the first year — Christ in the prime of life.

**6.** *keep it up until the fourteenth day*, etc. — Being selected from the rest of the flock, it was to be separated four days before sacrifice; and for the same length of time was Christ under examination and His spotless innocence declared before the world.

*kill it in the evening* — that is, the interval between the sun's beginning to decline, and sunset, corresponding to our three o'clock in the afternoon.

- **7.** *take of the blood*, *and strike it on the two side-posts*, etc. as a sign of safety to those within. The posts must be considered of tents, in which the Israelites generally lived, though some might be in houses. Though the Israelites were sinners as well as the Egyptians, God was pleased to accept the substitution of a lamb the blood of which, being seen *sprinkled* on the doorposts, procured them mercy. It was to be on the sideposts and upper doorposts, where it might be *looked* to, not on the threshold, where it might be trodden under foot. This was an emblem of the blood of sprinkling (\*\*\*Hebrews 12:24\*\*\*\*\*10:29).
- **8.** *roast with fire* for the sake of expedition; and this difference was always observed between the cooking of the paschal lamb and the other offerings (4853) Chronicles 35:13).

unleavened bread — also for the sake of despatch (\*\*Deuteronomy 16:3), but as a kind of corruption (\*\*DLuke 12:1) there seems to have been a typical meaning under it (\*\*TR Corinthians 5:8).

*bitter herbs* — literally, "bitters" — to remind the Israelites of their affliction in Egypt, and morally of the trials to which God's people are subject on account of sin.

- **9.** *Eat not of it raw* that is, with any blood remaining; a caveat against conformity to idolatrous practices. It was to be roasted whole, not a bone to be broken, and this pointed to Christ (\*\*\*John 19:36).
- **10.** *let nothing of it remain until the morning* which might be applied in a superstitious manner, or allowed to putrefy, which in a hot climate would speedily have ensued; and which was not becoming in what had been offered to God.

## \*\*EXODUS 12:11-14.

### THE RITE OF THE PASSOVER.

11. thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet—as prepared for a journey. The first was done by the skirts of the loose outer cloth being drawn up and fastened in the girdle, so as to leave the leg and knee free for motion. As to the other, the Orientals never wear shoes indoors, and the ancient Egyptians, as appears from the monuments, did not usually wear either shoes or sandals. These injunctions seem to have applied chiefly to the first celebration of the rite.

*it is the Lord's passover* — called by this name from the blood-marked dwellings of the Israelites being *passed* over figuratively be the destroying angel.

- **12.** *smite* ... *gods of Egypt* perhaps used here for princes and grandees. But, according to Jewish tradition, the idols of Egypt were all on that night broken in pieces (see Numbers 33:4 Saiah 19:1).
- **14.** *for a memorial* The close analogy traceable in all points between the Jewish and Christian passovers is seen also in the circumstance that both festivals were instituted before the events they were to commemorate had transpired.

\*\*EXODUS 12:15-51.

#### UNLEAVENED BREAD.

**15.** Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, etc. — This was to commemorate another circumstance in the departure of the Israelites, who were urged to leave so hurriedly that their dough was unleavened (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:39), and they had to eat unleavened cakes (\*\*Deuteronomy 16:3). The greatest care was always taken by the Jews to free their houses from leaven — the owner searching every corner of his dwelling with a lighted candle. A figurative allusion to this is made (\*\*\*T) Corinthians 5:7). The exclusion of leaven for seven days would not be attended with

inconvenience in the East, where the usual leaven is dough kept till it becomes sour, and it is kept from one day to another for the purpose of preserving leaven in readiness. Thus even were There none in all the country, it could be got within twenty-four hours [HARMER].

*that soul shall be cut off* — excommunicated from the community and privileges of the chosen people.

- **16.** *there shall be an holy convocation* literally, *calling* of the people, which was done by sound of trumpets (\*\*Numbers 10:2), a sacred assembly for these days were to be regarded as Sabbaths excepting only that meat might be cooked on them (\*\*\*Exodus 16:23).
- **17.** *ye shall observe*, etc. The seven days of this feast were to commence the day after the passover. It was a distinct festival following that feast; but although this feast was instituted like the passover *before* the departure, the observance of it did not take place till *after*.
- **19.** *stranger* No foreigner could partake of the passover, unless circumcised; the "stranger" specified as admissible to the privilege must, therefore, be considered a Gentile *proselyte*.
- **21-25.** *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel*, etc. Here are given special directions for the observance.
- **22.** *hyssop* a small red moss [HASSELQUIST]; the caper-plant [ROYLE]. It was used in the sprinkling, being well adapted for such purposes, as it grows in bushes putting out plenty of suckers from a single root. And it is remarkable that it was ordained in the arrangements of an all-wise Providence that the Roman soldiers should undesignedly, on their part, make use of this symbolical plant to Christ when, as our Passover, He was sacrificed for us [489].

none ... shall go out at the door of his house until the morning — This regulation was peculiar to the first celebration, and intended, as some think, to prevent any suspicion attaching to them of being agents in the impending destruction of the Egyptians; there is an allusion to it (\*\*Tsaiah 26:20).

- 26. when your children shall say, ... What mean ye by this service —
- Independently of some observances which were not afterwards repeated, the usages practiced at this yearly commemorative feast were so peculiar that the curiosity of the young would be stimulated, and thus parents had an excellent opportunity, which they were enjoined to embrace, for instructing each rising generation in the origin and leading facts of the national faith.
- **27, 28.** *the people bowed the head, and worshipped* All the preceding directions were communicated through the elders, and the Israelites, being deeply solemnized by the influence of past and prospective events, gave prompt and faithful obedience.
- 29. at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt At the moment when the Israelites were observing the newly instituted feast in the singular manner described, the threatened calamity overtook the Egyptians. It is more easy to imagine than describe the confusion and terror of that people suddenly roused from sleep and enveloped in darkness — none could assist their neighbors when the groans of the dying and the wild shrieks of mourners were heard everywhere around. The hope of every family was destroyed at a stroke. This judgment, terrible though it was, evinced the equity of divine retribution. For eighty years the Egyptians had caused the male children of the Israelites to be cast into the river [Exodus 1:16], and now all their own first-born fell under the stroke of the destroying angel. They were made, in the justice of God, to feel something of what they had made His people feel. Many a time have the hands of sinners made the snares in which they have themselves been entangled, and fallen into the pit which they have dug for the righteous Proverbs 28:10]. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth" Psalm 58:11].
- **30.** there was not a house where there was not one dead Perhaps this statement is not to be taken absolutely. The Scriptures frequently use the words "all," "none," in a comparative sense and so in this case. There would be many a house in which there would be no child, and many in which the first-born might be already dead. What is to be understood is, that almost every house in Egypt had a death in it.

- **31.** *called for Moses and Aaron* a striking fulfillment of the words of Moses (\*\*Exodus 11:8), and showing that they were spoken under divine suggestion.
- **32.** *also take your flocks*, etc. All the terms the king had formerly insisted on were now departed from; his pride had been effectually humbled. Appalling judgments in such rapid succession showed plainly that the hand of God was against him. His own family bereavement had so crushed him to the earth that he not only showed impatience to rid his kingdom of such formidable neighbors, but even begged an interest in their prayers.
- **34.** *people took* ... *their kneading-troughs* Having lived so long in Egypt, they must have been in the habit of using the utensils common in that country. The Egyptian kneading-trough was a bowl of wicker or rush work, and it admitted of being hastily wrapped up with the dough in it and slung over the shoulder in their *hykes* or loose upper garments.
- 35. children of Israel borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver When the Orientals go to their sacred festivals, they always put on their best jewels. The Israelites themselves thought they were only going three days' journey to hold a feast unto the Lord, and in these circumstances it would be easy for them to borrow what was necessary for a sacred festival. But borrow conveys a wrong meaning. The word rendered borrow signifies properly to ask, demand, require. The Israelites had been kept in great poverty, having received little or no wages. They now insisted on full remuneration for all their labor, and it was paid in light and valuable articles adapted for convenient carriage.
- **36.** the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians Such a dread of them was inspired into the universal minds of the Egyptians, that whatever they asked was readily given.
- spoiled the Egyptians The accumulated earnings of many years being paid them at this moment, the Israelites were suddenly enriched, according to the promise made to Abraham (\*\*Genesis 15:14), and they left the country like a victorious army laden with spoil (\*\*Psalm 105:37\*\*Ezekiel 39:10).

37. The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses — now generally identified with the ancient Heroopolis, and fixed at the modern Abu-Keisheid. This position agrees with the statement that the scene of the miraculous judgments against Pharaoh was "in the field of Zoan" [\*\*Psalm 78:12,43]. And it is probable that, in expectation of their departure, which the king on one pretext or another delayed, the Israelites had been assembled there as a general rendezvous. In journeying from Rameses to Palestine, there was a choice of two routes — the one along the shores of the Mediterranean to El-Arish, the other more circuitous round the head of the Red Sea and the desert of Sinai. The latter Moses was directed to take (\*\*\*Exodus 13:17).

*to Succoth* — that is, booths, probably nothing more than a place of temporary encampment. The Hebrew word signifies a covering or shelter formed by the boughs of trees; and hence, in memory of this lodgment, the Israelites kept the feast of tabernacles yearly in this manner.

six hundred thousand ... men — It appears from Numbers 1:3 that the enumeration is of men above twenty years of age. Assuming, what is now ascertained by statistical tables, that the number of males above that age is as nearly as possible the half of the total number of males, the whole male population of Israel, on this computation, would amount to 1,200,000; and adding an equal number for women and children, the aggregate number of Israelites who left Egypt would be 2,400,000.

**38.** *a mixed multitude went with them* — literally, "a great rabble" (see also "Numbers 11:4" Deuteronomy 29:11); slaves, persons in the lowest grades of society, partly natives and partly foreigners, bound close to them as companions in misery, and gladly availing themselves of the opportunity to escape in the crowd. (Compare "Zechariah 8:23).

**40.** the sojourning of the children of Israel ... four hundred and thirty years — The Septuagint renders it thus: "The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt." These additions are important, for the period of sojourn in Egypt did not exceed two hundred fifteen years; but if we reckon from the time that Abraham entered Canaan and the promise was made in which the sojourn of his posterity in Egypt was announced, this makes up the time to four hundred thirty years.

- **41.** *even the selfsame day* implying an exact and literal fulfillment of the predicted period.
- **49.** One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger—
  This regulation displays the liberal spirit of the Hebrew institutions. Any foreigner might obtain admission to the privileges of the nation on complying with their sacred ordinances. In the Mosaic equally as in the Christian dispensation, privilege and duty were inseparably conjoined.

## **EXODUS** 13:1,2.

### THE FIRST-BORN SANCTIFIED.

**2.** Sanctify unto me all the first-born — To "sanctify" means to "consecrate," to "set apart" from a common to a sacred use. The foundation of this duty rested on the fact that the Israelites, having had their first-born preserved by a distinguishing act of grace from the general destruction that overtook the families of the Egyptians, were bound in token of gratitude to consider them as the Lord's peculiar property (compare "Hebrews 12:23).

## **©TIB**EXODUS 13:3-10.

### MEMORIAL OF THE PASSOVER.

**3.** Moses said unto the people, Remember this day — The day that gave them a national existence and introduced them into the privileges of independence and freedom, deserved to live in the memories of the Hebrews and their posterity; and, considering the signal interposition of God displayed in it, to be held not only in perpetual, but devout remembrance.

*house of bondage* — literally, "house of slaves" — that is, a servile and degrading condition.

for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place — The emancipation of Israel would never have been obtained except it had been wrung from the Egyptian tyrant by the appalling judgments of God, as had been at the outset of his mission announced to Moses (\*Exodus 3:19).

**There shall no leavened bread**, etc. — The words are elliptical, and the meaning of the clause may be paraphrased thus: — "For by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place, in such haste that there could or should be no leavened bread eaten."

- **4.** *month Abib* literally, "a green ear," and hence the month Abib is the month of green ears, corresponding to the middle of our March. It was the best season for undertaking a journey to the desert region of Sinai, especially with flocks and herds; for then the winter torrents had subsided, and the wadies were covered with an early and luxuriant verdure.
- **5-7.** when the Lord shall bring thee The passover is here instituted as a permanent festival of the Israelites. It was, however, only a prospective observance; we read of only one celebration of the passover during the protracted sojourn in the wilderness [\*\*OUE\*\*Numbers 9:5]; but on their settlement in the promised land, the season was hallowed as a sacred anniversary [\*\*OUE\*\*Joshua 5:10], in conformity with the directions here given.
- **8.** thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying The establishment of this and the other sacred festivals presented the best opportunities of instructing the young in a knowledge of His gracious doings to their ancestors in Egypt.
- **9.** it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, etc. There is no reason to believe that the Oriental tattooing the custom of staining the hands with the powder of Hennah, as Eastern females now do is here referred to. Nor is it probable that either this practice or the phylacteries of the Pharisees parchment scrolls, which were worn on their wrists and foreheads had so early an existence. The words are to be considered only as a figurative mode of expression.

that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth, etc. — that is, that it may be the subject of frequent conversation and familiar knowledge among the people.

## **EXODUS** 13:11-16.

### FIRSTLINGS OF BEASTS.

**12, 13.** *every firstling*, etc. — the injunction respecting the consecration of the first-born, as here repeated, with some additional circumstances. The firstlings of clean beasts, such as lambs, kids, and calves, if males, were to be devoted to God and employed in sacrifice. Those unclean beasts, as the ass's colt, being unfit for sacrifice, were to be redeemed (\*\*Numbers 18:15).

## \*\*\*EXODUS 13:17-21.

#### JOURNEY FROM EGYPT.

- 17. God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, etc. The shortest and most direct route from Egypt to Palestine was the usual caravan road that leads by Belbeis, El-Arish, to Ascalon and Gaza. The Philistines, who then possessed the latter, would have been sure to dispute their passage, for between them and the Israelites there was a hereditary feud (Thronicles 7:21,22); and so early a commencement of hostilities would have discouraged or dismayed the unwarlike band which Moses led. Their faith was to be exercised and strengthened, and from the commencement of their travels we observe the same careful proportion of burdens and trials to their character and state, as the gracious Lord shows to His people still in that spiritual journey of which the former was typical.
- **18.** God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, etc. This wondrous expanse of water is a gulf of the Indian ocean. It was called in Hebrew "the weedy sea," from the forest of marine plants with which it abounds. But the name of the Red Sea is not so easily traced. Some think it was given from its contiguity to the countries of Edom ("red"); others derive it from its coral rocks; while a third class ascribe the origin of the name to an extremely red appearance of the water in some parts, caused by a numberless multitude of very small mollusca.

This sea, at its northern extremity, separates into two smaller inlets — the eastern called anciently the Elanitic gulf, now the gulf of Akaba; and the western the Heroopolite gulf, now the gulf of Suez, which, there can be no doubt, extended much more to the north anciently than it does now. It was toward the latter the Israelites marched.

went up harnessed — that is, girded, equipped for a long journey. (See Psalm 105:37). The Margin renders it "five in a rank," meaning obviously five large divisions, under five presiding officers, according to the usages of all caravans; and a spectacle of such a mighty and motley multitude must have presented an imposing appearance, and its orderly progress could have been effected only by the superintending influence of God.

- **19.** Moses took the bones of Joseph with him in fulfillment of the oath he exacted from his brethren (Genesis 50:25,26). The remains of the other patriarchs (not noticed from their obscurity) were also carried out of Egypt (GENESACTS 7:15,16); and there would be no difficulty as to the means of conveyance a few camels bearing these precious relics would give a true picture of Oriental customs, such as is still to be seen in the immense pilgrimages to Mecca.
- **20.** *encamped in Etham* This place is supposed by the most intelligent travelers to be the modern Ajrud, where is a watering-place, and which is the third stage of the pilgrim-caravans to Mecca. "It is remarkable that either of the different routes eastward from Heliopolis, or southward from Heroopolis, equally admit of Ajrud being Etham. It is twelve miles northwest from Suez, and is literally on the edge of the desert" [*Pictorial Bible*].
- 21, 22. the Lord went before them by a visible token of His presence, the Shekinah, in a majestic cloud (\*\*Psalm 78:14 \*\*\*Psalm 9:12 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:12 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 99:6,7 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 63:8,9).

## **PAREXODUS** 14:1-41.

### GOD INSTRUCTS THE ISRAELITES AS TO THEIR JOURNEY.

2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp — The Israelites had now completed their three days' journey, and at Etham the decisive step would have to be taken whether they would celebrate their intended feast and return, or march onwards by the head of the Red Sea into the desert, with a view to a final departure. They were already on the borders of the desert, and a short march would have placed them beyond the reach of pursuit, as the chariots of Egypt could have made little progress over dry and yielding sand. But at Etham, instead of pursuing their journey eastward with the sea on their right, they were suddenly commanded to diverge to the south, keeping the gulf on their left; a route which not only detained them lingering on the confines of Egypt, but, in adopting it, they actually turned their backs on the land of which they had set out to obtain the possession. A movement so unexpected, and of which the ultimate design was carefully concealed, could not but excite the astonishment of all, even of Moses himself, although, from his implicit faith in the wisdom and power of his heavenly Guide, he obeyed. The object was to entice Pharaoh to pursue, in order that the moral effect, which the judgments on Egypt had produced in releasing God's people from bondage, might be still further extended over the nations by the awful events transacted at the Red Sea.

**Pi-hahiroth** — the mouth of the defile, or pass — a description well suited to that of Bedea, which extended from the Nile and opens on the shore of the Red Sea.

**Migdol** — a fortress or citadel.

**Baal-zephon** — some marked site on the opposite or eastern coast.

- 3. the wilderness hath shut them in Pharaoh, who would eagerly watch their movements, was now satisfied that they were meditating flight, and he naturally thought from the error into which they appeared to have fallen by entering that defile, he could intercept them. He believed them now entirely in his power, the mountain chain being on one side, the sea on the other, so that, if he pursued them in the rear, escape seemed impossible.
- 5. the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, etc. Alas, how soon the obduracy of this reprobate king reappears! He had been convinced, but not converted overawed, but not sanctified by the appalling judgments of heaven. He bitterly repented of what he now thought a hasty concession. Pride and revenge, the honor of his kingdom, and the interests of his subjects, all prompted him to recall his permission to reclaim those runaway slaves and force them to their wonted labor. Strange that he should yet allow such considerations to obliterate or outweigh all his painful experience of the danger of oppressing that people. But those whom the Lord has doomed to destruction are first infatuated by sin.
- **6, 7.** *he made ready his chariot* His preparations for an immediate and hot pursuit are here described: A difference is made between "the chosen chariots" and "the chariots of Egypt." The first evidently composed the king's guard, amounting to six hundred, and they are called "chosen," literally, "third men"; three men being allotted to each chariot, the charioteer and two warriors. As to "the chariots of Egypt," the common cars contained only two persons, one for driving and the other for fighting; sometimes only one person was in the chariot, the driver lashed the reins round his body and fought; infantry being totally unsuitable for a rapid pursuit, and the Egyptians having had no cavalry, the word "riders" is in the grammatical connection applied to war chariots employed, and these were of light construction, open behind, and hung on small wheels.
- 10. when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes
   The great consternation of the Israelites is somewhat astonishing, considering their vast superiority in numbers, but their deep dismay and absolute despair at the sight of this armed host receives a satisfactory explanation from the fact that the civilized state of Egyptian society

required the absence of all arms, except when they were on service. If the Israelites were entirely unarmed at their departure, they could not think of making any resistance [WILKINSON and HENGSTENBERG].

- 13, 14. Moses said, ... Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord Never, perhaps, was the fortitude of a man so severely tried as that of the Hebrew leader in this crisis, exposed as he was to various and inevitable dangers, the most formidable of which was the vengeance of a seditious and desperate multitude; but his meek, unruffled, magnanimous composure presents one of the sublimest examples of moral courage to be found in history. And whence did his courage arise? He saw the miraculous cloud still accompanying them, and his confidence arose solely from the hope of a divine interposition, although, perhaps, he might have looked for the expected deliverance in every quarter, rather than in the direction of the sea.
- **15-18.** *the Lord said unto Moses*, *Wherefore criest thou unto me*? etc. When in answer to his prayers, he received the divine command to go forward, he no longer doubted by what kind of miracle the salvation of his mighty charge was to be effected.
- **19.** *the angel of God* that is, the pillar of cloud [see on Exodus 13:21]. The slow and silent movement of that majestic column through the air, and occupying a position behind them must have excited the astonishment of the Israelites (Essaiah 58:8). It was an effectual barrier between them and their pursuers, not only protecting them, but concealing their movements. Thus, the same cloud produced light (a symbol of favor) to the people of God, and darkness (a symbol of wrath) to their enemies (compare Corinthians 2:16).
- **21.** *Moses stretched out his hand*, etc. The waving of the rod was of great importance on this occasion to give public attestation in the presence of the assembled Israelites, both to the character of Moses and the divine mission with which he was charged.
- the Lord caused ... a strong east wind all that night Suppose a mere ebb tide caused by the wind, raising the water to a great height on *one side*, still as there was not only "dry land," but, according to the tenor of the sacred narrative, a wall on the right hand and on the left (\*\*Exodus 14:22),

it would be impossible on the hypothesis of such a natural cause to rear the wall on the *other*. The idea of divine interposition, therefore, is imperative; and, assuming the passage to have been made at Mount Attakah, or at the mouth of Wady Tawarik, an *east* wind would cut the sea in that line. The Hebrew word *kedem*, however, rendered in our translation, "east," means, in its primary signification, *previous*; so that this verse might, perhaps, be rendered, "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong *previous* wind all that night"; a rendering which would remove the difficulty of supposing the host of Israel marched over on the sand, in the teeth of a rushing column of wind, strong enough to heap up the waters as a wall on each side of a dry path, and give the intelligible narrative of divine interference.

**22.** the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, etc. — It is highly probable that Moses, along with Aaron, first planted his footsteps on the untrodden sand, encouraging the people to follow him without fear of the treacherous walls; and when we take into account the multitudes that followed him, the immense number who through infancy and old age were incapable of hastening their movements, together with all the appurtenances of the camp, the strong and steadfast character of the leaders' faith was strikingly manifested (\*\*Toshua 2:10 \*\*Toshua 2:10 \*\*Toshua

- **23.** the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea From the darkness caused by the intercepting cloud, it is probable that they were not aware on what ground they were driving: they heard the sound of the fugitives before them, and they pushed on with the fury of the avengers of blood, without dreaming that they were on the bared bed of the sea.
- **24, 25.** Lord looked ... through ... the cloud, and troubled them We suppose the fact to have been that the side of the pillar of cloud towards the Egyptians was suddenly, and for a few moments, illuminated with a blaze of light, which, coming as it were in a refulgent flash upon the dense darkness which had preceded, so frightened the horses of the pursuers that they rushed confusedly together and became unmanageable. "Let us flee,"

was the cry that resounded through the broken and trembling ranks, but it was too late; all attempts at flight were vain [Bush].

- **27.** Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, etc. What circumstances could more clearly demonstrate the miraculous character of this transaction than that at the waving of Moses' rod, the dividing waters left the channel dry, and on his making the same motion on the opposite side, they returned, commingling with instantaneous fury? Is such the character of any ebb tide?
- **28.** *there remained not so much as one of them* It is surprising that, with such a declaration, some intelligent writers can maintain there is no evidence of the destruction of Pharaoh himself (\*Psalm 106:11).
- **30.** Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, etc. The tide threw them up and left multitudes of corpses on the beach; a result that brought greater infamy on the Egyptians, but that tended, on the other hand, to enhance the triumph of the Israelites, and doubtless enriched them with arms, which they had not before. The locality of this famous passage has not yet been, and probably never will be, satisfactorily fixed. Some place it in the immediate neighborhood of Suez; where, they say, the part of the sea is most likely to be affected by "a strong east wind" (\*\*Exodus 14:21); where the road from the defile of Migdol (now Muktala) leads directly to this point; and where the sea, not above two miles broad, could be crossed in a short time. The vast majority, however, who have examined the spot, reject this opinion, and fix the passage, as does local tradition, about ten or twelve miles further down the shore at Wady Tawarik. "The time of the miracle was the whole night, at the season of the year, too, when the night would be about its average length. The sea at that point extends from six and a half to eight miles in breadth. There was thus ample time for the passage of the Israelites from any part of the valley, especially considering their excitement and animation by the gracious and wonderful interposition of Providence in their behalf" [WILSON].

## **EXODUS** 15:1-27.

### SONG OF MOSES.

1. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel — The scene of this thanksgiving song is supposed to have been at the landing place on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, at Ayoun Musa, "the fountains of Moses." They are situated somewhat farther northward along the shore than the opposite point from which the Israelites set out. But the line of the people would be extended during the passage, and one extremity of it would reach as far north as these fountains, which would supply them with water on landing. The time when it was sung is supposed to have been the morning after the passage. This song is, by some hundred years, the oldest poem in the world. There is a sublimity and beauty in the language that is unexampled. But its unrivalled superiority arises not solely from the splendor of the diction. Its poetical excellencies have often drawn forth the admiration of the best judges, while the character of the event commemorated, and its being prompted by divine inspiration, contribute to give it an interest and sublimity peculiar to itself.

## I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously —

Considering the state of servitude in which they had been born and bred, and the rude features of character which their subsequent history often displays, it cannot be supposed that the children of Israel generally were qualified to commit to memory or to appreciate the beauties of this inimitable song. But they might perfectly understand its pervading strain of sentiment; and, with the view of suitably improving the occasion, it was thought necessary that all, old and young, should join their united voices in the rehearsal of its words. As every individual had cause, so every individual gave utterance to his feelings of gratitude.

**20.** *Miriam the prophetess* — so called from her receiving divine revelations (\*\*Miriam\*) Numbers 12:1 \*\*Miriam\* (\*\*Miriam\*), but in this instance

principally from her being eminently skilled in music, and in this sense the word "prophecy" is sometimes used in Scripture ( Chronicles 25:1 Corinthians 11:5).

*took a timbrel* — or "tabret" — a musical instrument in the form of a hoop, edged round with rings or pieces of brass to make a jingling noise and covered over with tightened parchment like a drum. It was beat with the fingers, and corresponds to our tambourine.

all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances — We shall understand this by attending to the modern customs of the East, where the dance — a slow, grave, and solemn gesture, generally accompanied with singing and the sound of the timbrel, is still led by the principal female of the company, the rest imitating her movements and repeating the words of the song as they drop from her lips.

- **21.** *Miriam answered them* "them" in the *Hebrew* is masculine, so that Moses probably led the men and Miriam the women the two bands responding alternately, and singing the first verse as a chorus.
- **22.** *wilderness of Shur* comprehending all the western part of Arabia-Petræa. The desert of Etham was a part of it, extending round the northern portion of the Red Sea, and a considerable distance along its eastern shore; whereas the "wilderness of Shur" (now Sudhr) was the designation of all the desert region of Arabia-Petræa that lay next to Palestine.
- 23. when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters Following the general route of all travelers southward, between the sea and the tableland of the Tih ("valley of wandering"), Marah is almost universally believed to be what is now called Howarah, in Wady Amarah, about thirty miles from the place where the Israelites landed on the eastern shore of the Red Sea a distance quite sufficient for their march of three days. There is no other perennial spring in the intermediate space. The water still retains its ancient character, and has a bad name among the Arabs, who seldom allow their camels to partake of it.
- 25. the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet Some travelers have pronounced this to be

the Elvah of the Arabs — a shrub in form and flower resembling our hawthorn; others, the berries of the Ghurkhud — a bush found growing around all brackish fountains. But neither of these shrubs are known by the natives to possess such natural virtues. It is far more likely that God miraculously endowed some tree with the property of purifying the bitter water — a tree employed as the medium, but the sweetening was not dependent upon the nature or quality of the tree, but the power of God (compare \*\* John 9:6). And hence the "statute and ordinance" that followed, which would have been singularly inopportune if no miracle had been wrought.

and there he proved them — God now brought the Israelites into circumstances which would put their faith and obedience to the test (compare \*\*Compare\*\* (22:1).

27. they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water — supposed to be what is now called Wady-Ghurandel, the most extensive watercourse in the western desert — an oasis, adorned with a great variety of trees, among which the palm is still conspicuous, and fertilized by a copious stream. It is estimated to be a mile in breadth, but stretching out far to the northeast. After the weary travel through the desert, this must have appeared a most delightful encampment from its shade and verdure, as well as from its abundant supply of sweet water for the thirsty multitude. The palm is called "the tree of the desert," as its presence is always a sign of water. The palms in this spot are greatly increased in number, but the wells are diminished.

**PIONE XODUS** 16:1-36.

### MURMURS FOR WANT OF BREAD.

**1.** *they took their journey from Elim* — where they had remained several days.

came unto the wilderness of Sin — It appears from ORTH Numbers 32:1-42, that several stations are omitted in this historical notice of the journey. This passage represents the Israelites as advanced into the great plain, which, beginning near El-Murkah, extends with a greater or less breadth to almost the extremity of the peninsula. In its broadest part northward of Tur it is called El-Kaa, which is probably the desert of Sin [ROBINSON].

- 2. the whole congregation ... murmured against Moses and Aaron Modern travelers through the desert of Sinai are accustomed to take as much as is sufficient for the sustenance of men and beasts during forty days. The Israelites having been rather more than a month on their journey, their store of corn or other provisions was altogether or nearly exhausted; and there being no prospect of procuring any means of subsistence in the desert, except some wild olives and wild honey (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:13), loud complaints were made against the leaders.
- 3. Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt How unreasonable and absurd the charge against Moses and Aaron! how ungrateful and impious against God! After all their experience of the divine wisdom, goodness, and power, we pause and wonder over the sacred narrative of their hardness and unbelief. But the expression of feeling is contagious in so vast a multitude, and there is a feeling of solitude and despondency in the desert which numbers cannot dispel; and besides, we must remember that they were men engrossed with the present that the Comforter was not then given and that they were destitute of all visible means of sustenance and cut off from every visible comfort, with only the promises of an unseen God to look to as the ground of their hope.

**4.** Then said the Lord unto Moses — Though the outbreak was immediately against the human leaders, it was indirectly against God: yet mark His patience, and how graciously He promised to redress the grievance.

*I will rain bread from heaven* — Israel, a type of the Church which is from above, and being under the conduct, government, and laws of heaven, received their food from heaven also (\*\*PSalm 78:24).

that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no — The grand object of their being led into the wilderness was that they might receive a religious training directly under the eye of God; and the first lesson taught them was a constant dependence on God for their daily nourishment.

**13-31.** *at even the quails came up, and covered the camp* — This bird is of the gallinaceous kind [that is, relating to the order of heavy-bodied, largely terrestrial birds], resembling the red partridge, but not larger than the turtledove. They are found in certain seasons in the places through which the Israelites passed, being migratory birds, and they were probably brought to the camp by "a wind from the Lord" as on another occasion (ONLIN Numbers 11:31).

and in the morning ... a small round thing ... manna — There is a gum of the same name distilled in this desert region from the tamarisk, which is much prized by the natives, and preserved carefully by those who gather it. It is collected early in the morning, melts under the heat of the sun, and is congealed by the cold of night. In taste it is as sweet as honey, and has been supposed by distinguished travelers, from its whitish color, time, and place of its appearance, to be the manna on which the Israelites were fed: so that, according to the views of some, it was a production indigenous to

the desert; according to others, there was a miracle, which consisted, however, only in the preternatural arrangements regarding its supply. But more recent and accurate examination has proved this gum of the tarfa-tree to be wanting in all the principal characteristics of the Scripture manna. It exudes only in small quantities, and not every year; it does not admit of being baked (\*\*Numbers 11:8) or boiled (\*\*Exodus 16:23). Though it may be exhaled by the heat and afterwards fall with the dew, it is a medicine, not food it is well known to the natives of the desert, while the Israelites were strangers to theirs; and in taste as well as in the appearance of double quantity on Friday, none on Sabbath, and in not breeding worms, it is essentially different from the manna furnished to the Israelites.

32-36. Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations — The mere fact of such a multitude being fed for forty years in the wilderness, where no food of any kind is to be obtained, will show the utter impossibility of their subsisting on a natural production of the kind and quantity as this tarfa-gum [see on Exodus 16:13]; and, as if for the purpose of removing all such groundless speculations, Aaron was commanded to put a sample of it in a pot — a golden pot (Hebrews 9:4) — to be laid before the Testimony, to be kept for future generations, that they might see the bread on which the Lord fed their fathers in the wilderness. But we have the bread of which that was merely typical (Torinthians 10:3

### **●**EXODUS 17:1-7.

#### THE PEOPLE MURMUR FOR WATER.

**1.** the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin — In the succinct annals of this book, those places only are selected for particular notice by the inspired historian, which were scenes memorable for their happy or painful interest in the history of the Israelites. A more detailed itinerary is given in the later books of Moses, and we find that here two stations are omitted (\*\*\*ONUMBERS\*\* 33:1-56).

according to the commandment of the Lord, etc. — not given in oracular response, nor a vision of the night, but indicated by the movement of the cloudy pillar. The same phraseology occurs elsewhere (\*\*Numbers 9:18,19).

pitched in Rephidim — now believed, on good grounds, to be Wady Feiran, which is exactly a day's march from Mount Sinai, and at the entrance of the Horeb district. It is a long circuitous defile about forty feet in breadth, with perpendicular granite rocks on both sides. The wilderness of Sin through which they approached to this valley is very barren, has an extremely dry and thirsty aspect, little or no water, scarcely even a dwarfish shrub to be seen, and the only shelter to the panting pilgrims is under the shadow of the great overhanging cliffs.

**2, 3.** the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink, etc. — The want of water was a privation, the severity of which we cannot estimate, and it was a great trial to the Israelites, but their conduct on this new occasion was outrageous; it amounted even to "a tempting of the Lord." It was an opposition to His minister, a distrust of His care, an indifference to His kindness, an unbelief in His providence, a trying of His patience and fatherly forbearance.

- 4. Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people?
- His language, instead of betraying any signs of resentment or vindictive imprecation on a people who had given him a cruel and unmerited treatment, was the expression of an anxious wish to know what was the best to be done in the circumstances (compare \*\*Matthew 5:44\*\*\*\* Romans 12:21).
- **5.** *the Lord said unto Moses*, etc. not to smite the rebels, but the rock; not to bring a stream of blood from the breast of the offenders, but a stream of water from the granite cliffs. The cloud rested on a particular rock, just as the star rested on the house where the infant Savior was lodged (\*\*Matthew 2:9). And from the rod-smitten rock there forthwith gushed a current of pure and refreshing water. It was perhaps the greatest miracle performed by Moses, and in many respects bore a resemblance to the greatest of Christ's: being done without ostentation and in the presence of a few chosen witnesses (\*\*\*\*\*I Corinthians 10:4).

### **EXODUS** 17:8-16.

#### ATTACK OF AMALEK.

**8.** Then came Amalek — Some time probably elapsed before they were exposed to this new evil; and the presumption of there being such an interval affords the only ground on which we can satisfactorily account for the altered, the better, and former spirit that animated the people in this sudden contest. The miracles of the manna and the water from the rock had produced a deep impression and permanent conviction that God was indeed among them; and with feelings elevated by the conscious experience of the Divine Presence and aid, they remained calm, resolute, and courageous under the attack of their unexpected foe.

*fought with Israel* — The language implies that no occasion had been furnished for this attack; but, as descendants of Esau, the Amalekites

entertained a deep-seated grudge against them, especially as the rapid prosperity and marvellous experience of Israel showed that the blessing contained in the birthright was taking effect. It seems to have been a mean, dastardly, insidious surprise on the rear (\*\*Numbers 24:20\*\*\*Deuteronomy 25:17), and an impious defiance of God.

- **9.** *Moses said unto Joshua* or, "Jesus" (\*\*\*Acts 7:45 \*\*\*Hebrews 4:8). This is the earliest notice of a young warrior destined to act a prominent part in the history of Israel. He went with a number of picked men. There is not here a wide open plain on which the battle took place, as according to the rules of modern warfare. The Amalekites were a nomadic tribe, making an irregular attack on a multitude probably not better trained than themselves, and for such a conflict the low hills and open country around this wady would afford ample space [ROBINSON].
- **10-12.** *Moses* ... *went up* ... *the hill* ... *held up his hand* with the wonder-working rod; Moses acted as the standard bearer of Israel, and also their intercessor, praying for success and victory to crown their arms the earnestness of his feelings being conspicuously evinced amid the feebleness of nature.
- **13.** *Joshua discomfited Amalek* Victory at length decided in favor of Israel, and the glory of the victory, by an act of national piety, was ascribed to God (compare \*GRIFF) John 5:4).
- **14-16.** Write this for a memorial If the bloody character of this statute seems to be at variance with the mild and merciful character of God, the reasons are to be sought in the deep and implacable vengeance they meditated against Israel (\*\*Psalm 83:4).

### **EXODUS** 18:1-27.

#### VISIT OF JETHRO.

**1-5.** *Jethro* ... *came* ... *unto Moses*, etc. — It is thought by many eminent commentators that this episode is inserted out of its chronological order, for it is described as occurring when the Israelites were "encamped at the mount of God." And yet they did not reach it till the third month after their departure from Egypt (\*\*Exodus 19:1,2; compare \*\*Deuteronomy 1:6,9-15).

**6.** and thy wife, and her two sons — See <sup>(1)(1)</sup>Exodus 4:20.

- 7. Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, etc. Their salutations would be marked by all the warm and social greetings of Oriental friends (see on "Exodus 4:27) the one going out to "meet" the other, the "obeisance," the "kiss" on each side of the head, the silent entrance into the tent for consultation; and their conversation ran in the strain that might have been expected of two pious men, rehearsing and listening to a narrative of the wonderful works and providence of God.
- **12.** *Jethro* ... *took a burnt offering* This friendly interview was terminated by a solemn religious service the *burnt offerings* were consumed on the altar, and the *sacrifices* were *peace* offerings, used in a feast of joy and gratitude at which Jethro, as priest of the true God, seems to have presided, and to which the chiefs of Israel were invited. This incident is in beautiful keeping with the character of the parties, and is well worthy of the imitation of Christian friends when they meet in the present day.
- **13-26.** *on the morrow* ... *Moses sat to judge the people* We are here presented with a specimen of his daily morning occupations; and among the multifarious duties his divine legation imposed, it must be considered

only a small portion of his official employments. He appears in this attitude as a type of Christ in His legislative and judicial characters.

the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening, etc. — Governors in the East seat themselves at the most public gate of their palace or the city, and there, amid a crowd of applicants, hear causes, receive petitions, redress grievances, and adjust the claims of contending parties.

- **17.** *Moses' father-in-law said unto him*, *The thing ... is not good* not good either for Moses himself, for the maintenance of justice, or for the satisfaction and interests of the people. Jethro gave a prudent counsel as to the division of labor [\*\*DEX\*\*Exodus 18:21,22], and universal experience in the Church and State has attested the soundness and advantages of the principle.
- 23. If thou shalt do this thing, etc. Jethro's counsel was given merely in the form of a suggestion; it was not to be adopted without the express sanction and approval of a better and higher Counsellor; and although we are not informed of it, there can be no doubt that Moses, before appointing subordinate magistrates, would ask the mind of God, as it is the duty and privilege of every Christian in like manner to supplicate the divine direction in all his ways.

<sup>2001</sup>EXODUS 19:1-25.

### ARRIVAL AT SINAI.

1. In the third month — according to Jewish usage, the first day of that month — "same day." — It is added, to mark the time more explicitly, that is, forty-five days after Egypt — one day spent on the mount ("Exodus 19:3), one returning the people's answer ("Exodus 19:7,8), three days of preparation, making the whole time fifty days from the first passover to the promulgation of the law. Hence the feast of pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day, was the inauguration of the Old Testament church, and the divine wisdom is apparent in the selection of the same reason for the institution of the New Testament church ("In John 1:17" Acts 2:1).

**2.** were come to the desert of Sinai — The desert has its provinces, or divisions, distinguished by a variety of names; and the "desert of Sinai" is that wild and desolate region which occupies the very center of the peninsula, comprising the lofty range to which the mount of God belongs. It is a wilderness of shaggy rocks of porphyry and red granite, and of valleys for the most part bare of verdure.

and there Israel camped before the mount — Sinai, so called from Seneh, or acacia bush. It is now called Jebel Musa. Their way into the interior of the gigantic cluster was by Wady Feiran, which would lead the bulk of the hosts with their flocks and herds into the high valleys of Jebel Musa, with their abundant springs, especially into the great thoroughfare of the desert — the longest, widest, and most continuous of all the valleys, the Wadyes-Sheikh, while many would be scattered among the adjacent valleys; so that thus secluded from the world in a wild and sublime amphitheatre of rocks, they "camped before the mount." "In this valley — a long flat valley — about a quarter of a mile in breadth, winding northwards, Israel would find ample room for their encampment. Of all the wadys in that

region, it seems the most suitable for a prolonged sojourn. The 'goodly tents' of Israel could spread themselves without limit" [BONAR].

**3-6.** *Moses went up unto God* — the Shekinah — within the cloud (\*\*Exodus 33:20 \*\*\*\* John 1:18).

Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, etc. — The object for which Moses went up was to receive and convey to the people the message contained in these verses, and the purport of which was a general announcement of the terms on which God was to take the Israelites into a close and peculiar relation to Himself. In thus negotiating between God and His people, the highest post of duty which any mortal man was ever called to occupy, Moses was still but a servant. The only Mediator is Jesus Christ [5005] Timothy 2:5 5000 Hebrews 12:24].

**6.** *ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests* — As the priestly order was set apart from the common mass, so the Israelites, compared with other people, were to sustain the same near relation to God; a community of spiritual sovreigns.

*an holy nation* — set apart to preserve the knowledge and worship of God.

- **7, 8.** Moses came and called for the elders of the people The message was conveyed to the mighty multitude through their elders, who, doubtless, instructed them in the conditions required. Their unanimous acceptance was conveyed through the same channel to Moses, and by him reported to the Lord. Ah! how much self-confidence did their language betray! How little did they know what spirit they were of!
- 9-15. The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come ... in a thick cloud, etc. The deepest impressions are made on the mind through the medium of the senses; and so He who knew what was in man signalized His descent at the inauguration of the ancient church, by all the sensible tokens of august majesty that were fitted to produce the conviction that He is the great and terrible God. The whole multitude must have anticipated the event with feelings of intense solemnity and awe. The extraordinary preparations enjoined, the ablutions and rigid abstinence they were required to observe, the barriers erected all round the base of the mount, and the stern penalties

annexed to the breach of any of the conditions, all tended to create an earnest and solemn expectation which increased as the appointed day drew near.

**16.** *on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings*, etc. — The descent of God was signalized by every object imagination can conceive connected with the ideas of grandeur and of awe. But all was in keeping with the character of the law about to be proclaimed. As the mountain burned with fire, God was exhibited as a consuming fire to the transgressors of His law. The thunder and lightning, more awful amid the deep stillness of the region and reverberating with terrific peals among the mountains, would rouse the universal attention; a thick cloud was an apt emblem of the dark and shadowy dispensation (compare Matthew 17:5).

*the voice of a trumpet* — This gave the scene the character of a miraculous transaction, in which other elements than those of nature were at work, and some other than material trumpet was blown by other means than human breath.

17. Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God — Wady-er-Raheh, where they stood, has a spacious sandy plain; immediately in front of Esther Suksafeh, considered by ROBINSON to be the mount from which the law was given. "We measured it, and estimate the whole plain at two geographical miles long, and ranging in breadth from one-third to two-thirds of a mile, or as equivalent to a surface of one square mile. This space is nearly doubled by the recess on the west, and by the broad and level area of Wady-es-Sheikh on the east, which issues at right angles to the plain, and is equally in view of the front and summit of the mount. The examination convinced us that here was space enough to satisfy all the requisitions of the Scripture narrative, so far as it relates to the assembling of the congregation to receive the law. Here, too, one can see the fitness of the injunction to set bounds around the mount, that neither man nor beast might approach too near, for it rises like a perpendicular wall." But Jebel Musa, the old traditional Sinai, and the highest peak, has also a spacious valley, Wady Sebaiyeh, capable of holding the people. It is not certain on which of these two they stood.

**21.** *the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people* — No sooner had Moses proceeded a little up the mount, than he was suddenly ordered to return, in order to keep the people from breaking through to gaze — a course adopted to heighten the impressive solemnity of the scene. The strict injunctions renewed to all, whatever their condition, at a time and in circumstances when the whole multitude of Israel were standing at the base of the mount, was calculated in the highest degree to solemnize and awe every heart.

EXODUS 20:1-26.

#### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

- **1.** And God spake all these words The Divine Being Himself was the speaker (\*\*Deuteronomy 5:12,32,33), in tones so loud as to be heard so distinct as to be intelligible by the whole multitude standing in the valleys below, amid the most appalling phenomena of agitated nature. Had He been simply addressing rational and intelligent creatures, He would have spoken with the still small voice of persuasion and love. But He was speaking to those who were at the same time fallen and sinful creatures, and a corresponding change was required in the manner of God's procedure, in order to give a suitable impression of the character and sanctions of the law revealed from heaven (\*\*SID\*Romans 11:5-9).
- **2.** I am the Lord thy God This is a preface to the ten commandments the latter clause being specially applicable to the case of the Israelites, while the former brings it home to all mankind; showing that the reasonableness of the law is founded in their eternal relation as creatures to their Creator, and their mutual relations to each other.
- **3.** Thou shalt have no other gods before me in My presence, beside, or except Me.
- **4, 5.** Thou shalt not make ... any graven image ... thou shalt not bow down thyself to them that is, "make in order to bow." Under the auspices of Moses himself, figures of cherubim, brazen serpents, oxen, and many other things in the earth beneath, were made and never condemned. The mere making was no sin it was the making with the intent to give idolatrous worship.
- **8.** Remember the sabbath day implying it was already known, and recognized as a season of sacred rest. The first four commandments [\*\*Exodus 20:3-11] comprise our duties to God the other six

- Christ, they reach to the government of the heart as well as the lip (Matthew 5:17). "If a man do them he shall live in them" (Matthew 5:17). But, ah! what an *if* for frail and fallen man. Whoever rests his hope upon the law stands debtor to it all; and in this view every one would be without hope were not "the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" [ACCOUNTING 12:16] (MODITION 1:17).
- **18-21.** *all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings* They were eye and ear witnesses of the awful emblems of the Deity's descent. But they perceived not the Deity Himself.
- **19.** *let not God speak with us*, *lest we die*, etc. The phenomena of thunder and lightning had been one of the plagues so fatal to Egypt, and as they heard God speaking to them now, they were apprehensive of instant death also. Even Moses himself, the mediator of the old covenant, did "exceedingly quake and fear" (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 12:21). But doubtless God spake what gave *him* relief restored him to a frame of mind fit for the ministrations committed to him; and hence immediately after he was enabled to relieve and comfort them with the relief and comfort which he himself had received from God (\*\*\*\*Corinthians 1:4).
- **22, 23.** *the Lord said unto Moses* It appears from Deuteronomy 4:14-16, that this injunction was a conclusion drawn from the scene on Sinai that as no similitude of God was displayed then, they should not attempt to make any visible figure or form of Him.
- **24.** An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me a regulation applicable to special or temporary occasions.
- **25.** *thou shalt not build it of hewn stone*, etc. that is, carved with figures and ornaments that might lead to superstition.
- **26.** by steps a precaution taken for the sake of decency, in consequence of the loose, wide, flowing garments of the priests.

**EXODUS** 21:1-6.

#### LAWS FOR MENSERVANTS.

**1.** *judgments* — rules for regulating the procedure of judges and magistrates in the decision of cases and the trial of criminals. The government of the Israelites being a theocracy, those public authorities were the servants of the Divine Sovereign, and subject to His direction. Most of these laws here noticed were primitive usages, founded on principles of natural equity, and incorporated, with modifications and improvements, in the Mosaic code.

**2-6.** *If thou buy an Hebrew servant* — Every Israelite was free-born; but slavery was permitted under certain restrictions. An Hebrew might be made a slave through poverty, debt, or crime; but at the end of six years he was entitled to freedom, and his wife, if she had voluntarily shared his state of bondage, also obtained release. Should he, however, have married a female slave, she and the children, after the husband's liberation, remained the master's property; and if, through attachment to his family, the Hebrew chose to forfeit his privilege and abide as he was, a formal process was gone through in a public court, and a brand of servitude stamped on his ear (\*\*\*Psalm 40:6) for life, or at least till the Jubilee (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 15:17).

**EXODUS** 21:7-36.

#### LAWS FOR MAIDSERVANTS.

**7-11.** *if a man sell his daughter* — Hebrew girls might be redeemed for a reasonable sum. But in the event of her parents or friends being unable to pay the redemption money, her owner was not at liberty to sell her elsewhere. Should she have been betrothed to him or his son, and either

change their minds, a maintenance must be provided for her suitable to her condition as his intended wife, or her freedom instantly granted.

- **23-25.** *eye for eye* The law which authorized retaliation (a principle acted upon by all primitive people) was a civil one. It was given to regulate the procedure of the public magistrate in determining the amount of compensation in every case of injury, but did not encourage feelings of private revenge. The later Jews, however, mistook it for a moral precept, and were corrected by our Lord (\*\*Matthew 5:38-42).
- **28-36.** *If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die* For the purpose of sanctifying human blood, and representing all injuries affecting life in a serious light, an animal that occasioned death was to be killed or suffer punishment proportioned to the degree of damage it had caused. Punishments are still inflicted on this principle in Persia and other countries of the East; and among a rude people greater effect is thus produced in inspiring caution, and making them keep noxious animals under restraint, than a penalty imposed on the owners.
- **30.** *If there be laid on him a sum of money*, etc. Blood fines are common among the Arabs as they were once general throughout the East. This is the only case where a money compensation, instead of capital punishment, was expressly allowed in the Mosaic law.

### **EXODUS** 22:1-31.

#### LAWS CONCERNING THEFT.

- **1-4.** If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep The law respects the theft of cattle which constituted the chief part of their property. The penalty for the theft of a sheep which was slain or sold, was fourfold; for an ox fivefold, because of its greater utility in labor; but, should the stolen animal have been recovered alive, a double compensation was all that was required, because it was presumable he (the thief) was not a practiced adept in dishonesty. A robber breaking into a house at midnight might, in self-defense, be slain with impunity; but if he was slain after sunrise, it would be considered murder, for it was not thought likely an assault would then be made upon the lives of the occupants. In every case where a thief could not make restitution, he was sold as a slave for the usual term.
- **6.** If fire break out, and catch in thorns This refers to the common practice in the East of setting fire to the dry grass before the fall of the autumnal rains, which prevents the ravages of vermin, and is considered a good preparation of the ground for the next crop. The very parched state of the herbage and the long droughts of summer, make the kindling of a fire an operation often dangerous, and always requiring caution from its liability to spread rapidly.

*stacks* — or as it is rendered "shocks" (\*\*\*Judges 15:5\*\*\*Job 5:26), means simply a bundle of loose sheaves.

**26, 27.** If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, etc. — From the nature of the case, this is the description of a poor man. No Orientals undress, but, merely throwing off their turbans and some of their heavy outer garments, they sleep in the clothes which they wear during the day. The bed of the poor is usually nothing else than a mat; and, in winter, they cover themselves with a cloak — a practice which forms the ground or reason of the humane and merciful law respecting the pawned coat.

**28.** *gods* — a word which is several times in this chapter rendered "judges" or magistrates.

the ruler of thy people — and the chief magistrate who was also the high priest, at least in the time of Paul (\*\*Pacts 23:1-5).

### **EXODUS** 23:1-33.

### LAWS CONCERNING SLANDER, ETC.

- **1.** *put not thine hand* join not hands.
- **2.** *decline* depart, deviate from the straight path of rectitude.
- **3.** *countenance* adorn, embellish thou shalt not varnish the cause even of a poor man to give it a better coloring than it merits.
- **10.** *six years thou shalt sow thy land* intermitting the cultivation of the land every seventh year. But it appears that even then there was a spontaneous produce which the poor were permitted freely to gather for their use, and the beasts driven out fed on the remainder, the owners of fields not being allowed to reap or collect the fruits of the vineyard or oliveyard during the course of this sabbatical year. This was a regulation subservient to many excellent purposes; for, besides inculcating the general lesson of dependence on Providence, and of confidence in His faithfulness to His promise respecting the triple increase on the sixth year (\*\*\* Leviticus 25:20,21), it gave the Israelites a practical proof that they held their properties of the Lord as His tenants, and must conform to His rules on pain of forfeiting the lease of them.
- **12.** Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest This law is repeated (\*Exodus 20:9) lest any might suppose there was a relaxation of its observance during the sabbatical year.
- **13.** *make no mention of the name of other gods*, etc. that is, in common conversation, for a familiar use of them would tend to lessen horror of idolatry.
- **14-18.** Three times ... keep a feast ... in the year This was the institution of the great religious festivals "The feast of unleavened bread," or the passover "the feast of harvest," or pentecost "the

feast of ingathering," or the feast of tabernacles, which was a memorial of the dwelling in booths in the wilderness, and which was observed in the seventh month (\*\*DEX\*\*codus 12:2). All the males were enjoined to repair to the tabernacle and afterwards the temple, and the women frequently went. The institution of this national custom was of the greatest importance in many ways: by keeping up a national sense of religion and a public uniformity in worship, by creating a bond of unity, and also by promoting internal commerce among the people. Though the absence of all the males at these three festivals left the country defenseless, a special promise was given of divine protection, and no incursion of enemies was ever permitted to happen on those occasions.

- **19.** Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk A prohibition against imitating the superstitious rites of the idolaters in Egypt, who, at the end of their harvest, seethed a kid in its mother's milk and sprinkled the broth as a magical charm on their gardens and fields, to render them more productive the following season. [See on The Deuteronomy 14:21].
- **20-25.** *Behold*, *I* send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way The communication of these laws, made to Moses and by him rehearsed to the people, was concluded by the addition of many animating promises, intermingled with several solemn warnings that lapses into sin and idolatry would not be tolerated or passed with impunity.
- **21.** *my name is in him* This angel is frequently called Jehovah and Elohim, that is, God.
- **28.** *I will send hornets before thee*, etc. (See on Good Joshua 24:12) Some instrument of divine judgment, but variously interpreted: as hornets in a literal sense [BOCHART]; as a pestilential disease [ROSENMULLER]; as a terror of the Lord, an extraordinary dejection [JUNIUS].
- 29, 30. I will not drive ... out ... in one year; lest the land become desolate Many reasons recommend a gradual extirpation of the former inhabitants of Canaan. But only one is here specified the danger lest, in the unoccupied grounds, wild beasts should inconveniently multiply; a clear proof that the promised land was more than sufficient to contain the actual population of the Israelites.

### **EXODUS** 24:1-18.

#### DELIVERY OF THE LAW AND COVENANT.

- **3, 4.** *Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord* The rehearsal of the foregoing laws and the ten commandments, together with the promises of special blessings in the event of their obedience, having drawn forth from the people a unanimous declaration of their consent, it was forthwith recorded as the conditions of the *national* covenant. The next day preparations were made for having it (the covenant) solemnly ratified, by building an altar and twelve pillars; the altar representing God, and the pillars the tribes of Israel the two parties in this solemn compact while Moses acted as typical mediator.
- **5.** *young men* priests (\*\*Exodus 19:22), probably the oldest sons of particular families, who acted under the direction of Moses.
- **oxen** Other animals, though not mentioned, were offered in sacrifice (\*\*\*Hebrews 9:18-20).
- **6.** *Moses took half of the blood* ... *sprinkled* Preliminary to this was the public reading of the law and the renewed acceptance of the terms by the people; then the sprinkling of the blood was the sign of solemn ratification half on each party in the transaction.
- 8. Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people probably on the twelve pillars, as representing the people (also the book, "Hebrews 9:19), and the act was accompanied by a public proclamation of its import. It was setting their seal to the covenant (compare "12") Corinthians 11:25). It must have been a deeply impressive, as well as instructive scene, for it taught the Israelites that the covenant was made with them only through the sprinkling of blood that the divine acceptance of themselves and services, was only by virtue of an atoning sacrifice, and that even the blessings of the *national* covenant were promised and

secured to them only through grace. The ceremonial, however, had a further and higher significance, as is shown by the apostle (see as above).

**9.** Then went up Moses, and Aaron — in obedience to a command given (\*\*Exodus 24:1,2; also \*\*Exodus 19:24), previous to the religious engagement of the people, now described.

*Nadab*, and *Abihu* — the two oldest sons of Aaron (\*\*Exodus 6:23).

seventy of the elders — a select number; what was the principle of selection is not said; but they were the chief representatives, the most conspicuous for official rank and station, as well as for their probity and weight of character in their respective tribes.

**10.** And they saw the God of Israel — That there was no visible form or representation of the divine nature, we have expressly intimated (\*\*Deuteronomy 4:15). But a symbol or emblem of His glory was distinctly, and at a distance, displayed before those chosen witnesses. Many think, however, that in this private scene was discovered, amid the luminous blaze, the faint adumbrated form of the humanity of Christ (\*\*\*Ezekiel 1:26; compare \*\*\*\*Galatians 3:24).

sapphire — one of the most valuable and lustrous of the precious gems — of a sky-blue or light azure color and frequently chosen to describe the throne of God (see Ezekiel 1:26 10:1).

**11.** *upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand* — The "nobles," that is, the elders, after the sprinkling of the blood, were not inspired with terror in presence of the calm, benign, radiant symbol of the divine majesty; so different from the terrific exhibitions at the giving of the law. The report of so many competent witnesses would tend to confirm the people's faith in the divine mission of Moses.

*eat and drink* — feasted on the peace offering — on the remnants of the late sacrifices and libations. This feast had a prophetic bearing, intimating God's dwelling with men.

**12.** *I* will give thee tables of stone — The ten commandments, which had already been spoken, were to be given in a permanent form. Inscribed on stone, for greater durability, by the hand of God Himself, they were thus

authenticated and honored above the judicial or ceremonial parts of the law.

- **13.** *Moses went up into the mount of God* He was called to receive the divine transcript. Joshua was taken a little higher, and it would be a great comfort for the leader to have his company during the six days he was in patient waiting for the call on the seventh or sabbath day.
- **14.** he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us There is a circular valley or hollow a good way up on the brow of Jebel Musa, which was their halting place, while he alone was privileged to ascend the highest peak. The people stood below, as in the "outer court," the elders in the "holy place," Moses, as a type of Christ, in "the holy of holies."
- **18.** *Moses went into the midst of the cloud* the visible token of God's presence. Divine grace animated and supported him to enter with holy boldness.

Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights — The six days spent in waiting are not included. During that protracted period he was miraculously supported (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 9:9), on a peak scarcely thirty paces in compass.

### **EXODUS 25:1-40.**

### CONCERNING AN OFFERING.

- **1.** *the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc. The business that chiefly occupied Moses on the mount, whatever other disclosures were made to him there, was in receiving directions about the tabernacle, and they are here recorded as given to him.
- **2.** bring me an offering of every man that giveth it willingly, etc. Having declared allegiance to God as their sovereign, they were expected to contribute to His state, as other subjects to their kings; and the "offering" required of them was not to be imposed as a tax, but to come from their own loyal and liberal feelings.
- **3.** this is the offering which ye shall take of them the articles of which the offerings should consist.

*brass* — rather copper, brass being a composite metal.

- **4.** *goats' hair* or leather of goats' skin.
- **5.** badgers' skins The badger was an unclean animal, and is not a native of the East rather some kind of fish, of the leather of which sandals are made in the East. [See on \*Exodus 39:34 and \*Ezekiel 16:10.]
- **shittim wood** or *Shittah* (\*\*\*Isaiah 41:19), the acacia, a shrub which grows plentifully in the deserts of Arabia, yielding a light, strong, and beautiful wood, in long planks.
- **7.** *ephod* a square cloak, hanging down from the shoulders, and worn by priests.
- **8.** a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them In one sense the tabernacle was to be a palace, the royal residence of the King of Israel, in which He was to dwell among His people, receive their petitions, and

issue His responses. But it was also to be a place of worship, in which God was to record His name and to enshrine the mystic symbols of His presence.

- 9. According to all that I show thee, [after] the pattern of the tabernacle
- The proposed erection could be, in the circumstances of the Israelites, not of a fixed and stable but of a temporary and movable description, capable of being carried about with them in their various sojournings. It was made after "the pattern" shown to Moses, by which is now generally understood, not that it was an unheard-of novelty, or an entirely original structure, for it is ascertained to have borne resemblance in form and arrangements to the style of an Egyptian temple, but that it was so altered, modified, and purified from all idolatrous associations, as to be appropriated to right objects, and suggestive of ideas connected with the true God and His worship.
- **10.** *an ark* a coffer or chest, overlaid with gold, the dimensions of which, taking the cubit at eighteen inches, are computed to be three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches in breadth.
- 11. a crown a rim or cornice.
- **12.** *rings* staples for the poles, with which it was to be carried from place to place.
- **15.** staves shall be in the rings of the ark that is, always remain in the rings, whether the ark be at rest or in motion.
- 16. the testimony that is, the two tables of stone, containing the ten commandments, and called "the testimony," because by it God did testify His sovereign authority over Israel as His people, His selection of them as the guardians of His will and worship, and His displeasure in the event of their transgressing His laws; while on their part, by receiving and depositing this law in its appointed place, they testified their acknowledgment of God's right to rule over them, and their submission to the authority of His law. The superb and elaborate style of the ark that contained "the testimony" was emblematic of the great treasure it held; in other words, the incomparable value and excellence of the Word of God,

while its being placed in this chest further showed the great care which God has ever taken for preserving it.

- **17.** thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold to serve as a lid, covering it exactly. It was "the propitiatory cover," as the term may be rendered, denoting that Christ, our great propitiation [and 1 John 2:2 4:10], has fully answered all the demands of the law, covers our transgressions, and comes between us and the curse of a violated law.
- 18. two cherubim The real meaning of these figures, as well as the shape or form of them, is not known with certainty probably similar to what was afterwards introduced into the temple, and described in Ezekiel 10:8-22. They stretched out their wings, and their faces were turned towards the mercy seat [Exodus 25:20], probably in a bowing attitude. The prevailing opinion now is, that those splendid figures were symbolical not of angelic but of earthly and human beings the members of the Church of God interested in the dispensation of grace, the redeemed in every age and that these hieroglyphic forms symbolized the qualities of the true people of God courage, patience, intelligence, and activity.
- **22.** there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat The Shekinah, or symbol of the Divine Presence, rested on the mercy seat, and was indicated by a cloud, from the midst of which responses were audibly given when God was consulted on behalf of His people. Hence God is described as "dwelling" or "sitting" between the cherubim.
- 23. table of shittim wood of the same material and decorations as the ark [see on Exodus 25:5], and like it, too, furnished with rings for the poles on which it was carried Exodus 25:26]. The staves, however, were taken out of it when stationary, in order not to encumber the priests while engaged in their services at the table. It was half a cubit less than the ark in length and breadth, but of the same height. [See on Exodus 25:10.]
- **24.** *crown* the moulding or ornamental rim, which is thought to have been raised above the level of the table, to prevent anything from falling off.
- **29.** *dishes* broad platters.

*spoons* — cups or concave vessels, used for holding incense.

covers — both for bread and incense.

**bowls** — cups; for though no mention is made of wine, libations were undoubtedly made to God, according to JOSEPHUS and the rabbins, once a week, when the bread was changed.

to cover withal — rather, "to pour out withal."

- **30.** *showbread* literally, *presence bread*, so called because it was constantly exhibited before the Lord, or because the bread of His presence, like the angel of His presence, pointed symbolically to Christ. It consisted of twelve unleavened loaves, said traditionally to have been laid in piles of six each. This bread was designed to be a symbol of the full and neverfailing provision which is made in the Church for the spiritual sustenance and refreshment of God's people.
- **31.** *candlestick* literally, "a lamp bearer." It was so constructed as to be capable of being taken to pieces for facility in removal. The shaft or stock rested on a pedestal. It had seven branches, shaped like reeds or canes three on each side, with one in the center and worked out into knobs, flowers, and bowls, placed alternately [\*\*Exodus 25:32-36]. The figure represented on the arch of Titus gives the best idea of this candlestick.
- **33.** *knops* old spelling for "knobs" bosses.
- **37.** they shall light the lamps ... that they may give light The light was derived from pure olive oil, and probably kept continually burning (compare \*\*Exodus 30:7 \*\*Exodus 24:2).
- **38.** *tongs* snuffers.
- **39.** *a talent of pure gold* in weight equivalent to one hundred twenty-five pounds, troy.
- **40.** *look that thou make them after their pattern* This caution, which is repeated with no small frequency in other parts of the narrative, is an evidence of the deep interest taken by the Divine King in the erection of His palace or sanctuary; and it is impossible to account for the circumstance of God's condescending to such minute details, except on the

assumption that this tabernacle was to be of a typical character, and eminently subservient to the religious instruction and benefit of mankind, by shadowing forth in its leading features the grand truths of the Christian Church.

### **EXODUS** 26:1-37.

#### TEN CURTAINS

- **1.** *cunning work* that is, of elegant texture, richly embroidered. The word "cunning," in *old* English, is synonymous with "skillful."
- **2.** *length* Each curtain was to be fifteen yards in length and a little exceeding two in breadth.
- **3.** The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another, etc. so as to form two grand divisions, each eleven yards wide.
- **6.** *taches* clasps; supposed in shape, as well as in use, to be the same as hooks and eyes.
- **7-13.** *curtains of goats' hair* These coarse curtains were to be one more in number than the others, and to extend a yard lower on each side, the use of them being to protect and conceal the richer curtains.
- **14.** a covering ... of rams' skins dyed red that is, of Turkey red leather. [See on Exodus 39:34.]
- **15-30.** thou shalt make boards ... rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion ... which was showed thee The tabernacle, from its name as well as from its general appearance and arrangements, was a tent; but from the description given in these verses, the boards that formed its walls, the five (cross) bars that strengthened them, and the middle bar that "reached from end to end," and gave it solidity and compactness, it was evidently a more substantial fabric than a light and fragile tent, probably on account of the weight of its various coverings as well as for the protection of its precious furniture.
- **36.** *an hanging for the door of the tent* Curtains of rich and elaborate embroidery, made by the women, are suspended over the doors or

entrances of the tents occupied by Eastern chiefs and princes. In a similar style of elegance was the hanging finished which was to cover the door of this tabernacle — the chosen habitation of the God and King of Israel. It appears from Exodus 26:12,22,23, that the ark and mercy seat were placed in the west end of the tabernacle, and consequently the door or entrance fronted the east, so that the Israelites in worshipping Jehovah, turned their faces towards the west; that they might be thus figuratively taught to turn from the worship of that luminary which was the great idol of the nations, and to adore the God who made it and them [Hewlett].

### **EXODUS** 27:1-21.

### ALTAR FOR BURNT OFFERING.

- **1, 2.** *altar of shittim wood* The dimensions of this altar which was placed at the entrance of the sanctuary were nearly three yards square, and a yard and a half in height. Under the wooden frame of this chest-like altar the inside was hollow, and each corner was to be terminated by "horns" angular projections, perpendicular or oblique, in the form of horns. The animals to be sacrificed were bound to these (\*\*PSP\*Psalm 118:27), and part of the blood was applied to them.
- **3.** *shovels* fire shovels for scraping together any of the scattered ashes.

**basons** — for receiving the blood of the sacrifice to be sprinkled on the people.

*fleshhooks* — curved, three-pronged forks (4903) Samuel 2:13,14).

fire-pans — A large sort of vessel, wherein the sacred fire which came down from heaven (\*\*\*Leviticus 9:24) was kept burning, while they cleaned the altar and the grate from the coals and ashes, and while the altar was carried from one place to another in the wilderness [PATRICK, SPENCER, LE CLERC].

**4.** a grate of network of brass — sunk latticework to support the fire.

*four brazen rings* — by which the grating might be lifted and taken away as occasion required from the body of the altar.

- **5.** put it under the compass of the altar beneath that is, the grating in which they were carried to a clean place (\*\*\*\*\* Leviticus 4:12).
- **6, 7.** *staves* ... *rings* Those rings were placed at the side through which the poles were inserted on occasions of removal.

- 9-19. the court of the tabernacle The enclosure in which the edifice stood was a rectangular court, extending rather more than fifty yards in length and half that space in breadth, and the enclosing parapet was about three yards or half the height of the tabernacle. That parapet consisted of a connected series of curtains, made of fine twined linen yarn, woven into a kind of network, so that the people could see through; but that large curtain which overhung the entrance was of a different texture, being embroidered and dyed with variegated colors, and it was furnished with cords for pulling it up or drawing it aside when the priests had occasion to enter. The curtains of this enclosure were supported on sixty brazen pillars which stood on pedestals of the same metal, but their capitals and fillets were of silver, and the hooks on which they were suspended were of silver also.
- **19.** *pins* were designed to hold down the curtains at the bottom, lest the wind should waft them aside.
- **20, 21.** *pure oil olive beaten* that is, such as runs from the olives when bruised and without the application of fire.

*for the light ... Aaron and his sons* — were to take charge of lighting it in all time coming.

**21.** *shall order it from evening to morning* — The tabernacle having no windows, the lamps required to be lighted during the day. Josephus says that in his time only three were lighted; but his were degenerate times, and there is no Scripture authority for this limitation. But although the priests were obliged from necessity to light them by day, they might have let them go out at night had it not been for this express ordinance.

EXODUS 28:1-43.

### APPOINTMENT TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

1. take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him — Moses had hitherto discharged the priestly functions (\*\*Psalm 99:6), and he evinced the piety as well as humility of his character, in readily complying with the command to invest his brother with the sacred office, though it involved the perpetual exclusion of his own family. The appointment was a special act of God's sovereignty, so that there could be no ground for popular umbrage by the selection of Aaron's family, with whom the office was inalienably established and continued in unbroken succession till the introduction of the Christian era.

**2-5.** *holy garments* — No inherent holiness belonged either to the material or the workmanship. But they are called "holy" simply because they were not worn on ordinary occasions, but assumed in the discharge of the sacred functions (\*\*Ezekiel 44:19).

for glory and for beauty — It was a grand and sumptuous attire. In material, elaborate embroidery, and color, it had an imposing splendor. The tabernacle being adapted to the infantine aid of the church, it was right and necessary that the priests' garments should be of such superb and dazzling appearance, that the people might be inspired with a due respect for the ministers as well as the rites of religion. But they had also a further meaning; for being all made of linen, they were symbolical of the truth, purity, and other qualities in Christ that rendered Him such a high priest as became us.

**6-14.** *ephod* — It was a very gorgeous robe made of byssus, curiously embroidered, and dyed with variegated colors, and further enriched with golden tissue, the threads of gold being either originally interwoven or afterwards inserted by the embroiderer. It was short — reaching from the breast to a little below the loins — and though destitute of sleeves,

retained its position by the support of straps thrown over each shoulder. These straps or braces, connecting the one with the back, the other with the front piece of which the tunic was composed, were united on the shoulder by two onyx stones, serving as buttons, and on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved, and set in golden encasements. The symbolical design of this was, that the high priest, who bore the names along with him in all his ministrations before the Lord, might be kept in remembrance of his duty to plead their cause, and supplicate the accomplishment of the divine promises in their favor. The ephod was fastened by a girdle of the same costly materials, that is, dyed, embroidered, and wrought with threads of gold. It was about a handbreadth wide and wound twice round the upper part of the waist; it fastened in front, the ends hanging down at great length (\*\*Revelation 1:13).

### 15-29. thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work

— a very splendid and richly embroidered piece of brocade, a span square, and doubled, to enable it the better to bear the weight of the precious stones in it. There were twelve different stones, containing each the name of a tribe, and arranged in four rows, three in each. The Israelites had acquired a knowledge of the lapidary's art in Egypt, and the amount of their skill in cutting, polishing, and setting precious stones, may be judged of by the diamond forming one of the engraved ornaments on this breastplate. A ring was attached to each corner, through which the golden chains were passed to fasten this brilliant piece of jewelry at the top and bottom tightly on the breast of the ephod.

**30.** thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummim — The words signify "lights" and "perfections"; and nothing more is meant than the precious stones of the breastplate already described (compare Exodus 39:8-21 Leviticus 8:8). They received the name because the bearing of them qualified the high priest to consult the divine oracle on all public or national emergencies, by going into the holy place — standing close before the veil and putting his hand upon the Urim and Thummim, he conveyed a petition from the people and asked counsel of God, who, as the Sovereign of Israel, gave response from the midst of His glory. Little, however, is known about them. But it may be remarked that Egyptian judges wore on the breast of their official robes a

representation of Justice, and the high priest in Israel long officiated also as a judge; so that some think the Urim and Thummim had a reference to his judicial functions.

- **31-33.** *the robe of the ephod all of blue* It was the middle garment, under the ephod and above the coat. It had a hole through which the head was thrust, and was formed carefully of one piece, such as was the robe of Christ (\*\*PJohn 19:23). The high priest's was of a sky-blue color. The binding at the neck was strongly woven, and it terminated below in a fringe, made of blue, purple, and scarlet tassels, in the form of a pomegranate, interspersed with small bells of gold, which tinkled as the wearer was in motion.
- **34.** *a golden bell and a pomegranate* The bells were hung between the pomegranates, which were said to have amounted to seventy-two, and the use of them seems to have been to announce to the people when the high priest entered the most holy place, that they might accompany him with their prayers, and also to remind himself to be attired in his official dress, to minister without which was death.
- **36-38.** *plate* literally, a petal of a flower, which seems to have been the figure of this golden plate, which was tied with a ribbon of blue on the front of the mitre, so that every one facing him could read the inscription.
- **37.** *mitre* crown-like cap for the head, not covering the entire head, but adhering closely to it, composed of fine linen. The Scripture has not described its form, but from Josephus we may gather that it was conical in shape, as he distinguishes the mitres of the common priests by saying that they were not conical that it was encircled with swathes of blue embroidered, and that it was covered by one piece of fine linen to hide the seams.
- **39.** *coat of fine linen* a garment fastened at the neck, and reaching far down the person, with the sleeves terminating at the elbow.
- *girdle of needlework* a piece of fine twined linen, richly embroidered, and variously dyed. It is said to have been very long, and being many times wound round the body, it was fastened in front and the ends hung down, which, being an impediment to a priest in active duty, were usually

thrown across the shoulders. This was the outer garment of the common priests.

- **40.** *bonnets* turbans.
- **42.** *linen breeches* drawers, which encompassed the loins and reached half way down the thighs. They are seen very frequently represented in Egyptian figures.

**EXODUS** 29:1-35.

### CONSECRATING THE PRIESTS AND THE ALTAR.

**1.** hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office — The act of inaugurating the priests was accompanied by ceremonial solemnities well calculated not only to lead the people to entertain exalted views of the office, but to impress those functionaries themselves with a profound sense of its magnitude and importance. In short, they were taught to know that the service was for them as well as for the people; and every time they engaged in a new performance of their duties, they were reminded of their personal interest in the worship, by being obliged to offer for themselves, before they were qualified to offer as the representatives of the people.

this is the thing that thou shalt do — Steps are taken at the beginning of a society, which would not be repeated when the social machine was in full motion; and Moses, at the opening of the tabernacle, was employed to discharge functions which in later periods would have been regarded as sacrilege and punished with instant death. But he acted under the special directions of God.

**4-9.** Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle—as occupying the intermediate space between the court where the people stood, and the dwelling-place of Israel's king, and therefore the fittest spot for the priests being duly prepared for entrance, and the people witnessing the ceremony of inauguration.

wash them with water. And ... take the garments — The manner in which these parts of the ceremonial were performed is minutely described, and in discovering their symbolical import, which indeed, is sufficiently plain and obvious, we have inspired authority to guide us. It signified the necessity and importance of moral purity or holiness (\*\*\*Isaiah 52:11 \*\*\*\*John 13:10\*\*\* Corinthians 7:1 \*\*\*\* Peter 3:21). In like manner, the investiture with

the holy garments signified their being clothed with righteousness (\*\*Revelation 19:8) and equipped as men active and well-prepared for the service of God; the anointing the high priest with oil denoted that he was to be filled with the influences of the Spirit, for the edification and delight of the church (\*\*\*Leviticus 10:7\*\*Psalm 45:7\*\*Isaiah 61:1\*\*\*I John 2:27), and as he was officially a type of Christ (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 7:26\*\*\*John 3:34; also \*\*\*Matthew 3:16 11:29).

# **10-22.** And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle — This part of the ceremonial consisted of three sacrifices:

- (1) The sacrifice of a bullock, as a sin offering; and in rendering it, the priest was directed to put his hand upon the head of his sacrifice, expressing by that act a consciousness of personal guilt, and a wish that it might be accepted as a vicarious satisfaction.
- (2) The sacrifice of a ram as a burnt offering (\*\*Exodus 29:15-18). The ram was to be wholly burnt, in token of the priest's dedication of himself to God and His service. The sin offering was first to be presented, and *then* the burnt offering; for until guilt be removed, no acceptable service can be performed.
- (3) There was to be a peace offering, called "the ram of consecration" (Exodus 29:19-22).

And there was a marked peculiarity in the manner in which this other ram was to be disposed of. The former was for the glory of God — this was for the comfort of the priest himself; and as a sign of a mutual covenant being ratified, the blood of the sacrifice was divided — part sprinkled on the altar round about, and part upon the persons and garments of the priests. Nay, the blood was, by a singular act, directed to be put upon the extremities of the body, thereby signifying that the benefits of the atonement would be applied to the whole nature of man. Moreover, the flesh of this sacrifice was to be divided, as it were, between God and the priest — part of it to be put into his hand to be waved up and down, in token of its being offered to God, and then it was to be burnt upon the altar; the other part was to be eaten by the priests at the door of the tabernacle — that feast being a symbol of communion or fellowship with

God. These ceremonies, performed in the order described, showed the qualifications necessary for the priests. (See \*\*\*\*Hebrews 7:26,27 \*\*\*\*\*10:14).

**35.** seven days shalt thou consecrate them — The renewal of these ceremonies on the return of every day in the seven, with the intervention of a Sabbath, was a wise preparatory arrangement, in order to afford a sufficient interval for calm and devout reflection (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 9:1\*\*\*\*10:1).

**EXODUS** 29:36, 37.

### CONSECRATION OF THE ALTAR.

**36.** and thou shalt cleanse the altar — The phrase, "when thou hast made an atonement for it," should be, *upon* it; and the purport of the direction is, that during all the time they were engaged as above from day to day in offering the appointed sacrifices, the greatest care was to be taken to keep the altar properly cleansed — to remove the ashes, and sprinkle it with the prescribed unction that, at the conclusion of the whole ceremonial, the altar itself should be consecrated as much as the ministers who were to officiate at it (\*\*Matthew 23:19). It was thenceforth associated with the services of religion.

**EXODUS** 29:38-46.

### INSTITUTION OF DAILY SERVICE.

**38.** two lambs of the first year day by day continually — The sacred preliminaries being completed, Moses was instructed in the end or design to which these preparations were subservient, namely, the worship of God; and hence the institution of the morning and evening sacrifice. The institution was so imperative, that in no circumstances was this daily oblation to be dispensed with; and the due observance of it would secure the oft-promised grace and blessing of their heavenly King.

EXODUS 30:1-38.

### THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

- **1.** thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon, etc. Its material was to be like that of the ark of the testimony, but its dimensions very small [\*\*DEX\*\*Odus 25:10].
- 6. thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony— which separated the holy from the most holy place. The altar was in the middle between the table of showbread and the candlestick next the holy of holies, at equal distances from the north and south walls; in other words, it occupied a spot on the outside of the great partition veil, but directly in front of the mercy seat, which was within that sacred enclosure; so that although the priest who ministered at this altar could not behold the mercy seat, he was to look towards it, and present his incense in that direction. This was a special arrangement, and it was designed to teach the important lesson that, though we cannot with the eye of sense, see the

7, 8. Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense — literally, "incense of spices" — Strong aromatic substances were burnt upon this altar to counteract by their odoriferous fragrance the offensive fumes of the sacrifices; or the incense was employed in an offering of tributary homage which the Orientals used to make as a mark of honor to kings; and as God was Theocratic Ruler of Israel, His palace was not to be wanting in a usage of such significancy. Both these ends were served by this altar — that of fumigating the apartments of the sacred edifice, while the pure lambent flame, according to Oriental notions, was an honorary tribute to the majesty of Israel's King. But there was a far higher meaning in it still; for as the tabernacle was not only a palace for Israel's King, but a place of worship for Israel's God, this altar was immediately connected with a religious purpose. In the style of the sacred writers, incense was a symbol or emblem of prayer (\*\*PPsalm 141:2 \*\*Revelation 5:8 \*\*\*8:3). From the uniform combination of the two services, it is evident that the incense was an emblem of the prayers of sincere worshippers ascending to heaven in the cloud of perfume; and, accordingly, the priest who officiated at this altar typified the intercessory office of Christ (\*\*Luke 1:10 \*\*Hebrews 7:25).

*every morning ... at even* — In every period of the national history this daily worship was scrupulously observed.

- **8.** Aaron shall burn incense seemingly limiting the privilege of officiating at the altar of incense to the high priest alone, and there is no doubt that he and his successors exclusively attended this altar on the great religious festivals. But "Aaron" is frequently used for the whole priestly order, and in later times, any of the priests might have officiated at this altar in rotation (\*\*\*Luke 1:9).
- **9.** Ye shall offer no strange incense that is, of a different composition from that of which the ingredients are described so minutely.
- **11-16.** When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, etc. Moses did so twice, and doubtless observed the law here prescribed. The tax was not levied from women, minors, old men (\*\*Numbers 1:42,45), and the

Levites (\*\*Numbers 1:47), they being not numbered. Assuming the shekel of the sanctuary to be about half an ounce troy, though nothing certain is known about it, the sum payable by each individual was fifty cents. This was not a voluntary contribution, but a ransom for the soul or lives of the people. It was required from all classes alike, and a refusal to pay implied a wilful exclusion from the privileges of the sanctuary, as well as exposure to divine judgments. It was probably the same impost that was exacted from our Lord (\*\*\*Matthew 17:24-27), and it was usually devoted to repairs and other purposes connected with the services of the sanctuary.

**18-21.** Thou shalt ... make a laver of brass — Though not actually forming a component part of the furniture of the tabernacle, this vase was closely connected with it; and though from standing at the entrance it would be a familiar object, it possessed great interest and importance from the baptismal purposes to which it was applied. No data are given by which its form and size can be ascertained; but it was probably a miniature pattern of Solomon's — a circular basin.

his foot — supposed not to be the pedestal on which it rested, but a trough or shallow receptacle below, into which the water, let out from a cock or spout, flowed; for the way in which all Eastern people wash their hands or feet is by pouring upon them the water which falls into a basin. This laver was provided for the priests alone. But in the Christian dispensation, all believers are priests, and hence the apostle exhorts them how to draw near to God (\*\*\*\*\*\*Today\*\*\*\*\*Theorems\*\*\*\* 10:22).

**23-33.** *Take thou also ... principal spices*, etc. — Oil is frequently mentioned in Scripture as an emblem of sanctification, and anointing with it a means of designating objects as well as persons to the service of God. Here it is prescribed by divine authority, and the various ingredients in their several proportions described which were to compose the oil used in consecrating the furniture of the tabernacle.

myrrh — a fragrant and medicinal gum from a little known tree in Arabia.

**sweet cinnamon** — produced from a species of laurel or sweet bay, found chiefly in Ceylon, growing to a height of twenty feet: this spice is extracted from the inner bark, but it is not certain whether that mentioned by Moses is the same as that with which we are familiar.

*sweet calamus* — or sweet cane, a product of Arabia and India, of a tawny color in appearance; it is like the common cane and strongly odoriferous.

**24.** *cassia* — from the same species of tree as the cinnamon — some think the outer bark of that tree. All these together would amount to one hundred twenty pounds, troy weight.

**hin** — a word of Egyptian origin, equal to ten pints. Being mixed with the olive oil — no doubt of the purest kind — this composition probably remained always in a liquid state, and the strictest prohibition issued against using it for any other purpose than anointing the tabernacle and its furniture.

**34-38.** *the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices* — These were:

stacte — the finest myrrh;

*onycha* — supposed to be an odoriferous shell;

**galbanum** — a gum resin from an umbelliferous plant.

frankincense — a dry, resinous, aromatic gum, of a yellow color, which comes from a tree in Arabia, and is obtained by incision of the bark. This incense was placed within the sanctuary, to be at hand when the priest required to burn on the altar. The art of compounding unguents and perfumes was well known in Egypt, where sweet-scented spices were extensively used not only in common life, but in the ritual of the temples. Most of the ingredients here mentioned have been found on minute examination of mummies and other Egyptian relics; and the Israelites, therefore, would have the best opportunities of acquiring in that country the skill in pounding and mixing them which they were called to exercise in the service of the tabernacle. But the recipe for the incense as well as for the oil in the tabernacle, though it receives illustration from the customs of Egypt, was peculiar, and being prescribed by divine authority, was to be applied to no common or inferior purpose.

**EXODUS** 31:1-18.

### BEZALEEL AND AHOLIAB.

**2.** See, I have called — Though the instructions about the tabernacle were privately communicated to Moses, it was plainly impossible that he could superintend the work in person, amid the multiplicity of his other duties. A head director or builder was selected by God Himself; and the nomination by such high authority removed all ground of jealousy or discontent on the part of any who might have thought their merits overlooked (compare Matthew 18:1).

by name Bezaleel — signifying "in the shadow or protection of God"; and, as called to discharge a duty of great magnitude — to execute a confidential trust in the ancient Church of God, he has his family and lineage recorded with marked distinction. He belonged to the tribe of Judah, which, doubtless for wise and weighty reasons, God all along delighted to honor; and he was the grandson of Hur, a pious patriot (\*\*TExodus 17:12\*), who was associated, by a special commission, with Aaron in the government of the people during the absence of Moses. Moreover, it may be noticed that a Jewish tradition affirms Hur to be the husband of Miriam; and if this tradition may be relied on, it affords an additional reason for the appointment of Bezaleel emanating from the direct authority of God.

**3-5.** *I have filled him with the spirit of God* — It is probable that he was naturally endowed with a mechanical genius, and had acquired in Egypt great knowledge and skill in the useful, as well as liberal, arts so as to be a first-class artisan, competent to take charge of both the plain and ornamental work, which the building of the sacred edifice required. When God has any special work to be accomplished, He always raises up instruments capable of doing it; and it is likely that He had given to the son of Uri that strong natural aptitude and those opportunities of gaining

mechanical skill, with an ultimate view to this responsible office. Notwithstanding that his grand duty was to conform with scrupulous fidelity to the pattern furnished, there was still plenty of room for inventive talent and tasteful exactness in the execution; and his natural and acquired gifts were enlarged and invigorated for the important work.

**6.** I have given with him Aholiab — He belonged to the tribe of Dan, one of the least influential and honorable in Israel; and here, too, we can trace the evidence of wise and paternal design, in choosing the colleague or assistant of Bezaleel from an inferior tribe (compare \*\*C\*\*1 Corinthians 12:14-25; also \*\*Mark 6:7).

all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom — At that period, when one spirit pervaded all Israel, it was not the man full of heavenly genius who presided over the work; but all who contributed their skill, experience, and labor, in rendering the smallest assistance, showed their piety and devotedness to the divine service. In like manner, it was at the commencement of the Christian Church (4005Acts 6:5 400218:2).

12-17. Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep — The reason for the fresh inculcation of the fourth commandment at this particular period was, that the great ardor and eagerness, with which all classes betook themselves to the construction of the tabernacle, exposed them to the temptation of encroaching on the sanctity of the appointed day of rest. They might suppose that the erection of the tabernacle was a sacred work, and that it would be a high merit, an acceptable tribute, to prosecute the undertaking without the interruption of a day's repose; and therefore the caution here given, at the commencement of the undertaking, was a seasonable admonition.

**18.** *tables of stone, written with the finger of God* — containing the ten commandments (\*\*Exodus 24:12), called "tables of testimony," because God testified His will in them.

**EXODUS** 32:1-35.

#### THE GOLDEN CALF.

**1.** when the people saw that Moses delayed — They supposed that he had lost his way in the darkness or perished in the fire.

the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron — rather, "against" Aaron in a tumultuous manner, to compel him to do what they wished. The incidents related in this chapter disclose a state of popular sentiment and feeling among the Israelites that stands in singular contrast to the tone of profound and humble reverence they displayed at the giving of the law. Within a space of little more than thirty days, their impressions were dissipated. Although they were still encamped upon ground which they had every reason to regard as holy; although the cloud of glory that capped the summit of Sinai was still before their eyes, affording a visible demonstration of their being in close contact, or rather in the immediate presence, of God, they acted as if they had entirely forgotten the impressive scenes of which they had been so recently the witnesses.

said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us — The Hebrew word rendered "gods" is simply the name of God in its plural form. The image made was single, and therefore it would be imputing to the Israelites a greater sin than they were guilty of, to charge them with renouncing the worship of the true God for idols. The fact is, that they required, like children, to have something to strike their senses, and as the Shekinah, "the glory of God," of which they had hitherto enjoyed the sight, was now veiled, they wished for some visible material object as the symbol of the divine presence, which should go before them as the pillar of fire had done.

**2.** Aaron said, ... Break off ... earrings — It was not an Egyptian custom for young men to wear earrings, and the circumstance, therefore, seems to point out "the mixed rabble," who were chiefly *foreign* slaves, as the

ringleaders in this insurrection. In giving direction to break their earrings, Aaron probably calculated on gaining time; or, perhaps, on their covetousness and love of finery proving stronger than their idolatrous propensity. If such were his expectations, they were doomed to signal disappointment. Better to have calmly and earnestly remonstrated with them, or to have preferred duty to expediency, leaving the issue in the hands of Providence.

- **3.** all the people brake off the golden earrings The Egyptian rings, as seen on the monuments, were round massy plates of metal; and as they were rings of this sort the Israelites wore, their size and number must, in the general collection, have produced a large store of the precious metal.
- **4.** fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf—The words are transposed, and the rendering should be, "he framed with a graving tool the image to be made, and having poured the liquid gold into the mould, he made it a molten calf." It is not said whether it was of life size, whether it was of solid gold or merely a wooden frame covered with plates of gold. This idol seems to have been the god Apis, the chief deity of the Egyptians, worshipped at Memphis under the form of a live ox, three years old. It was distinguished by a triangular white spot on its forehead and other peculiar marks. Images of it in the form of a whole ox, or of a calf's head on the end of a pole, were very common; and it makes a great figure on the monuments where it is represented in the van of all processions, as borne aloft on men's shoulders.

they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt — It is inconceivable that they, who but a few weeks before had witnessed such amazing demonstrations of the true God, could have suddenly sunk to such a pitch of infatuation and brutish stupidity, as to imagine that human art or hands could make a god that should go before them. But it must be borne in mind, that though by election and in name they were the people of God, they were as yet, in feelings and associations, in habits and tastes, little, if at all different, from Egyptians. They meant the calf to be an image, a visible sign or symbol of Jehovah, so that their sin consisted not in a breach of the FIRST [\*\*Exodus 20:3], but of the SECOND commandment [\*\*TEXODUS 20:4-6].

- **5, 6.** Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord a remarkable circumstance, strongly confirmatory of the view that they had not renounced the worship of Jehovah, but in accordance with Egyptian notions, had formed an image with which they had been familiar, to be the visible symbol of the divine presence. But there seems to have been much of the revelry that marked the feasts of the heathen.
- **7-14.** *the Lord said unto Moses*, *Go*, *get thee down* Intelligence of the idolatrous scene enacted at the foot of the mount was communicated to Moses in language borrowed from human passions and feelings, and the judgment of a justly offended God was pronounced in terms of just indignation against the gross violation of the so recently promulgated laws.
- 10. make of thee a great nation Care must be taken not to suppose this language as betokening any change or vacillation in the divine purpose. The covenant made with the patriarchs had been ratified in the most solemn manner; it could not and never was intended that it should be broken. But the manner in which God spoke to Moses served two important purposes it tended to develop the faith and intercessory patriotism of the Hebrew leader, and to excite the serious alarm of the people, that God would reject them and deprive them of the privileges they had fondly fancied were so secure.
- **15-18.** *Moses turned, and went down from the mount* The plain, Er-Raheh, is not visible from the top of Jebel Musa, nor can the mount be descended on the side towards that valley; hence Moses and his companion, who on duty had patiently waited his return in the hollow of the mountain's brow, heard the shouting some time before they actually saw the camp.
- 19. Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands The arrival of the leader, like the appearance of a specter, arrested the revellers in the midst of their carnival, and his act of righteous indignation when he dashed on the ground the tables of the law, in token that as they had so soon departed from their covenant relation, so God could withdraw the peculiar privileges that He had promised them that act, together with the rigorous measures that followed, forms one of the most striking scenes recorded in sacred history.

- 20. he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, etc. It has been supposed that the gold was dissolved by natron or some chemical substance. But there is no mention of solubility here, or in Deuteronomy 9:21; it was "burned in the fire," to cast it into ingots of suitable size for the operations which follow "grounded to powder"; the powder of malleable metals can be ground so fine as to resemble dust from the wings of a moth or butterfly; and these dust particles will float in water for hours, and in a running stream for days. These operations of grinding were intended to show contempt for such worthless gods, and the Israelites would be made to remember the humiliating lesson by the state of the water they had drunk for a time [Napier]. Others think that as the idolatrous festivals were usually ended with great use of sweet wine, the nauseous draught of the gold dust would be a severe punishment (compare Kings 23:6,15 48502 Chronicles 15:16 486034:7).
- **22.** And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot Aaron cuts a poor figure, making a shuffling excuse and betraying more dread of the anger of Moses than of the Lord (compare —Deuteronomy 9:20).
- **25.** *naked* either unarmed and defenseless, or ashamed from a sense of guilt. Some think they were literally naked, as the Egyptians performed some of their rites in that indecent manner.
- **26-28.** *Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said* The camp is supposed to have been protected by a rampart after the attack of the Amalekites.
- Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me The zeal and courage of Moses was astonishing, considering he opposed an intoxicated mob. The people were separated into two divisions, and those who were the boldest and most obstinate in vindicating their idolatry were put to death, while the rest, who withdrew in shame or sorrow, were spared.
- **29.** Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord or, "Ye have consecrated yourselves to-day." The Levites, notwithstanding the dejection of Aaron, distinguished themselves by their zeal for the honor of God and their conduct in doing the office of executioners on this occasion; and this was one reason that they were appointed to a high and honorable office in the service of the sanctuary.

- **30-33.** *Moses said unto the people*, *Ye have sinned a great sin* Moses labored to show the people the heinous nature of their sin, and to bring them to repentance. But not content with that, he hastened more earnestly to intercede for them.
- **32. blot me** ... **out of thy book** an allusion to the registering of the living, and erasing the names of those who die. What warmth of affection did he evince for his brethren! How fully was he animated with the true spirit of a patriot, when he professed his *willingness* to die for them. But Christ actually died for His people (\*\*TROMANN 5:8).
- **35.** the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf No immediate judgments were inflicted, but this early lapse into idolatry was always mentioned as an aggravation of their subsequent apostasies.

### **EXODUS** 33:1-23.

### THE LORD REFUSES TO GO WITH THE PEOPLE.

- 1. the Lord said rather "had" said unto Moses. The conference detailed in this chapter must be considered as having occurred prior to the pathetic intercession of Moses, recorded at the close of the preceding chapter; and the historian, having mentioned the fact of his earnest and painful anxiety, under the overwhelming pressure of which he poured forth that intercessory prayer for his apostate countrymen, now enters on a detailed account of the circumstances.
- 3. I will not go up ... lest I consume thee Here the Lord is represented as determined to do what He afterwards did not. (See on Exodus 32:7).
- **4.** when the people heard these evil tidings from Moses on his descent from the mount.
- **5.** *put off thy ornaments* In seasons of mourning, it is customary with Eastern people to lay aside all gewgaws and divest themselves of their jewels, their gold, and every thing rich and splendid in their dress. This token of their sorrow the Lord required of His offending people.
- that I may know what to do unto thee The language is accommodated to the feeble apprehensions of men. God judges the state of the heart by the tenor of the conduct. In the case of the Israelites, He cherished a design of mercy; and the moment He discerned the first symptoms of contrition, by their stripping off their ornaments, as penitents conscious of their error and sincerely sorrowful, this fact added its weight to the fervency of Moses' prayers, and gave them prevalence with God in behalf of the people.
- **7.** *Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp* Not the tabernacle, of which a pattern had been given him, for it was not yet

erected, but his own tent — conspicuous as that of the leader — in a part of which he heard cases and communed with God about the people's interests; hence called "the tabernacle of the congregation," and the withdrawal of which, in abhorrence from a polluted camp, was regarded as the first step in the total abandonment with which God had threatened them.

- **8.** all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door Its removal produced deep and universal consternation; and it is easy to conceive how anxiously all eyes would be directed towards it; how rapidly the happy intelligence would spread, when a phenomenon was witnessed from which an encouraging hope could be founded.
- **9-11.** the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle How would the downcast hearts of the people revive how would the tide of joy swell in every bosom, when the symbolic cloud was seen slowly and majestically to descend and stand at the entrance of the tabernacle!
- as Moses entered It was when he appeared as their mediator, when he repaired from day to day to intercede for them, that welcome token of assurance was given that his advocacy prevailed, that Israel's sin was forgiven, and that God would again be gracious.
- **18-23.** *I beseech thee*, *show me thy glory* This is one of the most mysterious scenes described in the Bible: he had, for his comfort and encouragement, a splendid and full display of the divine majesty, not in its unveiled effulgence, but as far as the weakness of humanity would admit. The face, hand, back parts, are to be understood figuratively.

**EXODUS** 34:1-35.

### THE TABLES ARE RENEWED.

- 1. the like unto the first God having been reconciled to repentant Israel, through the earnest intercession, the successful mediation of Moses, means were to be taken for the restoration of the broken covenant. Intimation was given, however, in a most intelligible and expressive manner, that the favor was to be restored with some memento of the rupture; for at the former time God Himself had provided the materials, as well as written upon them. Now, Moses was to prepare the stone tables, and God was only to retrace the characters originally inscribed for the use and guidance of the people.
- **2.** present thyself ... to me in the top of the mount Not absolutely the highest peak; for as the cloud of the Shekinah usually abode on the summit, and yet (\*\*Exodus 34:5) it "descended," the plain inference is that Moses was to station himself at a point not far distant, but still below the loftiest pinnacle.
- 3. no man shall come up with thee ... neither ... flocks nor herds All these enactments were made in order that the law might be a second time renewed with the solemnity and sanctity that marked its first delivery. The whole transaction was ordered so as to impress the people with an awful sense of the holiness of God; and that it was a matter of no trifling moment to have subjected Him, so to speak, to the necessity of redelivering the law of the ten commandments.
- **4.** Moses ... took in his hand the two tables of stone As Moses had no attendant to divide the labor of carrying them, it is evident that they must have been light, and of no great dimensions probably flat slabs of shale or slate, such as abound in the mountainous region of Horeb. An additional proof of their comparatively small size appears in the circumstance of their being deposited in the ark of the most holy place (\*\*Exodus 25:10).

- **5.** the Lord descended in the cloud After graciously hovering over the tabernacle, it seems to have resumed its usual position on the summit of the mount. It was the shadow of God manifest to the outward senses; and, at the same time, of God manifest in the flesh. The emblem of a cloud seems to have been chosen to signify that, although He was pleased to make known much about himself, there was more veiled from mortal view. It was to check presumption and engender awe and give a humble sense of human attainments in divine knowledge, as now man sees, but darkly.
- **6.** *the Lord passed by before him* in this remarkable scene, God performed what He had promised to Moses the day before.
- proclaimed, The Lord ... merciful and gracious At an earlier period He had announced Himself to Moses, in the glory of His self-existent and eternal majesty, as "I am" [\*\*Exodus 3:14]; now He makes Himself known in the glory of His grace and goodness attributes that were to be illustriously displayed in the future history and experience of the church. Being about to republish His law the sin of the Israelites being forgiven and the deed of pardon about to be signed and sealed by renewing the terms of the former covenant it was the most fitting time to proclaim the extent of the divine mercy which was to be displayed, not in the case of Israel only, but of all who offend.
- **8-26.** *Moses bowed* ... *and worshipped* In the East, people bow the head to royalty, and are silent when it passes by, while in the West, they take off their hats and shout.
- **9, 10.** he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us On this proclamation, he, in the overflowing benevolence of s heart, founded an earnest petition for the Divine Presence being continued with the people; and God was pleased to give His favorable answer to Moses' intercession by a renewal of His promise under the form of a covenant, repeating the leading points that formed the conditions of the former national compact.
- **27, 28.** *And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words* that is, the ceremonial and judicial injunctions comprehended above (\*Exodus 34:11-26); while the rewriting of the ten commandments on the newly

prepared slabs was done by God Himself (compare Deuteronomy 10:1-4).

- **28.** he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights as long as formerly [\*\*Exodus 24:18], being sustained for the execution of his special duties by the miraculous power of God. A special cause is assigned for his protracted fast on this second occasion (\*\*Deuteronomy 9:18).
- **29.** Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him It was an intimation of the exalted presence into which he had been admitted and of the glory he had witnessed (\*\*2 Corinthians 3:18); and in that view, it was a badge of his high office as the ambassador of God. No testimonial needed to be produced. He bore his credentials on his very face; and whether this extraordinary effulgence was a permanent or merely temporary distinction, it cannot be doubted that this reflected glory was given him as an honor before all the people.
- **30.** *they were afraid to come nigh him* Their fear arose from a sense of guilt the beaming radiance of his countenance made him appear to their awe-struck consciences a flaming minister of heaven.
- **33.** *he put a veil on his face* That veil was with the greatest propriety removed when speaking with the Lord, for every one appears unveiled to the eye of Omniscience; but it was replaced on returning to the people and this was emblematic of the dark and shadowy character of that dispensation (\*\* Corinthians 3:13,14).

**EXODUS** 35:1-35.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TABERNACLE.

**1.** Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel, etc. — On the occasion referred to in the opening of this chapter, the Israelites were specially reminded of the design to erect a magnificent tabernacle for the regular worship of God, as well as of the leading articles that were required to furnish that sacred edifice [\*\*Exodus 35:11-19]. (See on \*\*Exodus 25:1-40; \*\*Exodus 27:1-21; \*\*Exodus 30:1-31:18).

### 20, 21. all the congregation of Israel departed from the presence of Moses

— No exciting harangues were made, nor had the people Bibles at home in which they could compare the requirements of their leader and see if these things were so. But they had no doubt as to his bearing to them the will of God, and they were impressed with so strong a sense of its being their duty, that they made a spontaneous offer of the best and most valuable treasures they possessed.

**21.** they came, every one whose heart stirred him up — One powerful element doubtless of this extraordinary open-hearted liberality was the remembrance of their recent transgression, which made them "zealous of good works" (compare <sup>4001</sup>2 Corinthians 7:11). But along with this motive, there were others of a higher and nobler kind — a principle of love to God and devotedness to His service, an anxious desire to secure the benefit of His presence, and gratitude for the tokens of His divine favor: it was under the combined influence of these considerations that the people were so willing and ready to pour their contributions into that exchequer of the sanctuary.

every one whom his spirit made willing — Human nature is always the same, and it is implied that while an extraordinary spirit of pious liberality reigned in the bosoms of the people at large, there were exceptions — some who were too fond of the world, who loved their possessions more

than their God, and who could not part with these; no, not for the service of the tabernacle.

**22.** *they came*, *both men and women*, etc. — literally, "the men over and above the women"; a phraseology which implies that the women acted a prominent part, presented their offerings *first*, and then were followed by as many of their male companions as were similarly disposed.

brought bracelets, etc. — There was in that early age no money in the form of coins or bullion. What money passed current with the merchant consisted of rings which were weighed, and principally of ornaments for personal decoration. Astonishment at the abundance of their ornaments is at an end when we learn that costly and elegant ornaments abounded in proportion as clothing was simple and scarce among the Egyptians, and some, entirely divested of clothing, yet wore rich necklaces [Hengstenberg]. Among people with Oriental sentiments and tastes, scarcely any stronger proof could have been given of the power of religion than their willingness not only to lay aside, but to devote those much-valued trinkets to the house of God; and thus all, like the Eastern sages, laid the best they had at the service of God.

- **30.** See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, etc. Moses had made this communication before [see Exodus 31:2-5; also see on Exodus 31:2]. But now that the collection had been made, the materials were contributed, and the operations of building about to be commenced, it was with the greatest propriety he reminded the people that the individuals entrusted with the application of their gold and silver had been nominated to the work by authority to which all would bow.
- 35. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart A statement which not only testifies that skill in art and science is a direct gift from God, but that weaving was especially the business of men in Egypt (see Exodus 38:22 39:22,27). And in perfect harmony with the testimony of the monuments is the account given by Moses to the artists who were divinely taught the arts necessary for the embellishment of the tabernacle. Others, whose limited means did not admit of these expensive contributions, offered their gratuitous services in fabricating such articles of tapestry as were needed; arts which the Israelitish females learned as bondwomen, in the houses of Egyptian princes.

**EXODUS** 36:1-38.

### OFFERINGS DELIVERED TO THE WORKMEN.

1. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, etc.

— Here is an illustrious example of zeal and activity in the work of the Lord. No unnecessary delay was allowed to take place; and from the moment the first pole was stuck in the ground till the final completion of the sacred edifice, he and his associates labored with all the energies both of mind and body engaged in the work. And what was the mainspring of their arduous and untiring diligence? They could be actuated by none of the ordinary motives that give impulse to human industry, by no desire for the acquisition of gain; no ambition for honor; no view of gratifying a mere love of power in directing the labors of a large body of men. They felt the stimulus — the strong irresistible impulse of higher and holier motives — obedience to the authority, zeal for the glory, and love to the service of God.

### **3.** *they* (the workmen)

received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought, etc. — It appears that the building was begun after the first few contributions were made; it was progressively carried on, and no necessity occurred to suspend operations even for the shortest interval, from want of the requisite materials.

they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning, etc. — Moses, in common with other Oriental magistrates, had his morning levees for receiving the people (see on Exodus 18:13); and it was while he was performing his magisterial duties that the people brought unto him freewill offerings every morning. Some who had nothing but their manual labor to give would spend a great part of the night in hastening to complete their self-imposed task before the early dawn; others might find their hearts constrained by silent meditations on their beds to open their coffers and

give a part of their hoarded treasure to the pious object. All whose hearts were touched by piety, penitence, or gratitude, repaired with eager haste into the presence of Moses, not as heretofore, to have their controversies settled, but to lay on his tribunal their contributions to the sanctuary of God (4000)2 Corinthians 9:7).

- **5.** they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough, etc. By the calculations which the practiced eyes of the workmen enabled them to make, they were unanimously of the opinion that the supply already far exceeded the demand and that no more contributions were required. Such a report reflects the highest honor on their character as men of the strictest honor and integrity, who, notwithstanding they had command of an untold amount of the most precious things and might, without any risk of human discovery, have appropriated much to their own use, were too high principled for such acts of peculation. Forthwith, a proclamation was issued to stop further contributions [\*\*Exodus 36:6].
- **35.** *he made a veil of blue* the second or inner veil, which separated the holy from the most holy place, embroidered with cherubim and of great size and thickness.
- 37. made an hanging for the ... door Curtains of elaborately wrought needlework are often suspended over the entrance to tents of the great nomad sheiks, and throughout Persia, at the entrance of summer tents, mosques, and palaces. They are preferred as cooler and more elegant than wooden doors. This chapter contains an instructive narrative: it is the first instance of donations made for the worship of God, given from the wages of the people's sufferings and toils. They were acceptable to God (\*\*This pipelings 4:18), and if the Israelites showed such liberality, how much more should those whose privilege it is to live under the Christian dispensation (\*\*This pipelings 4:20 16:20).

**EXODUS** 37:1-29.

### FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE.

- **1.** Bezaleel made the ark The description here given of the things within the sacred edifice is almost word for word the same as that contained in Exodus 25:1-40. It is not on that account to be regarded as a useless repetition of minute particulars; for by the enumeration of these details, it can be seen how exactly everything was fashioned according to the "pattern shown on the mount" [Exodus 25:40]; and the knowledge of this exact correspondence between the prescription and the execution was essential to the purposes of the fabric.
- **6-10.** *made the mercy seat of pure gold* To construct a figure, whether the body of a beast or a man, with two extended wings, measuring from two to three feet from tip to tip, with the hammer, out of a solid piece of gold, was what few, if any, artisans of the present day could accomplish.
- 17-22. he made the candlestick of pure gold Practical readers will be apt to say, "Why do such works with the hammer, when they could have been cast so much easier a process they were well acquainted with?" The only answer that can be given is, that it was done according to order. We have no doubt but there were reasons for so distinctive an order, something significant, which has not been revealed to us [NAPIER]. The whole of that sacred building was arranged with a view to inculcate through every part of its apparatus the great fundamental principles of revelation. Every object was symbolical of important truth every piece of furniture was made the hieroglyphic of a doctrine or a duty on the floor and along the sides of that movable edifice was exhibited, by emblematic signs addressed to the eye, the whole remedial scheme of the gospel. How far this spiritual instruction was received by every successive generation of the Israelites, it may not be easy to determine. But the tabernacle, like the law of which it was a part, was a schoolmaster to

Christ [ Galatians 3:24,25]. Just as the walls of schools are seen studded with pictorial figures, by which the children, in a manner level to their capacities and suited to arrest their volatile minds, are kept in constant and familiar remembrance of the lessons of piety and virtue, so the tabernacle was intended by its furniture and all its arrangements to serve as a "shadow of good things to come" [ Hebrews 10:1]. In this view, the minute description given in this chapter respecting the ark and mercy seat, the table of showbread, the candlestick, the altar of incense, and the holy oil, were of the greatest utility and importance; and though there are a few things that are merely ornamental appendages, such as the knops and the flowers, yet, in introducing these into the tabernacle, God displayed the same wisdom and goodness as He has done by introducing real flowers into the kingdom of nature to engage and gratify the eye of man.

### **EXODUS** 38:1-31.

### FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE.

- **1.** *the altar of burnt offering* The repetitions are continued, in which may be traced the exact conformity of the execution to the order.
- **8.** *laver of brass ... of the looking glasses of the women* The word *mirrors* should have been used, as those implements, usually round, inserted into a handle of wood, stone, or metal, were made of brass, silver, or bronze, highly polished [WILKINSON]. It was customary for the Egyptian women to carry mirrors with them to the temples; and whether by taking the looking glasses of the Hebrew women Moses designed to put it out of their power to follow a similar practice at the tabernacle, or whether the supply of brass from other sources in the camp was exhausted, it is interesting to learn how zealously and to a vast extent they surrendered those valued accompaniments of the female toilet.
- of the women assembling ... at the door not priestesses but women of pious character and influence, who frequented the courts of the sacred building (\*\*Luke 2:37), and whose parting with their mirrors, like the cutting the hair of the Nazarites, was their renouncing the world for a season [HENGSTENBERG].
- **9.** *the court* It occupied a space of one hundred and fifty feet by seventy-five, and it was enclosed by curtains of fine linen about eight feet high, suspended on brazen or copper pillars. Those curtains were secured by rods fastened to the top, and kept extended by being fastened to pins stuck in the ground.
- **10.** *hooks* The hooks of the pillars in the court were for hanging up the carcasses of the sacrificial beasts those on the pillars at the entry of the tabernacle were for hanging the sacerdotal robes and other things used in the service.

- **11.** *sockets* mortices or holes in which the end of the pillars stood.
- **17.** *chapiters* or capitals of the pillars, were wooden posts which ran along their top, to which were attached the hooks for the hangings.
- **18.** the height in the breadth or, "in the measure." The sense is that the hangings of the court gate, which was twenty cubits wide, were of the same height as the hangings all round the court [WALL].
- **21.** This is the sum of the tabernacle Having completed his description of the component parts of the tabernacle, the inspired historian digresses into a statement respecting the gold and silver employed in it, the computation being made according to an order of Moses by the Levites, under the direction of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son.
- **24.** *twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels*—equivalent to approximately \$450,000.
- **25.** *the silver of them that were numbered* 603,550 men at fifty cents each would contribute \$301,775. It may seem difficult to imagine how the Israelites should be possessed of so much wealth in the desert; but it should be remembered that they were enriched first by the spoils of the Egyptians, and afterwards by those of the Amalekites. Besides, it is highly probable that during their sojourn they traded with the neighboring nations who bordered on the wilderness [Hewlett].

EXODUS 39:1-43.

### GARMENTS OF THE PRIESTS.

- **1, 2.** *cloths of service* official robes. The ephod of the high priest, the robe of the ephod, the girdle of needlework, and the embroidered coat were all of fine linen; for on no material less delicate could such elaborate symbolical figures have been portrayed in embroidery, and all beautified with the same brilliant colors. (See on <sup>4000</sup>Exodus 28:1-43).
- **3.** cut the gold into wires to work it that is, the metal was beaten with a hammer into thin plates, cut with scissors or some other instrument into long slips, then rounded into filaments or threads. "Cloth of golden tissue is not uncommon on the monuments, and specimens of it have been found rolled about mummies; but it is not easy to determine whether the gold thread was originally interwoven or subsequently inserted by the embroiderer" [Taylor].
- **30.** a writing, like to the engravings of a signet The seal-ring worn both by ancient and modern Egyptians on the little finger of the right hand, contained, inscribed on a cornelian or other precious stone, along with the owner's name, a religious sentiment or sacred symbol, intimating that he was the servant of God, or expressive of trust in Him. And it was to this practice the inscription on the high priest alludes (compare Exodus 28:11).
- **34.** *the covering of rams' skin dyed red* (See on Exodus 25:5). It was probably red morocco leather and "badgers' skins," rather "the skins of the "tahash," supposed to be the dugong, or dolphin of the Red Sea, the skin of which is still used by the Arabs under the same appellation." [Goss].
- **43.** Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded A formal inspection was made on the

completion of the tabernacle, not only with a view to have the work transferred from the charge of the workmen, but to ascertain whether it corresponded with "the pattern." The result of a careful and minute survey showed that every plank, curtain, altar, and vase had been most accurately made of the form, and in the place designed by the Divine Architect — and Moses, in accepting it of their hands, thanked God for them, and begged Him to bless them.

**EXODUS** 40:1-38.

#### THE TABERNACLE REARED AND ANOINTED.

2. On the first day of the first month — From a careful consideration of the incidents corded to have happened after the exodus (\*\*Exodus 12:2\*\*\*13:4\*\*\*19:1\*\*\*20:18\*\*\*20:18\*\*34:28, etc.), it has been computed that the work of the tabernacle was commenced within six months after that emigration; and consequently, that other six months had been occupied in building it. So long a period spent in preparing the materials of a movable pavilion, it would be difficult to understand, were it not for what we are told of the vast dimensions of the tabernacle, as well as the immense variety of curious and elaborate workmanship which its different articles of furniture required.

*the tabernacle* — the entire edifice.

*the tent* — the covering that surmounted it (\*\*Exodus 40:19).

- **15.** anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father The sacred oil was used, but it does not appear that the ceremony was performed exactly in the same manner; for although the anointing oil was sprinkled over the garments both of Aaron and his sons (\*\*Exodus 29:21 \*\*\*Leviticus 8:30), it was not poured over the heads of the latter. This distinction was reserved for the high priest (\*\*Exodus 29:7 \*\*\*Leviticus 8:12 \*\*\*Psalm 133:2).
- **16.** Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him On his part, the same scrupulous fidelity was shown in conforming to the "pattern" in the disposition of the furniture, as had been displayed by the workmen in the erection of the edifice.
- **33.** So Moses finished the work Though it is not expressly recorded in this passage, yet, from what took place on all similar occasions, there is

reason to believe that on the inauguration day the people were summoned from their tents — were all drawn up as a vast assemblage, yet in calm and orderly arrangement, around the newly erected tabernacle.

**34.** a cloud — literally, "The cloud," the mystic cloud which was the wellknown symbol of the Divine Presence. After remaining at a great distance from them on the summit of the mount, it appeared to be in motion; and if many among them had a secret misgiving about the issue, how the fainting heart would revive, the interest of the moment intensely increase, and the tide of joy swell in every bosom, when that symbolic cloud was seen slowly and majestically descending towards the plain below and covering the tabernacle. The entire and universal concealment of the tabernacle within the folds of an impervious cloud was not without a deep and instructive meaning; it was a protection to the sacred edifice from the burning heats of the Arabian climate; it was a token of the Divine Presence; and it was also an emblem of the Mosaic dispensation, which, though it was a revelation from heaven, yet left many things hid in obscurity; for it was a dark cloud compared with the bright cloud, which betokened the clearer and fuller discoveries of the divine character and glory in the gospel (Matthew 17:5).

35. Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation — How does this circumstance show the incapacity of man, in his present state, to look upon the unveiled perfections of the Godhead! Moses could not endure the unclouded effulgence, nor the sublimest of the prophets (\*\*Isaiah 6:5). But what neither Moses nor the most eminent of God's messengers to the ancient church through the weakness of nature could endure, we can all now do by an exercise of faith; looking unto Jesus, who

reflected with chastened radiance the brightness of the Father's glory; and who, having as the Forerunner for us, entered within the veil, has invited us to come boldly to the mercy seat. While Moses was compelled, through the influence of overwhelming awe, to stand aloof and could not enter the tabernacle, Christ entered into the holy place not made with hands; nay, He is Himself the true tabernacle, filled with the glory of God, ever with the grace and truth which the Shekinah typified. What great reason we have to thank God for Jesus Christ, who, while He Himself was the brightness of the Father's glory, yet exhibited that glory in so mild and attractive a manner, as to allure us to draw near with confidence and love into the Divine Presence!

**36.** when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle — In journeying through the sandy, trackless deserts of the East, the use of torches, exhibiting a cloud of smoke by day and of fire by night, has been resorted to from time immemorial. The armies of Darius and Alexander were conducted on their marches in this manner [FABER]. The Arab caravans in the present day observe the same custom; and materials for these torches are stored up among other necessary preparations for a journey. Live fuel, hoisted in chafing dishes at the end of long poles, and being seen at a great distance, serves, by the smoke in the daytime and the light at night, as a better signal for march than the sound of a trumpet, which is not heard at the extremities of a large camp [LABORDE]. This usage, and the miracle related by Moses, mutually illustrate each other. The usage leads us to think that the miracle was necessary, and worthy of God to perform; and, on the other hand, the miracle of the cloudy pillar, affording double benefit of shade by day and light at night, implies not only that the usage was not unknown to the Hebrews, but supplied all the wants which they felt in common with other travelers through those dreary regions [FABER, HESS, GRANDPIERRE]. But its peculiar appearance, unvarying character, and regular movements, distinguished it from all the common atmospheric phenomena. It was an invaluable boon to the Israelites, and being recognized by all classes among that people as the symbol of the Divine Presence, it guided their journeys and regulated their encampments (compare Psalm 29:1-11 105:1-45).

**38.** *the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle*, etc. — While it had hitherto appeared sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, it was

now found on the tabernacle only; so that from the moment that sanctuary was erected, and the glory of the Lord had filled the sacred edifice, the Israelites had to look to the place which God had chosen to put His name there, in order that they might enjoy the benefit of a heavenly Guide (\*\*Numbers 9:15-23). In like manner, the church had divine revelation for its guide from the first — long before the WORD of God existed in a written form; but ever since the setting up of that sacred canon, it rests on that as its tabernacle and there only is it to be found. It accompanies us wherever we are or go, just as the cloud led the way of the Israelites. It is always accessible and can be carried in our pockets when we walk abroad; it may be engraved on the inner tablets of our memories and our hearts; and so true, faithful, and complete a guide is it, that there is not a scene of duty or of trial through which we may be called to pass in the world, but it furnishes a clear, a safe, and unerring direction (\*\*\*Colossians 3:16).

### THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

# **LEVITICUS**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

#### BURNT OFFERINGS OF THE HERD.

- 1. the Lord ... spake ... out of the tabernacle The laws that are contained in the previous record were delivered either to the people publicly from Sinai, or to Moses privately, on the summit of that mountain; but on the completion of the tabernacle, the remainder of the law was announced to the Hebrew leader by an audible voice from the divine glory, which surmounted the mercy seat.
- **2.** Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them If the subject of communication were of a temporal nature, the Levites were excluded; but if it were a spiritual matter, all the tribes were comprehended under this name (\*Deuteronomy 27:12).

bring your offering of the cattle, etc. — that is, those animals that were not only tame, innocent and gentle, but useful and adapted for food. This rule excluded horses, dogs, swine, camels, and asses, which were used in

sacrifice by some heathen nations, beasts and birds of prey, as also hares and deer.

**3.** a burnt sacrifice — so called from its being wholly consumed on the altar; no part of it was eaten either by the priests or the offerer. It was designed to propitiate the anger of God incurred by original sin, or by particular transgressions; and its entire combustion indicated the self-dedication of the offerer — his body and soul — as necessary to form a sacrifice acceptable to God (\*\*TRomans 12:1 \*\*TPhilippians 1:20). This was the most ancient as well as the most conspicuous mode of sacrifice.

a male without blemish — No animal was allowed to be offered that had any deformity or defect. Among the Egyptians, a minute inspection was made by the priest; and the bullock having been declared perfect, a certificate to that effect being fastened to its horns with wax, was sealed with his ring, and no other might be substituted. A similar process of examining the condition of the beasts brought as offerings, seems to have been adopted by the priests in Israel (\*\*Tohn 6:27).

at the door of the tabernacle — where stood the altar of burnt offering (\*\*Exodus 40:6). Every other place was forbidden, under the highest penalty (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 17:4).

**4.** *shall put his hand upon the head* — This was a significant act which implied not only that the offerer devoted the animal to God, but that he confessed his consciousness of sin and prayed that his guilt and its punishment might be transferred to the victim.

and it shall be — rather, "that it may be an acceptable atonement."

**5.** *he shall kill the bullock* — The animal should be killed by the offerer, not by the priest, for it was not his duty in case of voluntary sacrifices; in later times, however, the office was generally performed by Levites.

**before the Lord** — on the spot where the hands had been laid upon the animal's head, on the north side of the altar.

*sprinkle the blood* — This was to be done by the priests. The blood being considered the life, the effusion of it was the essential part of the sacrifice; and the sprinkling of it — the application of the atonement — made the

person and services of the offerer acceptable to God. The skin having been stripped off, and the carcass cut up, the various pieces were disposed on the altar in the manner best calculated to facilitate their being consumed by the fire.

- **8.** *the fat* that about the kidneys especially, which is called "suet."
- **9.** but his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water This part of the ceremony was symbolical of the inward purity, and the holy walk, that became acceptable worshippers.

a sweet savor unto the Lord— is an expression of the offerer's piety, but especially as a sacrificial type of Christ.

- **10-13.** *if his offering be of the flocks* Those who could not afford the expense of a bullock might offer a ram or a he-goat, and the same ceremonies were to be observed in the act of offering.
- **14-17.** if the burnt sacrifice ... be of fowls The gentle nature and cleanly habits of the dove led to its selection, while all other fowls were rejected, either for the fierceness of their disposition or the grossness of their taste; and in this case, there being from the smallness of the animal no blood for waste, the priest was directed to prepare it at the altar and sprinkle the blood. This was the offering appointed for the poor. The fowls were always offered in pairs, and the reason why Moses ordered two turtledoves or two young pigeons, was not merely to suit the convenience of the offerer, but according as the latter was in season; for pigeons are sometimes quite hard and unfit for eating, at which time turtledoves are very good in Egypt and Palestine. The turtledoves are not restricted to any age because they are always good when they appear in those countries, being birds of passage; but the age of the pigeons is particularly marked that they might not be offered to God at times when they are rejected by men [HARMER]. It is obvious, from the varying scale of these voluntary sacrifices, that the disposition of the offerer was the thing looked to — not the costliness of his offering.

### LEVITICUS 2:1-16.

### THE MEAT OFFERINGS.

**1.** when any will offer a meat offering — or gift — distinguishing a bloodless from a bloody sacrifice. The word "meat," however, is improper, as its meaning as now used is different from that attached at the date of our English translation. It was then applied not to "flesh," but "food," generally, and here it is applied to the flour of wheat. The meat offerings were intended as a thankful acknowledgment for the bounty of Providence; and hence, although meat offerings accompanied some of the appointed sacrifices, those here described being voluntary oblations, were offered alone.

*pour oil upon it* — Oil was used as butter is with us; symbolically it meant the influences of the Spirit, of which oil was the emblem, as incense was of prayer.

- **2.** *shall burn the memorial* rather, "for a memorial"; that is, a part of it.
- 3. the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'—
  The circumstance of a portion of it being appropriated to the use of the priests distinguishes this from a burnt offering. They alone were to partake of it within the sacred precincts, as among "the most holy things."
- **4.** if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven generally a circular hole excavated in the floor, from one to five feet deep, the sides of which are covered with hardened plaster, on which cakes are baked of the form and thickness of pancakes. (See on Genesis 18:6). The shape of Eastern ovens varies considerably according to the nomadic or settled habits of the people.

- **5.** baken in a pan a thin plate, generally of copper or iron, placed on a slow fire, similar to what the country people in Scotland called a "girdle" for baking oatmeal cakes.
- **6.** *part it in pieces*, *and pour oil thereon* Pouring oil on bread is a common practice among Eastern people, who are fond of broken bread dipped in oil, butter, and milk. Oil only was used in the meat offerings, and probably for a symbolic reason. It is evident that these meat offerings were previously prepared by the offerer, and when brought, the priest was to take it from his hands and burn a portion on the altar.
- 11. ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord
   Nothing sweet or sour was to be offered. In the warm climates of the
  East leavened bread soon spoils, and hence it was regarded as the emblem
  of hypocrisy or corruption. Some, however, think that the prohibition was
  that leaven and honey were used in the idolatrous rites of the heathen.
- **12.** *the oblation of the first-fruits* voluntary offerings made by individuals out of their increase, and leaven and honey might be used with these (\*\*\*Leviticus 23:17 \*\*Numbers 15:20). Though presented at the altar, they were not consumed, but assigned by God for the use of the priests.
- 13. every ... meat offering shalt thou season with salt The same reasons which led to the prohibition of leaven, recommended the use of salt if the one soon putrefies, the other possesses a strongly preservative property, and hence it became an emblem of incorruption and purity, as well as of a perpetual covenant a perfect reconciliation and lasting friendship. No injunction in the whole law was more sacredly observed than this application of salt; for besides other uses of it that will be noticed elsewhere, it had a typical meaning referred to by our Lord concerning the effect of the Gospel on those who embrace it (\*\*Mark 9:49,50); as when plentifully applied it preserves meat from spoiling, so will the Gospel keep men from being corrupted by sin. And as salt was indispensable to render sacrifices acceptable to God, so the Gospel, brought home to the hearts of men by the Holy Ghost, is indispensably requisite to their offering up of themselves as living sacrifices [BROWN].

**14.** *a meat offering of thy first-fruits* — From the mention of "green ears," this seems to have been a voluntary offering before the harvest — the ears being prepared in the favorite way of Eastern people, by parching them at the fire, and then beating them out for use. It was designed to be an early tribute of pious thankfulness for the earth's increase, and it was offered according to the usual directions.

### LEVITICUS 3:1-17.

### THE PEACE OFFERING OF THE HERD.

- **1.** *if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering* "Peace" being used in Scripture to denote prosperity and happiness generally, a peace offering was a voluntary tribute of gratitude for health or other benefits. In this view it was eucharistic, being a token of thanksgiving for benefits already received, or it was sometimes votive, presented in prayer for benefits wished for in the future.
- of the herd This kind of offering being of a festive character, either male or female, if without blemish, might be used, as both of them were equally good for food, and, if the circumstances of the offerer allowed it, it might be a calf.
- **2.** he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering Having performed this significant act, he killed it before the door of the tabernacle, and the priests sprinkled the blood round about upon the altar.
- 3. he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering The peace offering differed from the oblations formerly mentioned in this respect: while the burnt offering was wholly consumed on the altar, and the freewill offering was partly consumed and partly assigned to the priests; in this offering the fat alone was burnt; only a small part was allotted to the priests while the rest was granted to the offerer and his friends, thus forming a sacred feast of which the Lord, His priests, and people conjointly partook, and which was symbolical of the spiritual feast, the sacred communion which, through Christ, the great peace offering, believers enjoy. (See further on deal Leviticus 19:1-37 deal 22:1-33).

*the fat that covereth the inwards* — that is, the web work that presents itself first to the eye on opening the belly of a cow.

*the fat ... upon the inwards* — adhering to the intestines, but easily removable from them; or, according to some, that which was next the ventricle.

- 4-11. the two kidneys ... of the flock ... the whole rump There is, in Eastern countries, a species of sheep the tails of which are not less than four feet and a half in length. These tails are of a substance between fat and marrow. A sheep of this kind weighs sixty or seventy English pounds weight, of which the tail usually weighs fifteen pounds and upwards. This species is by far the most numerous in Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, and, forming probably a large portion in the flocks of the Israelites, it seems to have been the kind that usually bled on the Jewish altars. The extraordinary size and deliciousness of their tails give additional importance to this law. To command by an express law the tail of a certain sheep to be offered in sacrifice to God, might well surprise us; but the wonder ceases, when we are told of those broad-tailed Eastern sheep, and of the extreme delicacy of that part which was so particularly specified in the statute [PAXTON].
- **12.** *if his offering be a goat* Whether this or any of the other two animals were chosen, the same general directions were to be followed in the ceremony of offering.
- **17.** *ye eat neither fat nor blood* The details given above distinctly define the fat in animals which was not to be eaten, so that all the rest, whatever adhered to other parts, or was intermixed with them, might be used. The prohibition of blood rested on a different foundation, being intended to preserve their reverence for the Messiah, who was to shed His blood as an stoning sacrifice for the sins of the world [Brown].

## LEVITICUS 4:1,2.

### SIN OFFERING OF IGNORANCE.

**2.** If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord — a soul — an individual. All sins may be considered, in a certain sense, as committed "through ignorance," error, or misapprehension of one's true interests. The sins, however, referred to in this law were unintentional violations of the ceremonial laws, — breaches made through haste, or inadvertency of some negative precepts, which, if done knowingly and wilfully, would have involved a capital punishment.

*do against any of them* — To bring out the meaning, it is necessary to supply, "he shall bring a sin offering."

## LEVITICUS 4:3-35.

### SIN OFFERING FOR THE PRIEST.

3. If the priest that is anointed do sin — that is, the high priest, in whom, considering his character as typical mediator, and his exalted office, the people had the deepest interest; and whose transgression of any part of the divine law, therefore, whether done unconsciously or heedlessly, was a very serious offense, both as regarded himself individually, and the influence of his example. He is the person principally meant, though the common order of the priesthood was included.

according to the sin of the people — that is, bring guilt on the people. He was to take a young bullock (the age and sex being expressly mentioned), and having killed it according to the form prescribed for the burnt offerings, he was to take it into the holy place and sprinkle the atoning blood seven times before the veil, and tip with the crimson fluid the horns

of the golden altar of incense, on his way to the court of the priests, — a solemn ceremonial appointed only for very grave and heinous offenses, and which betokened that his sin, though done in ignorance, had vitiated all his services; nor could any official duty he engaged in be beneficial either to himself or the people, unless it were atoned for by blood.

11. the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh — In ordinary circumstances, these were perquisites of the priests. But in the expiation necessary for a sin of the high priest, after the fat of the sacrifice was offered on the altar, the carcass was carried without the camp (\*\*Deviticus 4:12), in order that the total combustion of it in the place of ashes might the more strikingly indicate the enormity of the transgression, and the horror with which he regarded it (compare \*\*Deviticus\*\*).

13-21. if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance — In consequence of some culpable neglect or misapprehension of the law, the people might contract national guilt, and then national expiation was necessary. The same sacrifice was to be offered as in the former case, but with this difference in the ceremonial, that the elders or heads of the tribes, as representing the people and being the principal aggressors in misleading the congregation, laid their hands on the head of the victim. The priest then took the blood into the holy place, where, after dipping his finger in it seven times, he sprinkled the drops seven times before the veil. This done, he returned to the court of the priests, and ascending the altar, put some portion upon its horns; then he poured it out at the foot of the altar. The fat was the only part of the animal which was offered on the altar; for the carcass, with its appurtenances and offals, was carried without the camp, into the place where the ashes were deposited, and there consumed with fire.

**22-26.** When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments — Whatever was the form of government, the king, judge, or subordinate, was the party concerned in this law. The trespass of such a civil functionary being less serious in its character and consequences than that either of the high priest or the congregation, a sin offering of inferior value was required — "a kid of the goats"; and neither was the blood carried into the sanctuary, but applied

only to the altar of burnt offering; nor was the carcass taken without the camp; it was eaten by the priests-in-waiting.

**27-34.** *if any one of the common people sin through ignorance* — In this case the expiatory offering appointed was a female kid, or a ewe-lamb without blemish; and the ceremonies were exactly the same as those observed in the case of the offending ruler [4002] Leviticus 4:22-26]. In these two latter instances, the blood of the sin offering was applied to the altar of burnt offering — the place where bloody sacrifices were appointed to be immolated. But the transgression of a high priest, or of the whole congregation, entailing a general taint on the ritual of the tabernacle, and vitiating its services, required a further expiation; and therefore, in these cases, the blood of the sin offering was applied to the altar of incense [4002] Leviticus 4:6,17].

**35.** it shall be forgiven him — None of these sacrifices possessed any intrinsic value sufficient to free the conscience of the sinner from the pollution of guilt, or to obtain his pardon from God; but they gave a formal deliverance from a secular penalty (\*\*\*Hebrews 9:13,14); and they were figurative representations of the full and perfect sin offering which was to be made by Christ.

### **CREOLEVITICUS** 5:1.

### TRESPASS OFFERINGS FOR CONCEALING KNOWLEDGE.

**1.** if a soul ... hear the voice of swearing — or, according to some, "the words of adjuration." A proclamation was issued calling any one who could give information, to come before the court and bear testimony to the guilt of a criminal; and the manner in which witnesses were interrogated in the Jewish courts of justice was not by swearing them directly, but adjuring them by reading the words of an oath: "the voice of swearing." The offense, then, for the expiation of which this law provides, was that of a person who neglected or avoided the opportunity of lodging the information which it was in his power to communicate.

## LEVITICUS 5:2,3.

#### TOUCHING ANY THING UNCLEAN.

**2.** if a soul touch any unclean thing — A person who, unknown to himself at the time, came in contact with any thing unclean, and either neglected the requisite ceremonies of purification or engaged in the services of religion while under the taint of ceremonial defilement, might be afterwards convinced that he had committed an offense.

### LEVITICUS 5:4-19.

#### FOR SWEARING.

**4.** *if a soul swear* — a rash oath, without duly considering the nature and consequences of the oath, perhaps inconsiderately binding himself to do anything wrong, or neglecting to perform a vow to do something good. In

all such cases a person might have transgressed one of the divine commandments unwittingly, and have been afterwards brought to a sense of his delinquency.

- **5.** it shall be, when he shall be guilty ... that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing make a voluntary acknowledgment of his sin from the impulse of his own conscience, and before it come to the knowledge of the world. A previous discovery might have subjected him to some degree of punishment from which his spontaneous confession released him, but still he was considered guilty of trespass, to expiate which he was obliged by the ceremonial law to go through certain observances.
- 6-14. he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sins which he hath sinned A trespass offering differed from a sin offering in the following respects: that it was appointed for persons who had either done evil unwittingly, or were in doubt as to their own criminality; or felt themselves in such a special situation as required sacrifices of that kind [Brown]. The trespass offering appointed in such cases was a female lamb or kid; if unable to make such an offering, he might bring a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons the one to be offered for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering; or if even that was beyond his ability, the law would be satisfied with the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour without oil or frankincense.
- 15, 16. sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord, etc. This is a case of sacrilege committed ignorantly, either in not paying the full due of tithes, first-fruits, and similar tribute in eating of meats, which belonged to the priests alone or he was required, along with the restitution in money, the amount of which was to be determined by the priest, to offer a ram for a trespass offering, as soon as he came to the knowledge of his involuntary fraud.
- 17-19. if a soul sin ... though he wist it not, yet is he guilty This also refers to holy things, and it differs from the preceding in being one of the doubtful cases, that is, where conscience suspects, though the understanding be in doubt whether criminality or sin has been committed. The Jewish rabbis give, as an example, the case of a person who, knowing that "the fat of the inwards" is not to be eaten, religiously abstained from

the use of it; but should a dish happen to have been at table in which he had reason to suspect some portion of that meat was intermingled, and he had, inadvertently, partaken of that unlawful viand, he was bound to bring a ram as a trespass offering [\*\*\*\*Leviticus 5:16]. These provisions were all designed to impress the conscience with the sense of responsibility to God and keep alive on the hearts of the people a salutary fear of doing any secret wrong.

### LEVITICUS 6:1-7.

### TRESPASS OFFERING FOR SINS DONE WITTINGLY.

**2-7.** If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord — This law, the record of which should have been joined with the previous chapter, was given concerning things stolen, fraudulently gotten, or wrongfully kept. The offender was enjoined to make restitution of the articles to the rightful owner, along with a fifth part out of his own possessions. But it was not enough thus to repair the injury done to a neighbor and to society; he was required to bring a trespass offering, as a token of sorrow and penitence for having hurt the cause of religion and of God. That trespass offering was a ram without blemish, which was to be made on the altar of burnt offerings, and the flesh belonged to the priests. This penalty was equivalent to a mitigated fine; but being associated with a sacred duty, the form in which the fine was inflicted served the important purpose of rousing attention to the claims and reviving a sense of responsibility to God.

LEVITICUS 6:8-13.

#### THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING.

9. Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This ... law of the burnt offering — In this passage Moses received instructions to be delivered to the priests respecting their official duties, and first the burnt offering — Hebrew, "a sacrifice, which went up in smoke." The daily service consisted of two lambs, one offered in the morning at sunrise, the other in the evening, when the day began to decline. Both of them were consumed on the altar by means of a slow fire, before which the pieces of the sacrifice were so placed that they fed it all night. At all events, the

observance of this daily sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering was a daily expression of national repentance and faith. The fire that consumed these sacrifices had been kindled from heaven at the consecration of the tabernacle [\*\*PLeviticus 9:24], and to keep it from being extinguished and the sacrifices from being burned with common fire, strict injunctions are here given respecting not only the removal of the ashes (\*\*TLeviticus 6:10,11), but the approaching near to the fireplace in garments that were not officially "holy."

## **4864**LEVITICUS 6:14-18.

#### THE LAW OF THE MEAT OFFERING.

**14-18.** *this is the law of the meat offering* — Though this was a provision for the priests and their families, it was to be regarded as "most holy"; and the way in which it was prepared was: on any meat offerings being presented, the priest carried them to the altar, and taking a handful from each of them as an oblation, he salted and burnt it on the altar; the residue became the property of the priests, and was the food of those whose duty it was to attend on the service. They themselves as well as the vessels from which they ate were typically holy, and they were not at liberty to partake of the meat offering while they labored under any ceremonial defilement.

## LEVITICUS 6:19-23.

### THE HIGH PRIEST'S MEAT OFFERING.

**20.** This is the offering of Aaron, and of his sons — the daily meat offering of the high priest; for though his sons are mentioned along with him, it was probably only those of his descendants who succeeded him in that high office that are meant. It was to be offered, one half of it in the morning and the other half in the evening — being daily laid by the ministering priest on the altar of burnt offering, where, being dedicated to God, it was wholly consumed. This was designed to keep him and the

other attendant priests in constant remembrance, that though they were typically expiating the sins of the people, their own persons and services could meet with acceptance only through faith, which required to be daily nourished and strengthened from above.

## LEVITICUS 6:21-30.

#### THE LAW OF THE SIN OFFERING.

25-28. This is the law of the sin offering — It was slain, and the fat and inwards, after being washed and salted, were burnt upon the altar. But the rest of the carcass belonged to the officiating priest. He and his family might feast upon it — only, however, within the precincts of the tabernacle; and none else were allowed to partake of it but the members of a priestly family — and not even they, if under any ceremonial defilement. The flesh on all occasions was boiled or sodden, with the exception of the paschal lamb, which was roasted [ Exodus 12:8,9]; and if an earthen vessel had been used, it being porous and likely to imbibe some of the liquid particles, it was to be broken; if a metallic pan had been used it was to be scoured and washed with the greatest care, not because the vessels had been defiled, but the reverse — because the flesh of the sin offering having been boiled in them, those vessels were now too sacred for ordinary use. The design of all these minute ceremonies was to impress the minds, both of priests and people, with a sense of the evil nature of sin and the care they should take to prevent the least taint of its impurities clinging to them.

## LEVITICUS 7:1-27.

### THE LAW OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING.

- 1. Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering This chapter is a continuation of the laws that were to regulate the duty of the priests respecting the trespass offerings. The same regulations obtained in this case as in the burnt offerings part was to be consumed on the altar, while the other part was a perquisite of the priests some fell exclusively to the officiating minister, and was the fee for his services; others were the common share of all the priestly order, who lived upon them as their provision, and whose meetings at a common table would tend to promote brotherly harmony and friendship.
- **8.** the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered All the flesh and the fat of the burnt offerings being consumed, nothing remained to the priest but the skin. It has been thought that this was a patriarchal usage, incorporated with the Mosaic law, and that the right of the sacrificer to the skin of the victim was transmitted from the example of Adam (see on Genesis 3:21).
- **11-14.** *this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings* Besides the usual accompaniments of other sacrifices, leavened bread was offered with the peace offerings, as a thanksgiving, such bread being common at feasts.
- 15-17. the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings ... shall be eaten the same day that it is offered The flesh of the sacrifices was eaten on the day of the offering or on the day following. But if any part of it remained till the third day, it was, instead of being made use of, to be burned with fire. In the East, butcher-meat is generally eaten the day it is killed, and it is rarely kept a second day, so that as a prohibition was issued against any of the flesh in the peace offerings being used on the third day, it has been thought, not without reason, that this injunction

must have been given to prevent a superstitious notion arising that there was some virtue or holiness belonging to it.

- 18. if any of the flesh of the sacrifice ... be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither ... imputed The sacrifice will not be acceptable to God nor profitable to him that offers it.
- **20.** *cut off from his people* that is, excluded from the privileges of an Israelite lie under a sentence of excommunication.
- **21.** *abominable unclean thing* Some copies of the Bible read, "any reptile."
- **22-27.** Ye shall eat no manner of fat (See on The Leviticus 3:17).

### LEVITICUS 7:28-38.

### THE PRIESTS' PORTION.

## 29-34. He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the Lord

- In order to show that the sacrifice was voluntary, the offerer was required to bring it with his own hands to the priest. The breast having been waved to and fro in a solemn manner as devoted to God, was given to the priests; it was assigned to the use of their order generally, but the right shoulder was the perquisite of the officiating priest.
- **35-38.** This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron These verses contain a general summing up of the laws which regulate the privileges and duties of the priests. The word "anointing" is often used as synonymous with "office" or "dignity." So that the "portion of the anointing of Aaron" probably means the provision made for the maintenance of the high priest and the numerous body of functionaries which composed the sacerdotal order.

*in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord*, etc. — that is, from the day they approached the Lord in the duties of their ministry.

### LEVITICUS 8:1-36.

### MOSES CONSECRATES AARON AND HIS SONS.

- **2.** *Take Aaron and his sons* The consecration of Aaron and his sons had been ordered long before (\*Exodus 29:1-46), but it is now described with all the details of the ceremonial, as it was gone through after the tabernacle was completed and the regulations for the various sacrifices enacted
- **3-5.** gather thou all the congregation together, etc. It was manifestly expedient for the Israelitish people to be satisfied that Aaron's appointment to the high dignity of the priesthood was not a personal intrusion, nor a family arrangement between him and Moses; and nothing, therefore, could be a more prudent or necessary measure, for impressing a profound conviction of the divine origin and authority of the priestly institution, than to summon a general assembly of the people, and in their presence perform the solemn ceremonies of inauguration, which had been prescribed by divine authority.
- **6.** *Moses* ... *washed them with water* At consecration they were subjected to entire ablution, though on ordinary occasions they were required, before entering on their duties, only to wash their hands and feet. This symbolical ablution was designed to teach them the necessity of inward purity, and the imperative obligation on those who bore the vessels and conducted the services of the sanctuary to be holy.
- **7-9.** he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle The splendor of the official vestments, together with the gorgeous tiara of the high priest, was intended, doubtless, in the first instance, to produce in the minds of the people a high respect for the ministers of religion; and in the next, from the predominant use of linen, to inculcate upon Aaron and his sons the duty of maintaining unspotted righteousness in their characters and lives.

- **10-12.** *took the anointing oil*, etc. which was designed to intimate that persons who acted as leaders in the solemn services of worship should have the unction of the Holy One both in His gifts and graces.
- **14-17.** brought the bullock for the sin offering, etc. a timely expression of their sense of unworthiness a public and solemn confession of their personal sins and a transference of their guilt to the typical victim.
- **18-21.** *brought the ram*, etc. as a token of their entire dedication to the service of God.
- **22-30.** brought the other ram, etc. After the sin offering and burnt offering had been presented on their behalf, this was their peace offering, by which they declared the pleasure which they felt in entering upon the service of God and being brought into close communion with Him as the ministers of His sanctuary, together with their confident reliance on His grace to help them in all their sacred duties.

### 33. ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation

— After all these preliminaries, they had still to undergo a week's probation in the court of the tabernacle before they obtained permission to enter into the interior of the sacred building. During the whole of that period the same sacrificial rites were observed as on the first day, and they were expressly admonished that the smallest breach of any of the appointed observances would lead to the certain forfeiture of their lives [-4085]Leviticus 8:35].

### LEVITICUS 9:1-24.

### THE PRIESTS' ENTRY INTO OFFICE.

**1-7.** Moses called ... Take thee a young calf for a sin offering — The directions in these sacred things were still given by Moses, the circumstances being extraordinary. But he was only the medium of communicating the divine will to the newly made priests. The first of their official acts was the sacrifice of another sin offering to atone for the defects of the inauguration services; and yet that sacrifice did not consist of a bullock — the sacrifice appointed for some particular transgression, but of a calf, perhaps not without a significant reference to Aaron's sin in the golden calf [ Exodus 32:22-24]. Then followed a burnt offering, expressive of their voluntary and entire self-devotement to the divine service. The newly consecrated priests having done this on their own account, they were called to offer a sin offering and burnt offering for the people, ending the ceremonial by a peace offering, which was a sacred feast. This injunction, "to make atonement for himself and for the people" (Septuagint, "for thy family"), at the commencement of his sacred functions, furnishes a striking evidence of the divine origin of the Jewish system of worship. In all false or corrupt forms of religion, the studied policy has been to inspire the people with an idea of the sanctity of the priesthood as in point of purity and favor with the Divinity far above the level of other men. But among the Hebrews the priests were required to offer for the expiation of their own sins as well as the humblest of the people. This imperfection of Aaron's priesthood, however, does not extend to the gospel dispensation: for our great High Priest, who has entered for us into "the true tabernacle," "knew no sin" (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 10:10,11).

**8.** Aaron ... went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering — Whether it had been enjoined the first time, or was unavoidable from the divisions of the priestly labor not being as yet completely arranged,

Aaron, assisted by his sons, appears to have slain the victims with his own hands, as well as gone through all the prescribed ritual at the altar.

- **17-21.** *meat offering* ... *wave offering* It is observable that there is no notice taken of these in the offerings the priests made for themselves. They could not bear their own sins: and therefore, instead of eating any part of their own sin offering, as they were at liberty to do in the case of the people's offering, they had to carry the whole carcasses "without the camp and burn them with fire" [\*\*Exodus 29:14 \*\*\*Characteristics 4:12].
- **22.** Aaron lifted up his hand ... and blessed them The pronouncing of a benediction on the people assembled in the court was a necessary part of the high priest's duty, and the formula in which it was to be given is described (\*\*Numbers 6:23-27).

**came down from offering** — The altar was elevated above the level of the floor, and the ascent was by a gentle slope (\*\*Exodus 20:26).

**23.** *Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle* — Moses, according to the divine instructions he had received, accompanied Aaron and his sons to initiate them into their sacred duties. Their previous occupations had detained them at the altar, and they now entered in company into the sacred edifice to bear the blood of the offerings within the sanctuary.

*the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people* — perhaps in a resplendent effulgence above the tabernacle as a fresh token of the divine acceptance of that newly established seat of His worship.

**24.** there came a fire out from ... the Lord — A flame emanating from that resplendent light that filled the holy place flashed upon the brazen altar and kindled the sacrifices. This miraculous fire — for the descent of which the people had probably been prepared, and which the priests were enjoined never to let go out (\*\*\*ELeviticus 6:13) — was a sign, not only of the acceptance of the offerings and of the establishment of Aaron's authority, but of God's actual residence in that chosen dwelling-place. The moment the solemn though welcome spectacle was seen, a simultaneous shout of joy and gratitude burst from the assembled congregation, and in the attitude of profoundest reverence they worshipped "a present Deity."

### LEVITICUS 10:1-20.

### NADAB AND ABIHU BURNT.

- 1. the sons of Aaron, etc. If this incident occurred at the solemn period of the consecrating and dedicating the altar, these young men assumed an office which had been committed to Moses; or if it were some time after, it was an encroachment on duties which devolved on their father alone as the high priest. But the offense was of a far more aggravated nature than such a mere informality would imply. It consisted not only in their venturing unauthorized to perform the incense service — the highest and most solemn of the priestly offices — not only in their engaging together in a work which was the duty only of one, but in their presuming to intrude into the holy of holies, to which access was denied to all but the high priest alone. In this respect, "they offered strange fire before the Lord"; they were guilty of a presumptuous and unwarranted intrusion into a sacred office which did not belong to them. But their offense was more aggravated still; for instead of taking the fire which was put into their censers from the brazen altar, they seem to have been content with common fire and thus perpetrated an act which, considering the descent of the miraculous fire they had so recently witnessed and the solemn obligation under which they were laid to make use of that which was specially appropriated to the service of the altars, they betrayed a carelessness, an irreverence, a want of faith, most surprising and lamentable. A precedent of such evil tendency was dangerous, and it was imperatively necessary, therefore, as well for the priests themselves as for the sacred things, that a marked expression of the divine displeasure should be given for doing that which "God commanded them not."
- **2.** there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them rather, "killed them"; for it appears that neither their bodies nor their robes were consumed (\*\*Leviticus 10:5). The expression, "from the Lord," indicates that this fire issued from the most holy place. In the destruction of these

two young priests by the infliction of an awful judgment, the wisdom of God observed the same course, in repressing the first instance of contempt for sacred things, as he did at the commencement of the Christian dispensation (\*\*Acts 5:1-11).

3. Moses said ... This is it that the Lord spoke ... I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me — "They that come nigh me," points, in this passage, directly to the priests; and they had received repeated and solemn warnings as to the cautious and reverent manner of their approach into the divine presence (\*\*Exodus 19:22; \*\*Exodus 19:244 \*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 8:35).

- **4, 5.** *Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan* The removal of the two corpses for burial without the camp would spread the painful intelligence throughout all the congregation; and the remembrance of so appalling a judgment could not fail to strike a salutary fear into the hearts both of priests and people. The interment of the priestly vestments along with Nadab and Abihu, was a sign of their being polluted by the sin of their irreligious wearers.
- **6.** *Uncover not your heads* They who were ordered to carry out the two bodies, being engaged in their sacred duties, were forbidden to remove their turbans, in conformity with the usual customs of mourning; and the prohibition "neither rend your garments," was, in all probability, confined also to their official costume. For at other times the priests wore the ordinary dress of their countrymen and, in common with their families, might indulge their private feelings by the usual signs or expressions of grief.
- **8-11.** *Do not drink wine nor strong drink* This prohibition, and the accompanying admonitions, following immediately the occurrence of so fatal a catastrophe [\*\*\*\*\*DLeviticus 10:1,2], has given rise to an opinion entertained by many, that the two disobedient priests were under the influence of intoxication when they committed the offense which was

expiated only by their lives. But such an idea, though the presumption is in its favor, is nothing more than conjecture.

**12-15.** *Moses spake unto Aaron*, etc. — This was a timely and considerate rehearsal of the laws that regulated the conduct of the priests. Amid the distractions of their family bereavement, Aaron and his surviving sons might have forgotten or overlooked some of their duties.

16-20. Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt — In a sacrifice presented, as that had been, on behalf of the people, it was the duty of the priests, as typically representing them and bearing their sins, to have eaten the flesh after the blood had been sprinkled upon the altar. Instead of using it, however, for a sacred feast, they had burnt it without the camp; and Moses, who discovered this departure from the prescribed ritual, probably from a dread of some further chastisements, challenged, not Aaron, whose heart was too much lacerated to bear a new cause of distress but his two surviving sons in the priesthood for the great irregularity. Their father, however, who heard the charge and by whose directions the error had been committed, hastened to give the explanation. The import of his apology is, that all the duty pertaining to the presentation of the offering had been duly and sacredly performed, except the festive part of the observance, which privately devolved upon the priest and his family. And that this had been omitted, either because his heart was too dejected to join in the celebration of a cheerful feast, or that he supposed, from the appalling judgments that had been inflicted, that all the services of that occasion were so vitiated that he did not complete them. Aaron was decidedly in the wrong. By the express command of God, the sin offering was to be eaten in the holy place; and no fanciful view of expediency or propriety ought to have led him to dispense at discretion with a positive statute. The law of God was clear and, where that is the case, it is sin to deviate a hair's breadth from the path of duty. But Moses sympathized with his deeply afflicted brother and, having pointed out the error, said no more.

## LEVITICUS 11:1-47.

### BEASTS THAT MAY AND MAY NOT BE EATEN.

1, 2. the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron — These laws, being addressed to both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers in Israel, may serve to indicate the twofold view that is to be taken of them. Undoubtedly the first and strongest reason for instituting a distinction among meats was to discourage the Israelites from spreading into other countries, and from general intercourse with the world — to prevent them acquiring familiarity with the inhabitants of the countries bordering on Canaan, so as to fall into their idolatries or be contaminated with their vices: in short, to keep them a distinct and peculiar people. To this purpose, no difference of creed, no system of polity, no diversity of language or manner, was so subservient as a distinction of meats founded on religion; and hence the Jews, who were taught by education to abhor many articles of food freely partaken of by other people, never, even during periods of great degeneracy, could amalgamate with the nations among which they were dispersed. But although this was the principal foundation of these laws, dietetic reasons also had weight; for there is no doubt that the flesh of many of the animals here ranked as unclean, is everywhere, but especially in warm climates, less wholesome and adapted for food than those which were allowed to be eaten. These laws, therefore, being subservient to sanitary as well as religious ends, were addressed both to Moses and Aaron.

**3-7.** Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud — Ruminating animals by the peculiar structure of their stomachs digest their food more fully than others. It is found that in the act of chewing the cud, a large portion of the poisonous properties of noxious plants eaten by them, passes off by the salivary glands. This power of secreting the poisonous effects of vegetables, is said to be particularly remarkable in cows and goats, whose mouths are often sore, and sometimes bleed, in consequence. Their flesh is therefore in a better state

for food, as it contains more of the nutritious juices, is more easily digested in the human stomach, and is consequently more easily assimilated. Animals which do not chew the cud, convert their food less perfectly; their flesh is therefore unwholesome, from the gross animal juices with which they abound, and is apt to produce scorbutic and scrofulous disorders. But the animals that may be eaten are those which "part the hoof as well as chew the cud," and this is another means of freeing the flesh of the animal from noxious substances. "In the case of animals with parted hoofs, when feeding in unfavorable situations a prodigious amount of foetid matter is discharged, and passes off between the toes; while animals with undivided hoofs, feeding on the same ground, become severely affected in the legs, from the poisonous plants among the pasture" [WHITLAW, Code of Health]. All experience attests this, and accordingly the use of ruminating animals (that is, those which both chew the cud and part the hoof) has always obtained in most countries though it was observed most carefully by the people who were favored with the promulgation of God's law.

- **4.** *the camel* It does to a certain extent divide the hoof, for the foot consists of two large parts, but the division is not complete; the toes rest upon an elastic pad on which the animal goes; as a beast of burden its flesh is tough. An additional reason for its prohibition might be to keep the Israelites apart from the descendants of Ishmael.
- **5.** *the coney* not the rabbit, for it is not found in Palestine or Arabia, but the hyrax, a little animal of the size and general shape of the rabbit, but differing from it in several essential features. It has no tail, singular, long hairs bristling like thorns among the fur on its back; its feet are bare, its nails flat and round, except those on each inner toe of the hind feet, which are sharp and project like an awl. It does not burrow in the ground but frequents the clefts of rocks.
- **6.** *the hare* Two species of hare must have been pointed at: the Sinai hare, the hare of the desert, small and generally brown; the other, the hare of Palestine and Syria, about the size and appearance of that known in our own country. Neither the hare nor the coney are really ruminating. They only appear to be so from working the jaws on the grasses they live on. They are not cloven-footed; and besides, it is said that from the great

quantity of down upon them, they are very much subject to vermin—that in order to expel these, they eat poisonous plants, and if used as food while in that state, they are most deleterious [WHITLAW].

- **7.** *the swine* It is a filthy, foul-feeding animal, and it lacks one of the natural provisions for purifying the system, "it cheweth not the cud"; in hot climates indulgence in swine's flesh is particularly liable to produce leprosy, scurvy, and various cutaneous eruptions. It was therefore strictly avoided by the Israelites. Its prohibition was further necessary to prevent their adopting many of the grossest idolatries practiced by neighboring nations.
- **9.** These shall ye eat ... whatsoever hath fins and scales "The fins and scales are the means by which the excrescences of fish are carried off, the same as in animals by perspiration. I have never known an instance of disease produced by eating such fish; but those that have no fins and scales cause, in hot climates, the most malignant disorders when eaten; in many cases they prove a mortal poison" [WHITLAW].
- **12.** Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales, etc. Under this classification frogs, eels, shellfish of all descriptions, were included as unclean; "many of the latter (shellfish) enjoy a reputation they do not deserve, and have, when plentifully partaken of, produced effects which have led to a suspicion of their containing something of a poisonous nature."
- 13-19. these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls All birds of prey are particularly ranked in the class unclean; all those which feed on flesh and carrion. No less than twenty species of birds, all probably then known, are mentioned under this category, and the inference follows that all which are not mentioned were allowed; that is, fowls which subsist on vegetable substances. From our imperfect knowledge of the natural history of Palestine, Arabia, and the contiguous countries at that time, it is not easy to determine exactly what some of the prohibited birds were; although they must have been all well known among the people to whom these laws were given.

*the ossifrage* — *Hebrew*, "bone-breaker," rendered in the *Septuagint* "griffon," supposed to be the *Gypætos barbatus*, the Lammer Geyer of the Swiss — a bird of the eagle or vulture species, inhabiting the highest

mountain ranges in Western Asia as well as Europe. It pursues as its prey the chamois, ibex, or marmot, among rugged cliffs, till it drives them over a precipice — thus obtaining the name of "bone-breaker."

*the ospray* — the black eagle, among the smallest, but swiftest and strongest of its kind.

**14.** *the vulture* — The word so rendered in our version means more probably "the kite" or "glede" and describes a varying but majestic flight, exactly that of the kite, which now darts forward with the rapidity of an arrow, now rests motionless on its expanded wings in the air. It feeds on small birds, insects, and fish.

*the kite* — the vulture. In Egypt and perhaps in the adjoining countries also, the kite and vulture are often seen together flying in company, or busily pursuing their foul but important office of devouring the carrion and relics of putrefying flesh, which might otherwise pollute the atmosphere.

*after his kind* — that is, the prohibition against eating it extended to the whole species.

**15.** *the raven* — including the crow, the pie.

**16.** *the owl* — It is generally supposed the ostrich is denoted by the original word.

*the nighthawk* — a very small bird, with which, from its nocturnal habits, many superstitious ideas were associated.

*the cuckoo* — Evidently some other bird is meant by the original term, from its being ranged among rapacious birds. DR. SHAW thinks it is the safsaf; but that, being a graminivorous and gregarious bird, is equally objectionable. Others think that the sea mew, or some of the small sea fowl, is intended.

the hawk — The Hebrew word includes every variety of the falcon family — as the goshawk, the jerhawk, the sparrow hawk, etc. Several species of hawks are found in Western Asia and Egypt, where they find inexhaustible prey in the immense numbers of pigeons and turtledoves that abound in those quarters. The hawk was held pre-eminently sacred among the Egyptians; and this, besides its rapacious disposition and gross habits,

might have been a strong reason for its prohibition as an article of food to the Israelites.

**17.** *the little owl* — or horned owl, as some render it. The common barn owl, which is well known in the East. It is the only bird of its kind here referred to, although the word is thrice mentioned in our version.

**cormorant** — supposed to be the gull. [See on Deuteronomy 14:17.]

**the great owl** — according to some, the Ibis of the Egyptians. It was well known to the Israelites, and so rendered by the *Septuagint* (\*\*Deuteronomy 14:16 \*\*\* Isaiah 34:11): according to PARKHURST, the bittern, but not determined.

**18.** *the swan* — found in great numbers in all the countries of the Levant. It frequents marshy places — the vicinity of rivers and lakes. It was held sacred by the Egyptians, and kept tame within the precincts of heathen temples. It was probably on this account chiefly that its use as food was prohibited. MICHAELIS considers it the goose.

*the pelican* — remarkable for the bag or pouch under its lower jaw which serves not only as a net to catch, but also as a receptacle of food. It is solitary in its habits and, like other large aquatic birds, often flies to a great distance from its favorite haunts.

the gier eagle — Being here associated with waterfowl, it has been questioned whether any species of eagle is referred to. Some think, as the original name *racham* denotes "tenderness," "affection," the halcyon or kingfisher is intended [CALMET]. Others think that it is the bird now called the *rachami*, a kind of Egyptian vulture, abundant in the streets of Cairo and popularly called "Pharaoh's fowl." It is white in color, in size like a raven, and feeds on carrion; it is one of the foulest and filthiest birds in the world. [See on "SMD Deuteronomy 14:17.]

**19.** *the stork* — a bird of benevolent temper and held in the highest estimation in all Eastern countries; it was declared unclean, probably, from its feeding on serpents and other venomous reptiles, as well as rearing its young on the same food.

the heron — The word so translated only occurs in the prohibited list of food and has been variously rendered — the crane, the plover, the woodcock, the parrot. In this great diversity of opinion nothing certain can be affirmed regarding it. Judging from the group with which it is classified, it must be an aquatic bird that is meant. It may as well be the heron as any other bird, the more especially as herons abound in Egypt and in the Hauran of Palestine.

**the lapwing** — or boopoe; found in warm regions, a very pretty but filthy species of bird. It was considered unclean, probably from its feeding on insects, worms, and snails.

*the bat* — the great or Ternat bat, known in the East, noted for its voracity and filthiness.

- **20.** *All fowls that creep*, etc. By "fowls" here are to be understood all creatures with wings and "going upon all fours," not a restriction to animals which have exactly four feet, because many "creeping things" have more than that number. The prohibition is regarded generally as extending to insects, reptiles, and worms.
- 21, 22. Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet Nothing short of a scientific description could convey more accurately the nature "of the locust after its kind." They were allowed as lawful food to the Israelites, and they are eaten by the Arabs, who fry them in olive oil. When sprinkled with salt, dried, smoked, and fried, they are said to taste not unlike red herrings.
- **26.** *every beast* ... *not cloven-footed* The prohibited animals under this description include not only the beasts which have a single hoof, as horses and asses, but those also which divided the foot into paws, as lions, tigers, etc.
- **29.** *the weasel* rather, the mole.

*the mouse* — From its diminutive size it is placed among the reptiles instead of the quadrupeds.

*the tortoise* — a lizard, resembling very nearly in shape, and in the hard pointed scales of the tail, the shaketail.

**30.** *the ferret* — the *Hebrew* word is thought by some to signify the newt or chameleon, by others the frog.

*the chameleon* — called by the Arabs the *warral*, a green lizard.

*the snail* — a lizard which lives in the sand, and is called by the Arabs *chulca*, of an azure color.

*the mole* — Another species of lizard is meant, probably the chameleon.

31-35. whosoever doth touch them, when ... dead, shall be unclean until the even — These regulations must have often caused annoyance by suddenly requiring the exclusion of people from society, as well as the ordinances of religion. Nevertheless they were extremely useful and salutary, especially as enforcing attention to cleanliness. This is a matter of essential importance in the East, where venomous reptiles often creep into houses and are found lurking in boxes, vessels, or holes in the wall; and the carcass of one of them, or a dead mouse, mole, lizard, or other unclean animal, might be inadvertently touched by the hand, or fall on clothes, skin bottles, or any article of common domestic use. By connecting, therefore, the touch of such creatures with ceremonial defilement, which required immediately to be removed, an effectual means was taken to prevent the bad effects of venom and all unclean or noxious matter

**47.** *make a difference between the unclean and the clean* — that is, between animals used and not used for food. It is probable that the laws contained in this chapter were not entirely new, but only gave the sanction of divine enactment to ancient usages. Some of the prohibited animals have, on physiological grounds, been everywhere rejected by the general sense or experience of mankind; while others may have been declared unclean from their unwholesomeness in warm countries of from some reasons, which are now imperfectly known, connected with contemporary idolatry.

### LEVITICUS 12:1-8.

### WOMAN'S UNCLEANNESS BY CHILDBIRTH.

- 2. If a woman, etc. The mother of a boy was ceremonially unclean for a week, at the end of which the child was circumcised (\*\*\*Genesis 17:12\*\*\*Commons 4:11-13); the mother of a girl for two weeks (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 12:5) a stigma on the sex (\*\*\*\*Timothy 2:14,15) for sin, which was removed by Christ; everyone who came near her during that time contracted a similar defilement. After these periods, visitors might approach her though she was still excluded from the public ordinances of religion [\*\*\*\*Leviticus 12:4].
- **6-8.** *the days of her purifying* Though the occasion was of a festive character, yet the sacrifices appointed were not a peace offering, but a burnt offering and sin offering, in order to impress the mind of the parent with recollections of the origin of sin, and that the child inherited a fallen and sinful nature. The offerings were to be presented the day after the period of her separation had ended that is, forty-first for a boy, eighty-first for a girl.
- **8.** bring two turtles, etc. (See on Leviticus 5:6). This was the offering made by Mary, the mother of Jesus, and it affords an incontestable proof of the poor and humble condition of the family (Luke 2:22-24).

## LEVITICUS 13:1-59.

### THE LAWS AND TOKENS IN DISCERNING LEPROSY.

2. When a man shall have in the skin, etc. — The fact of the following rules for distinguishing the plague of leprosy being incorporated with the Hebrew code of laws, proves the existence of the odious disease among that people. But a short time, little more than a year (if so long a period had elapsed since the exodus) when symptoms of leprosy seem extensively to have appeared among them; and as they could not be very liable to such a cutaneous disorder amid their active journeyings and in the dry open air of Arabia, the seeds of the disorder must have been laid in Egypt, where it has always been endemic. There is every reason to believe that this was the case: that the leprosy was not a family complaint, hereditary among the Hebrews, but that they got it from intercourse with the Egyptians and from the unfavorable circumstances of their condition in the house of bondage. The great excitement and irritability of the skin in the hot and sandy regions of the East produce a far greater predisposition to leprosy of all kinds than in cooler temperatures; and cracks or blotches, inflammations or even contusions of the skin, very often lead to these in Arabia and Palestine, to some extent, but particularly in Egypt. Besides, the subjugated and distressed state of the Hebrews in the latter country, and the nature of their employment, must have rendered them very liable to this as well as to various other blemishes and misaffections of the skin; in the production of which there are no causes more active or powerful than a depressed state of body and mind, hard labor under a burning sun, the body constantly covered with the excoriating dust of brick fields, and an impoverished diet — to all of which the Israelites were exposed while under the Egyptian bondage. It appears that, in consequence of these hardships, there was, even after they had left Egypt, a general predisposition among the Hebrews to the contagious forms of leprosy so that it often occurred as a consequence of various other affections of the skin. And hence all cutaneous blemishes or blains — especially such as had a tendency to terminate in leprosy — were watched with a jealous eye from the first [Good, *Study of Medicine*]. A swelling, a pimple, or bright spot on the skin, created a strong ground of suspicion of a man's being attacked by the dreaded disease.

then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, etc. — Like the Egyptian priests, the Levites united the character of physician with that of the sacred office; and on the appearance of any suspicious eruptions on the skin, the person having these was brought before the priest — not, however, to receive medical treatment, though it is not improbable that some purifying remedies might be prescribed, but to be examined with a view to those sanitary precautions which it belonged to legislation to adopt.

3-6. the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh, etc. — The leprosy, as covering the person with a white, scaly scurf, has always been accounted an offensive blemish rather than a serious malady in the East, unless when it assumed its less common and malignant forms. When a Hebrew priest, after a careful inspection, discovered under the cutaneous blemish the distinctive signs of contagious leprosy, the person was immediately pronounced unclean, and is supposed to have been sent out of the camp to a lazaretto provided for that purpose. If the symptoms appeared to be doubtful, he ordered the person to be kept in domestic confinement for seven days, when he was subjected to a second examination; and if during the previous week the eruption had subsided or appeared to be harmless, he was instantly discharged. But if the eruption continued unabated and still doubtful, he was put under surveillance another week; at the end of which the character of the disorder never failed to manifest itself, and he was either doomed to perpetual exclusion from society or allowed to go at large. A person who had thus been detained on suspicion, when at length set at liberty, was obliged to "wash his clothes," as having been tainted by ceremonial pollution; and the purification through which he was required to go was, in the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, symbolical of that inward purity it was instituted to promote.

- 7, 8. But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin Those doubtful cases, when they assumed a malignant character, appeared in one of two forms, apparently according to the particular constitution of the skin or of the habit generally. The one was "somewhat dark" [\*\*\*Cheviticus 13:6] that is, the obscure or dusky leprosy, in which the natural color of the hair (which in Egypt and Palestine is black) is not changed, as is repeatedly said in the sacred code, nor is there any depression in the dusky spot, while the patches, instead of keeping stationary to their first size, are perpetually enlarging their boundary. The patient laboring under this form was pronounced unclean by the Hebrew priest or physician, and hereby sentenced to a separation from his family and friends a decisive proof of its being contagious.
- **9-37.** if the rising be white This Bright White leprosy is the most malignant and inveterate of all the varieties the disease exhibits, and it was marked by the following distinctive signs: A glossy white and spreading scale, upon an elevated base, the elevation depressed in the middle, but without a change of color; the black hair on the patches participating in the whiteness, and the scaly patches themselves perpetually enlarging their boundary. Several of these characteristics, taken separately, belong to other blemishes of the skin as well; so that none of them was to be taken alone, and it was only when the whole of them concurred that the Jewish priest, in his capacity of physician, was to pronounce the disease a malignant leprosy. If it spread over the entire frame without producing any ulceration, it lost its contagious power by degrees; or, in other words, it ran through its course and exhausted itself. In that case, there being no longer any fear of further evil, either to the individual himself or to the community, the patient was declared clean by the priest, while the dry scales were yet upon him, and restored to society. If, on the contrary, the patches ulcerated and quick or fungous flesh sprang up in them, the purulent matter of which, if brought into contact with the skin of other persons, would be taken into the constitution by means of absorbent vessels, the priest was at once to pronounce it an inveterate leprosy. A temporary confinement was them declared to be totally unnecessary, and he was regarded as unclean for life [DR. GOOD]. Other skin affections, which had a tendency to terminate in leprosy, though they were not decided symptoms when alone, were: "a boil" (\*\*Eeviticus 13:18-23); "a

hot burning," — that is, a fiery inflammation or carbuncle (\*\*\*Leviticus 13:24-28); and "a dry scall" (\*\*\*Leviticus 13:29-37), when the leprosy was distinguished by being deeper than the skin and the hair became thin and yellow.

- 38, 39. If a man ... or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots

   This modification of the leprosy is distinguished by a dull white color, and it is entirely a cutaneous disorder, never injuring the constitution. It is described as not penetrating below the skin of the flesh and as not rendering necessary an exclusion from society. It is evident, then, that this common form of leprosy is not contagious; otherwise Moses would have prescribed as strict a quarantine in this as in the other cases. And hereby we see the great superiority of the Mosaic law (which so accurately distinguished the characteristics of the leprosy and preserved to society the services of those who were laboring under the uncontagious forms of the disease) over the customs and regulations of Eastern countries in the present day, where all lepers are indiscriminately proscribed and are avoided as unfit for free intercourse with their fellow men.
- **40, 41.** *bald* ... *forehead bald* The falling off of the hair, when the baldness commences in the back part of the head, is another symptom which creates a suspicion of leprosy. But it was not of itself a decisive sign unless taken in connection with other tokens, such as a "sore of a reddish white color" [\*\*\*Ceviticus 13:43]. The Hebrews as well as other Orientals were accustomed to distinguish between the forehead baldness, which might be natural, and that baldness which might be the consequence of disease.
- **45.** *the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent*, etc. The person who was declared affected with the leprosy forthwith exhibited all the tokens of suffering from a heavy calamity. Rending garments and uncovering the head were common signs of mourning. As to "the putting a covering upon the upper lip," that means either wearing a moustache, as the Hebrews used to shave the upper lip [CALMET], or simply keeping a hand over it. All these external marks of grief were intended to proclaim, in addition to his own exclamation "Unclean!" that the person was a leper, whose company every one must shun.

**46.** *he shall dwell alone*; *without the camp* — in a lazaretto by himself, or associated with other lepers (\*\*TRB2 Kings 7:3,8).

**47-59.** The garment ... that the ... leprosy is in — It is well known that infectious diseases, such as scarlet fever, measles, the plague, are latently imbibed and carried by the clothes. But the language of this passage clearly indicates a disease to which clothes themselves were subject, and which was followed by effects on them analogous to those which malignant leprosy produces on the human body — for similar regulations were made for the rigid inspection of suspected garments by a priest as for the examination of a leprous person. It has long been conjectured and recently ascertained by the use of a lens, that the leprous condition of swine is produced by myriads of minute insects engendered in their skin; and regarding all leprosy as of the same nature, it is thought that this affords a sufficient reason for the injunction in the Mosaic law to destroy the clothes in which the disease, after careful observation, seemed to manifest itself. Clothes are sometimes seen contaminated by this disease in the West Indies and the southern parts of America [WHITLAW, Code of *Health*]; and it may be presumed that, as the Hebrews were living in the desert where they had not the convenience of frequent changes and washing, the clothes they wore and the skin mats on which they lay, would be apt to breed infectious vermin, which, being settled in the stuff, would imperceptibly gnaw it and leave stains similar to those described by Moses. It is well known that the wool of sheep dying of disease, if it had not been shorn from the animal while living, and also skins, if not thoroughly prepared by scouring, are liable to the effects described in this passage. The stains are described as of a greenish or reddish color, according, perhaps, to the color or nature of the ingredients used in preparing them; for acids convert blue vegetable colors into red and alkalis change then into green [Brown]. It appears, then, that the leprosy, though sometimes inflicted as a miraculous judgment ( Numbers 12:10 2 Kings 5:27) was a natural disease, which is known in Eastern countries still; while the rules prescribed by the Hebrew legislator for distinguishing the true character and varieties of the disease and which are far superior to the method of treatment now followed in those regions, show the divine wisdom by which he was guided. Doubtless the origin of the disease is owing to some latent causes in nature; and perhaps a more extended

acquaintance with the archaeology of Egypt and the natural history of the adjacent countries, may confirm the opinion that leprosy results from noxious insects or a putrid fermentation. But whatever the origin or cause of the disease, the laws enacted by divine authority regarding it, while they pointed in the first instance to sanitary ends, were at the same time intended, by stimulating to carefulness against ceremonial defilement, to foster a spirit of religious fear and inward purity.

## LEVITICUS 14:1-57.

### THE RITES AND SACRIFICES IN CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

- **2, 3.** *law of the leper in the day of his cleansing* Though quite convalescent, a leper was not allowed to return to society immediately and at his own will. The malignant character of his disease rendered the greatest precautions necessary to his re-admission among the people. One of the priests most skilled in the diagnostics of disease [Grotius], being deputed to attend such outcasts, the restored leper appeared before this official, and when after examination a certificate of health was given, the ceremonies here described were forthwith observed outside the camp.
- **4.** *two birds* literally, "sparrows." The *Septuagint*, however, renders the expression "little birds"; and it is evident that it is to be taken in this generic sense from their being specified as "clean" a condition which would have been altogether superfluous to mention in reference to sparrows. In all the offerings prescribed in the law, Moses ordered only common and accessible birds; and hence we may presume that he points here to such birds as sparrows or pigeons, as in the desert it might have been very difficult to procure wild birds alive.

cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop — The cedar here meant was certainly not the famous tree of Lebanon, and it is generally supposed to have been the juniper, as several varieties of that shrub are found growing abundantly in the clefts and crevices of the Sinaitic mountains. A stick of this shrub was bound to a bunch of hyssop by a scarlet ribbon, and the living bird was to be so attached to it, that when they dipped the branches in the water, the tail of the bird might also be moistened, but not the head nor the wings, that it might not be impeded in its flight when let loose.

**5-9.** the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed ... over running water — As the blood of a single bird would not have been sufficient to immerse the body of another bird, it was mingled with spring

water to increase the quantity necessary for the appointed sprinklings, which were to be repeated seven times, denoting a complete purification. (See Kings 5:10 See Psalm 51:2 Matthew 8:4 Luke 5:14). The living bird being then set free, in token of the leper's release from quarantine, the priest pronounced him clean; and this official declaration was made with all solemnity, in order that the mind of the leper might be duly impressed with a sense of the divine goodness, and that others might be satisfied they might safely hold intercourse with him. Several other purifications had to be gone through during a series of seven days, and the whole process had to be repeated on the seventh, ere he was allowed to reenter the camp. The circumstance of a priest being employed seems to imply that instruction suitable to the newly recovered leper would be given, and that the symbolical ceremonies used in the process of cleansing leprosy would be explained. How far they were then understood we cannot tell. But we can trace some instructive analogies between the leprosy and the disease of sin, and between the rites observed in the process of cleansing leprosy and the provisions of the Gospel. The chief of these analogies is that as it was only when a leper exhibited a certain change of state that orders were given by the priest for a sacrifice, so a sinner must be in the exercise of faith and penitence ere the benefits of the gospel remedy can be enjoyed by him. The slain bird and the bird let loose are supposed to typify, the one the death, and the other the resurrection of Christ; while the sprinklings on him that had been leprous typified the requirements which led a believer to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect his holiness in the fear of the Lord.

presented by our great Priest, whose blood alone makes any clean. The offering was to consist of two lambs, the one was to be a sin offering, and an ephah of fine flour (two pints equals one-tenth), and one log (half pint) of oil (\*\*Leviticus 2:1). One of the lambs was for a trespass offering, which was necessary from the inherent sin of his nature or from his defilement of the camp by his leprosy previous to his expulsion; and it is remarkable that the blood of the trespass offering was applied exactly in the same particular manner to the extremities of the restored leper, as that of the ram in the consecration of the priests [\*\*\*\*Leviticus 8:23]. The parts sprinkled with this blood were then anointed with oil — a ceremony which is supposed to have borne this spiritual import: that while the blood was a token of forgiveness, the oil was an emblem of healing — as the blood of Christ justifies, the influence of the Spirit sanctifies. Of the other two lambs the one was to be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering, which had also the character of a thank offering for God's mercy in his restoration. And this was considered to make atonement "for him": that is, it removed that ceremonial pollution which had excluded him from the enjoyment of religious ordinances, just as the atonement of Christ restores all who are cleansed through faith in His sacrifice to the privileges of the children of God.

21-32. if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb — a kind and considerate provision for an extension of the privilege to lepers of the poorer class. The blood of their smaller offering was to be applied in the same process of purification and they were as publicly and completely cleansed as those who brought a costlier offering (\*\*\*Acts 10:34).

**34-48.** *leprosy in a house* — This law was prospective, not to come into operation till the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. The words, "I put the leprosy," has led many to think that this plague was a judicial infliction from heaven for the sins of the owner; while others do not regard it in this light, it being common in Scripture to represent God as doing that which He only permits in His providence to be done. Assuming it to have been a natural disease, a new difficulty arises as to whether we are to consider that the house had become infected by the contagion of leprous occupiers; or that the leprosy was in the house itself. It is evident that the latter was the true state of the case, from the furniture being removed out

of it on the first suspicion of disease on the walls. Some have supposed that the name of leprosy was analogically applied to it by the Hebrews, as we speak of cancer in trees when they exhibit corrosive effects similar to what the disease so named produces on the human body; while others have pronounced it a mural efflorescence or species of mildew on the wall apt to be produced in very damp situations, and which was followed by effects so injurious to health as well as to the stability of a house, particularly in warm countries, as to demand the attention of a legislator. Moses enjoined the priests to follow the same course and during the same period of time for ascertaining the true character of this disease as in human leprosy. If found leprous, the infected parts were to be removed. If afterwards there appeared a risk of the contagion spreading, the house was to be destroyed altogether and the materials removed to a distance. The stones were probably rough, unhewn stones, built up without cement in the manner now frequently used in fences and plastered over, or else laid in mortar. The oldest examples of architecture are of this character. The very same thing has to be done still with houses infected with mural salt. The stones covered with the nitrous incrustation must be removed, and if the infected wall is suffered to remain, it must be plastered all over anew.

**48-57.** the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed — The precautions here described show that there is great danger in warm countries from the house leprosy, which was likely to be increased by the smallness and rude architecture of the houses in the early ages of the Israelitish history. As a house could not contract any impurity in the sight of God, the "atonement" which the priest was to make for it must either have a reference to the sins of its occupants or to the ceremonial process appointed for its purification, the very same as that observed for a leprous person. This solemn declaration that it was "clean," as well as the offering made on the occasion, was admirably calculated to make known the fact, to remove apprehension from the public mind, as well as relieve the owner from the aching suspicion of dwelling in an infected house.

## LEVITICUS 15:1-18.

### UNCLEANNESS OF MEN.

- **2.** When any man hath a running issue This chapter describes other forms of uncleanness, the nature of which is sufficiently intelligible in the text without any explanatory comment. Being the effects of licentiousness, they properly come within the notice of the legislator, and the very stringent rules here prescribed, both for the separation of the person diseased and for avoiding contamination from anything connected with him, were well calculated not only to prevent contagion, but to discourage the excesses of licentious indulgence.
- **9.** what saddle ... he rideth upon that hath the issue shall be unclean (See on desired Genesis 31:34).
- 12. the vessel of earth, that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken It is thought that the pottery of the Israelites, like the earthenware jars in which the Egyptians kept their water, was unglazed and consequently porous, and that it was its porousness which, rendering it extremely liable to imbibe small particles of impure matter, was the reason why the vessel touched by an unclean person was ordered to be broken.
- 13, 14. then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing Like a leprous person he underwent a week's probation, to make sure he was completely healed. Then with the sacrifices prescribed, the priest made an atonement for him, that is, offered the oblations necessary for the removal of his ceremonial defilement, as well as the typical pardon of his sins.

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### UNCLEANNESS OF WOMEN.

**19.** *if a woman have an issue* — Though this, like the leprosy, might be a natural affection, it was anciently considered contagious and entailed a ceremonial defilement which typified a moral impurity. This ceremonial defilement had to be removed by an appointed method of ceremonial expiation, and the neglect of it subjected any one to the guilt of defiling the tabernacle, and to death as the penalty of profane temerity.

31-33. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness — The divine wisdom was manifested in inspiring the Israelites with a profound reverence for holy things; and nothing was more suited to this purpose than to debar from the tabernacle all who were polluted by any kind of uncleanness, ceremonial as well as natural, mental as well as physical. The better to mark out that people as His family, His servants and priests, dwelling in the camp as in a holy place, consecrated by His presence and His tabernacle, He required of them complete purity, and did not allow them to come before Him when defiled, even by involuntary or secret impurities, as a want of respect due to His majesty. And when we bear in mind that God was training a people to live in His presence in some measure as priests devoted to His service, we shall not consider these rules for the maintenance of personal purity either too stringent or too minute ( Thesalonians 4:4).

## LEVITICUS 16:1-34.

# HOW THE HIGH PRIEST MUST ENTER INTO THE HOLY PLACE.

- 1. after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died It is thought by some that this chapter has been transposed out of its right place in the sacred record, which was immediately after the narrative of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu [Content Leviticus 10:1-20]. That appalling catastrophe must have filled Aaron with painful apprehensions lest the guilt of these two sons might be entailed on his house, or that other members of his family might share the same fate by some irregularities or defects in the discharge of their sacred functions. And, therefore, this law was established, by the due observance of whose requirements the Aaronic order would be securely maintained and accepted in the priesthood.
- 2. Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil, etc. Common priests went every day into the part of the sanctuary without the veil to burn incense on the golden altar. But none except the high priest was allowed to enter within the veil, and that only once a year with the greatest care and solemnity. This arrangement was evidently designed to inspire a reverence for the most holy place, and the precaution was necessary at a time when the presence of God was indicated by sensible symbols, the impression of which might have been diminished or lost by daily and familiar observation.

*I will appear in the cloud* — that is, the smoke of the incense which the high priest burnt on his yearly entrance into the most holy place: and this was the cloud which at that time covered the mercy seat.

**3, 4.** Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place — As the duties of the great day of atonement led to the nearest and most solemn approach to

God, the directions as to the proper course to be followed were minute and special.

with a young bullock ... and a ram — These victims he brought alive, but they were not offered in sacrifice till he had gone through the ceremonies described between \*\*CLeviticus 16:3-11. He was not to attire himself on that occasion in the splendid robes that were proper to his sacred office, but in a plain dress of linen, like the common Levites, for, as he was then to make atonement for his own sins, as well as for those of the people, he was to appear in the humble character of a suppliant. That plain dress was more in harmony with a season of humiliation (as well as lighter and more convenient for the duties which on that occasion he had singly to perform) than the gorgeous robes of the pontificate. It showed that when all appeared as sinners, the highest and lowest were then on a level, and that there is no distinction of persons with God [\*\*Acts 10:34].

5-10. shall take of the congregation ... two kids of the goats ... and one ram — The sacrifices were to be offered by the high priest, respectively for himself and the other priests, as well as for the people. The bullock (\*\*Deviticus 16:3) and the goats were for sin offerings and the rams for burnt offerings. The goats, though used in different ways, constituted only one offering. They were both presented before the Lord, and the disposal of them determined by lot, which Jewish writers have thus described: The priest, placing one of the goats on his right hand and the other on his left, took his station by the altar, and cast into an urn two pieces of gold exactly similar, inscribed, the one with the words "for the Lord," and the other for "Azazel" (the scapegoat). After having well shaken them together, he put both his hands into the box and took up a lot in each: that in his right hand he put on the head of the goat which stood on his right, and that in his left he dropped on the other. In this manner the fate of each was decided.

**11-19.** Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself, etc. — The first part of the service was designed to solemnize his own mind, as well as the minds of the people, by offering the sacrifices for their sins. The sin offerings being slain had the sins of the offerer judicially transferred to them by the imputation of his hands on their head (TDO) Leviticus 4:4,15,24,29,33); and thus the young bullock, which was to

make atonement for himself and the other priests (called "his house," Psalm 135:19), was killed by the hands of the high priest. While the blood of the victim was being received into a vessel, taking a censer of live coals in his right hand and a platter of sweet incense in his left, he, amid the solemn attention and the anxious prayers of the assembled multitude, crossed the porch and the holy place, opened the outer veil which led into the holy of holies and then the inner veil. Standing before the ark, he deposited the censer of coals on the floor, emptied the plate of incense into his hand, poured it on the burning coals; and the apartment was filled with fragrant smoke, intended, according to Jewish writers, to prevent any presumptuous gazer prying too curiously into the form of the mercy seat, which was the Lord's throne. The high priest having done this, perfumed the sanctuary, returned to the door, took the blood of the slain bullock, and, carrying it into the holy of holies, sprinkled it with his finger once upon the mercy seat "eastward" — that is, on the side next to himself; and seven times "before the mercy seat" — that is, on the front of the ark. Leaving the coals and the incense burning, he went out a second time, to sacrifice at the altar of burnt offering the goat which had been assigned as a sin offering for the people; and carrying its blood into the holy of holies, he made similar sprinklings as he had done before with the blood of the bullock. While the high priest was thus engaged in the most holy place, none of the ordinary priests were allowed to remain within the precincts of the tabernacle. The sanctuary or holy place and the altar of burnt offering were in like manner sprinkled seven times with the blood of the bullock and the goat. The object of this solemn ceremonial was to impress the minds of the Israelites with the conviction that the whole tabernacle was stained by the sins of a guilty people, that by their sins they had forfeited the privileges of the divine presence and worship, and that an atonement had to be made as the condition of God's remaining with them. The sins and shortcomings of the past year having polluted the sacred edifice, the expiation required to be annually renewed. The exclusion of the priests indicated their unworthiness and the impurities of their service. The mingled blood of the two victims being sprinkled on the horns of the altar indicated that the priests and the people equally needed an atonement for their sins. But the sanctuary being thus ceremonially purified, and the people of Israel reconciled by the blood of the consecrated victim, the

Lord continued to dwell in the midst of them, and to honor them with His gracious presence.

20-22. he shall bring the live goat — Having already been presented before the Lord (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 16:10), it was now brought forward to the high priest, who, placing his hands upon its head, and "having confessed over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," transferred them by this act to the goat as their substitute. It was then delivered into the hands of a person, who was appointed to lead him away into a distant, solitary, and desert place, where in early times he was let go, to escape for his life; but in the time of Christ, he was carried to a high rock twelve miles from Jerusalem, and there, being thrust over the precipice, he was killed. Commentators have differed widely in their opinions about the character and purpose of this part of the ceremonial; some considering the word "Azazel," with the Septuagint and our translators, to mean, "the scapegoat"; others, "a lofty, precipitous rock" [BOCHART]; others, "a thing separated to God" [EWALD, THOLUCK]; while others think it designates Satan [GESENIUS, HENGSTENBERG]. This last view is grounded on the idea of both goats forming one and the same sacrifice of atonement, and it is supported by Zechariah 3:1-10, which presents a striking commentary on this passage. Whether there was in this peculiar ceremony any reference to an Egyptian superstition about Typhon, the spirit of evil, inhabiting the wilderness, and the design was to ridicule it by sending a cursed animal into his gloomy dominions, it is impossible to say. The subject is involved in much obscurity. But in any view there seems to be a typical reference to Christ who bore away our sins [\*\*\*\*Hebrews 10:4 \*\*\*\*\* John 3:5].

**23-28.** Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments — On the dismissal of the scapegoat, the high priest prepared for the important parts of the service which still remained; and for the performance of these he laid aside his plain linen clothes, and, having bathed himself in water, he assumed his pontifical dress. Thus gorgeously attired, he went to present the burnt offerings which were prescribed for himself and the people, consisting of the two rams which had been brought with the sin offerings, but reserved till now. The fat was ordered to be burnt upon the altar; the rest of the carcasses to be cut down and given to some priestly attendants to burn without the

camp, in conformity with the general law for the sin offerings (\*\*\*Leviticus 4:8-12 \*\*\*8:14-17). The persons employed in burning them, as well as the conductor of the scapegoat, were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh in water before they were allowed to return into the camp.

**29-34.** this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month ye shall afflict your souls — This day of annual expiation for all the sins, irreverences, and impurities of all classes in Israel during the previous year, was to be observed as a solemn fast, in which "they were to afflict their souls"; it was reckoned a sabbath, kept as a season of "holy convocation," or, assembling for religious purposes. All persons who performed any labor were subject to the penalty of death [\*Exodus 31:14,15 35:2]. It took place on the tenth day of the seventh month, corresponding to our third of October; and this chapter, together with \*Exotus 23:27-32, as containing special allusion to the observances of the day, was publicly read. The rehearsal of these passages appointing the solemn ceremonial was very appropriate, and the details of the successive parts of it (above all the spectacle of the public departure of the scapegoat under the care of its leader) must have produced salutary impressions both of sin and of duty that would not be soon effaced.

## LEVITICUS 17:1-16.

# BLOOD OF BEASTS MUST BE OFFERED AT THE TABERNACLE DOOR.

- 3, 4. What man ... killeth an ox The Israelites, like other people living in the desert, would not make much use of animal food; and when they did kill a lamb or a kid for food, it would almost always be, as in Abraham's entertainment of the angels [Genesis 18:7], an occasion of a feast, to be eaten in company. This was what was done with the peace offerings, and accordingly it is here enacted, that the same course shall be followed in slaughtering the animals as in the case of those offerings, namely, that they should be killed publicly, and after being devoted to God, partaken of by the offerers. This law, it is obvious, could only be observable in the wilderness while the people were encamped within an accessible distance from the tabernacle. The reason for it is to be found in the strong addictedness of the Israelites to idolatry at the time of their departure from Egypt; and as it would have been easy for any by killing an animal to sacrifice privately to a favorite object of worship, a strict prohibition was made against their slaughtering at home. (See on Deuteronomy 12:15).
- 5. To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field "They" is supposed by some commentators to refer to the Egyptians, so that the verse will stand thus: "the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they (the Egyptians) offer in the open field." The law is thought to have been directed against those whose Egyptian habits led them to imitate this idolatrous practice.
- **7.** they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils literally, "goats." The prohibition evidently alludes to the worship of the hireifooted kind, such as Pan, Faunus, and Saturn, whose recognized symbol was a goat. This was a form of idolatry enthusiastically practiced by the

Egyptians, particularly in the nome or province of Mendes. Pan was supposed especially to preside over mountainous and desert regions, and it was while they were in the wilderness that the Israelites seem to have been powerfully influenced by a feeling to propitiate this idol. Moreover, the ceremonies observed in this idolatrous worship were extremely licentious and obscene, and the gross impurity of the rites gives great point and significance to the expression of Moses, "they have gone a-whoring."

**8, 9.** Whatsoever man ... offereth ... And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle — Before the promulgation of the law, men worshipped wherever they pleased or pitched their tents. But after that event the rites of religion could be acceptably performed only at the appointed place of worship. This restriction with respect to place was necessary as a preventive of idolatry; for it prohibited the Israelites, when at a distance, from repairing to the altars of the heathen, which were commonly in groves or fields.

10. I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will

- cut him off from among his people The face of God is often used in Scripture to denote His anger (\*\*\*Psalm 34:16 \*\*\*Revelation 6:16 \*\*Ezekiel 38:18). The manner in which God's face would be set against such an offender was, that if the crime were public and known, he was condemned to death; it it were secret, vengeance would overtake him. (See on Genesis 9:4). But the practice against which the law is here pointed was an idolatrous rite. The Zabians, or worshippers of the heavenly host, were accustomed, in sacrificing animals, to pour out the blood and eat a part of the flesh at the place where the blood was poured out (and sometimes the blood itself) believing that by means of it, friendship, brotherhood, and familiarity were contracted between the worshippers and the deities. They, moreover, supposed that the blood was very beneficial in obtaining for them a vision of the demon during their sleep, and a revelation of future events. The prohibition against eating blood, viewed in the light of this historic commentary and unconnected with the peculiar terms in which it is expressed, seems to have been levelled against idolatrous practices, as is still further evident from Ezekiel 33:25,26 Torinthians 10:20,21.
- 11. the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls God, as the sovereign

author and proprietor of nature, reserved the blood to Himself and allowed men only one use of it — in the way of sacrifices.

- **13, 14.** whatsoever man ... hunteth It was customary with heathen sportsmen, when they killed any game or venison, to pour out the blood as a libation to the god of the chase. The Israelites, on the contrary, were enjoined, instead of leaving it exposed, to cover it with dust and, by this means, were effectually debarred from all the superstitious uses to which the heathen applied it.
- **15, 16.** every soul that eateth that which died of itself (\*\*\*Exodus 22:31 Leviticus 7:24 \*\*\*\*Acts 15:20),

be unclean until the even — that is, from the moment of his discovering his fault until the evening. This law, however, was binding only on an Israelite. (See Deuteronomy 14:21).

## LEVITICUS 18:1-30.

### UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES.

- **2-4.** *I am the Lord your God* This renewed mention of the divine sovereignty over the Israelites was intended to bear particularly on some laws that were widely different from the social customs that obtained both in Egypt and Canaan; for the enormities, which the laws enumerated in this chapter were intended to put down, were freely practiced or publicly sanctioned in both of those countries; and, indeed, the extermination of the ancient Canaanites is described as owing to the abominations with which they had polluted the land.
- **5.** Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them A special blessing was promised to the Israelites on condition of their obedience to the divine law; and this promise was remarkably verified at particular eras of their history, when pure and undefiled religion prevailed among them, in the public prosperity and domestic happiness enjoyed by them as a people. Obedience to the divine law always, indeed, ensures temporal advantages; and this, doubtless, was the primary meaning of the words, "which if a man do, he shall live in them." But that they had a higher reference to spiritual life is evident from the application made of them by our Lord (\*\*\*Luke 10:28) and the apostle (\*\*\*Romans 10:2).
- **6.** None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him Very great laxity prevailed amongst the Egyptians in their sentiments and practice about the conjugal relation, as they not only openly sanctioned marriages between brothers and sisters, but even between parents and children. Such incestuous alliances Moses wisely prohibited, and his laws form the basis upon which the marriage regulations of this and other Christian nations are chiefly founded. This verse contains a general summary of all the particular prohibitions; and the forbidden intercourse is

pointed out by the phrase, "to approach to." In the specified prohibitions that follow, all of which are included in this general summary, the prohibited familiarity is indicated by the phrases, to "uncover the nakedness" [CENTLE VICTURE 18:12-17], to "take" [CENTLE VICTURE 18:17,18], and to "lie with" [CENTLE VICTURE 18:22,23]. The phrase in this sixth verse, therefore, has the same identical meaning with each of the other three, and the marriages in reference to which it is used are those of consanguinity or too close affinity, amounting to incestuous connections.

**18.** Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her — The original is rendered in the Margin, "neither shalt thou take one wife to another to vex her," and two different and opposite interpretations have been put upon this passage. The marginal construction involves an express prohibition of polygamy; and, indeed, there can be no doubt that the practice of having more wives than one is directly contrary to the divine will. It was prohibited by the original law of marriage, and no evidence of its lawfulness under the Levitical code can be discovered, although Moses — from "the hardness of their hearts" [ Matthew 19:8 Mark 10:5] tolerated it in the people of a rude and early age. The second interpretation forms the ground upon which the "vexed question" has been raised in our times respecting the lawfulness of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Whatever arguments may be used to prove the unlawfulness or inexpediency of such a matrimonial relation, the passage under consideration cannot, on a sound basis of criticism, be enlisted in the service; for the crimes with which it is here associated warrant the conclusion that it points not to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, but with a sister in the wife's lifetime, a practice common among the ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans, and others.

# 21. thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, etc.

— Molech, or Moloch, which signifies "king," was the idol of the Ammonites. His statue was of brass, and rested on a pedestal or throne of the same metal. His head, resembling that of a calf, was adorned with a crow, and his arms were extended in the attitude of embracing those who approached him. His devotees dedicated their children to him; and when this was to be done, they heated the statue to a high pitch of intensity by a fire within, and then the infants were either shaken over the flames, or passed through the ignited arms, by way of lustration to ensure the favor

of the pretended deity. The fire-worshippers asserted that all children who did not undergo this purifying process would die in infancy; and the influence of this Zabian superstition was still so extensively prevalent in the days of Moses, that the divine lawgiver judged it necessary to prohibit it by an express statute.

neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God — by giving it to false or pretended divinities; or, perhaps, from this precept standing in close connection with the worship of Molech, the meaning rather is, Do not, by devoting your children to him, give foreigners occasion to blaspheme the name of your God as a cruel and sanguinary deity, who demands the sacrifice of human victims, and who encourages cruelty in his votaries.

**24.** *Defile not yourselves in any of these things* — In the preceding verses seventeen express cases of incest are enumerated; comprehending eleven of affinity [\*\*\*Eeviticus 18:7-16], and six of consanguinity [\*\*\*Eeviticus 18:17-20], together with some criminal enormities of an aggravated and unnatural character. In such prohibitions it was necessary for the instruction of a people low in the scale of moral perception, that the enumeration should be very specific as well as minute; and then, on completing it, the divine lawgiver announces his own views of these crimes, without any exception or modification, in the remarkable terms employed in this verse.

Ancient history gives many appalling proofs that the enormous vices described in this chapter were very prevalent, nay, were regularly practiced from religious motives in the temples of Egypt and the groves of Canaan; and it was these gigantic social disorders that occasioned the expulsion, of which the Israelites were, in the hands of a righteous and retributive Providence, the appointed instruments (\*\*Genesis 15:16). The strongly figurative language of "the land itself vomiting out her inhabitants" [\*\*\*Leviticus 18:25], shows the hopeless depth of their moral corruption.

**25.** therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it; and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants — The Canaanites, as enormous and incorrigible sinners, were to be exterminated; and this extermination was manifestly a judicial punishment inflicted by a ruler whose laws had been

grossly and perseveringly outraged. But before a law can be disobeyed, it must have been previously in existence; and hence a law, prohibiting all the horrid crimes enumerated above — a law obligatory upon the Canaanites as well as other nations — was already known and in force before the Levitical law of incest was promulgated. Some general law, then, prohibiting these crimes must have been published to mankind at a very early period of the world's history; and that law must either have been the moral law, originally written on the human heart, or a law on the institution of marriage revealed to Adam and known to the Canaanites and others by tradition or otherwise.

- **29.** *the souls that commit them shall be cut off* This strong denunciatory language is applied to all the crimes specified in the chapter without distinction: to incest as truly as to bestiality, and to the eleven cases of affinity [\*\*\*Leviticus 18:7-16], as fully as to the six of consanguinity [\*\*\*Leviticus 18:17-20]. Death is the punishment sternly denounced against all of them. No language could be more explicit or universal; none could more strongly indicate intense loathing and abhorrence.
- **30.** Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs In giving the Israelites these particular institutions, God was only re-delivering the law imprinted on the natural heart of man; for there is every reason to believe that the incestuous alliances and unnatural crimes prohibited in this chapter were forbidden to all men by a law expressed or understood from the beginning of the world, or at least from the era of the flood, since God threatens to condemn and punish, in a manner so sternly severe, these atrocities in the practice of the Canaanites and their neighbors, who were not subject to the laws of the Hebrew nation

## **CROOL**LEVITICUS 19:1-37.

### A REPETITION OF SUNDRY LAWS.

**2.** Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel — Many of the laws enumerated in this chapter had been previously announced. As they were, however, of a general application, not suited to particular classes, but to the nation at large, so Moses seems, according to divine instructions, to have rehearsed them, perhaps on different occasions and to successive divisions of the people, till "all the congregation of the children of Israel" were taught to know them. The will of God in the Old as well as the New Testament Church was not locked up in the repositories of an unknown tongue, but communicated plainly and openly to the people.

**Ye shall be holy: for I ... am holy** — Separated from the world, the people of God were required to be holy, for His character, His laws, and service were holy. (See \*\*\* Peter 1:15).

- 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths The duty of obedience to parents is placed in connection with the proper observance of the Sabbaths, both of them lying at the foundation of practical religion.
- 5-8. if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, ye shall offer it at your own will Those which included thank offerings, or offerings made for vows, were always freewill offerings. Except the portions which, being waved and heaved, became the property of the priests (see Leviticus 3:1-17), the rest of the victim was eaten by the offerer and his friend, under the following regulations, however, that, if thank offerings, they were to be eaten on the day of their presentation; and if a freewill offering, although it might be eaten on the second day, yet if any remained of it till the third day, it was to be burnt, or deep criminality was incurred by the person who then ventured to partake of it. The reason of this strict

prohibition seems to have been to prevent any mysterious virtue being superstitiously attached to meat offered on the altar.

- 9, 10. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field The right of the poor in Israel to glean after reapers, as well as to the unreaped corners of the field, was secured by a positive statute; and this, in addition to other enactments connected with the ceremonial law, formed a beneficial provision for their support. At the same time, proprietors were not obliged to admit them into the field until the grain had been carried off the field; and they seem also to have been left at liberty to choose the poor whom they deemed the most deserving or needful (\*\*TRuth 2:2,8). This was the earliest law for the benefit of the poor that we read of in the code of any people; and it combined in admirable union the obligation of a public duty with the exercise of private and voluntary benevolence at a time when the hearts of the rich would be strongly inclined to liberality.
- **11-16.** *Ye shall not steal* A variety of social duties are inculcated in this passage, chiefly in reference to common and little-thought-of vices to which mankind are exceedingly prone; such as committing petty frauds, or not scrupling to violate truth in transactions of business, ridiculing bodily infirmities, or circulating stories to the prejudice of others. In opposition to these bad habits, a spirit of humanity and brotherly kindness is strongly enforced.
- **17.** thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor Instead of cherishing latent feelings of malice or meditating purposes of revenge against a person who has committed an insult or injury against them, God's people were taught to remonstrate with the offender and endeavor, by calm and kindly reason, to bring him to a sense of his fault.

**not suffer sin upon him** — literally, "that ye may not participate in his sin."

**18.** thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself — The word "neighbor" is used as synonymous with "fellow creature." The Israelites in a later age restricted its meaning as applicable only to their own countrymen. This narrow interpretation was refuted by our Lord in a beautiful parable (\*\*\*USL\*\*Uke\*\* 10:30-37).

**19.** Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind — This prohibition was probably intended to discourage a practice which seemed to infringe upon the economy which God has established in the animal kingdom.

thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed — This also was directed against an idolatrous practice, namely, that of the ancient Zabians, or fireworshippers, who sowed different seeds, accompanying the act with magical rites and invocations; and commentators have generally thought the design of this and the preceding law was to put an end to the unnatural lusts and foolish superstitions which were prevalent among the heathen. But the reason of the prohibition was probably deeper: for those who have studied the diseases of land and vegetables tell us, that the practice of mingling seeds is injurious both to flowers and to grains. "If the various genera of the natural order Gramineæ, which includes the grains and the grasses, should be sown in the same field, and flower at the same time, so that the pollen of the two flowers mix, a spurious seed will be the consequence, called by the farmers chess. It is always inferior and unlike either of the two grains that produced it, in size, flavor, and nutritious principles. Independently of contributing to disease the soil, they never fail to produce the same in animals and men that feed on them" [WHITLAW].

# neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee

— Although this precept, like the other two with which it is associated, was in all probability designed to root out some superstition, it seems to have had a further meaning. The law, it is to be observed, did not prohibit the Israelites wearing many different kinds of cloths together, but only the two specified; and the observations and researches of modern science have proved that "wool, when combined with linen, increases its power of passing off the electricity from the body. In hot climates, it brings on malignant fevers and exhausts the strength; and when passing off from the body, it meets with the heated air, inflames and excoriates like a blister" [Whitlaw]. (See \*\*Ezekiel 44:17,18).

23-25. ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised; three years ... it shall not be eaten of — "The wisdom of this law is very striking. Every gardener will teach us not to let fruit trees bear in their earliest years, but

to pluck off the blossoms: and for this reason, that they will thus thrive the better, and bear more abundantly afterwards. The very expression, "to regard them as uncircumcised," suggests the propriety of pinching them off; I do not say *cutting* them off, because it is generally the hand, and not a knife, that is employed in this operation" [MICHAELIS].

**26.** shall not eat any thing with the blood — (See on Eviticus 17:10).

**neither ... use enchantment, nor observe times** — The former refers to divination by serpents — one of the earliest forms of enchantment, and the other means the observation, literally, of clouds, as a study of the appearance and motion of *clouds* was a common way of foretelling good or bad fortune. Such absurd but deep-rooted superstitions often put a stop to the prosecution of serious and important transactions, but they were forbidden especially as implying a want of faith in the being, or of reliance on the providence of God.

27. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, etc. — It seems probable that this fashion had been learned by the Israelites in Egypt, for the ancient Egyptians had their dark locks cropped short or shaved with great nicety, so that what remained on the crown appeared in the form of a circle surrounding the head, while the beard was dressed into a square form. This kind of coiffure had a highly idolatrous meaning; and it was adopted, with some slight variations, by almost all idolaters in ancient times. (\*\*Peremiah 9:25,26\*\*25:23, where "in the utmost corners" means having the corners of their hair cut.) Frequently a lock or tuft of hair was left on the hinder part of the head, the rest being cut round in the form of a ring, as the Turks, Chinese, and Hindus do at the present day.

neither shalt thou mar, etc. — The Egyptians used to cut or shave off their whiskers, as may be seen in the coffins of mummies, and the representations of divinities on the monuments. But the Hebrews, in order to separate them from the neighboring nations, or perhaps to put a stop to some existing superstition, were forbidden to imitate this practice. It may appear surprising that Moses should condescend to such minutiæ as that of regulating the fashion of the hair and the beard — matters which do not usually occupy the attention of a legislator — and which appear widely remote from the province either of government or of a religion. A

strong presumption, therefore, arises that he had in mind by these regulations to combat some superstitious practices of the Egyptians.

**28.** Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead — The practice of making deep gashes on the face and arms and legs, in time of bereavement, was universal among the heathen, and it was deemed a becoming mark of respect for the dead, as well as a sort of propitiatory offering to the deities who presided over death and the grave. The Jews learned this custom in Egypt, and though weaned from it, relapsed in a later and degenerate age into this old superstition (\*\*Tsaiah 15:2\*\* Isaiah 15:2\*\* Isaiah 16:6\*\* Isaiah 15:2\*\* Isaiah 16:6\*\* Isaiah 16:6\*

nor print any marks upon you — by tattooing, imprinting figures of flowers, leaves, stars, and other fanciful devices on various parts of their person. The impression was made sometimes by means of a hot iron, sometimes by ink or paint, as is done by the Arab females of the present day and the different castes of the Hindus. It it probable that a strong propensity to adopt such marks in honor of some idol gave occasion to the prohibition in this verse; and they were wisely forbidden, for they were signs of apostasy; and, when once made, they were insuperable obstacles to a return. (See allusions to the practice, Attitude).

- **30.** Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary This precept is frequently repeated along with the prohibition of idolatrous practices, and here it stands closely connected with the superstitions forbidden in the previous verses.
- **31.** Regard not them that have familiar spirits The Hebrew word, rendered "familiar spirit," signifies the belly, and sometimes a leathern bottle, from its similarity to the belly. It was applied in the sense of this passage to ventriloquists, who pretended to have communication with the invisible world. The Hebrews were strictly forbidden to consult them as the vain but high pretensions of those impostors were derogatory to the honor of God and subversive of their covenant relations with Him as His people.

**neither seek after wizards** — fortunetellers, who pretended, as the *Hebrew* word indicates, to prognosticate by palmistry (or an inspection of the lines of the hand) the future fate of those who applied to them.

# 33, 34. if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him — The Israelites were to hold out encouragement to strangers to settle among them, that they might be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God; and with this in view, they were enjoined to treat them not as aliens, but as friends, on the ground that they themselves, who were strangers in Egypt, were at first kindly and hospitably received in that

country.

**37.** *I am the Lord* — This solemn admonition, by which these various precepts are repeatedly sanctioned, is equivalent to "I, your Creator — your Deliverer from bondage, and your Sovereign, who have wisdom to establish laws, have power also to punish the violation of them." It was well fitted to impress the minds of the Israelites with a sense of their duty and God's claims to obedience.

## LEVITICUS 20:1-27.

### GIVING ONE'S SEED TO MOLECH.

**2.** Whosoever ... giveth any of his seed unto Molech — (See on Leviticus 18:21).

the people of the land shall stone him with stones, etc. — Criminals who were condemned to be stoned were led, with their hands bound, without the gates to a small eminence, where was a large stone placed at the bottom. When they had approached within ten cubits of the spot, they were exhorted to confess, that, by faith and repentance, their souls might be saved. When led forward to within four cubits, they were stripped almost naked, and received some stupefying draught, during which the witnesses prepared, by laying aside their outer garments, to carry into execution the capital sentence which the law bound them to do. The criminal, being placed on the edge of the precipice, was then pushed backwards, so that he fell down the perpendicular height on the stone lying below: if not killed by the fall, the second witness dashed a large stone down upon his breast, and then the "people of the land," who were by-standers, rushed forward, and with stones completed the work of death (""Matthew 21:44" Acts 7:58).

- **4.** If the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, etc. that is, connive at their countrymen practising the horrid rites of Molech. Awful was it that any Hebrew parents could so violate their national covenant, and no wonder that God denounced the severest penalties against them and their families.
- **7-19.** Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy The minute specification of the incestuous and unnatural crimes here enumerated shows their sad prevalence amongst the idolatrous nations around, and the extreme proneness of the Israelites to follow the customs of their neighbors. It is to be understood, that, whenever mention is made that the

offender was "to be put to death" without describing the mode, stoning is meant. The only instance of another form of capital punishment occurs in Leviticus 20:14, that of being burnt with fire; and yet it is probable that even here death was first inflicted by stoning, and the body of the criminal afterwards consumed by fire (\*\*TS) Joshua 7:15).

- **20.** *they shall die childless* Either by the judgment of God they shall have no children, or their spurious offspring shall be denied by human authority the ordinary privileges of children in Israel.
- **24.** *I* ... have separated you from other people Their selection from the rest of the nations was for the all-important end of preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God amid the universal apostasy; and as the distinction of meats was one great means of completing that separation, the law about making a difference between clean and unclean beasts is here repeated with emphatic solemnity.

# LEVITICUS 21:1-24.

### OF THE PRIESTS' MOURNING.

- 1. There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people The obvious design of the regulations contained in this chapter was to keep inviolate the purity and dignity of the sacred office. Contact with a corpse, or even contiguity to the place where it lay, entailing ceremonial defilement (\*\*Numbers 19:14), all mourners were debarred from the tabernacle for a week; and as the exclusion of a priest during that period would have been attended with great inconvenience, the whole order were enjoined to abstain from all approaches to the dead, except at the funerals of relatives, to whom affection or necessity might call them to perform the last offices. Those exceptional cases, which are specified, were strictly confined to the members of their own family, within the nearest degrees of kindred.
- **4.** But he shall not defile himself "for any other," as the sense may be fully expressed. "The priest, in discharging his sacred functions, might well be regarded as a chief man among his people, and by these defilements might be said to profane himself" [BISHOP PATRICK]. The word rendered "chief man" signifies also "a husband"; and the sense according to others is, "But he being a husband, shall not defile himself by the obsequies of a wife"; or, "being an husband among his people, he shall not defile himself for his wife" (\*\*Ezekiel 44:25).
- 5. They shall not make baldness upon their heads ... nor ... cuttings in their flesh The superstitious marks of sorrow, as well as the violent excesses in which the heathen indulged at the death of their friends, were forbidden by a general law to the Hebrew people (\*\*ELeviticus 19:28). But the priests were to be laid under a special injunction, not only that they might exhibit examples of piety in the moderation of their grief, but also by the restraint of their passions, be the better qualified to administer the

consolations of religion to others, and show, by their faith in a blessed resurrection, the reasons for sorrowing not as those who have no hope.

**7-9.** They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane — Private individuals might form several connections, which were forbidden as inexpedient or improper in priests. The respectability of their office, and the honor of religion, required unblemished sanctity in their families as well as themselves, and departures from it in their case were visited with severer punishment than in that of others.

**10-15.** he that is the high priest among his brethren ... shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes — The indulgence in the excepted cases of family bereavement, mentioned above [\*\*D\*Leviticus 21:2,3], which was granted to the common priests, was denied to him; for his absence from the sanctuary for the removal of any contracted defilement could not have been dispensed with, neither could he have acted as intercessor for the people, unless ceremonially clean. Moreover, the high dignity of his office demanded a corresponding superiority in personal holiness, and stringent rules were prescribed for the purpose of upholding the suitable dignity of his station and family. The same rules are extended to the families of Christian ministers (\*\*\*TT\* Timothy 3:2 \*\*\*\*TT\* Titus 1:6).

**16-24.** Whosoever he be ... hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God — As visible things exert a strong influence on the minds of men, any physical infirmity or malformation of body in the ministers of religion, which disturbs the associations or excites ridicule, tends to detract from the weight and authority of the sacred office. Priests laboring under any personal defect were not allowed to officiate in the public service; they might be employed in some inferior duties about the sanctuary but could not perform any sacred office. In all these regulations for preserving the unsullied purity of the sacred character and office, there was a typical reference to the priesthood of Christ (\*\*\*TETHEBERENT\*\*).

## LEVITICUS 22:1-9.

### THE PRIESTS IN THEIR UNCLEANNESS.

**2.** Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things — "To separate" means, in the language of the Mosaic ritual, "to abstain"; and therefore the import of this injunction is that the priests should abstain from eating that part of the sacrifices which, though belonging to their order, was to be partaken of only by such of them as were free from legal impurities.

that they profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me, etc. — that is, let them not, by their want of due reverence, give occasion to profane my holy name. A careless or irreverent use of things consecrated to God tends to dishonor the name and bring disrespect on the worship of God.

3. Whosoever he be ... that goeth unto the holy things — The multitude of minute restrictions to which the priests, from accidental defilement, were subjected, by keeping them constantly on their guard lest they should be unfit for the sacred service, tended to preserve in full exercise the feeling of awe and submission to the authority of God. The ideas of sin and duty were awakened in their breasts by every case to which either an interdict or an injunction was applied. But why enact an express statute for priests disqualified by the leprosy or polluting touch of a carcass Leviticus 22:4), when a general law was already in force which excluded from society all persons in that condition? Because priests might be apt, from familiarity, to trifle with religion, and in committing irregularities or sins, to shelter themselves under the cloak of the sacred office. This law, therefore, was passed, specifying the chief forms of temporary defilement which excluded from the sanctuary, that priests might not deem themselves entitled to greater license than the rest of the people; and that so far from being in any degree exempted from the sanctions of the law,

they were under greater obligations, by their priestly station, to observe it in its strict letter and its smallest enactments.

**4-6.** wash his flesh with water — Any Israelite who had contracted a defilement of such a nature as debarred him from the enjoyment of his wonted privileges, and had been legally cleansed from the disqualifying impurity, was bound to indicate his state of recovery by the immersion of his whole person in water. Although all ceremonial impurity formed a ground of exclusion, there were degrees of impurity which entailed a longer or shorter period of excommunication, and for the removal of which different rites required to be observed according to the trivial or the malignant nature of the case. A person who came inadvertently into contact with an unclean animal was rendered unclean for a specified period; and then, at the expiry of that term, he washed, in token of his recovered purity. But a leper was unclean so long as he remained subject to that disease, and on his convalescence, he also washed, not to cleanse himself, for the water was ineffectual for that purpose, but to signify that he was clean. Not a single case is recorded of a leper being restored to communion by the use of water; it served only as an outward and visible sign that such a restoration was to be made. The Book of Leviticus abounds with examples which show that in all the ceremonial washings, as uncleanness meant loss of privileges, so baptism with water indicated a restoration those privileges. There was no exemption; for as the unclean Israelite was exiled from the congregation, so the unclean priest was disqualified from executing his sacred functions in the sanctuary; and in the case of both, the same observance was required — a formal intimation of their being readmitted to forfeited privileges was intimated by the appointed rite of baptism. If any one neglected or refused to perform the washing, he disobeyed a positive precept, and he remained in his uncleanness; he forbore to avail himself of this privilege, and was therefore said to be "cut off" from the presence of the Lord.

**8.** *dieth of itself* — The feelings of nature revolt against such food. It might have been left to the discretion of the Hebrews, who it may be supposed (like the people of all civilized nations) would have abstained from the use of it without any positive interdict. But an express precept was necessary to show them that whatever died naturally or from disease,

was prohibited to them by the operation of that law which forbade them the use of any meat with its blood.

# LEVITICUS 22:10-16.

### WHO OF THE PRIESTS' HOUSE MAY EAT OF THEM.

- **10-13.** There shall no stranger eat the holy thing The portion of the sacrifices assigned for the support of the officiating priests was restricted to the exclusive use of his own family. A temporary guest or a hired servant was not at liberty to eat of them; but an exception was made in favor of a bought or homeborn slave, because such was a stated member of his household. On the same principle, his own daughter, who married a husband not a priest, could not eat of them. However, if a widow and childless, she was reinstated in the privileges of her father's house as before her marriage. But if she had become a mother, as her children had no right to the privileges of the priesthood, she was under a necessity of finding support for them elsewhere than under her father's roof.
- **13.** there shall no stranger eat thereof The interdict recorded (\*\*Deviticus 22:10) is repeated to show its stringency. All the Hebrews, even the nearest neighbors of the priest, the members of his family excepted, were considered strangers in this respect, so that they had no right to eat of things offered at the altar.
- **14.** *if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly* A common Israelite might unconsciously partake of what had been offered as tithes, first-fruits, etc. and on discovering his unintentional error, he was not only to restore as much as he had used, but be fined in a fifth part more for the priests to carry into the sanctuary.
- 15, 16. they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel—
  There is some difficulty felt in determining to whom "they" refers. The subject of the preceding context being occupied about the priests, it is supposed by some that this relates to them also; and the meaning then is that the whole people would incur guilt through the fault of the priests, if they should defile the sacred offerings, which they would have done had

they presented them while under any defilement [Calvin]. According to others, "the children of Israel" is the nominative in the sentence; which thus signifies, the children of Israel shall not profane or defile their offerings, by touching them or reserving any part of them, lest they incur the guilt of eating what is divinely appointed to the priests alone [Calmet].

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### THE SACRIFICES MUST BE WITHOUT BLEMISH.

**19.** Ye shall offer at your own will — rather, to your being accepted.

a male without blemish — This law (\*\*\*DLeviticus 1:3) is founded on a sense of natural propriety, which required the greatest care to be taken in the selection of animals for sacrifice. The reason for this extreme caution is found in the fact that sacrifices are either an expression of praise to God for His goodness, or else they are the designed means of conciliating or retaining His favor. No victim that was not perfect in its kind could be deemed a fitting instrument for such purposes if we assume that the significance of sacrifices is derived entirely from their relation to Jehovah. Sacrifices may be likened to gifts made to a king by his subjects, and hence the reasonableness of God's strong remonstrance with the worldly-minded Jews (\*\*Malachi 1:8). If the tabernacle, and subsequently the temple, were considered the palace of the great King, then the sacrifices would answer to presents as offered to a monarch on various occasions by his subjects; and in this light they would be the appropriate expressions of their feelings towards their sovereign. When a subject wished to do honor to his sovereign, to acknowledge allegiance, to appease his anger, to supplicate forgiveness, or to intercede for another, he brought a present; and all the ideas involved in sacrifices correspond to these sentiments those of gratitude, of worship, of prayer, of confession and atonement [BIB. SAC.].

**23.** *that mayest thou offer*, etc. — The passage should be rendered thus: "if thou offer it either for a freewill offering, or for a vow, it shall not be accepted." This sacrifice being required to be "without blemish"

Leviticus 22:19], symbolically implied that the people of God were to dedicate themselves wholly with sincere purposes of heart, and its being required to be "perfect to be accepted" [——Leviticus 22:21], led them typically to Him without whom no sacrifice could be offered acceptable to God.

27, 28. it shall be seven days under the dam — Animals were not considered perfect nor good for food till the eighth day. As sacrifices are called the bread or food of God (\*\*Eviticus 22:25), to offer them immediately after birth, when they were unfit to be eaten, would have indicated a contempt of religion; and besides, this prohibition, as well as that contained in \*\*Eviticus 22:28, inculcated a lesson of humanity or tenderness to the dam, as well as secured the sacrifices from all appearance of unfeeling cruelty.

## LEVITICUS 23:1-4.

### OF SUNDRY FEASTS.

- 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, ... concerning the feasts of the Lord literally, "the times of assembling, or solemnities" ( Isaiah 33:20); and this is a preferable rendering, applicable to all sacred seasons mentioned in this chapter, even the day of atonement, which was observed as a fast. They were appointed by the direct authority of God and announced by a public proclamation, which is called "the joyful sound" ( Psalm 89:15). Those "holy convocations" were evidences of divine wisdom, and eminently subservient to the maintenance and diffusion of religious knowledge and piety.
- 3. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest— (See on Exodus 20:8). The Sabbath has the precedence given to it, and it was to be "a holy convocation," observed by families "in their dwellings"; where practicable, by the people repairing to the door of the tabernacle; at later periods, by meeting in the schools of the prophets, and in synagogues.
- **4.** These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons Their observance took place in the parts of the year corresponding to our March, May, and September. Divine wisdom was manifested in fixing them at those periods; in winter, when the days were short and the roads broken up, a long journey was impracticable; while in summer the harvest and vintage gave busy employment in the fields. Besides, another reason for the choice of those seasons probably was to counteract the influence of Egyptian associations and habits. And God appointed more sacred festivals for the Israelites in the month of September than the people of Egypt had in honor of their idols. These institutions, however, were for the most part prospective, the observance being not binding on the Israelites during their wanderings in the

wilderness, while the regular celebration was not to commence till their settlement in Canaan.

## LEVITICUS 23:5-8.

#### THE PASSOVER.

5. the Lord's passover — (See Decodus 12:2,14,18) The institution of the passover was intended to be a perpetual memorial of the circumstances attending the redemption of the Israelites, while it had a typical reference to a greater redemption to be effected for God's spiritual people. On the first and last days of this feast, the people were forbidden to work [Decodus 23:7,8]; but while on the Sabbath they were not to do any work, on feast days they were permitted to dress meat — and hence the prohibition is restricted to "no servile work." At the same time, those two days were devoted to "holy convocation" — special seasons of social devotion. In addition to the ordinary sacrifices of every day, there were to be "offerings by fire" on the altar (see Numbers 28:19), while unleavened bread was to be eaten in families all the seven days (see Corinthians 5:8).

## **LEVITICUS 23:9-14.**

#### THE SHEAF OF FIRST FRUITS.

10. ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest— A sheaf, literally, an omer, of the first-fruits of the barley harvest. The barley being sooner ripe than the other grains, the reaping of it formed the commencement of the general harvest season. The offering described in this passage was made on the sixteenth of the first month, the day following the first Passover Sabbath, which was on the fifteenth (corresponding to the beginning of our April); but it was reaped after sunset on the previous evening by persons deputed to go with sickles and obtain samples from different fields. These, being laid together in a sheaf or loose bundle, were brought to the court of the temple, where the grain

was winnowed, parched, and bruised in a mortar. Then, after some incense had been sprinkled on it, the priest waved the sheaf aloft before the Lord towards the four different points of the compass, took a part of it and threw it into the fire of the altar — all the rest being reserved to himself. It was a proper and beautiful act, expressive of dependence on the God of nature and providence — common among all people, but more especially becoming the Israelites, who owed their land itself as well as all it produced to the divine bounty. The offering of the wave-sheaf sanctified the whole harvest (\*\*TROMANNE 11:16\*). At the same time, this feast had a typical character, and pre-intimated the resurrection of Christ (\*\*\*TROMANNE 11:16\*). Corinthians 15:20), who rose from the dead on the very day the first-fruits were offered.

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### FEAST OF PENTECOST.

- **15.** *ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath* that is, after the first day of the passover week, which was observed as a Sabbath.
- **16.** *number fifty days* The forty-ninth day after the presentation of the first-fruits, or the fiftieth, including it, was the feast of Pentecost. (See also Exodus 23:16 Deuteronomy 16:9).
- **17.** Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals, etc. These loaves were made of "fine" or wheaten flour, the quantity contained in them being somewhat more than ten pounds in weight. As the wave-sheaf gave the signal for the commencement, the two loaves solemnized the termination of the harvest season. They were the first-fruits of that season, being offered unto the Lord by the priest in name of the whole nation. (See \*\*DE\*\*Loadus 34:22). The loaves used at the Passover were unleavened; those presented at Pentecost were leavened a difference which is thus accounted for, that the one was a memorial of the bread hastily prepared at their departure, while the other was a tribute of gratitude to God for their daily food, which was leavened.

- **21.** ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein Though it extended over a week, the first day only was held as a Sabbath, both for the national offering of first-fruits and a memorial of the giving of the law.
- **22.** thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, etc. (See on Leviticus 19:9). The repetition of this law here probably arose from the priests reminding the people, at the presentation of the first-fruits, to unite piety to God with charity to the poor.

## LEVITICUS 23:23-25.

#### FEAST OF TRUMPETS.

**24.** In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath — That was the first day of the ancient civil year.

a memorial of blowing of trumpets — Jewish writers say that the trumpets were sounded thirty successive times, and the reason for the institution was for the double purpose of announcing the commencement of the new year, which was (\*\*Eviticus 23:25) to be religiously observed (see \*\*Numbers 29:3), and of preparing the people for the approaching solemn feast.

- **27-32.** there shall be a day of atonement ... and ye shall afflict your souls an unusual festival, at which the sins of the whole year were expiated. (See \*\*ELEVITICUS 16:29-34). It is here only stated that the severest penalty was incurred by the violation of this day.
- **34-44.** *the feast of tabernacles, for seven days unto the Lord* This festival, which was instituted in grateful commemoration of the Israelites having securely dwelt in booths or tabernacles in the wilderness, was the third of the three great annual festivals, and, like the other two, it lasted a week. It began on the fifteenth day of the month, corresponding to the end of our September and beginning of October, which was observed as a Sabbath; and it could be celebrated only at the place of the sanctuary, offerings being made on the altar every day of its continuance. The Jews

were commanded during the whole period of the festival to dwell in booths, which were erected on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets or fields; and the trees made use of are by some stated to be the citron, the palm, the myrtle, and the willow, while others maintain the people were allowed to take any trees they could obtain that were distinguished for verdure and fragrance. While the solid branches were reserved for the construction of the booths, the lighter branches were carried by men, who marched in triumphal procession, singing psalms and crying "Hosanna!" which signifies, "Save, we beseech thee!" (\*\*\*Psalm 118:15,25,26). It was a season of great rejoicing. But the ceremony of drawing water from the pool, which was done on the last day, seems to have been the introduction of a later period ( John 7:37). That last day was the eighth, and, on account of the scene at Siloam, was called "the great day of the feast." The feast of ingathering, when the vintage was over, was celebrated also on that day [Exodus 23:16 34:22], and, as the conclusion of one of the great festivals, it was kept as a sabbath.

## LEVITICUS 24:1-23.

#### OIL FOR THE LAMPS.

**2.** Command the children of Israel — This is the repetition of a law previously given (\*Exodus 27:20,21).

pure oil olive beaten — or cold-drawn, which is always of great purity.

- **3, 4.** Aaron shall order it from the evening unto the morning The daily presence of the priests was necessary to superintend the cleaning and trimming.
- **4.** *upon the pure candlestick* so called because of pure gold. This was symbolical of the light which ministers are to diffuse through the Church.
- **5-9.** *take fine flour*, *and bake twelve cakes* for the showbread, as previously appointed (\*\*Exodus 25:30). Those cakes were baked by the Levites, the flour being furnished by the people (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 9:32 \*\*\*23:29), oil, wine, and salt being the other ingredients (\*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 2:13).

two tenth deals — that is, of an ephah — thirteen and a half pounds weight each; and on each row or pile of cakes some frankincense was strewed, which, being burnt, led to the showbread being called "an offering made by fire." Every Sabbath a fresh supply was furnished; hot loaves were placed on the altar instead of the stale ones, which, having lain a week, were removed, and eaten only by the priests, except in cases of necessity (\*\*PIR\*\*1 Samuel 21:3-6; also \*\*TLuke 6:3,4).

**10.** the son of an Israelitish woman, etc. — This passage narrates the enactment of a new law, with a detail of the circumstances which gave rise to it. The "mixed multitude" [\*\*Exodus 12:38] that accompanied the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt creates a presumption that marriage connections of the kind described were not infrequent. And it was most

natural, in the relative circumstances of the two people, that the father should be an Egyptian and the mother an Israelite.

- A youth of this half-blood, having quarrelled with an Israelite [4980] Leviticus 24:10], vented his rage in some horrid form of impiety. It was a common practice among the Egyptians to curse their idols when disappointed in obtaining the object of their petitions. The Egyptian mind of this youth thought the greatest insult to his opponent was to blaspheme the object of his religious reverence. He spoke disrespectfully of One who sustained the double character of the King as well as the God of the Hebrew people; as the offense was a new one, he was put in ward till the mind of the Lord was ascertained as to his disposal.
- **14.** Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp All executions took place without the camp; and this arrangement probably originated in the idea that, as the Israelites were to be "a holy people" (\*\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*14:2,21 \*\*\*\*\*26:19 \*\*\*\*\*28:9), all flagrant offenders should be thrust out of their society.

*let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head*, etc. — The imposition of hands formed a public and solemn testimony against the crime, and at the same time made the punishment legal.

- **16.** as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death Although strangers were not obliged to be circumcised, yet by joining the Israelitish camp, they became amenable to the law, especially that which related to blasphemy.
- **17-22.** he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death These verses contain a repetition of some other laws, relating to offenses of a social nature, the penalties for which were to be inflicted, not by the hand of private parties, but through the medium of the judges before whom the cause was brought.
- **23.** *the children of Israel did as the Lord's commanded* The chapter closes with the execution of Shelomith's son [4844 Leviticus 24:14] and stoning having afterwards become the established punishment in all cases

of blasphemy, it illustrates the fate of Stephen, who suffered under a false imputation of that crime [\*\*\*Acts 7:58,59].

## LEVITICUS 25:1-7.

### SABBATH OF THE SEVENTH YEAR.

**2-4.** When ye come into the land which I give you — It has been questioned on what year, after the occupation of Canaan, the sabbatic year began to be observed. Some think it was the seventh year after their entrance. But others, considering that as the first six years were spent in the conquest and division of the land (\*\*\*Toshua 5:12), and that the sabbatical year was to be observed after six years of agriculture, maintain that the observance did not commence till the fourteenth year.

the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord — This was a very peculiar arrangement. Not only all agricultural processes were to be intermitted every seventh year, but the cultivators had no right to the soil. It lay entirely fallow, and its spontaneous produce was the common property of the poor and the stranger, the cattle and game. This year of rest was to invigorate the productive powers of the land, as the weekly Sabbath was a refreshment to men and cattle. It commenced immediately after the feast of ingathering, and it was calculated to teach the people, in a remarkable manner, the reality of the presence and providential power of God.

LEVITICUS 25:8-23.

### THE JUBILEE.

**8-11.** *thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years* — This most extraordinary of all civil institutions, which received the name of "Jubilee" from a *Hebrew* word signifying a musical instrument, a horn or trumpet, began on the tenth day of the seventh month, or the great day of atonement, when, by order of the public authorities, the sound of trumpets proclaimed the beginning of the universal redemption. All

prisoners and captives obtained their liberties, slaves were declared free, and debtors were absolved. The land, as on the sabbatic year, was neither sowed nor reaped, but allowed to enjoy with its inhabitants a sabbath of repose; and its natural produce was the common property of all. Moreover, every inheritance throughout the land of Judea was restored to its original owner.

- **10.** *ye shall hallow the fiftieth year* Much difference of opinion exists as to whether the jubilee was observed on the forty-ninth, or, in round numbers, it is called the fiftieth. The prevailing opinion, both in ancient and modern times, has been in favor of the latter.
- **12.** *ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field*, etc. All that the ground yielded spontaneously during that period might be eaten for their necessary subsistence, but no persons were at liberty to hoard or form a private stock in reserve.
- 13. ye shall return every man unto his possession, etc. Inheritances, from whatever cause, and how frequently soever they had been alienated, came back into the hands of the original proprietors. This law of entail, by which the right heir could never be excluded, was a provision of great wisdom for preserving families and tribes perfectly distinct, and their genealogies faithfully recorded, in order that all might have evidence to establish their right to the ancestral property. Hence the tribe and family of Christ were readily discovered at his birth.
- 17. Ye shall not oppress one another, but thou shalt fear thy God This, which is the same as \*\*ELeviticus 25:14, related to the sale or purchase of possessions and the duty of paying an honest and equitable regard, on both sides, to the limited period during which the bargain could stand. The object of the legislator was, as far as possible, to maintain the original order of families, and an equality of condition among the people.
- 21, 22. I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years, etc. A provision was made, by the special interposition of God, to supply the deficiency of food which would otherwise have resulted from the suspension of all labor during the sabbatic year. The sixth year was to yield a miraculous supply for three continuous years. And the remark is applicable to the year of Jubilee as

well as the sabbatic year. (See allusions to this extraordinary provision in Kings 19:29 Kings 19:30). None but a legislator who was conscious of acting under divine authority would have staked his character on so singular an enactment as that of the sabbatic year; and none but a people who had witnessed the fulfillment of the divine promise would have been induced to suspend their agricultural preparations on a recurrence of a periodical Jubilee.

**23-28.** The land shall not be sold for ever — or, "be quite cut off," as the Margin better renders it. The land was God's, and, in prosecution of an important design, He gave it to the people of His choice, dividing it among their tribes and families — who, however, held it of Him merely as tenants-at-will and had no right or power of disposing of it to strangers. In necessitous circumstances, individuals might effect a temporary sale. But they possessed the right of redeeming it, at any time, on payment of an adequate compensation to the present holder; and by the enactments of the Jubilee they recovered it free — so that the land was rendered inalienable. (See an exception to this law, \*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 27:20).

**29-31.** if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold — All sales of houses were subject to the same condition. But there was a difference between the houses of villages (which, being connected with agriculture, were treated as parts of the land) and houses possessed by trading people or foreigners in walled towns, which could only be redeemed within the year after the sale; if not then redeemed, these did not revert to the former owner at the Jubilee.

**32-34.** *Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites* — The Levites, having no possessions but their towns and their houses, the law conferred on them the same privileges that were granted to the lands of the other Israelites. A certain portion of the lands surrounding the Levitical cities was appropriated to them for the pasturage of their cattle and flocks (\*\*Numbers 35:4,5). This was a permanent endowment for the support of the ministry and could not be alienated for any time. The Levites, however, were at liberty to make exchanges among themselves; and a priest might sell his house, garden, and right of pasture to another priest, but not to an Israelite of another tribe (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 41:7-9).

**35-38.** *if thy brother be waxen poor*, ... *relieve him* — This was a most benevolent provision for the poor and unfortunate, designed to aid them or alleviate the evils of their condition. Whether a native Israelite or a mere sojourner, his richer neighbor was required to give him food, lodging, and a supply of money without usury. Usury was severely condemned (\*\*\*\*Psalm 15:5\*\*\*Ezekiel 18:8,17), but the prohibition cannot be considered as applicable to the modern practice of men in business, borrowing and lending at legal rates of interest.

39-46. if thy brother ... be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant — An Israelite might be compelled, through misfortune, not only to mortgage his inheritance, but himself. In the event of his being reduced to this distress, he was to be treated not as a slave, but a hired servant whose engagement was temporary, and who might, through the friendly aid of a relative, be redeemed at any time before the Jubilee. The ransom money was determined on a most equitable principle. Taking account of the number of years from the proposal to redeem and the Jubilee, of the current wages of labor for that time, and multiplying the remaining years by that sum, the amount was to be paid to the master for his redemption. But if no such friendly interposition was made for a Hebrew slave, he continued in servitude till the year of Jubilee, when, as a matter of course, he regained his liberty, as well as his inheritance. Viewed in the various aspects in which it is presented in this chapter, the Jubilee was an admirable institution, and subservient in an eminent degree to uphold the interests of religion, social order, and freedom among the Israelites.

## LEVITICUS 26:1,2.

### OF IDOLATRY.

**1.** Ye shall make you no idols — Idolatry had been previously forbidden (\*\*Exodus 20:4,5), but the law was repeated here with reference to some particular forms of it that were very prevalent among the neighboring nations.

a standing image — that is, "upright pillar."

*image of stone* — that is, an obelisk, inscribed with hieroglyphical and superstitious characters; the former denoting the common and smaller pillars of the Syrians or Canaanites; the latter, pointing to the large and elaborate obelisks which the Egyptians worshipped as guardian divinities, or used as stones of adoration to stimulate religious worship. The Israelites were enjoined to beware of them.

**2.** Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary — Very frequently, in this Book of the Law, the Sabbath and the sanctuary are mentioned as antidotes to idolatry.

LEVITICUS 26:3-13.

#### A BLESSING TO THE OBEDIENT.

**3.** If ye walk in my statutes — In that covenant into which God graciously entered with the people of Israel, He promised to bestow upon them a variety of blessings, so long as they continued obedient to Him as their Almighty Ruler; and in their subsequent history that people found every promise amply fulfilled, in the enjoyment of plenty, peace, a populous country, and victory over all enemies.

- **4.** I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase Rain seldom fell in Judea except at two seasons the former rain at the end of autumn, the seedtime; and the latter rain in spring, before the beginning of harvest (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 5:24).
- **5.** your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time, etc. The barley harvest in Judea was about the middle of April; the wheat harvest about six weeks after, or in the beginning of June. After the harvest came the vintage, and fruit gathering towards the latter end of July. Moses led the Hebrews to believe that, provided they were faithful to God, there would be no idle time between the harvest and vintage, so great would be the increase. (See Amos 9:13). This promise would be very animating to a people who had come from a country where, for three months, they were pent up without being able to walk abroad because the fields were under water.
- **10.** *ye shall eat old store* Their stock of old corn would be still unexhausted and large when the next harvest brought a new supply.
- **13.** *I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright* a metaphorical expression to denote their emancipation from Egyptian slavery.

## LEVITICUS 26:14-39.

### A CURSE TO THE DISOBEDIENT.

- **14, 15.** *But if ye will not hearken unto me*, etc. In proportion to the great and manifold privileges bestowed upon the Israelites would be the extent of their national criminality and the severity of their national punishments if they disobeyed.
- **16.** *I will even appoint over you terror* the falling sickness [PATRICK].

consumption, and the burning ague — Some consider these as symptoms of the same disease — consumption followed by the shivering, burning, and sweating fits that are the usual concomitants of that malady. According to the Septuagint, "ague" is "the jaundice," which disorders the

eyes and produces great depression of spirits. Others, however, consider the word as referring to a scorching wind; no certain explanation can be given.

- **18.** if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more that is, with far more severe and protracted calamities.
- **19.** *I will make your heaven as iron*, *and your earth as brass* No figures could have been employed to convey a better idea of severe and long-continued famine.
- **22.** *I will also send wild beasts among you* This was one of the four judgments threatened (<sup>2340</sup>Ezekiel 14:21; see also <sup>4210</sup>2 Kings 2:4).
- your highways shall be desolate Trade and commerce will be destroyed freedom and safety will be gone neither stranger nor native will be found on the roads ( Said Saiah 33:8). This is an exact picture of the present state of the Holy Land, which has long lain in a state of desolation, brought on by the sins of the ancient Jews.
- **26.** *ten women shall bake your bread in one oven*, etc. The bread used in families is usually baked by women, and at home. But sometimes also, in times of scarcity, it is baked in public ovens for want of fuel; and the scarcity predicted here would be so great, that one oven would be sufficient to bake as much as ten women used in ordinary occasions to provide for family use; and even this scanty portion of bread would be distributed by weight (\*\*Ezekiel 4:16).
- **29.** *ye shall eat the flesh of your sons* The revolting picture was actually exhibited at the siege of Samaria, at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (\*\*\*Lamentations 4:10), and at the destruction of that city by the Romans. (See on \*\*\*Deuteronomy 28:53).
- **30.** *I will destroy your high places* Consecrated enclosures on the tops of mountains, or on little hillocks, raised for practising the rites of idolatry.
- cut down your images According to some, those images were made in the form of chariots (\*\*\*2\*\*12\*\*11); according to others, they were of a conical form, like small pyramids. Reared in honor of the sun, they were usually placed on a very high situation, to enable the worshippers to have

a better view of the rising sun. They were forbidden to the Israelites, and when set up, ordered to be destroyed.

cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, etc. — Like the statues of idols, which, when broken, lie neglected and contemned, the Jews during the sieges and subsequent captivity often wanted the rites of sepulture.

**31.** *I will make your cities waste* — This destruction of its numerous and flourishing cities, which was brought upon Judea through the sins of Israel, took place by the forced removal of the people during, and long after, the captivity. But it is realized to a far greater extent now.

bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odours — the tabernacle and temple, as is evident from the tenor of the subsequent clause, in which God announces that He will not accept or regard their sacrifices.

- **33.** *I will scatter you among the heathen*, etc. as was done when the elite of the nation were removed into Assyria and placed in various parts of the kingdom.
- **34.** Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, etc. A long arrear of sabbatic years had accumulated through the avarice and apostasy of the Israelites, who had deprived their land of its appointed season of rest. The number of those sabbatic years seems to have been seventy, as determined by the duration of the captivity. This early prediction is very remarkable, considering that the usual policy of the Assyrian conquerors was to send colonies to cultivate and inhabit their newly acquired provinces.
- **38.** the land of your enemies shall eat you up, etc. On the removal of the ten tribes into captivity, they never returned, and all traces of them were lost.
- **40-45.** *If they shall confess their iniquity*, etc. This passage holds out the gracious promise of divine forgiveness and favor on their repentance, and their happy restoration to their land, in memory of the covenant made with their fathers (\*\*TROMAN 2:1-29).

**46.** These are the statutes and judgments and laws — It has been thought by some that the last chapter was originally placed after the twenty-fifth [ADAM CLARKE], while others consider that the next chapter was added as an appendix, in consequence of many people being influenced by the promises and threats of the preceding one, to resolve that they would dedicate themselves and their possessions to the service of God [CALMET].

## LEVITICUS 27:1-18.

### CONCERNING VOWS.

**2-8.** When a man shall make a singular vow, etc. — Persons have, at all times and in all places, been accustomed to present votive offerings, either from gratitude for benefits received, or in the event of deliverance from apprehended evil. And Moses was empowered, by divine authority, to prescribe the conditions of this voluntary duty.

"According to thy estimation, the persons shall be for the Lord." Persons might consecrate themselves or their children to the divine service, in some inferior or servile kind of work about the sanctuary (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 3:1). In the event of any change, the persons so devoted had the privilege in their power of redeeming themselves; and this chapter specifies the amount of the redemption money, which the priest had the discretionary power of reducing, as circumstances might seem to require. Those of mature age, between twenty and sixty, being capable of the greatest service, were rated highest; young people, from five till twenty, less, because not so serviceable; infants, though devotable by their parents before birth (\*\*\*\* 111), could not be offered nor redeemed till a month after birth; old people were valued below the young, but above children; and the poor — in no case freed from payment, in order to prevent the rash formation of vows — were rated according to their means.

9-13. if it be a beast, whereof men bring an offering unto the Lord— a clean beast. After it had been vowed, it could neither be employed in common purposes nor exchanged for an equivalent— it must be sacrificed— or if, through some discovered blemish, it was unsuitable for the altar, it might be sold, and the money applied for the sacred service— such as an ass or camel, for instance, had been vowed, it was to be appropriated to the use of the priest at the estimated value, or it might be redeemed by the

person vowing on payment of that value, and the additional fine of a fifth more.

- 14, 15. when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord, etc. In this case, the house having been valued by the priest and sold, the proceeds of the sale were to be dedicated to the sanctuary. But if the owner wished, on second thought, to redeem it, he might have it by adding a fifth part to the price.
- **16-24.** *if a man shall sanctify unto the Lord some aprt of a field of his possession*, etc. In the case of acquired property in land, if not redeemed, it returned to the donor at the Jubilee; whereas the part of a hereditary estate, which had been vowed, did not revert to the owner, but remained attached in perpetuity to the sanctuary. The reason for this remarkable difference was to lay every man under an obligation to redeem the property, or stimulate his nearest kinsman to do it, in order to prevent a patrimonial inheritance going out from any family in Israel.
- **26, 27.** *Only the firstling of the beasts* These, in the case of clean beasts, being consecrated to God by a universal and standing law (\*\*Exodus 13:12 34:19), could not be devoted; and in that of unclean beasts, were subject to the rule mentioned (\*\*Exodus 27:11,12).
- **28, 29.** no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, ... shall be sold or redeemed This relates to vows of the most solemn kind the devotee accompanying his vow with a solemn imprecation on himself not to fail in accomplishing his declared purpose.
- **29.** *shall surely be put to death* This announcement imported not that the person was to be sacrificed or doomed to a violent death; but only that he should remain till death unalterably in the devoted condition. The preceding regulations were evidently designed to prevent rashness in vowing (\*\*Ecclesiastes 5:4) and to encourage serious and considerate reflection in all matters between God and the soul (\*\*DLuke 21:4).
- **30-33.** *all the tithe of the land*, *whether of the seed of the land* This law gave the sanction of divine authority to an ancient usage (Genesis 14:20 28:22). The whole produce of the land was subjected to the tithe tribute it was a yearly rent which the Israelites, as tenants, paid to

God, the owner of the land, and a thank offering they rendered to Him for the bounties of His providence. (See Proverbs 3:9 4001 Corinthians 9:11 Galatians 6:6).

- **32.** whatsoever passeth under the rod, etc. This alludes to the mode of taking the tithe of cattle, which were made to pass singly through a narrow gateway, where a person with a rod, dipped in ochre, stood, and counting them, marked the back of every tenth beast, whether male or female, sound or unsound.
- **34.** These are the commandments, etc. The laws contained in this book, for the most part ceremonial, had an important spiritual bearing, the study of which is highly instructive (\*\*\*Romans 10:4\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 4:2\*\*\*\*\*\*12:18). They imposed a burdensome yoke (\*\*\*\*\*\*Acts 15:10), but yet in the infantine age of the Church formed the necessary discipline of "a schoolmaster to Christ" [\*\*\*\*\*Galatians 3:24].

### THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

# **NUMBERS**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

•••••NUMBERS 1:1-54.

#### MOSES NUMBERING THE MEN OF WAR.

1, 2. on the first day of the second month, etc. — Thirteen months had elapsed since the exodus. About one month had been occupied in the journey; and the rest of the period had been passed in encampment among the recesses of Sinai, where the transactions took place, and the laws, religious and civil, were promulgated, which are contained in the two preceding books. As the tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month, and the order here mentioned was given on the first day of the second, some think the laws in Leviticus were all given in one month. The Israelites having been formed into a separate nation, under the special government of God as their King, it was necessary, before resuming their march towards the promised land, to put them into good order. And accordingly Moses was commissioned, along with Aaron, to take a census of the people. This census was incidentally noticed (Exodus 38:26), in reference to the poll tax for the works of the tabernacle; but it is here described in detail, in order to show the relative increase and military strength of the different tribes. The enumeration was confined to those capable of bearing arms [ Numbers 1:3], and it was to be made with a careful distinction of the tribe, family, and household to which every individual belonged. By this rule of summation many important advantages were secured: an exact genealogical register was formed, the

relative strength of each tribe was ascertained, and the reason found for arranging the order of precedence in march as well as disposing the different tribes in camp around the tabernacle. The promise of God to Abraham [\*\*Cenesis 22:17] was seen to be fulfilled in the extraordinary increase of his posterity, and provision made for tracing the regular descent of the Messiah.

- **3.** Aaron shall number them by their armies or companies. In their departure from Egypt they were divided into five grand companies (\*\*Exodus 13:18), but from the sojourn in the wilderness to the passage of the Jordan, they were formed into four great divisions. The latter is here referred to.
- **4-16.** with you there shall be a man of every tribe, etc. The social condition of the Israelites in the wilderness bore a close resemblance to that of the nomad tribes of the East in the present day. The head of the tribe was a hereditary dignity, vested in the oldest son or some other to whom the right of primogeniture was transferred, and under whom were other inferior heads, also hereditary, among the different branches of the tribe. The Israelites being divided into twelve tribes, there were twelve chiefs appointed to assist in taking the census of the people.
- **5.** these are the names of the men that shall stand with you, etc. Each is designated by adding the name of the ancestors of his tribe, the people of which were called "Beni-Reuben," "Beni-Levi," sons of Reuben, sons of Levi, according to the custom of the Arabs still, as well as other nations which are divided into clans, as the Macs of Scotland, the Aps of Wales, and the O's and the Fitzes of Ireland [CHALMERS].
- **16-18.** *These were the renowned* literally, "the called" of the congregation, summoned by name; and they entered upon the survey the very day the order was given.
- **18.** by their polls individually, one by one.
- **19.** As the Lord commanded Moses, etc. The numbering of the people was not an act sinful in itself, as Moses did it by divine appointment; but David incurred guilt by doing it without the authority of God. (See on Samuel 24:10).

- 20-44. These are those that were numbered In this registration the tribe of Judah appears the most numerous; and accordingly, as the pre-eminence had been assigned to it by Jacob [Genesis 49:8-12], it got the precedence in all the encampments of Israel. Of the two half-tribes of Joseph, who is seen to be "a fruitful bough" [Genesis 49:22], that of Ephraim was the larger, as had been predicted. The relative increase of all, as in the two just mentioned, was owing to the special blessing of God, conformably to the prophetic declaration of the dying patriarch. But the divine blessing is usually conveyed through the influence of secondary causes; and there is reason to believe that the relative populousness of the tribes would, under God, depend upon the productiveness of the respective localities assigned to them. [For tabular chart, see on
- **45, 46.** *all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand.* etc. What an astonishing increase from seventy-five persons who went down to Egypt about two hundred fifteen years before [see on Genesis 46:8], and who were subjected to the greatest privations and hardships! And yet this enumeration was restricted to men from twenty years and upwards (GON) Numbers 1:3). Including women, children, and old men, together with the Levites, the whole population of Israel, on the ordinary principles of computation, amounted to about 2,400,000.
- 47-54. But the Levites ... were not numbered among them They were obliged to keep a register of their own. They were consecrated to the priestly office, which in all countries has been exempted customarily, and in Israel by the express authority of God, from military service. The custody of the things devoted to the divine service was assigned to them so exclusively, that "no stranger" that is, no person, not even an Israelite of any other tribe, was allowed, under penalty of death, to approach these [\*\*ONUMBERS\*\* 16:40]. Hence they encamped round the tabernacle in order that there should be no manifestation of the divine displeasure among the people. Thus the numbering of the people was subservient to the separation of the Levites from those Israelites who were fit for military service, and to the practical introduction of the law respecting the first-born, for whom the tribe of Levi became a substitute [\*\*ONUMBERS\*\*\* 13:2\*\*\* NumberS\*\*\* 3:12].

### NUMBERS 2:1-34.

### THE ORDER OF THE TRIBES IN THEIR TENTS.

- 2. Every man ... shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house Standards were visible signs of a certain recognized form for directing the movements of large bodies of people. As the Israelites were commanded to encamp "each by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house," the direction has been considered as implying that they possessed three varieties:
  - (1) the great tribal standards, which served as rallying points for the twelve large clans of the people;
  - (2) the standards of the subdivided portions; and,
  - (3) those of families or houses.

The latter must have been absolutely necessary, as one ensign only for a tribe would not have been visible at the extremities of so large a body. We possess no authentic information as to their forms, material, colors, and devices. But it is probable that they might bear some resemblance to those of Egypt, only stripped of any idolatrous symbols. These were of an umbrella or a fanlike form, made of ostrich feathers, shawls, etc., lifted on the points of long poles, which were borne, either like the sacred central one, on a car, or on men's shoulders, while others might be like the beacon lights which are set on poles by Eastern pilgrims at night. Jewish writers say that the standards of the Hebrew tribes were symbols borrowed from the prophetic blessing of Jacob — Judah's being a lion, Benjamin's a wolf, etc. [Genesis 49:3-24]; and that the ensigns or banners were distinguished by their colors — the colors of each tribe being the same as that of the precious stone representing that tribe in the breastplate of the high priest [Exodus 28:17-21].

far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch — that is, "over against," at a reverential distance. The place of every tribe is successively and specifically described because each had a certain part assigned both in the order of march and the disposition of the encampment.

3. on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies — Judah, placed at the head of a camp composed of three tribes rallying under its standard, was said to have combined the united colors in the high priest's breastplate, but called by the name of Judah. They were appointed to occupy the east side and to take the lead in the march, which, for the most part, was in an easterly direction.

**Nahshon** — or Naasson (Matthew 1:4 Luke 3:32,33).

**shall be captain** — It appears that the twelve men who were called to superintend the census were also appointed to be the captains of their respective tribes — a dignity which they owed probably to the circumstances, formerly noticed, of their holding the hereditary office of head or "prince."

- **5.** those that pitch next unto him that is, on the one side.
- **7.** Then the tribe of Zebulun on the other side. While Judah's tribe was the most numerous, those of Issachar and Zebulun were also very numerous; so that the association of those three tribes formed a strong and imposing van.
- **10-31.** On the south side the standard of the camp of Reuben The description given of the position of Reuben and his attendant tribes on the south, of Ephraim and his associates on the west, of Daniel and his confederates on the north, with that of Judah on the east, suggests the idea of a square or quadrangle, which, allowing one square cubit to each soldier while remaining close in the ranks, has been computed to extend over an area of somewhat more than twelve square miles. But into our calculations of the occupied space must be taken not only the fighting men, whose numbers are here given, but also the families, tents, and baggage. The tabernacle or sacred tent of their Divine King, with the camp of the Levites

around it [see on ONE Numbers 3:38], formed the center, as does the chief's in the encampment of all nomad people. In marching, this order was adhered to, with some necessary variations. Judah led the way, followed, it is most probable, by Issachar and Zebulun [ONE Numbers 10:14-16]. Reuben, Simeon, and Gad formed the second great division [ONE Numbers 10:18-20]. They were followed by the central company, composed of the Levites, bearing the tabernacle [ONE Numbers 10:21]. Then the third and posterior squadron consisted of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin [ONE Numbers 10:22-24], while the hindmost place was assigned to Dan, Asher, and Naphtali [ONE Numbers 10:25-27]. Thus Judah's, which was the most numerous, formed the van: and Dan's, which was the next in force, brought up the rear; while Reuben's and Ephraim's, with the tribes associated with them respectively, being the smallest and weakest, were placed in the center. (See on Numbers 10:13).

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### THE LEVITES' SERVICE.

1. These ... are the generations of Aaron and Moses, etc. — This chapter contains an account of their families; and although that of Moses is not detailed like his brother's, his children are included under the general designation of the Amramites (\*\*Mumbers 3:27), a term which comprehends all the descendants of their common father Amram. The reason why the family of Moses was so undistinguished in this record is that they were in the private ranks of the Levites, the dignity of the priesthood being conferred exclusively on the posterity of Aaron; and hence, as the sacerdotal order is the subject of this chapter, Aaron, contrary to the usual style of the sacred history, is mentioned before Moses.

in the day that the Lord spake with Moses in mount Sinai — This is added, because at the date of the following record the family of Aaron was unbroken.

- **2-4.** And these are the names of the sons of Aaron All the sons of Aaron, four in number, were consecrated to minister in the priest's office. The two oldest enjoyed but a brief term of office (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 10:1,2\*\*\*Numbers 3:4\*\*\*26:61); but Eleazar and Ithamar, the other two, were dutiful, and performed the sacred service during the lifetime of their father, as his assistants, and under his superintendence.
- **5-10.** Bring the tribe of Levi near The Hebrew word "bring near" is a sacrificial term, denoting the presentation of an offering to God; and the use of the word, therefore, in connection with the Levites, signifies that they were devoted as an offering to the sanctuary, no longer to be employed in any common offices. They were subordinate to the priests, who alone enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy place; but they were employed in discharging many of the humbler duties which belonged to the

sanctuary, as well as in various offices of great utility and importance to the religion and morals of the people.

- **9.** they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel, etc. The priests hold the place of God, and the Levites are the servants of God in the obedience they render to the priests.
- 11-13. I have taken the Levites, etc. The consecration of this tribe did not originate in the legislative wisdom of Moses, but in the special appointment of God, who chose them as substitutes for the first-born. By an appointment made in memory of the last solemn judgment on Egypt (from which the Israelitish households were miraculously exempt) all the first-born were consecrated to God (\*\*Exodus 13:12 \*\*\*22:29), who thus, under peculiar circumstances, seemed to adopt the patriarchal usage of appointing the oldest to act as the priest of the family. But the privilege of redemption that was allowed the first-born opened the way for a change; and accordingly, on the full organization of the Mosaic economy, the administration of sacred things formerly committed to the first-born was transferred from them to the Levites, who received that honor partly as a tribute to Moses and Aaron, partly because this tribe had distinguished themselves by their zeal in the affair of the golden calf (Exodus 32:29), and also because, being the smallest of the tribes, they could ill find suitable employment and support in the work. (See on Deuteronomy 33:8). The designation of a special class for the sacred offices of religion was a wise arrangement; for, on their settlement in Canaan, the people would be so occupied that they might not be at leisure to wait on the service of the sanctuary, and sacred things might, from various causes, fall into neglect. But the appointment of an entire tribe to the divine service ensured the regular performance of the rites of religion. The subsequent portion of the chapter relates to the formal substitution of this tribe.

*I am the Lord* — that is, I decree it to be so; and being possessed of sovereign authority, I expect full obedience.

**14-31.** *Number the children of Levi* — They were numbered as well as the other tribes; but the enumeration was made on a different principle — for while in the other tribes the number of males was calculated from twenty years and upward [\*\*OND\*\*Numbers 1:3], in that of Levi they were counted "from a month old and upward." The reason for the distinction is

obvious. In the other tribes the survey was made for purposes of war Numbers 1:3], from which the Levites were totally exempt. But the Levites were appointed to a work on which they entered as soon as they were capable of instruction. They are mentioned under the names of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, sons of Levi, and chiefs or ancestral heads of three subdivisions into which this tribe was distributed. Their duties were to assist in the conveyance of the tabernacle when the people were removing the various encampments, and to form its guard while stationary — the Gershonites being stationed on the west, the Kohathites on the south, and the families of Merari on the north. The Kohathites had the principal place about the tabernacle, and charge of the most precious and sacred things — a distinction with which they were honored, probably, because the Aaronic family belonged to this division of the Levitical tribe. The Gershonites, being the oldest, had the next honorable post assigned them, while the burden of the drudgery was thrown on the division of Merari.

- **32.** *chief* rather, "chiefs" of the Levites. Three persons are mentioned as chiefs of these respective divisions [\*\*Numbers 3:24,30,35]. And Eleazar presided over them; whence he is called "the second priest" (\*\*\*2\*\* Kings 25:18); and in the case of the high priest's absence from illness or other necessary occasions, he performed the duties (\*\*\*1000) Kings 4:4).
- **38.** *those that encamp*, etc. That being the entrance side, it was the post of honor, and consequently reserved to Moses and the priestly family. But the sons of Moses had no station here.
- **39.** *twenty and two thousand* The result of this census, though made on conditions most advantageous to Levi, proved it to be by far the smallest in Israel. The separate numbers stated in Numbers 3:22,28,34, when added together, amount to twenty-two thousand three hundred. The omission of the three hundred is variously accounted for by some, because they might be first-born who were already devoted to God and could not be counted as substitutes; and by others, because in Scripture style, the sum is reckoned in round numbers. The most probable conjecture is, that as *Hebrew* letters are employed for figures, one letter was, in the course of transcription, taken for another of like form but smaller value.

40-51. Number all the first-born of the males of the children of Israel, etc. — The principle on which the enumeration of the Levites had been made was now to be applied to the other tribes. The number of their male children, from a month old and upward, was to be reckoned, in order that a comparison might be instituted with that of the Levites, for the formal adoption of the latter as substitutes for the first-born. The Levites, amounting to twenty-two thousand, were given in exchange for an equal number of the first-born from the other tribes, leaving an excess of two hundred seventy-three; and as there were no substitutes for these, they were redeemed at the rate of five shekels for each (\*\*Numbers 18:15,16). Every Israelite would naturally wish that his son might be redeemed by a Levite without the payment of this tax, and yet some would have to incur the expense, for there were not Levites enough to make an equal exchange. Jewish writers say the matter was determined by lot, in this manner: Moses put into an urn twenty-two thousand pieces of parchment, on each of which he wrote "a son of Levi," and two hundred seventy-three more, containing the words, "five shekels." These being shaken, he ordered each of the first-born to put in his hand and take out a slip. If it contained the first inscription, the boy was redeemed by a Levite; if the latter, the parent had to pay. The ransom money, which, reckoning the shekel at half a dollar, would amount to \$2.50 each, was appropriated to the use of the sanctuary. The excess of the general over the Levitical first-born is so small, that the only way of accounting for it is, by supposing those firstborn only were counted as were males remaining in their parents' household, or that those first-born only were numbered which had been born since the departure from Egypt, when God claimed all the first-born as his special property.

**41.** *the cattle of the Levites* — These, which they kept to graze on the glebes and meadows in the suburbs of their cities, to supply their families with dairy produce and animal food, were also taken as an equivalent for all the firstlings of the cattle which the Israelites at that time possessed. In consequence of this exchange the firstlings were not brought then, as afterwards, to the altar and the priests.

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### OF THE LEVITES' SERVICE.

**2, 3.** *sons of Kohath, from thirty years old and upward* — This age was specifically fixed (see on Numbers 8:24) as the full maturity of bodily energy to perform the laborious duties assigned them in the wilderness, as well as of mental activity to assist in the management of the sacred services. And it was the period of life at which John the Baptist and Christ entered on their respective ministries.

even unto fifty — The term prescribed for active duty was a period of twenty years, at the end of which they were exempted from the physical labors of the office, though still expected to attend in the tabernacle (\*\*Numbers 8:26).

all that enter into the host — so called from their ranks, and their special duty as guards of the tabernacle. The *Hebrew* word, however, signifies also a station of office; and hence the passage may be rendered, "All that enter into the sacerdotal office" ("Numbers 4:23).

**4-15.** This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath, etc. — They are mentioned first, from their close connection with Aaron; and the special department of duty assigned to them during the journeyings of Israel accorded with the charge they had received of the precious contents of the tabernacle. But these were to be previously covered by the common priests, who, as well as the high priest, were admitted on such necessary occasions into the holy place. This was an exception to the general rule, which prohibited the entrance of any but the high priest. But when the cloud removed from the tabernacle, the sanctuary might be entered by the common priests, as to them was reserved the exclusive privilege of packing the sacred utensils; and it was not till the holy things were thus ready for carriage, that the Kohathites were allowed to approach.

- **5.** *covering veil* the inner veil, which separated the holy from the most holy place. (See on Exodus 36:35).
- **6.** covering of badgers' skins (See on Exodus 25:5). The covering, however, referred to was not that of the tabernacle, but one made for the special purpose of protecting the ark.
- put in the staves These golden staves were now taken out. (See on Exodus 25:15, compared with Kings 8:8). The Hebrew word rendered "put in," signifies also "dispose," and probably refers here to their insertion through the openings in the coverings made for receiving them, to preserve them from the touch of the carriers as well as from the influence of the weather. It is worthy of notice that the coverings did not consist of canvas or coarse tarpaulin, but of a kind which united beauty with decency.
- **7.** *continual showbread* Though the people were in the wilderness fed upon manna, the sacred loaves were constantly made of corn, which was probably raised in small quantities from the verdant patches of the desert.
- **10.** *a bar* or bier, formed of two poles fastened by two cross pieces and borne by two men, after the fashion of a sedan chair.
- **12.** *instruments of ministry* the official dress of the priests (<sup>40510</sup>Exodus 31:10).
- **13.** *shall take away the ashes from the altar*, etc. The necessity of removing ashes from the altar plainly implies that sacrifices were offered in the wilderness (compare Exodus 18:12 24:4), though that rebellious race seems frequently to have neglected the duty (Exodus 5:25). No mention is made of the sacred fire; but as, by divine command, it was to be kept constantly burning, it must have been transferred to some pan or brazier under the covering, and borne by the appointed carriers.
- **15.** the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it, but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die The mode of transport was upon the shoulders of the Levites (see on Numbers 7:9), although afterwards wheeled vehicles were employed (Samuel 6:3 Samuel 6:3 Chronicles 15:12). And it was allowed to touch the covering, but not the things covered, on the penalty of death, which was inflicted more than once (Samuel 6:19)

- Samuel 6:6,7). This stern denunciation was designed to inspire a sentiment of deep and habitual reverence in the minds of those who were officially engaged about holy things.
- **16.** to the office of Eleazar ... pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, etc. He was charged with the special duty of superintending the squadron who were employed in the carrying of the sacred furniture; besides, to his personal care were committed the materials requisite for the daily service, and which it was necessary he should have easily at his command (\*\*Exodus 29:38).
- 17-20. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites, etc. a solemn admonition to Moses and Aaron to beware, lest, by any negligence on their part, disorder and improprieties should creep in, and to take the greatest care that all the parts of this important service be apportioned to the proper parties, lest the Kohathites should be disqualified for their high and honorable duties. The guilt of their death would be incurred by the superintending priest, if he failed to give proper directions or allowed any irreverent familiarity with sacred things.
- **24-28.** This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, etc. They were appointed to carry "the curtains of the tabernacle" that is, the goats' hair covering of the tent the ten curious curtains and embroidered hangings at the entrance, with their red morocco covering, etc.
- **28.** their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron, etc. The Levites were generally subject to the official command of the priests in doing the ordinary work of the tabernacle. But during the journeyings Eleazar, who was next in succession to his father, took the special charge of the Kohathites [\*\*Numbers 4:16], while his brother Ithamar had the superintendence of the Gershonites and Merarites [\*\*\*OBB\*\*Numbers 4:33].
- **29-33.** As for the sons of Merari They carried the coarser and heavier appurtenances, which, however, were so important and necessary, that an inventory was kept of them not only on account of their number and variety, but of their comparative commonness and smallness, which might have led to their being lost or missing through carelessness, inadvertency,

or neglect. It was a useful lesson, showing that God disregards nothing pertaining to His service, and that even in the least and most trivial matters, He requires the duty of faithful obedience.

**34-49.** *Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites*, etc. — This enumeration was made on a different principle from that which is recorded in the preceding chapter [\*\*ONE\*\*Numbers 3:15]. That was confined to the males from a month old and upward, while this was extended to all capable of service in the three classes of the Levitical tribe. In considering their relative numbers, the wisdom of Divine Providence appears in arranging that, whereas in the Kohathites and Gershonites, whose burdens were few and easier, there were but about a third part of them which were fit for service; the Merarites, whose burdens were more and heavier, had above one half of them fit for this work [Poole]. The small population of this tribe, so inferior to that of the other tribes, is attempted to be explained (see on \*\*ONE\*\*Numbers 3:39).

## NUMBERS 5:1-4.

### THE UNCLEAN TO BE REMOVED OUT OF THE CAMP.

2. Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every *leper* — The exclusion of leprous persons from the camp in the wilderness, as from cities and villages afterwards, was a sanitary measure taken according to prescribed rules (\*\*\*Leviticus 13:1-14:57). This exclusion of lepers from society has been acted upon ever since; and it affords almost the only instance in which any kind of attention is paid in the East to the prevention of contagion. The usage still more or less prevails in the East among people who do not think the least precaution against the plague or cholera necessary; but judging from personal observation, we think that in Asia the leprosy has now much abated in frequency and virulence. It usually appears in a comparatively mild form in Egypt, Palestine, and other countries where the disorder is, or was, endemic. Small societies of excluded lepers live miserably in paltry huts. Many of them are beggars, going out into the roads to solicit alms, which they receive in a wooden bowl; charitable people also sometimes bring different articles of food, which they leave on the ground at a short distance from the hut of the lepers, for whom it is intended. They are generally obliged to wear a distinctive badge that people may know them at first sight and be warned to avoid them. Other means were adopted among the ancient Jews by putting their hand on their mouth and crying, "Unclean, unclean" [ Leviticus 13:45]. But their general treatment, as to exclusion from society, was the same as now described. The association of the lepers, however, in this passage, with those who were subject only to ceremonial uncleanness, shows that one important design in the temporary exile of such persons was to remove all impurities that reflected dishonor on the character and residence of Israel's King. And this vigilant care to maintain external cleanliness in the people was typically designed to teach them the practice of moral purity, or cleansing themselves from all

filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The regulations made for ensuring cleanliness in the camp suggest the adoption of similar means for maintaining purity in the church. And although, in large communities of Christians, it may be often difficult or delicate to do this, the suspension or, in flagrant cases of sin, the total excommunication of the offender from the privileges and communion of the church is an imperative duty, as necessary to the moral purity of the Christian as the exclusion of the leper from the camp was to physical health and ceremonial purity in the Jewish church.

## OURDNUMBERS 5:5-10.

#### RESTITUTION ENJOINED.

**6-8.** When a man or a woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord — This is a wrong or injury done by one man to the property of another, and as it is called "a trespass against the Lord," it is implied, in the case supposed, that the offense has been aggravated by prevaricating — by a false oath, or a fraudulent lie in denying it, which is a "trespass" committed against God, who is the sole judge of what is falsely sworn or spoken (\*\*\*\*\*\*Acts 5:3,4).

and that person be guilty — that is, from the obvious tenor of the passage, conscience-smitten, or brought to a sense and conviction of his evil conduct. (See on Leviticus 6:2). In that case, there must be: first, confession, a penitential acknowledgment of sin; secondly, restitution of the property, or the giving of an equivalent, with the additional fine of a fifth part, both as a compensation to the person defrauded, and as a penalty inflicted on the injurer, to deter others from the commission of similar trespasses. (See on Exodus 22:1). The difference between the law recorded in that passage and this is that the one was enacted against flagrant and determined thieves, the other against those whose necessities might have urged them into fraud, and whose consciences were distressed by their sin. This law also supposes the injured party to be dead, in which case, the compensation due to his representatives was to be paid to the priest, who, as God's deputy, received the required satisfaction.

**9, 10.** *every offering* ... *shall be his* — Whatever was given in this way, or otherwise, as by freewill offerings, irrevocably belonged to the priest.

## **NUMBERS** 5:11-31.

#### THE TRIAL OF JEALOUSY.

12-15. if any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him — This law was given both as a strong discouragement to conjugal infidelity on the part of a wife, and a sufficient protection of her from the consequences of a hasty and groundless suspicion on the part of the husband. His suspicions, however, were sufficient in the absence of witnesses (\*\*\*Leviticus 20:10) to warrant the trial described; and the course of proceeding to be followed was for the jealous husband to bring his wife unto the priest with an offering of barley meal, because none were allowed to approach the sanctuary empty handed (\*\*\*Exodus 23:15). On other occasions, there were mingled with the offering, oil which signified joy, and frankincense which denoted acceptance (\*\*\*Psalm 141:2). But on the occasion referred to, both these ingredients were to be excluded, partly because it was a solemn appeal to God in distressing circumstances, and partly because it was a sin offering on the part of the wife, who came before God in the character of a real or suspected offender.

17, 18. *the priest shall take holy water* — Water from the laver, which was to be mixed with dust — an emblem of vileness and misery (\*\*Genesis 3:14\*\*\*Psalm 22:15).

in an earthen vessel — This fragile ware was chosen because, after being used, it was broken in pieces (\*\*Leviticus 6:28 11:33). All the circumstances of this awful ceremony — her being placed with her face toward the ark — her uncovered head, a sign of her being deprived of the protection of her husband (\*\*\*ITT) — the bitter potion being put into her hands preparatory to an appeal to God — the solemn adjuration of the priest (\*\*\*ITT) Numbers 5:19-22), all were calculated in no common degree to excite and appall the imagination of a person conscious of guilt.

- **21.** The Lord make thee a curse, etc. a usual form of imprecation (Saiah 65:15 Special 29:22).
- **22.** *the woman shall say, Amen, Amen* The Israelites were accustomed, instead of formally repeating the words of an oath merely to say, "Amen," a "so be it" to the imprecations it contained. The reduplication of the word was designed as an evidence of the woman's innocence, and a willingness that God would do to her according to her desert.
- **23, 24.** write these curses in a book The imprecations, along with her name, were inscribed in some kind of record on parchment, or more probably on a wooden tablet.
- **blot them out with the bitter water** If she were innocent, they could be easily erased, and were perfectly harmless; but if guilty, she would experience the fatal effects of the water she had drunk.
- **29.** This is the law of jealousies Adultery discovered and proved was punished with death. But strongly suspected cases would occur, and this law made provision for the conviction of the guilty person. It was, however, not a trial conducted according to the forms of judicial process, but an ordeal through which a suspected adulteress was made to go — the ceremony being of that terrifying nature, that, on the known principles of human nature, guilt or innocence could not fail to appear. From the earliest times, the jealousy of Eastern people has established ordeals for the detection and punishment of suspected unchastity in wives. The practice was deep-rooted as well as universal. And it has been thought, that the Israelites being strongly biassed in favor of such usages, this law of jealousies "was incorporated among the other institutions of the Mosaic economy, in order to free it from the idolatrous rites which the heathens had blended with it." Viewed in this light, its sanction by divine authority in a corrected and improved form exhibits a proof at once of the wisdom and condescension of God.

## NUMBERS 6:1-22.

#### THE LAW OF THE NAZARITE IN HIS SEPARATION.

2-8. When either man or woman ... shall vow a vow of a Nazarite — that is, "a separated one," from a *Hebrew* word, "to separate." It was used to designate a class of persons who, under the impulse of extraordinary piety and with a view to higher degrees of religious improvement, voluntarily renounced the occupations and pleasures of the world to dedicate themselves unreservedly to the divine service. The vow might be taken by either sex, provided they had the disposal of themselves ( Numbers 30:4), and for a limited period — usually a month or a lifetime ( Judges 13:5 Tudges 16:17). We do not know, perhaps, the whole extent of abstinence they practiced. But they separated themselves from three things in particular — namely, from wine, and all the varieties of vinous produce; from the application of a razor to their head, allowing their hair to grow; and from pollution by a dead body. The reasons of the selfrestrictions are obvious. The use of wine tended to inflame the passions, intoxicate the brain, and create a taste for luxurious indulgence. The cutting off the hair being a recognized sign of uncleanness (\*\*\*Leviticus 14:8,9), its unpolled luxuriance was a symbol of the purity he professed. Besides, its extraordinary length kept him in constant remembrance of his vow, as well as stimulated others to imitate his pious example. Moreover, contact with a dead body, disqualifying for the divine service, the Nazarite carefully avoided such a cause of unfitness, and, like the high priest, did not assist at the funeral rites of his nearest relatives, preferring his duty to God to the indulgence of his strongest natural affections.

But by the terms of this law an accidental defilement vitiated the whole of his previous observances, and he was required to begin the period of his Nazaritism afresh. But even this full completion did not supersede the necessity of a sin offering at the close. Sin mingles with our best and holiest performances, and the blood of sprinkling is necessary to procure acceptance to us and our services.

**13-20.** when the days of his separation are fulfilled, etc. — On the accomplishment of a limited vow of Nazaritism, Nazarites might cut their hair wherever they happened to be (\*\*\*Acts 18:18); but the hair was to be carefully kept and brought to the door of the sanctuary. Then after the presentation of sin offerings and burnt offerings, it was put under the vessel in which the peace offerings were boiled; and the priest, taking the shoulder (\*\*\*TELEVITICUS 7:32), when boiled, and a cake and wafer of the meat offering, put them on the hands of the Nazarites to wave before the Lord, as a token of thanksgiving, and thus released them from their vow.

• NUMBERS 6:23-27.

#### THE FORM OF BLESSING THE PEOPLE.

23-27. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the congregation of Israel, etc. — This passage records the solemn benediction which God appointed for dismissing the people at the close of the daily service. The repetition of the name "Lord" or "Jehovah" three times, expresses the great mystery of the Godhead — three persons, and yet one God. The expressions in the separate clauses correspond to the respective offices of the Father, to "bless and keep us"; of the Son, to be "gracious to us"; and of the Holy Ghost, to "give us peace." And because the benediction, though pronounced by the lips of a fellow man, derived its virtue, not from the priest but from God, the encouraging assurance was added, "I the Lord will bless them."

#### THE PRINCES' OFFERINGS.

1. the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle — Those who take the word "day" as literally pointing to the exact date of the completion of the tabernacle, are under a necessity of considering the sacred narrative as disjointed, and this portion of the history from the seventh to the eleventh chapters as out of its place — the chronology requiring that it should have immediately followed the fortieth chapter of Exodus, which relates that the tabernacle was reared on the first day of the first month of the second year [ Exodus 40:17]. But that the term "day" is used in a loose and indeterminate sense, as synonymous with time, is evident from the fact that not one day but several days were occupied with the transactions about to de described. So that this chapter stands in its proper place in the order of the history; after the tabernacle and its instruments (the altar and its vessels) had been anointed (\*\*\*Leviticus 8:10), the Levites separated to the sacred service — the numbering of the people, and the disposal of the tribes about the tabernacle, in a certain order, which was observed by the princes in the presentation of their offerings. This would fix the period of the imposing ceremonial described in this chapter about a month after the completion of the tabernacle.

**2, 3.** the princes of Israel ... brought their offering before the Lord — The finishing of the sacred edifice would, it may well be imagined, be hailed as an auspicious occasion, diffusing great joy and thankfulness throughout the whole population of Israel. But the leading men, not content with participating in the general expression of satisfaction, distinguished themselves by a movement, which, while purely spontaneous, was at the same time so appropriate in the circumstances and so equal in character, as indicates it to have been the result of concerted and previous arrangement. It was an offer of the means of carriage, suitable to the migratory state of the nation in the wilderness, for transporting the tabernacle from place to

place. In the pattern of that sacred tent exhibited on the mount, and to which its symbolic and typical character required a faithful adherence, no provision had been made for its removal in the frequent journeyings of the Israelites. That not being essential to the plan of the divine architect, it was left to be accomplished by voluntary liberality; and whether we look to the judicious character of the gifts, or to the public manner in which they were presented, we have unmistakable evidence of the pious and patriotic feelings from which they emanated and the extensive interest the occasion produced. The offerers were "the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers," and the offering consisted of six covered wagons or little cars, and twelve oxen, two of the princes being partners in a wagon, and each furnishing an ox.

4, 5. The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation — They exhibited a beautiful example to all who are great in dignity and in wealth, to be foremost in contributing to the support and in promoting the interests of religion. The strictness of the injunctions Moses had received to adhere with scrupulous fidelity to the divine model of the tabernacle probably led him to doubt whether he was at liberty to act in this matter without orders. God, however, relieved him by declaring His acceptance of the freewill offerings, as well as by giving instructions as to the mode of their distribution among the Levites. It is probable that in doing so, He merely sanctioned the object for which they were offered, and that the practical wisdom of the offerers had previously determined that they should be distributed "unto the Levites, to every man according to his service" — that is, more or fewer were assigned to each of the Levitical divisions, as their department of duty seemed to require. This divine sanction it is of great importance to notice, as establishing the principle, that while in the great matters of divine worship and church government we are to adhere faithfully to the revealed rule of faith and duty, minor arrangements respecting them may be lawfully made, according to the means and convenience of God's people in different places. "There is a great deal left to human regulation — appendages of undoubted convenience, and which it were as absurd to resist on the ground that an express warrant cannot be produced for them, as to protest against the

convening of the people to divine service, because there is no Scripture for the erection and ringing of a church bell" [CHALMERS].

6-9. Moses took the wagons and the oxen — The Hebrew word seems to be fairly rendered by the word "wagons." Wheel carriages of some kind are certainly intended; and as they were covered, the best idea we can form of them is, that they bore some resemblance to our covered wagons. That wheel carriages were anciently used in Egypt, and in what is now Asiatic Turkey, is attested, not only by history, but by existing sculptures and paintings. Some of these the Israelites might have brought with them at their departure; and others, the skillful artisans, who did the mechanical work of the tabernacle, could easily have constructed, according to models with which they had been familiar. Each wagon was drawn by two oxen, and a greater number does not seem to have been employed on any of the different occasions mentioned in Scripture. Oxen seem to have been generally used for draught in ancient times among other nations as well as the Hebrews; and they continue still to be employed in dragging the few carts which are in use in some parts of Western Asia [Kitto].

gave them unto the Levites — The principle of distribution was natural and judicious. The Merarites had twice the number of wagons and oxen appropriated to them that the Gershonites had, obviously because, while the latter had charge only of the coverings and hangings (the light but precious and richly-embroidered drapery, [\*\*Numbers 4:24-26]) the former were appointed to transport all the heavy and bulky materials (the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets) in short, all the larger articles of furniture Numbers 4:31,32]. Whoever thinks only of the enormous weight of metal, the gold, silver, brass, etc. that were on the bases, chapiters, and pillars, etc. will probably come to the conclusion that four wagons and eight oxen were not nearly sufficient for the conveyance of so vast a load. Besides, the Merarites were not very numerous, as they amounted only to thirty-two hundred men from thirty years and upward [ Numbers 4:44]; and, therefore, there is reason to suppose that a much greater number of wagons would afterwards be found necessary, and be furnished, than were given on this occasion [CALMET]. Others, who consider the full number of wagons and oxen to be stated in the sacred record, suppose that the Merarites may have carried many of the smaller things in their hands the sockets, for instance, which being each a talent weight, was one man's

burden (\*\*22 Kings 5:23). The Kohathites had neither wheeled vehicles nor beasts of burden assigned them, because, being charged with the transport of the furniture belonging to the holy place, the sacred worth and character of the vessels entrusted to them (see on \*\*Numbers 4:15) demanded a more honorable mode of conveyance. These were carried by those Levites shoulder high. Even in this minute arrangement every reflecting reader will perceive the evidence of divine wisdom and holiness; and a deviation from the prescribed rule of duty led, in one recorded instance, to a manifestation of holy displeasure, calculated to make a salutary and solemn impression (\*\*\*1000\*\*2 Samuel 6:6-13).

- **10, 11.** the princes offered for dedicating of the altar, etc. "Altar" is here used in the singular for the plural; for it is evident, from the kind of offerings, that the altars of burnt offering and incense are both referred to. This was not the first or proper dedication of those altars, which had been made by Moses and Aaron some time before [\*\*RNI\*Leviticus 8:11]. But it might be considered an additional "dedication" those offerings being the first that were made for particular persons or tribes.
- 11. They shall offer ... each prince on his day, etc. Eastern princes were accustomed anciently, as they are in Persia still on a certain yearly festival, to sit upon their thrones in great state, when the princes and nobles, from all parts of their dominions, appear before them with tributary presents, which form a large proportion of their royal revenue. And in the offering of all gifts or presents to great personages, every article is presented singly and with ostentatious display. The tabernacle being the palace of their great King, as well as the sanctuary of their God, the princes of Israel may be viewed, on the occasion under notice, as presenting their tributary offerings, and in the same manner of successive detail, which accords with the immemorial usages of the East. A day was set apart for each, as much for the imposing solemnity and splendor of the ceremony, as for the prevention of disorder and hurry; and it is observable that, in the order of offering, regard was paid to priority not of birth, but of rank and dignity as they were ranked in the camp — beginning at the east, proceeding to the south, then to the west, and closing with the north, according to the course of the sun.

12-17. He that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon ... of the tribe of Judah, etc. — Judah having had the precedence assigned to it, the prince or head of that tribe was the first admitted to offer as its representative; and his offering, as well as that of the others, is thought, from its costliness, to have been furnished not from his own private means, but from the general contributions of each tribe. Some parts of the offering, as the animals for sacrifice, were for the ritual service of the day, the peace offerings being by much the most numerous, as the princes and some of the people joined with the priests afterwards in celebrating the occasion with festive rejoicing Hence the feast of dedication became afterwards an anniversary festival. Other parts of the offering were intended for permanent use, as utensils necessary in the service of the sanctuary; such as an immense platter and bowl (\*\*Exodus 25:29). Being of silver, they were to be employed at the altar of burnt offering, or in the court, not in the holy place, all the furniture of which was of solid or plated gold; and there was a golden spoon, the contents of which show its destination to have been the altar of incense. The word rendered "spoon" means a hollow cup, in the shape of a hand, with which the priests on ordinary occasions might lift a quantity from the incense-box to throw on the altar-fire, or into the censers; but on the ceremonial on the day of the annual atonement no instrument was allowed but the high priest's own hands (\*\*Leviticus 16:12).

18-83. On the second day Nethaneel ... prince of Issachar, did offer—
This tribe being stationed on the right side of Judah, offered next through its representative; then Zebulun, which was on the left side; and so on in orderly succession, every tribe making the same kind of offering and in the same amount, to show that, as each was under equal obligation, each rendered an equal tribute. Although each offering made was the same in quantity as well as quality, a separate notice is given of each, as a separate day was appointed for the presentation, that equal honor might be conferred on each, and none appear to be overlooked or slighted. And as the sacred books were frequently read in public, posterity, in each successive age, would feel a livelier interest in the national worship, from the permanent recognition of the offerings made by the ancestors of the respective tribes. But while this was done in one respect, as subjects offering tribute to their king, it was in another respect, a purely religious

act. The vessels offered were for a sacrificial use — the animals brought were clean and fit for sacrifice, both symbolically denoting, that while God was to dwell among them as their Sovereign, they were a holy people, who by this offering dedicated themselves to God.

**48.** On the seventh day — Surprise has been expressed by some that this work of presentation was continued on the Sabbath. But assuming that the seventh day referred to was a Sabbath (which is uncertain), the work was of a directly religious character, and perfectly in accordance with the design of the sacred day.

84-88. This was the dedication of the altar — The inspired historian here sums up the separate items detailed in the preceding narrative, and the aggregate amount is as follows: twelve silver chargers, each weighing one hundred thirty shekels equals 1560; twelve silver bowls, each seventy shekels equals 840: total weight. A silver charger at one hundred thirty shekels, reduced to troy weight, made seventy-five ounces, nine pennyweight, 168.31 grains; and a silver bowl at seventy shekels amounts to forty ounces, twelve pennyweight, 2121.31 grains. The total weight of the twelve chargers is therefore nine hundred five ounces, sixteen pennyweight, 33.11 grains; and that of the twelve bowls four hundred eighty-seven ounces, fourteen pennyweight, 204.31 grains; making the total weight of silver vessels 1393 ounces, ten pennyweight, 237.31 grains with an approximate value of \$1200. The twelve golden spoons, allowing each to be five ounces, sixteen pennyweight, 3.31 grains, would have a value of about \$1000. All this would make a grand total of about \$2200. Besides these the offerings comprised twelve bullocks, twelve rams, twelve lambs, twenty-four goats, sixty rams, sixty he-goats, sixty lambs — amounting in all to two hundred forty. So large a collection of cattle offered for sacrifice on one occasion proves both the large flocks of the Israelites and the abundance of pastures which were then, and still are, found in the valleys that lie between the Sinaitic Mountains. All travelers attest the luxuriant verdure of those extensive wadies; and that they were equally or still more rich in pasture anciently, is confirmed by the numerous flocks of the Amalekites, as well as of Nabal, which were fed in the wilderness of Paran ( Samuel 15:9).

**89.** And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him — As a king gives private audience to his minister, so special license was granted to Moses, who, though not a priest, was admitted into the sanctuary to receive instructions from his heavenly King as occasion demanded.

then he heard the voice of one speaking to him — Though standing on the outer side of the veil, he could distinctly hear it, and the mention of this circumstance is important as the fulfillment, at the dedication of the tabernacle, of a special promise made by the Lord Christ Himself, the Angel of the Covenant, commanding its erection (\*\*Exodus 25:22). It was the reward of Moses' zeal and obedience; and, in like manner, to all who love Him and keep His commandments He will manifest Himself (\*\*\*John 14:21).

# NUMBERS 8:1-4.

#### HOW THE LAMPS ARE TO BE LIGHTED.

- **1.** *the Lord spake unto Moses* The order of this chapter suggests the idea that the following instructions were given to Moses while he was within the tabernacle of the congregation, after the princes had completed their offering. But from the tenor of the instructions, it is more likely that they were given immediately after the Levites had been given to the priests (see on Numbers 3:1-4:49), and that the record of these instructions had been postponed till the narrative of other transactions in the camp had been made [PATRICK].
- **2.** *Speak unto Aaron*, etc. The candlestick, which was made of one solid, massive piece of pure gold, with six lamps supported on as many branches, a seventh in the center surmounting the shaft itself (\*\*Exodus 25:31\*\*37:17), and completed according to the pattern shown in the mount, was now to be lighted, when the other things in the sanctuary began to be applied to religious service. It was Aaron's personal duty, as the servant of God, to light His house, which, being without windows, required the aid of lights (\*\*\*OB\*\*2 Peter 1:19) And the course he was ordered to follow was first to light the middle lamp from the altar-fire, and then the other lamps from each other a course symbolical of all the light of heavenly truth being derived from Christ, and diffused by His ministers throughout the world (\*\*\*\*Revelation 4:5).

the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick — The candlestick stood close to the boards of the sanctuary, on the south side, in full view of the table of showbread on the north (Exodus 26:35), having one set of its lamps turned towards the east, and another towards the west; so that all parts of the tabernacle were thus lighted up.

# NUMBERS 8:5-22.

#### THE CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES.

- **6, 7.** *Take the Levites* ... *and cleanse them* This passage describes the consecration of the Levites. Although the tribe was to be devoted to the divine service, their hereditary descent alone was not a sufficient qualification for entering on the duties of the sacred office. They were to be set apart by a special ceremony, which, however, was much simpler than that appointed for the priests; neither washing nor anointing, nor investiture with official robes, was necessary. Their purification consisted, along with the offering of the requisite sacrifices (\*\*\*Theory\*\* Leviticus 1:4 3:2 4:4), in being sprinkled by water mixed with the ashes of a red heifer (\*\*\*\* Numbers 19:9), and shaved all over, and their clothes washed a combination of symbolical acts which was intended to remind them of the mortification of carnal and worldly desires, and the maintenance of that purity in heart and life which became the servants of God.
- **9, 10.** thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together, etc. As it was plainly impossible that the whole multitude of the Israelites could do this, a select portion of them must be meant. This party, who laid their hands upon the Levites, are supposed by some to have been the first-born, who by that act, transferred their peculiar privilege of acting as God's ministers to the Levitical tribe; and by others, to have been the princes, who thus blessed them. It appears, from this passage, that the imposition of hands was a ceremony used in consecrating persons to holy offices in the ancient, as, from the example of our Lord and His apostles, it has been perpetuated in the Christian Church.
- 11-13. And Aaron shall offer the Levites Hebrew, "as a wave offering"; and it has been thought probable that the high priest, in bringing the Levites one by one to the altar, directed them to make some simple movements of their persons, analogous to what was done at the presentation of the wave offerings before the Lord. Thus were they first devoted as an offering to God, and by Him surrendered to the priests to be employed in His service. The consecration ceremonial was repeated in the case of every Levite who was taken (as was done at a later period) to

- assist the priests in the tabernacle and temple. (See on 4282 Chronicles 29:34).
- **14.** and the Levites shall be mine that is, exempt from all military duty or secular work free from all pecuniary imposition and wholly devoted to the custody and service of the sanctuary.
- **15.** after that, shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation into the court, to assist the priests; and at removal into the tabernacle that is, into the door of it to receive the covered furniture.
- **19.** to make an atonement for the children of Israel, etc. to aid the priests in that expiatory work; or, as the words may be rendered, "to make redemption for" the Levites being exchanged or substituted for the first-born for this important end, that there might be a sanctified body of men appointed to guard the sanctuary, and the people not allowed to approach or presumptuously meddle with holy things, which would expose them to the angry judgments of Heaven.
- **24.** from twenty and five years old, etc. (Compare Only Numbers 4:3). They entered on their work in their twenty-fifth year, as pupils and probationers, under the superintendence and direction of their senior brethren; and at thirty they were admitted to the full discharge of their official functions.
- **25.** from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, etc. that is, on the laborious and exhausting parts of their work.
- **26.** But shall minister with their brethren in the performance of easier and higher duties, instructing and directing the young, or superintending important trusts. "They also serve who only wait" [MILTON].

# ••••NUMBERS 9:1-5.

#### THE PASSOVER ENJOINED.

2-5. Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season, etc. — The date of this command to keep the passover in the wilderness was given shortly after the erection and consecration of the tabernacle and preceded the numbering of the people by a month. (Compare Numbers 9:1 with Numbers 1:1,2). But it is narrated after that transaction in order to introduce the notice of a particular case, for which a law was provided to meet the occasion. This was the first observance of the passover since the exodus; and without a positive injunction, the Israelites were under no obligation to keep it till their settlement in the land of Canaan (\*Exodus 12:25). The anniversary was kept on the exact day of the year on which they, twelve months before, had departed from Egypt; and it was marked by all the peculiar rites the he lamb and the unleavened bread. The materials would be easily procured — the lambs from their numerous flocks and the meal for the unleavened bread, by the aid of Jethro, from the land of Midian, which was adjoining their camp (\*\*Exodus 3:1). But their girded loins, their sandaled feet, and their staff in their hand, being mere circumstances attending a hurried departure and not essential to the rite, were not repeated. It is supposed to have been the only observance of the feast during their forty years' wandering; and Jewish writers say that, as none could eat the passover except they were circumcised (\*\*Exodus 12:43,44,48), and circumcision was not practiced in the wilderness Joshua 5:4-7], there could be no renewal of the paschal solemnity.

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### A SECOND PASSOVER ALLOWED.

- **6, 7.** there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man— To discharge the last offices to the remains of deceased relatives was imperative; and yet attendance on a funeral entailed ceremonial defilement, which led to exclusion from all society and from the camp for seven days. Some persons who were in this situation at the arrival of the first paschal anniversary, being painfully perplexed about the course of duty because they were temporarily disqualified at the proper season, and having no opportunity of supplying their want were liable to a total privation of all their privileges, laid their case before Moses. Jewish writers assert that these men were the persons who had carried out the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu [\*\*\*CENTICLE\*\*\* [\*\*CENTICLE\*\*\*\* [\*\*CENTICLE\*\*\*\* [\*\*CENTICLE\*\*\*\* [\*\*CENTICLE\*\*\* [\*\*
- **8-14.** Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you A solution of the difficulty was soon obtained, it being enacted, by divine authority, that to those who might be disqualified by the occurrence of a death in their family circle or unable by distance to keep the passover on the anniversary day, a special license was granted of observing it by themselves on the same day and hour of the following month, under a due attendance to all the solemn formalities. (See on Chronicles 30:2). But the observance was imperative on all who did not labor under these impediments.
- **14.** *if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover* Gentile converts, or proselytes, as they were afterwards called, were admitted, if circumcised, to the same privileges as native Israelites, and were liable to excommunication if they neglected the passover. But circumcision was an indispensable condition; and whoever did not submit to that rite, was prohibited, under the sternest penalties, from eating the passover.

## NUMBERS 9:15-23.

#### A CLOUD GUIDES THE ISRAELITES.

**15.** *the cloud covered the tabernacle* — The inspired historian here enters on an entirely new subject, which might properly have formed a separate chapter, beginning at this verse and ending at \*Numbers 10:29 [CALMET]. The cloud was a visible token of God's special presence and guardian care of the Israelites (\*Exodus 14:20 \*Psalm 105:39). It was easily distinguishable from all other clouds by its peculiar form and its fixed position; for from the day of the completion of the tabernacle it rested by day as a dark, by night as a fiery, column on that part of the sanctuary which contained the ark of the testimony (\*\*Call\*\*Call\*\*).

**17.** when the cloud was taken up — that is, rose to a higher elevation, so as to be conspicuous at the remotest extremities of the camp. That was a signal for removal; and, accordingly, it is properly called (\*\*Numbers 9:18) "the commandment of the Lord." It was a visible token of the presence of God; and from it, as a glorious throne, He gave the order. So that its motion regulated the commencement and termination of all the journeys of the Israelites. (See on \*\*D249\*Exodus 14:19).

19. when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle, ... then Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not — A desert life has its attractions, and constant movements create a passionate love of change. Many incidents show that the Israelites had strongly imbibed this nomad habit and were desirous of hastening to Canaan. But still the phases of the cloud indicated the command of God: and whatsoever irksomeness they might have felt in remaining long stationary in camp, "when the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days, they kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not." Happy for them had they always exhibited this spirit of obedience! and happy for all if, through the wilderness of this world, we implicitly follow the leadings of God's Providence and the directions of God's Word!

## NUMBERS 10:1-36.

#### THE USE OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

- 3-7. when they shall blow with them There seem to have been signals made by a difference in the loudness and variety in the notes, suited for different occasions, and which the Israelites learned to distinguish. A simple uniform sound by both trumpets summoned a general assembly of the people; the blast of a single trumpet convoked the princes to consult on public affairs; notes of some other kind were made to sound an alarm, whether for journeying or for war. One alarm was the recognized signal for the eastern division of the camp (the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun) to march; two alarms gave the signal for the southern to move; and, though it is not in our present *Hebrew* text, the *Septuagint* has, that on three alarms being sounded, those on the west; while on four blasts, those on the north decamped. Thus the greatest order and discipline were established in the Israelitish camp no military march could be better regulated.

- **8.** the sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets, etc. Neither the Levites nor any in the common ranks of the people could be employed in this office of signal giving. In order to attract greater attention and more faithful observance, it was reserved to the priests alone, as the Lord's ministers; and as anciently in Persia and other Eastern countries the alarm trumpets were sounded from the tent of the sovereign, so were they blown from the tabernacle, the visible residence of Israel's King.
- 9. If ye go to war In the land of Canaan, either when attacked by foreign invaders or when they went to take possession according to the divine promise, "ye [that is, the priests] shall blow an alarm." This advice was accordingly acted upon (\*\*ONUMBERS\*\* 31:6\*\* Chronicles 13:12); and in the circumstances it was an act of devout confidence in God. A solemn and religious act on the eve of a battle has often animated the hearts of those who felt they were engaged in a good and just cause; and so the blowing of the trumpet, being an ordinance of God, produced that effect on the minds of the Israelites. But more is meant by the words namely, that God would, as it were, be aroused by the trumpet to bless with His presence and aid.
- **10.** Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days Festive and thanksgiving occasions were to be ushered in with the trumpets, as all feasts afterwards were (\*\*\*Psalm 81:3\*\*\*2 Chronicles 29:27) to intimate the joyous and delighted feelings with which they engaged in the service of God.
- 11. It came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year The Israelites had lain encamped in Wady-Er-Rahah and the neighboring valleys of the Sinaitic range for the space of eleven months and twenty-nine days. (Compare Exodus 19:1). Besides the religious purposes of the highest importance to which their long sojourn at Sinai was subservient, the Israelites, after the hardships and oppression of the Egyptian servitude, required an interval of repose and refreshment. They were neither physically nor morally in a condition to enter the lists with the warlike people they had to encounter before obtaining possession of Canaan. But the wondrous transactions at Sinai the arm of Jehovah so visibly displayed in their favor the covenant entered into, and the special blessings guaranteed, beginning a course of moral and religious

education which moulded the character of this people — made them acquainted with their high destiny and inspired them with those noble principles of divine truth and righteousness which alone make a great nation.

**12.** *wilderness of Paran* — It stretched from the base of the Sinaitic group, or from Et-Tyh, over that extensive plateau to the southwestern borders of Palestine.

## 13-27. the children of Israel took their journey ... by the hand of Moses

- It is probable that Moses, on the breaking up of the encampment, stationed himself on some eminence to see the ranks defile in order through the embouchure of the mountains. The marching order is described Numbers 2:1-34); but, as the vast horde is represented here in actual migration, let us notice the extraordinary care that was taken for ensuring the safe conveyance of the holy things. In the rear of Judah, which, with the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun, led the van, followed the Gershonites and Merarites with the heavy and coarser materials of the tabernacle. Next in order were set in motion the flank divisions of Reuben and Ephraim. Then came the Kohathites, who occupied the center of the moving mass, bearing the sacred utensils on their shoulder. They were so far behind the other portions of the Levitical body that these would have time at the new encampment to rear the framework of the tabernacle before the Kohathites arrived. Last of all, Dan, with the associated tribes, brought up the rear of the immense caravan. Each tribe was marshalled under its prince or chief and in all their movements rallied around its own standard.
- **29.** *Hobab*, *the son of Raguel the Midianite* called also Reuel (the same as Jethro [\*Exodus 2:18, *Margin*]). Hobab, the son of this Midianite chief and brother-in-law to Moses, seems to have sojourned among the Israelites during the whole period of their encampment at Sinai and now on their removal proposed returning to his own abode. Moses urged him to remain, both for his own benefit from a religious point of view, and for the useful services his nomad habits could enable him to render.

# 31. Leave us not, I pray thee ... and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes — The earnest importunity of Moses to secure the attendance of this man, when he enjoyed the benefit of the directing cloud, has surprised

many. But it should be recollected that the guidance of the cloud, though it showed the general route to be taken through the trackless desert, would not be so special and minute as to point out the places where pasture, shade, and water were to be obtained and which were often hid in obscure spots by the shifting sands. Besides, several detachments were sent off from the main body; the services of Hobab, not as a single Arab, but as a prince of a powerful clan, would have been exceedingly useful.

- **32.** if thou go with us ... what goodness the Lord will show unto us, the same will we do unto thee A strong inducement is here held out; but it seems not to have changed the young man's purpose, for he departed and settled in his own district. (See on \*\*TIGUIGES\* 1:16 and \*\*STIGUIGES\* 1:16.)
- **33.** *they departed* ... *three days' journey* the first day's progress being very small, about eighteen or twenty miles.

ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them — It was carried in the center, and hence some eminent commentators think the passage should be rendered, "the ark went in their presence," the cloud above upon it being conspicuous in their eyes. But it is probable that the cloudy pillar, which, while stationary, rested upon the ark, preceded them in the march — as, when in motion at one time (\*\*Exodus 14:19) it is expressly said to have shifted its place.

**35, 36.** when the ark set forward that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered — Moses, as the organ of the people, uttered an appropriate prayer both at the commencement and the end of each journey. Thus all the journeys were sanctified by devotion; and so should our prayer be, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence" [\*\*Exodus 33:15].

## **NUMBERS** 11:1-35.

#### MANNA LOATHED.

## 1. When the people complained it displeased the Lord, etc. —

Unaccustomed to the fatigues of travel and wandering into the depths of a desert, less mountainous but far more gloomy and desolate than that of Sinai, without any near prospect of the rich country that had been promised, they fell into a state of vehement discontent, which was vented at these irksome and fruitless journeyings. The displeasure of God was manifested against the ungrateful complainers by fire sent in an extraordinary manner. It is worthy of notice, however, that the discontent seems to have been confined to the extremities of the camp, where, in all likelihood, "the mixed multitude" [see on Exodus 12:38] had their station. At the intercession of Moses, the appalling judgment ceased ("Numbers 11:2), and the name given to the place, Taberah, remained ever after a monument of national sin and punishment. (See on Numbers 11:34).

- **4.** the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting These consisted of Egyptians. [See on Exodus 12:38.] To dream of banquets and plenty of animal food in the desert becomes a disease of the imagination; and to this excitement of the appetite no people are more liable than the natives of Egypt. But the Israelites participated in the same feelings and expressed dissatisfaction with the manna on which they had hitherto been supported, in comparison with the vegetable luxuries with which they had been regaled in Egypt.
- **5.** We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely (See on Exodus 7:17). The people of Egypt are accustomed to an almost exclusive diet of fish, either fresh or sun-dried, during the hot season in April and May the very season when the Israelites were travelling in this desert. Lower Egypt, where were the brick-kilns in which they were

employed, afforded great facilities for obtaining fish in the Mediterranean, the lakes, and the canals of the Nile.

*cucumbers* — The Egyptian species is smooth, of a cylindrical form, and about a foot in length. It is highly esteemed by the natives and when in season is liberally partaken of, being greatly mellowed by the influence of the sun.

*melons* — The watermelons are meant, which grow on the deep, loamy soil after the subsidence of the Nile; and as they afford a juicy and cooling fruit, all classes make use of them for food, drink, and medicine.

*leeks* — by some said to be a species of grass cresses, which is much relished as a kind of seasoning.

*onions* — the same as ours; but instead of being nauseous and affecting the eyes, they are sweet to the taste, good for the stomach, and form to a large extent the aliment of the laboring classes.

garlic — is now nearly if not altogether extinct in Egypt although it seems to have grown anciently in great abundance. The herbs now mentioned form a diet very grateful in warm countries where vegetables and other fruits of the season are much used. We can scarcely wonder that both the Egyptian hangers-on and the general body of the Israelites, incited by their clamors, complained bitterly of the want of the refreshing viands in their toilsome wanderings. But after all their experience of the bounty and care of God, their vehement longing for the luxuries of Egypt was an impeachment of the divine arrangements; and if it was the sin that beset them in the desert, it became them more strenuously to repress a rebellious spirit, as dishonoring to God and unbecoming their relation to Him as a chosen people.

**6-9.** But now ... there is nothing ... beside this manna — Daily familiarity had disgusted them with the sight and taste of the monotonous food; and, ungrateful for the heavenly gift, they longed for a change of fare. It may be noticed that the resemblance of the manna to coriander seed was not in the color, but in the size and figure; and from its comparison to bdellium, which is either a drop of white gum or a white pearl, we are enabled to form a better idea of it. Moreover, it is evident, from the process of baking

into cakes, that it could not have been the natural manna of the Arabian desert, for that is too gummy or unctuous to admit of being ground into meal. In taste it is said to have been like "wafers made with honey" (\*\*Exodus 16:31), and here to have the taste of fresh oil. The discrepancy in these statements is only apparent; for in the latter the manna is described in its raw state; in the former, after it was ground and baked. The minute description given here of its nature and use was designed to show the great sinfulness of the people, in being dissatisfied with such excellent food, furnished so plentifully and gratuitously.

**10-15.** Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, etc. — It is impossible not to sympathize with his feelings although the tone and language of his remonstrances to God cannot be justified. He was in a most distressing situation — having a mighty multitude under his care, with no means of satisfying their clamorous demands. Their conduct shows how deeply they had been debased and demoralized by long oppression: while his reveals a state of mind agonized and almost overwhelmed by a sense of the undivided responsibilities of his office.

**16, 17.** the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders — (\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*\*Exodus 3:16 \*\*\*Exodus 3:1

**17.** *I* will come down — that is, not in a visible manner or by local descent, but by the tokens of the divine presence and operations.

and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee— "The spirit" means the gifts and influences of the Spirit ("Numbers 27:18 "Joel 2:28 "John 7:39 "I Corinthians 14:12), and by "taking the spirit of Moses, and putting it upon them," is not to be understood that the qualities of the great leader were to be in any degree impaired but that the elders would be endowed with a portion of the same gifts, especially of prophecy

- (\*\*Numbers 11:25) that is, an extraordinary penetration in discovering hidden and settling difficult things.
- **18-20.** say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh that is, "prepare yourselves," by repentance and submission, to receive to-morrow the flesh you clamor for. But it is evident that the tenor of the language implied a severe rebuke and that the blessing promised would prove a curse.
- **21-23.** Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand ... Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them? The great leader, struck with a promise so astonishing as that of suddenly furnishing, in the midst of the desert, more than two millions of people with flesh for a whole month, betrayed an incredulous spirit, surprising in one who had witnessed so many stupendous miracles. But it is probable that it was only a feeling of the moment at all events, the incredulous doubt was uttered only to himself and not, as afterwards, publicly and to the scandal of the people. (See on Numbers 20:10). It was, therefore, sharply reproved, but not punished.
- **24.** Moses ... gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people The tabernacle was chosen for the convocation, because, as it was there God manifested Himself, there His Spirit would be directly imparted there the minds of the elders themselves would be inspired with reverential awe and their office invested with greater respect in the eyes of the people.
- 25. when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease
- As those elders were constituted civil governors, their "prophesying" must be understood as meaning the performance of their civil and sacred duties by the help of those extraordinary endowments they had received; and by their not "ceasing" we understand, either that they continued to exercise their gifts uninterruptedly the first day (see "I Samuel 19:24), or that these were permanent gifts, which qualified them in an eminent degree for discharging the duty of public magistrates.
- **26-29.** But there remained two of the men in the camp They did not repair with the rest to the tabernacle, either from modesty in shrinking from the assumption of a public office, or being prevented by some ceremonial defilement. They, however, received the gifts of the Spirit as

well as their brethren. And when Moses was urged to forbid their prophesying, his answer displayed a noble disinterestedness as well as zeal for the glory of God akin to that of our Lord ( Mark 9:39).

31-35. There went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, etc. — These migratory birds (see on Exodus 16:13) were on their journey from Egypt, when "the wind from the Lord," an east wind (Psalm 78:26) forcing them to change their course, wafted them over the Red Sea to the camp of Israel.

let them fall a day's journey — If the journey of an individual is meant, this space might be thirty miles; if the inspired historian referred to the whole host, ten miles would be as far as they could march in one day in the sandy desert under a vertical sun. Assuming it to be twenty miles this immense cloud of quails (\*\*Exodus 16:13) covered a space of forty miles in diameter. Others reduce it to sixteen. But it is doubtful whether the measurement be from the center or the extremities of the camp. It is evident, however, that the language describes the countless number of these quails.

as it were two cubits high — Some have supposed that they fell on the ground above each other to that height — a supposition which would leave a vast quantity useless as food to the Israelites, who were forbidden to eat any animal that died of itself or from which the blood was not poured out. Others think that, being exhausted with a long flight, they could not fly more than three feet above the earth, and so were easily felled or caught. A more recent explanation applies the phrase, "two cubits high," not to the accumulation of the mass, but to the size of the individual birds. Flocks of large red-legged cranes, three feet high, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, have been frequently seen on the western shores of the Gulf of Akaba, or eastern arm of the Red Sea [Stanley; Shubert].

**32.** *people stood up* — rose up in eager haste — some at one time, others at another; some, perhaps through avidity, both day and night.

ten homers — ten asses' loads; or, "homers" may be used indefinitely (as in "Exodus 8:14 "Tidges 15:16); and "ten" for many: so that the phrase "ten homers" is equivalent to "great heaps." The collectors were probably one or two from each family; and, being distrustful of God's goodness,

they gathered not for immediate consumption only, but for future use. In eastern and southern seas, innumerable quails are often seen, which, when weary, fall down, covering every spot on the deck and rigging of vessels; and in Egypt they come in such myriads that the people knock them down with sticks.

**spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp** — salted and dried them for future use, by the simple process to which they had been accustomed in Egypt.

- 33. while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed—
  literally, "cut off"; that is, before the supply of quails, which lasted a
  month ("Numbers 11:20), was exhausted. The probability is, that their
  stomachs, having been long inured to manna (a light food), were not
  prepared for so sudden a change of regimen— a heavy, solid diet of animal
  food, of which they seem to have partaken to so intemperate a degree as to
  produce a general surfeit, and fatal consequences. On a former occasion
  their murmurings for flesh were raised ("Exodus 16:1-8) because they
  were in want of food. Here they proceeded, not from necessity, but
  wanton, lustful desire; and their sin, in the righteous judgment of God, was
  made to carry its own punishment.
- **34.** *called the name of that place Kibrothhattaavah* literally, "The graves of lust," or "Those that lusted"; so that the name of the place proves that the mortality was confined to those who had indulged inordinately.
- **35.** *Hazeroth* The extreme southern station of this route was a watering-place in a spacious plain, now Ain-Haderah.

## NUMBERS 12:1-9.

#### MIRIAM'S AND AARON'S SEDITION.

- 1. an Ethiopian woman Hebrew, "a Cushite woman" Arabia was usually called in Scripture the land of Cush, its inhabitants being descendants of that son of Ham (see on Exodus 2:15) and being accounted generally a vile and contemptible race (see on Amos 9:7). The occasion of this seditious outbreak on the part of Miriam and Aaron against Moses was the great change made in the government by the adoption of the seventy rulers [Numbers 11:16]. Their irritating disparagement of his wife (who, in all probability, was Zipporah [Exodus 2:21], and not a second wife he had recently married) arose from jealousy of the relatives, through whose influence the innovation had been first made (Exodus 18:13-26), while they were overlooked or neglected. Miriam is mentioned before Aaron as being the chief instigator and leader of the sedition.
- **2.** Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us? The prophetical name and character was bestowed upon Aaron (\*\*Exodus 4:15,16) and Miriam (\*\*Exodus 15:20); and, therefore, they considered the conduct of Moses, in exercising an exclusive authority in this matter, as an encroachment on their rights (\*\*Micah 6:4).
- 3. the man Moses was very meek (\*\*\*Exodus 14:13 \*\*\*21:7 \*\*\*232:12,13 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 9:18). This observation might have been made to account for Moses taking no notice of their angry reproaches and for God's interposing so speedily for the vindication of His servant's cause. The circumstance of Moses recording an eulogium on a distinguishing excellence of his own character is not without a parallel among the sacred writers, when forced to it by the insolence and contempt of opponents (\*\*\*TE\*\*2 Corinthians 12:11,12). But it is not improbable that, as this verse appears to be a parenthesis, it may have been inserted as

a gloss by Ezra or some later prophet. Others, instead of "very meek," suggest "very afflicted," as the proper rendering.

- **4.** the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam The divine interposition was made thus openly and immediately, in order to suppress the sedition and prevent its spreading among the people.
- **5.** the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood the door of the tabernacle without gaining admission, as was the usual privilege of Aaron, though it was denied to all other men and women. This public exclusion was designed to be a token of the divine displeasure.
- **6, 7.** *Hear now my words* A difference of degree is here distinctly expressed in the gifts and authority even of divinely commissioned prophets. Moses, having been set over all God's house, (that is, His church and people), was consequently invested with supremacy over Miriam and Aaron also and privileged beyond all others by direct and clear manifestations of the presence and will of God.
- **8.** with him will I speak mouth to mouth immediately, not by an interpreter, nor by visionary symbols presented to his fancy.

apparently — plainly and surely.

*not in dark speeches* — parables or similitudes.

the similitude of the Lord shall he behold — not the face or essence of God, who is invisible (\*\*Exodus 33:20 \*\*Colossians 1:15 \*\*IB\*John 1:18); but some unmistakable evidence of His glorious presence (\*\*Exodus 33:2 \*\*Exodus 33:2). The latter clause should have been conjoined with the preceding one, thus: "not in dark speeches, and in a figure shall he behold the Lord." The slight change in the punctuation removes all appearance of contradiction to \*\*Deuteronomy 4:15.

# 

#### MIRIAM'S LEPROSY.

**10.** *the cloud departed from the tabernacle* — that is, from the door to resume its permanent position over the mercy seat.

Miriam became leprous — This malady in its most malignant form (\*\*Exodus 4:6 \*\*\* 2 Kings 5:27) as its color, combined with its sudden appearance, proved, was inflicted as a divine judgment; and she was made the victim, either because of her extreme violence or because the leprosy on Aaron would have interrupted or dishonored the holy service.

- **11-13.** On the humble and penitential submission of Aaron, Moses interceded for both the offenders, especially for Miriam, who was restored; not, however, till she had been made, by her exclusion, a public example [\*\*Numbers 12:14,15].
- **14.** her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? The Jews, in common with all people in the East, seem to have had an intense abhorrence of spitting, and for a parent to express his displeasure by doing so on the person of one of his children, or even on the ground in his presence, separated that child as unclean from society for seven days.
- **15.** the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again Either not to crush her by a sentence of overwhelming severity or not to expose her, being a prophetess, to popular contempt.
- **16.** *pitched in the wilderness of Paran* The station of encampments seems to have been Rithma (\*\*\*\*Numbers 33:19).

## **NUMBERS** 13:1-33.

# THE NAMES OF THE MEN WHO WERE SENT TO SEARCH THE LAND.

- **1, 2.** The Lord spake unto Moses, Send thou men, that they may search the land, of Canaan Compare Deuteronomy 1:22, whence it appears, that while the proposal of delegating confidential men from each tribe to explore the land of Canaan emanated from the people who petitioned for it, the measure received the special sanction of God, who granted their request at once as a trial, and a punishment of their distrust.
- **3.** those men were heads of the children of Israel Not the princes who are named (\*\*Numbers 10:14-16,18-20,22-27), but chiefs, leading men though not of the first rank.
- **16.** *Oshea* that is, "a desire of salvation." Jehoshua, by prefixing the name of God, means "divinely appointed," "head of salvation," "Savior," the same as Jesus [\*\*Matthew 1:21, *Margin*].
- 17. Get you up this way ..., and go up into the mountain Mount Seir (\*\*Deuteronomy 1:2), which lay directly from Sinai across the wilderness of Paran, in a northeasterly direction into the southern parts of the promised land.
- **20.** Now the time was the time of the first grapes This was in August, when the first clusters are gathered. The second are gathered in September, and the third in October. The spies' absence for a period of forty days determines the grapes they brought from Eshcol to have been of the second period.
- **21-24.** *So they* ... *searched the land* They advanced from south to north, reconnoitering the whole land.

*the wilderness of Zin* — a long level plain, or deep valley of sand, the monotony of which is relieved by a few tamarisk and rethem trees. Under the names of El Ghor and El Araba, it forms the continuation of the Jordan valley, extending from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba.

**Rehob** — or, Beth-rehob, was a city and district situated, according to some, eastward of Sidon; and, according to others, it is the same as El Hule, an extensive and fertile champaign country, at the foot of Antilibanus, a few leagues below Paneas.

as men come to Hamath — or, "the entering in of Hamath" (\*\*22 Kings 14:25), now the valley of Balbeck, a mountain pass or opening in the northern frontier, which formed the extreme limit in that direction of the inheritance of Israel. From the mention of these places, the route of the scouts appears to have been along the course of the Jordan in their advance; and their return was by the western border through the territories of the Sidonians and Philistines.

**22.** *unto Hebron* — situated in the heart of the mountains of Judah, in the southern extremity of Palestine. The town or "cities of Hebron," as it is expressed in the *Hebrew*, consists of a number of sheikdoms distinct from each other, standing at the foot of one of those hills that form a bowl round and enclose it. "The children of Anak" mentioned in this verse seem to have been also chiefs of townships; and this coincidence of polity, existing in ages so distant from each other, is remarkable [Vere Monro]. Hebron (Kirjath Arba, "Cenesis 23:2) was one of the oldest cities in the world.

**Zoan** — (the Tunis of the Greeks) was situated on one of the eastern branches of the Nile, near the lake Menzala, and was the early royal residence of the Pharaohs. It boasted a higher antiquity than any other city in Egypt. Its name, which signifies flat and level, is descriptive of its situation in the low grounds of the Delta.

**23.** they came unto the brook of Eshcol — that is, "the torrent of the cluster." Its location was a little to the southwest of Hebron. The valley and its sloping hills are still covered with vineyards, the character of whose fruit corresponds to its ancient celebrity.

and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes — The grapes reared in this locality are still as magnificent as formerly — they are said by one to be equal in size to prunes, and compared by another to a man's thumb. One cluster sometimes weights ten or twelve pounds. The mode of carrying the cluster cut down by the spies, though not necessary from its weight, was evidently adopted to preserve it entire as a specimen of the productions of the promised land; and the impression made by the sight of it would be all the greater because the Israelites were familiar only with the scanty vines and small grapes of Egypt.

- **26.** *they came ... to Kadesh* an important encampment of the Israelites. But its exact situation is not definitely known, nor is it determined whether it is the same or a different place from Kadesh-barnea. It is supposed to be identical with Ain-el-Weibeh, a famous spring on the eastern side of the desert [ROBINSON], or also with Petra [STANLEY].
- 27, 28. they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey The report was given publicly in the audience of the people, and it was artfully arranged to begin their narrative with commendations of the natural fertility of the country in order that their subsequent slanders might the more readily receive credit.
- **29.** *The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south* Their territory lay between the Dead and the Red Seas, skirting the borders of Canaan.

Hittites ... dwell in the mountains — Their settlements were in the southern and mountainous part of Palestine (4020) Genesis 23:7).

- *the Canaanites dwell by the sea* The remnant of the original inhabitants, who had been dispossessed by the Philistines, were divided into two nomadic hordes one settled eastward near the Jordan; the other westward, by the Mediterranean.
- **32.** a land that eateth up the inhabitants that is, an unhealthy climate and country. Jewish writers say that in the course of their travels they saw a great many funerals, vast numbers of the Canaanites being cut off at that time, in the providence of God, by a plague or the hornet (GOD) Joshua 24:12).

*men of a great stature* — This was evidently a false and exaggerated report, representing, from timidity or malicious artifice, what was true of a few as descriptive of the people generally.

**33.** there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak — The name is derived from the son of Arba, a great man among the Arabians ( osladoshua 15:14), who probably obtained his appellation from wearing a splendid collar or chain round his neck, as the word imports. The epithet "giant" evidently refers here to stature. (See on Genesis 6:4). And it is probable the Anakims were a distinguished family, or perhaps a select body of warriors, chosen for their extraordinary size.

we were in our own sight as grasshoppers — a strong Orientalism, by which the treacherous spies gave an exaggerated report of the physical strength of the people of Canaan.

## **NUMBERS 14:1-45.**

#### THE PEOPLE MURMUR AT THE SPIES' REPORT.

- **1.** all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried Not literally all, for there were some exceptions.
- **2-4.** Would God that we had died in Egypt Such insolence to their generous leaders, and such base ingratitude to God, show the deep degradation of the Israelites, and the absolute necessity of the decree that debarred that generation from entering the promised land [\*\*Numbers 14:29-35]. They were punished by their wishes being granted to die in that wilderness [\*\*\*Mebrews 3:17 \*\*\*Mude 1:5]. A leader to reconduct them to Egypt is spoken of (\*\*\*Mehemiah 9:17) as actually nominated. The sinfulness and insane folly of their conduct are almost incredible. Their conduct, however, is paralleled by too many among us, who shrink from the smallest difficulties and rather remain slaves to sin than resolutely try to surmount the obstacles that lie in their way to the Canaan above.
- **5.** Moses and Aaron fell on their faces as humble and earnest suppliants either to the people, entreating them to desist from so perverse a design; or rather, to God, as the usual and only refuge from the violence of that tumultuous and stiff-necked rabble a hopeful means of softening and impressing their hearts.
- **6.** Joshua ... and Caleb, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes The two honest spies testified their grief and horror, in the strongest manner, at the mutiny against Moses and the blasphemy against God; while at the same time they endeavored, by a truthful statement, to persuade the people of the ease with which they might obtain possession of so desirable a country, provided they did not, by their rebellion and ingratitude, provoke God to abandon them.

- **8.** a land flowing with milk and honey a general expression, descriptive of a rich and fertile country. The two articles specified were among the principal products of the Holy Land.
- **9.** their defense is departed Hebrew, "their shadow." The Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia are called "the shadow of God," "the refuge of the world." So that the meaning of the clause, "their defense is departed from them," is, that the favor of God was now lost to those whose iniquities were full (\*\*OGenesis 15:16\*), and transferred to the Israelites.
- **10.** *the glory of the Lord appeared* It was seasonably manifested on this great emergency to rescue His ambassadors from their perilous situation.
- **12.** *the Lord said*, ... *I will smite them with the pestilence* not a final decree, but a threatening, suspended, as appeared from the issue, on the intercession of Moses and the repentance of Israel.
- **17.** *let the power of my Lord be great* be magnified.
- **21.** *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord* This promise, in its full acceptation, remains to be verified by the eventual and universal prevalence of Christianity in the world. But the terms were used restrictively in respect to the occasion, to the report which would spread over all the land of the "terrible things in righteousness" [\*\*\*\*Psalm 65:5] which God would do in the infliction of the doom described, to which that rebellious race was now consigned.
- **22.** *ten times* very frequently.
- **24.** *my servant Caleb* Joshua was also excepted, but he is not named because he was no longer in the ranks of the people, being a constant attendant on Moses.
- because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully Under the influence of God's Spirit, Caleb was a man of bold, generous, heroic courage, above worldly anxieties and fears.
- **25.** (*Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley*) that is, on the other side of the Idumean mountain, at whose base they were then encamped. Those nomad tribes had at that time occupied it with a

determination to oppose the further progress of the Hebrew people. Hence God gave the command that they seek a safe and timely retreat into the desert, to escape the pursuit of those resolute enemies, to whom, with their wives and children, they would fall a helpless prey because they had forfeited the presence and protection of God. This verse forms an important part of the narrative and should be freed from the parenthetical form which our English translators have given it.

- **30.** *save Caleb* ... *and Joshua* These are specially mentioned, as honorable exceptions to the rest of the scouts, and also as the future leaders of the people. But it appears that some of the old generation did not join in the mutinous murmuring, including in that number the whole order of the priests (\*\*GSG\*\*Joshua 14:1).
- **34.** *ye shall know my breach of promise* that is, in consequence of your violation of the covenant betwixt you and Me, by breaking the terms of it, it shall be null and void on My part, as I shall withhold the blessings I promised in that covenant to confer on you on condition of your obedience.
- **36-38.** those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord Ten of the spies struck dead on the spot either by the pestilence or some other judgment. This great and appalling mortality clearly betokened the hand of the Lord.
- **40-45.** they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain Notwithstanding the tidings that Moses communicated and which diffused a general feeling of melancholy and grief throughout the camp, the impression was of very brief continuance. They rushed from one extreme of rashness and perversity to another, and the obstinacy of their rebellious spirit was evinced by their active preparations to ascend the hill, notwithstanding the divine warning they had received not to undertake that enterprise.

for we have sinned — that is, realizing our sin, we now repent of it, and are eager to do as Caleb and Joshua exhorted us — or, as some render it, though we have sinned, we trust God will yet give us the land of promise. The entreaties of their prudent and pious leader, who represented to them that their enemies, scaling the other side of the valley, would post

themselves on the top of the hill before them, were disregarded. How strangely perverse the conduct of the Israelites, who, shortly before, were afraid that, though their Almighty King was with them, they could not get possession of the land; and yet now they act still more foolishly in supposing that, though God were not with them, they could expel the inhabitants by their unaided efforts. The consequences were such as might have been anticipated. The Amalekites and Canaanites, who had been lying in ambuscade expecting their movement, rushed down upon them from the heights and became the instruments of punishing their guilty rebellion.

**45.** *even unto Hormah* — The name was afterwards given to that place in memory of the immense slaughter of the Israelites on this occasion.

### NUMBERS 15:1-41.

#### THE LAW OF SUNDRY OFFERINGS.

- **1, 2.** The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel Some infer from Numbers 15:23 that the date of this communication must be fixed towards the close of the wanderings in the wilderness; and, also, that all the sacrifices prescribed in the law were to be offered only after the settlement in Canaan.
- 3. make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering It is evident that a peace offering is referred to because this term is frequently used in such a sense (\*\*Exodus 18:12 \*\*\*Exotus 17:5).
- **4.** tenth deal that is, an omer, the tenth part of an ephah (\*\*Exodus 16:36).
- *fourth part of an hin of oil* This element shows it to have been different from such meat offerings as were made by themselves, and not merely accompaniments of other sacrifices.
- **6-12.** *two tenth deals* The quantity of flour was increased because the sacrifice was of superior value to the former. The accessory sacrifices were always increased in proportion to the greater worth and magnitude of its principal.
- **13-16.** *a stranger* one who had become a proselyte. There were scarcely any of the national privileges of the Israelites, in which the Gentile stranger might not, on conforming to certain conditions, fully participate.
- 19. when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering The offering prescribed was to precede the act of eating.
- unto the Lord that is, the priests of the Lord (\*\*Ezekiel 44:30).

**20.** *heave offering of the threshing-floor* — meaning the corn on the threshing-floor; that is, after harvest.

**so shall ye heave it** — to the priests accompanying the ceremony with the same rites.

- **22.** *if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments*, etc. respecting the performance of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies that constitute the holy service. The law relates only to any omission and consequently is quite different from *that* laid down in \*\*Leviticus 4:13, which implies a transgression or positive neglect of some observances required. *This* law relates to private parties or individual tribes; *that* to the whole congregation of Israel.
- **24-26.** *if aught be committed by ignorance* The Mosaic ritual was complicated, and the ceremonies to be gone through in the various instances of purification which are specified, would expose a worshipper, through ignorance, to the risk of omitting or neglecting some of them. This law includes the stranger in the number of those for whom the sacrifice was offered for the sin of general ignorance.
- **27-29.** *if any soul sin through ignorance* not only in common with the general body of the people, but his personal sins were to be expiated in the same manner.
- **30.** the soul that doeth aught presumptuously Hebrew, "with an high" or "uplifted hand" that is, knowingly, wilfully, obstinately. In this sense the phraseology occurs (\*\*Exodus 14:8 \*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 26:21 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 19:13).

*the same reproacheth the Lord* — sets Him at open defiance and dishonors His majesty.

- **31.** *his iniquity shall be upon him* The punishment of his sins shall fall on himself individually; no guilt shall be incurred by the nation, unless there be a criminal carelessness in overlooking the offense.
- **32-34.** *a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day* This incident is evidently narrated as an instance of presumptuous sin. The mere gathering of sticks was not a sinful act and might be necessary for fuel to

warm him or to make ready his food. But its being done on the Sabbath altered the entire character of the action. The law of the Sabbath being a plain and positive commandment, this transgression of it was a known and wilful sin, and it was marked by several aggravations. For the deed was done with unblushing boldness in broad daylight, in open defiance of the divine authority — in flagrant inconsistency with His religious connection with Israel, as the covenant-people of God; and it was an application to improper purposes of time, which God had consecrated to Himself and the solemn duties of religion. The offender was brought before the rulers, who, on hearing the painful report, were at a loss to determine what ought to be done. That they should have felt any embarrassment in such a case may seem surprising, in the face of the sabbath law (\*Exodus 31:14). Their difficulty probably arose from this being the first public offense of the kind which had occurred; and the appeal might be made to remove all ground of complaint — to produce a more striking effect, so that the fate of this criminal might be a beacon to warn all Israelites in the future.

## 35, 36. The Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death

— The Lord was King, as well as God of Israel, and the offense being a violation of the law of the realm, the Sovereign Judge gave orders that this man should be put to death; and, moreover, He required the whole congregation unite in executing the fatal sentence.

## 38. bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments

— These were narrow strips, in a wing-like form, wrapped over the shoulders and on various parts of the attire. "Fringe," however, is the English rendering of two distinct *Hebrew* words — the one meaning a narrow lappet or edging, called the "hem" or "border" (\*\*\*Matthew 23:5\*\*\*Luke 8:44), which, in order to make it more attractive to the eye and consequently more serviceable to the purpose described, was covered with a riband of blue or rather purple color; the other term signifies strings with tassels at the end, fastened to the corners of the garment. Both of these are seen on the Egyptian and Assyrian frocks; and as the Jewish people were commanded by express and repeated ordinances to have them, the fashion was rendered subservient, in their case, to awaken high and religious associations — to keep them in habitual remembrance of the divine commandments.

**41.** *I am the Lord your God* — The import of this solemn conclusion is, that though He was displeased with them for their frequent rebellions, for which they would be doomed to forty years' wanderings, He would not abandon them but continue His divine protection and care of them till they were brought into the land of promise.

### **NUMBERS** 16:1-30.

#### THE REBELLION OF KORAH.

**1, 2.** *Now Korah, the son of Izhar* — Izhar, brother of Amram (\*\*Exodus 6:18), was the second son of Kohath, and for some reason unrecorded he had been supplanted by a descendant of the fourth son of Kohath, who was appointed prince or chief of the Kohathites (\*\*Numbers 3:30). Discontent with the preferment over him of a younger relative was probably the originating cause of this seditious movement on the part of Korah.

**Dathan and Abiram, ... and On** — These were confederate leaders in the rebellion, but On seems to have afterwards withdrawn from the conspiracy (compare Numbers 16:12,24,25,27 26:9 Deuteronomy 11:6 Psalm 106:17)

**took men** — The latter mentioned individuals, being all sons of Reuben, the eldest of Jacob's family, had been stimulated to this insurrection on the pretext that Moses had, by an arbitrary arrangement, taken away the right of primogeniture, which had vested the hereditary dignity of the priesthood in the first-born of every family, with a view of transferring the hereditary exercise of the sacred functions to a particular branch of his own house; and that this gross instance of partiality to his own relations, to the permanent detriment of others, was a sufficient ground for refusing allegiance to his government. In addition to this grievance, another cause of jealousy and dissatisfaction that rankled in the breasts of the Reubenites was the advancement of Judah to the leadership among the tribes. These malcontents had been incited by the artful representations of Korah (Jude 1:11), with whom the position of their camp on the south side afforded them facilities of frequent intercourse. In addition to his feeling of personal wrongs, Korah participated in their desire (if he did not originate the attempt) to recover their lost rights of primogeniture. When the

conspiracy was ripe, they openly and boldly declared its object, and at the head of two hundred fifty princes, charged Moses with an ambitious and unwarrantable usurpation of authority, especially in the appropriation of the priesthood, for they disputed the claim of Aaron also to pre-eminence [-0400]Numbers 16:3].

- 3. they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron The assemblage seems to have been composed of the whole band of conspirators; and they grounded their complaint on the fact that the whole people, being separated to the divine service (\*\*\*Exodus 19:6), were equally qualified to present offerings on the altar, and that God, being graciously, present among them by the tabernacle and the cloud, evinced His readiness to receive sacrifices from the hand of any others as well as from theirs
- **4.** when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face This attitude of prostration indicated not only his humble and earnest desire that God would interpose to free him from the false and odious imputation, but also his strong sense of the daring sin involved in this proceeding. Whatever feelings may be entertained respecting Aaron, who had formerly headed a sedition himself [\*\*Numbers 12:1], it is impossible not to sympathize with Moses in this difficult emergency. But he was a devout man, and the prudential course he adopted was probably the dictate of that heavenly wisdom with which, in answer to his prayers, he was endowed.
- **5-11.** *he spake unto Korah and unto all his company* They were first addressed, not only because they were a party headed by his own cousin and Moses might hope to have more influence in that quarter, but because they were stationed near the tabernacle; and especially because an expostulation was the more weighty coming from him who was a Levite himself, and who was excluded along with his family from the priesthood. But to bring the matter to an issue, he proposed a test which would afford a decisive evidence of the divine appointment.

**Even to-morrow** — literally, "in the morning," the usual time of meeting in the East for the settlement of public affairs.

- the Lord will show who are his, ... even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him that is, will bear attestation to his ministry by some visible or miraculous token of His approval.
- **6, 7.** *Take you censers, Korah, and all his company*, etc. that is, since you aspire to the priesthood, then go, perform the highest function of the office that of offering incense; and if you are accepted well. How magnanimous the conduct of Moses, who was now as willing that God's people should be priests, as formerly that they should be prophets (ONLINE) But he warned them that they were making a perilous experiment.
- **12-14.** *Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram* in a separate interview, the ground of their mutiny being different; for while Korah murmured against the exclusive appropriation of the priesthood to Aaron and his family, they were opposed to the supremacy of Moses in civil power. They refused to obey the summons; and their refusal was grounded on the plausible pretext that their stay in the desert was prolonged for some secret and selfish purposes of the leader, who was conducting them like blind men wherever it suited him.
- **15.** *Moses was very wroth* Though the meekest of all men [\*\*Numbers 12:3], he could not restrain his indignation at these unjust and groundless charges; and the highly excited state of his feeling was evinced by the utterance of a brief exclamation in the mixed form of a prayer and an impassioned assertion of his integrity. (Compare \*\*\*OTE\*\* Samuel 12:3).
- and said unto the Lord, Respect not thou their offering He calls it their offering, because, though it was to be offered by Korah and his Levitical associates, it was the united appeal of all the mutineers for deciding the contested claims of Moses and Aaron.
- **16-18.** Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord that is, at "the door of the tabernacle" (\*\*Numbers 16:18), that the assembled people might witness the experiment and be properly impressed by the issue.
- **17.** *two hundred fifty censers* probably the small platters, common in Egyptian families, where incense was offered to household deities and

which had been among the precious things borrowed at their departure (\*\*Exodus 12:35,36).

- **20, 21.** the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation Curiosity to witness the exciting spectacle attracted a vast concourse of the people, and it would seem that the popular mind had been incited to evil by the clamors of the mutineers against Moses and Aaron. There was something in their behavior very offensive to God; for after His glory had appeared as at the installation of Aaron (\*\*\*Leviticus 9:23), so now for his confirmation in the sacred office He bade Moses and Aaron withdraw from the assembly "that He might consume them in a moment."
- 22. they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh The benevolent importunity of their prayer was the more remarkable that the intercession was made for their enemies.
- **24-26.** Speak unto the congregation, ... Get you up from about the tabernacle Moses was attended in the execution of this mission by the elders. The united and urgent entreaties of so many dignified personages produced the desired effect of convincing the people of their crime, and of withdrawing them from the company of men who were doomed to destruction, lest, being partakers of their sins, they should perish along with them.
- **27.** *the tabernacle of Korah*, *Dathan*, *and Abiram* Korah being a Kohathite, his tent could not have been in the Reubenite camp, and it does not appear that he himself was on the spot where Dathan and Abiram stood with their families. Their attitude of defiance indicated their daring and impenitent character, equally regardless of God and man.
- **28-34.** Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works The awful catastrophe of the earthquake which, as predicted by Moses, swallowed up those impious rebels in a living tomb, gave the divine attestation to the mission of Moses and struck the spectators with solemn awe.
- **35.** *there came out a fire from the Lord* that is, from the cloud. This seems to describe the destruction of Korah and those Levites who with

him aspired to the functions of the priesthood. (See Numbers 26:11,58 Chronicles 6:22,37).

- **37-40.** *Speak unto Eleazar* He was selected lest the high priest might contract defilement from going among the dead carcasses.
- **39, 40.** the brazen censers ... made broad plates to be a memorial The altar of burnt offerings, being made of wood and covered with brass, this additional covering of broad plates not only rendered it doubly secure against the fire, but served as a warning beacon to deter all from future invasions of the priesthood.
- **41.** the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord What a strange exhibition of popular prejudice and passion to blame the leaders for saving the rebels! Yet Moses and Aaron interceded for the people the high priest perilling his own life in doing good to that perverse race.
- **48.** *he stood between the living and the dead* The plague seems to have begun in the extremities of the camp. Aaron, in this remarkable act, was a type of Christ.

### **OUTS** NUMBERS 17:1-13.

#### AARON'S ROD FLOURISHES.

**2-5.** *Speak unto the children of Israel* — The controversy with Moses and Aaron about the priesthood was of such a nature and magnitude as required a decisive and authoritative settlement. For the removal of all doubts and the silencing of all murmuring in the future regarding the holder of the office, a miracle was wrought of a remarkable character and permanent duration; and in the manner of performing it, all the people were made to have a direct and special interest.

take of every one ... princes ... twelve rods — As the princes, being the oldest sons of the chief family, and heads of their tribes, might have advanced the best claims to the priesthood, if that sacred dignity was to be shared among all the tribes, they were therefore selected, and being twelve in number — that of Joseph being counted only one — Moses was ordered to see that the name of each was inscribed — a practice borrowed from the Egyptians — upon his rod or wand of office. The name of Aaron rather than of Levi was used, as the latter name would have opened a door of controversy among the Levites; and as there was to be one rod only for the head of each tribe, the express appointment of a rod for Aaron determined him to be the head of that tribe, as well as that branch or family of the tribe to which the priestly dignity should belong. These rods were to be laid in the tabernacle close to the ark (compare of Numbers 17:10 and of Hebrews 9:4), where a divine token was promised that would for all time terminate the dispute.

**6.** the rod of Aaron was among their rods — either one of the twelve, or, as many suppose, a thirteenth in the midst (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 9:4). The rods were of dry sticks or wands, probably old, as transmitted from one head of the family to a succeeding.

- **8.** Moses went into the tabernacle being privileged to do so on this occasion by the special command of God. And he there beheld the remarkable spectacle of Aaron's rod which, according to Josephus, was a stick of an almond tree, bearing fruit in three different stages at once buds, blossoms, and fruit.
- **10.** Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels For if, after all admonitions and judgments, seconded by miracles, the people should still rebel, they would certainly pay the penalty by death.
- **12, 13.** *Behold*, *we die*, *we perish* an exclamation of fear, both from the remembrance of former judgments, and the apprehension of future relapses into murmuring.
- **13.** cometh any thing near that is, nearer than he ought to do; an error into which many may fall. Will the stern justice of God overtake every slight offense? We shall all be destroyed. Some, however, regard this exclamation as the symptom or a new discontent, rather than the indication of a reverential and submissive spirit. Let us fear and sin not.

### NUMBERS 18:1-7.

#### THE CHARGE OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

**1.** the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary — Security is here given to the people from the fears expressed (\*\*OTT\*\*Numbers 17:12), by the responsibility of attending to all sacred things being devolved upon the priesthood, together with the penalties incurred through neglect; and thus the solemn responsibilities annexed to their high dignity, of having to answer not only for their own sins, but also for the sins of the people, were calculated in a great measure to remove all feeling of envy at the elevation of Aaron's family, when the honor was weighed in the balance with its burdens and dangers.

**2-7.** *thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi* — The departments of the sacred office, to be filled respectively by the priests and Levites, are here assigned to each. To the priests was committed the charge of the sanctuary and the altar, while the Levites were to take care of everything else about the tabernacle. The Levites were to attend the priests as servants — bestowed on them as "gifts" to aid in the service of the tabernacle — while the high and dignified office of the priesthood was a "service of gift." "A stranger," that is, one, neither a priest nor a Levite, who should intrude into any departments of the sacred office, should incur the penalty of death.

**NUMBERS** 18:8-20.

#### THE PRIESTS' PORTION.

8-13. the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of my heave offerings — A recapitulation is made in this passage

of certain perquisites specially appropriated to the maintenance of the priests. They were parts of the votive and freewill offerings, including both meat and bread, wine and oil, and the first-fruits, which formed a large and valuable item.

- **14.** Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine provided it was adapted for food or consumable by use; for the gold and silver vessels that were dedicated as the spoils of victory were not given to the priests, but for the use and adornment of the sacred edifice.
- **19.** *it is a covenant of salt* that is, a perpetual ordinance. This figurative form of expression was evidently founded on the conservative property of salt, which keeps meat from corruption; and hence it became an emblem of inviolability and permanence. It is a common phrase among Oriental people, who consider the eating of salt a pledge of fidelity, binding them in a covenant of friendship. Hence the partaking of the altar meats, which were appropriated to the priests on condition of their services and of which salt formed a necessary accompaniment, was naturally called "a covenant of salt" (\*\*\*Teviticus 2:13).

## 

#### THE LEVITES' PORTION.

21, 22. I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve — Neither the priests nor the Levites were to possess any allotments of land but to depend entirely upon Him who liberally provided for them out of His own portion; and this law was subservient to many important purposes — such as that, being exempted from the cares and labors of worldly business, they might be exclusively devoted to His service; that a bond of mutual love and attachment might be formed between the people and the Levites, who, as performing religious services for the people, derived their subsistence from them; and further, that being the more easily dispersed among the different tribes, they might be more useful in instructing and directing the people.

- 23. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: they shall bear their iniquity They were to be responsible for the right discharge of those duties that were assigned to them, and consequently to bear the penalty that was due to negligence or carelessness in the guardianship of the holy things.
- **26.** the Levites ... offer ... a tenth of the tithe Out of their own they were to pay tithes to the priests equally as the people gave to them. The best of their tithes was to be assigned to the priests, and afterwards they enjoyed the same liberty to make use of the remainder that other Israelites had of the produce of their threshing-floors and wine-presses.
- **32.** *ye shall bear no sin by reason of it*, etc. Neglect in having the best entailed sin in the use of such unhallowed food. And the holy things would be polluted by the reservation to themselves of what should be offered to God and the priests.

### 

#### THE WATER OF SEPARATION.

**2.** This is the ordinance of the law — an institution of a peculiar nature ordained by law for the purification of sin, and provided at the public expense because it was for the good of the whole community.

Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, etc. — This is the only case in which the color of the victim is specified. It has been supposed the ordinance was designed in opposition to the superstitious notions of the Egyptians. That people never offered a vow but they sacrificed a red bull, the greatest care being taken by their priests in examining whether it possessed the requisite characteristics, and it was an annual offering to Typhon, their evil being. By the choice, both of the sex and the color, provision was made for eradicating from the minds of the Israelites a favorite Egyptian superstition regarding two objects of their animal worship.

**3-6.** ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest that he may bring her forth without the camp — He was the second or deputy high priest, and he was selected for this duty because the execution of it entailed temporary defilement, from which the acting high priest was to be preserved with the greatest care. It was led "forth without the camp," in accordance with the law regarding victims laden with the sins of the people, and thus typical of Christ ("Hebrews 13:12; also "Leviticus 24:14). The priest was to sprinkle the blood "seven times" before — literally, "towards" or "near" the tabernacle, a description which seems to imply either that he carried a portion of the blood in a basin to the door of the tabernacle ("Leviticus 4:17), or that in the act of sprinkling he turned his face towards the sacred edifice, being disqualified through the defiling influence of this operation from approaching close to it. By this attitude he indicated that he was presenting an expiatory sacrifice, for the acceptance of which he hoped, in

the grace of God, by looking to the mercy seat. Every part of it was consumed by fire except the blood used in sprinkling, and the ingredients mixed with the ashes were the same as those employed in the sprinkling of lepers (\*\*Eviticus 14:4-7). It was a water of separation — that is, of "sanctification" for the people of Israel.

- 7. the priest shall be unclean until the even The ceremonies prescribed show the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, while they typify the condition of Christ when expiating our sins (400) 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- 11-22. He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean This law is noticed here to show the uses to which the water of separation [OPPO] Numbers 19:9] was applied. The case of a death is one; and as in every family which sustained a bereavement the members of the household became defiled, so in an immense population, where instances of mortality and other cases of uncleanness would be daily occurring, the water of separation must have been in constant requisition. To afford the necessary supply of the cleansing mixture, the Jewish writers say that a red heifer was sacrificed every year, and that the ashes, mingled with the sprinkling ingredients, were distributed through all the cities and towns of Israel.
- **12.** He shall purify himself ... the third day The necessity of applying the water on the third day is inexplicable on any natural or moral ground; and, therefore, the regulation has been generally supposed to have had a typical reference to the resurrection, on that day, of Christ, by whom His people are sanctified; while the process of ceremonial purification being extended over seven days, was intended to show that sanctification is progressive and incomplete till the arrival of the eternal Sabbath. Every one knowingly and presumptuously neglecting to have himself sprinkled with this water was guilty of an offense which was punished by excommunication.
- **14.** when a man dieth in a tent, etc. The instances adduced appear very minute and trivial; but important ends, both of a religious and of a sanitary nature, were promoted by carrying the idea of pollution from contact with dead bodies to so great an extent. While it would effectually prevent that Egyptianized race of Israelites imitating the superstitious custom of the Egyptians, who kept in their houses the mummied remains of their ancestors, it ensured a speedy interment to all, thus not only

keeping burial places at a distance, but removing from the habitations of the living the corpses of persons who died from infectious disorders, and from the open field the unburied remains of strangers and foreigners who fell in battle.

21. he that sprinkleth ...; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even — The opposite effects ascribed to the water of separation — of cleansing one person and defiling another — are very singular, and not capable of very satisfactory explanation. One important lesson, however, was thus taught, that its purifying efficacy was not inherent in itself, but arose from the divine appointment, as in other ordinances of religion, which are effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but solely through the grace of God communicated thereby.

## NUMBERS 20:1-29.

#### THE DEATH OF MIRIAM.

1. Then came the children of Israel ... into the desert of Zin in the first month — that is, of the fortieth year (compare Numbers 20:22,23, with Numbers 33:38). In this history only the principal and most important incidents are recorded, those confined chiefly to the first or second and the last years of the journeyings in the wilderness, thence called Et-Tih. Between Numbers 19:22 and Numbers 20:1 there is a long and undescribed interval of thirty-seven years.

the people abode in Kadesh — supposed to be what is now known as Ain-el-Weibeh, three springs surrounded by palms. (See on Numbers 13:26). It was their second arrival after an interval of thirty-eight years (Deuteronomy 1:19). The old generation had nearly all died, and the new one encamped in it with the view of entering the promised land, not, however, as formerly on the south, but by crossing the Edomite region on the east.

*Miriam died there* — four months before Aaron [ Numbers 33:38].

- **2-13.** *there was no water for the congregation* There was at Kadesh a fountain, En-Mishpat (Genesis 14:7), and at the first encampment of the Israelites there was no want of water. It was then either partially dried up by the heat of the season, or had been exhausted by the demands of so vast a multitude.
- **6.** Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly Here is a fresh ebullition of the untamed and discontented spirit of the people. The leaders fled to the precincts of the sanctuary, both as an asylum from the increasing fury of the highly excited rabble, and as their usual refuge in seasons of perplexity and danger, to implore the direction and aid of God.

- **8.** *Take the rod* which had been deposited in the tabernacle (\*\*Numbers 17:10), the wonder-working rod by which so many miracles had been performed, sometimes called "the rod of God" (\*\*\*Exodus 4:20), sometimes Moses' (\*\*\*Numbers 20:11) or Aaron's rod (\*\*\*\*Exodus 7:12).
- **10.** [Moses] *said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels*; *must we fetch you water out of this rock?* The conduct of the great leader on this occasion was hasty and passionate (\*\*\*Psalm 106:33). He had been directed to *speak* to the rock [\*\*\*Numbers 20:8], but he *smote it twice* [\*\*\*Numbers 20:11] in his impetuosity, thus endangering the blossoms of the rod, and, instead of speaking to the *rock*, he spoke to the *people* in a fury.
- **11.** *the congregation drank, and their beasts* Physically the water afforded the same kind of needful refreshment to both. But from a religious point of view, this, which was only a common element to the cattle, was a sacrament to the people (\*\*\*\*\* Corinthians 10:3,4) It possessed a relative sanctity imparted to it by its divine origin and use.
- **12.** The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, etc. The act of Moses in smiting twice betrayed a doubt, not of the power, but of the will of God to gratify such a rebellious people, and his exclamation seems to have emanated from a spirit of incredulity akin to Sarai's (\*\*Genesis 18:13). These circumstances indicate the influence of unbelief, and there might have been others unrecorded which led to so severe a chastisement.
- **13.** This is the water of Meribah The word "Kadesh" is added to it [\*\*Deuteronomy 32:51] to distinguish it from another Meribah (\*\*\*Exodus 17:7).
- **14-16.** *Moses sent messengers* ... *to the king of Edom* The encampment at Kadesh was on the confines of the Edomite territory, through which the Israelites would have had an easy passage across the Arabah by Wady-el-Ghuweir, so that they could have continued their course around Moab, and approached Palestine from the east [ROBERTS]. The Edomites, being the descendants of Esau and tracing their line of descent from Abraham as their common stock, were recognized by the Israelites as brethren, and a very brotherly message was sent to them.

- 17. we will go by the king's highway probably Wady-el-Ghuweir [ROBERTS], through which ran one of the great lines of road, constructed for commercial caravans, as well as for the progress of armies. The engineering necessary for carrying them over marshes or mountains, and the care requisite for protecting them from the shifting sands, led to their being under the special care of the state. Hence the expression, "the king's highway," which is of great antiquity.
- **19.** if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it From the scarcity of water in the warm climates of the East, the practice of levying a tax for the use of the wells is universal; and the jealousy of the natives, in guarding the collected treasures of rain, is often so great that water cannot be procured for money.
- **21.** Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border, etc. A churlish refusal obliged them to take another route. (See on Numbers 21:4; ODD Deuteronomy 2:4; and ODD Judges 11:18; see also ODD Samuel 14:47 Samuel 8:14, which describe the retribution that was taken.)
- **22.** the children of Israel ... came unto mount Hor now Gebel Haroun, the most striking and lofty elevation in the Seir range, called emphatically "the mount" (\*\*Numbers 20:28). It is conspicuous by its double top.
- **24-28.** Aaron shall be gathered unto his people In accordance with his recent doom, he, attired in the high priest's costume, was commanded to ascend that mountain and die. But although the time of his death was hastened by the divine displeasure as a punishment for his sins, the manner of his death was arranged in tenderness of love, and to do him honor at the close of his earthly service. His ascent of the mount was to afford him a last look of the camp and a distant prospect of the promised land. The simple narrative of the solemn and impressive scene implies, though it does not describe, the pious resignation, settled faith, and inward peace of the aged pontiff.
- **26.** *strip Aaron of his garments* that is, his pontifical robes, in token of his resignation. (See \*\*\*\*Tsaiah 22:20-25).

*put them on his son* — as the inauguration into his high office. Having been formerly anointed with the sacred oil, that ceremony was not repeated, or, as some think, it was done on his return to the camp.

- **28.** Aaron died there in the top of the mount (See on <sup>dout</sup>Deuteronomy 10:6). A tomb has been erected upon or close by the spot where he was buried.
- **29.** When all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead Moses and Eleazar were the sole witnesses of his departure (\*\*Numbers 20:28). According to the established law, the new high priest could not have been present at the funeral of his father without contracting ceremonial defilement (\*\*ElliLeviticus 21:11). But that law was dispensed with in the extraordinary circumstances. The people learned the event not only from the recital of the two witnesses, but from their visible signs of grief and change; and this event betokened the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood (\*\*\*ElliPhenews 7:12).

they mourned for Aaron thirty days — the usual period of public and solemn mourning. (See on Deuteronomy 34:8).

## **OPOO!** NUMBERS 21:1-35.

#### ISRAEL ATTACKED BY THE CANAANITES.

**1.** *King Arad the Canaanite* — rather, "the Canaanite king of Arad" — an ancient town on the southernmost borders of Palestine, not far from Kadesh. A hill called Tell Arad marks the spot.

heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies — in the way or manner of spies, stealthily, or from spies sent by himself to ascertain the designs and motions of the Israelites. The Septuagint and others consider the Hebrew word "spies" a proper NAME, and render it: "Came by the way of Atharim towards Arad" [KENNICOTT].

he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners — This discomfiture was permitted to teach them to expect the conquest of Canaan not from their own wisdom and valor, but solely from the favor and help of God (\*\*Deuteronomy 9:4 \*\*Psalm 44:3,4).

- **2, 3.** *Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord* Made to feel their own weakness, they implored the aid of Heaven, and, in anticipation of it, *devoted* the cities of this king to future destruction. The nature and consequence of such anathemas are described (\*\*\*Leviticus 27:1-34\*\*\*Deuteronomy 13:1-18). This vow of extermination against Arad (\*\*\*Unumbers 21:2) gave name to the place Hormah (slaughter and destruction) though it was not accomplished till after the passage of the Jordan. Others think Hormah the name of a town mentioned (\*\*\*Joshua 12:14).
- **4.** *they journeyed from mount Hor* On being refused the passage requested, they returned through the Arabah, "the way of the Red Sea," to Elath, at the head of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and thence passed up through the mountains to the eastern desert, so as to make the circuit of the land of Edom (\*\*Numbers 33:41,42).

### the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way —

Disappointment on finding themselves so near the confines of the promised land without entering it; vexation at the refusal of a passage through Edom and the absence of any divine interposition in their favor; and above all, the necessity of a retrograde journey by a long and circuitous route through the worst parts of a sandy desert and the dread of being plunged into new and unknown difficulties — all this produced a deep depression of spirits. But it was followed, as usually, by a gross outburst of murmuring at the scarcity of water, and of expressions of disgust at the manna.

- **5.** our soul loatheth this light bread that is, bread without substance or nutritious quality. The refutation of this calumny appears in the fact, that on the strength of this food they performed for forty years so many and toilsome journeys. But they had been indulging a hope of the better and more varied fare enjoyed by a settled people; and disappointment, always the more bitter as the hope of enjoyment seems near, drove them to speak against God and against Moses (\*\*\*\*\*) Corinthians 10:9).
- **6.** The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people That part of the desert where the Israelites now were near the head of the gulf of Akaba is greatly infested with venomous reptiles, of various kinds, particularly lizards, which raise themselves in the air and swing themselves from branches; and scorpions, which, being in the habit of lying in long grass, are particularly dangerous to the barelegged, sandaled people of the East. The only known remedy consists in sucking the wound, or, in the case of cattle, in the application of ammonia. The exact species of serpents that caused so great mortality among the Israelites cannot be ascertained. They are said to have been "fiery," an epithet applied to them either from their bright, vivid color, or the violent inflammation their bite occasioned.
- **7-9.** *the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned* The severity of the scourge and the appalling extent of mortality brought them to a sense of sin, and through the intercessions of Moses, which they implored, they were miraculously healed. He was directed to make the figure of a serpent in brass, to be elevated on a pole or standard, that it might be seen at the extremities of the camp and that every bitten Israelite who looked to it might be healed. This peculiar method of cure was

- designed, in the first instance, to show that it was the efficacy of God's power and grace, not the effect of nature or art, and also that it might be a type of the power of faith in Christ to heal all who look to Him because of their sins (\*\*\*John 3:14,15; see also on \*\*\*\*Z Kings 18:4).
- **10.** *the children of Israel set forward* along the eastern frontier of the Edomites, encamping in various stations.
- **12.** *pitched in the valley* literally, the "woody brook-valley" of Zared ("Deuteronomy 2:13 "Isaiah 15:7" Amos 6:14). This torrent rises among the mountains to the east of Moab, and flowing west, empties itself into the Dead Sea. Ije-Abarim is supposed to have been its ford [CALMET].
- **13.** *pitched on the other side of Arnon* now El-Mojib, a deep, broad, and rapid stream, dividing the dominions of the Moabites and Amorites.
- **14.** *book of the wars of the Lord* A fragment or passage is here quoted from a poem or history of the wars of the Israelites, principally with a view to decide the position of Arnon.
- **15.** *Ar* the capital of Moab.
- **16.** from thence they went to Beer that is, a "well." The name was probably given to it afterwards [see \*\*Judges 9:21], as it is not mentioned (\*\*\*Numbers 33:1-56).
- 17, 18. *Then Israel sang* This beautiful little song was in accordance with the wants and feelings of travelling caravans in the East, where water is an occasion both of prayer and thanksgiving. From the princes using their official rods only, and not spades, it seems probable that this well was concealed by the brushwood or the sand, as is the case with many wells in Idumea still. The discovery of it was seasonable, and owing to the special interposition of God.
- **21-23.** *Israel sent messengers unto Sihon* The rejection of their respectful and pacific message was resented Sihon was discomfited in battle and Israel obtained by right of conquest the whole of the Amorite dominions.
- **24.** *from Arnon unto Jabbok* now the Zurka. These rivers formed the southern and northern boundaries of his usurped territory.

- *for the border of ... Ammon was strong* a reason stated for Sihon not being able to push his invasion further.
- **25.** *Israel dwelt in all the cities* after exterminating the inhabitants who had been previously doomed (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 2:34).
- **26.** *Heshbon* (So 7:4) situated sixteen English miles north of the Arnon, and from its ruins it appears to have been a large city.
- **27-30.** Wherefore they that speak in proverbs Here is given an extract from an Amorite song exultingly anticipating an extension of their conquests to Arnon. The quotation from the poem of the Amorite bard ends at \*\*Numbers 21:28. The two following verses appear to be the strains in which the Israelites expose the impotence of the usurpers.
- **29.** *people of Chemosh* the name of the Moabite idol ( Kings 11:7-33 Kings 23:13 Kings 48:46).
- **he** that is, their god, hath surrendered his worshippers to the victorious arms of Sihon.
- **33.** they turned and went up by the way of Bashan a name given to that district from the richness of the soil now Batanea or El-Bottein a hilly region east of the Jordan lying between the mountains of Hermon on the north and those of Gilead on the south.
- **Og** a giant, an Amoritish prince, who, having opposed the progress of the Israelites, was defeated.
- **34, 35.** *The Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not* a necessary encouragement, for Og's gigantic stature (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 3:11) was calculated to inspire terror. He and all his were put to the sword.

### **NUMBERS** 22:1-20.

### BALAK'S FIRST MESSAGE FOR BALAAM REFUSED.

- **1.** *Israel* ... *pitched in the plains of Moab* so called from having formerly belonged to that people, though wrested from them by Sihon. It was a dry, sunken, desert region on the east of the Jordan valley, opposite Jericho.
- **2.** *Balak* that is, "empty." Terrified (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:25 \*\*Exodus 15:15) at the approach of so vast a multitude and not daring to encounter them in the field, he resolved to secure their destruction by other means.
- **4.** *elders of Midian* called kings (\*\*\*Numbers 31:8) and princes (\*\*\*Toshua 13:21). The Midianites, a distinct people on the southern frontier of Moab, united with them as confederates against Israel, their common enemy.
- **5.** He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam that is, "lord" or "devourer" of people, a famous soothsayer (\*\*\*\*\*Joshua 13:22).

son of Beor — or, in the Chaldee form, Bosor — that is, "destruction."

**Pethor** — a city of Mesopotamia, situated on the Euphrates.

**6.** Come ... curse me this people — Among the heathen an opinion prevailed that prayers for evil or curses would be heard by the unseen powers as well as prayers for good, when offered by a prophet or priest and accompanied by the use of certain rites. Many examples are found in the histories of the Greeks and Romans of whole armies being devoted to destruction, and they occur among the natives of India and other heathen countries still. In the Burmese war, magicians were employed to curse the British troops.

- 7. the elders of Moab and ... of Midian departed with the rewards of divination like the fee of a fortune teller, and being a royal present, it would be something handsome.
- **8-14.** Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me, etc. God usually revealed His will in visions and dreams; and Balaam's birth and residence in Mesopotamia, where the remains of patriarchal religion still lingered, account for his knowledge of the true God. His real character has long been a subject of discussion. Some, judging from his language, have thought him a saint; others, looking to his conduct, have described him as an irreligious charlatan; and a third class consider him a novice in the faith, who had a fear of God, but who had not acquired power over his passions [HENGSTENBERG].
- 13-15. the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you This answer has an appearance of being good, but it studiously concealed the reason of the divine prohibition (\*\*PNumbers 22:12), and it intimated his own willingness and desire to go if permitted. Balak despatched a second mission, which held out flattering prospects, both to his avarice and his ambition (\*\*Genesis 31:30).
- **19, 20.** *tarry ye also here this night*, *that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more* The divine will, as formerly declared, not being according to his desires, he hoped by a second request to bend it, as he had already bent his own conscience, to his ruling passions of pride and covetousness. The permission granted to Balaam is in accordance with the ordinary procedure of Providence. God often gives up men to follow the impulse of their own lusts; but there is no approval in thus leaving them to act at the prompting of their own wicked hearts (AREZ) Joshua 13:27).

### NUMBERS 22:21-41.

#### THE JOURNEY.

- **21.** *Balaam* ... *saddled his ass* probably one of the white sprightly animals which persons of rank were accustomed to ride. The saddle, as usually in the East, would be nothing more than a pad or his outer cloak.
- **22.** God's anger was kindled because he went The displeasure arose partly from his neglecting the condition on which leave was granted him namely, to wait till the princes of Moab "came to call him" [ Numbers 22:20], and because, through desire for "the wages of unrighteousness" [ Peter 2:15], he entertained the secret purpose of acting in opposition to the solemn charge of God.
- **24.** the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards The roads which lead through fields and vineyards are so narrow that in most parts a man could not pass a beast without care and caution. A stone or mud fence flanks each side of these roads, to prevent the soil being washed off by the rains.
- **28.** the Lord opened the mouth of the ass to utter, like a parrot, articulate sounds, without understanding them. That this was a visionary scene is a notion which seems inadmissible, because of the improbability of a vision being described as an actual occurrence in the middle of a plain history. Besides, the opening of the ass's mouth must have been an external act, and that, with the manifest tenor of Peter's language, strongly favors the literal view [ Peter 2:15,16]. The absence of any surprise at such a phenomenon on the part of Balaam may be accounted for by his mind being wholly engrossed with the prospect of gain, which produced "the madness of the prophet" [ Peter 2:16]. "It was a miracle, wrought to humble his proud heart, which had to be first subjected in the school of an ass before he was brought to attend to the voice of God speaking by the angel" [CALVIN].

- 34, 35. *I have sinned* ... *if it displease thee, I will get me back again* Notwithstanding this confession, he evinced no spirit of penitence, as he speaks of desisting only from the outward act. The words "go with the men" was a mere withdrawal of further restraint, but the terms in which leave was given are more absolute and peremptory than those in "OPEN" Numbers 22:20.
- 36, 37. when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him Politeness requires that the higher the rank of the expected guest, greater distance is to be gone to welcome his arrival.
- **38.** the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak This appears a pious answer. It was an acknowledgment that he was restrained by a superior power.
- **39.** *Kirjath-huzoth* that is, "a city of streets."
- **40.** *Balak offered oxen and sheep* made preparations for a grand entertainment to Balaam and the princes of Midian.
- **41.** *high places of Baal* eminences consecrated to the worship of Baalpeor (see on \*\*DNumbers 25:3) or Chemosh

## NUMBERS 23:1-30.

#### BALAK'S SACRIFICES.

- 1. Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars Balak, being a heathen, would naturally suppose these altars were erected in honor of Baal, the patron deity of his country. It is evident, from Numbers 23:4 that they were prepared for the worship of the true God; although in choosing the high places of Baal as their site and rearing a number of altars (Kings 18:22 Kings 18:22 Kings 18:22 Kings 18:22 Kings 19:40). Jeremiah 11:13 Kings Hosea 8:11 10:1), instead of one only, as God had appointed, Balaam blended his own superstitions with the divine worship. The heathen, both in ancient and modern times, attached a mysterious virtue to the number seven; and Balaam, in ordering the preparation of so many altars, designed to mystify and delude the king.
- **3.** Stand by thy burnt offering as one in expectation of an important favor.

peradventure the Lord will come to meet me: and whatsoever he showeth me — that is, makes known to me by word or sign.

*he went to an high place* — apart by himself, where he might practice rites and ceremonies, with a view to obtain a response of the oracle.

- **4-6.** *God met Balaam* not in compliance with his incantations, but to frustrate his wicked designs and compel him, contrary to his desires and interests, to pronounce the following benediction (\*\*Numbers 23:8-10).
- **7.** *took up his parable* that is, spoke under the influence of inspiration, and in the highly poetical, figurative, and oracular style of a prophet.

**brought me from Aram** — This word joined with "the mountains of the East," denotes the upper portion of Mesopotamia, lying on the east of

Moab. The East enjoyed an infamous notoriety for magicians and soothsayers (\*\*Tsaiah 2:6).

- **8.** How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? A divine blessing has been pronounced over the posterity of Jacob; and therefore, whatever prodigies can be achieved by my charms, all magical skill, all human power, is utterly impotent to counteract the decree of God.
- **9.** *from the top* literally, "a bare place" on the rocks, to which Balak had taken him, for it was deemed necessary to see the people who were to be devoted to destruction. But that commanding prospect could contribute nothing to the accomplishment of the king's object, for the destiny of Israel was to be a distinct, peculiar people, separated from the rest of the nations in government, religion, customs, and divine protection (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 33:28). So that although I might be able to gratify your wishes against other people, I can do nothing against them (\*\*\*Exodus 19:5\*\*\*Leviticus 20:24).
- **10.** Who can count the dust of Jacob? an Oriental hyperbole for a very populous nation, as Jacob's posterity was promised to be (\*\*Genesis 13:16 28:14).

*the number of the fourth part of Israel* — that is, the camp consisted of four divisions; every one of these parts was formidable in numbers.

Let me die the death of the righteous — Hebrew, "of Jeshurun"; or, the Israelites. The meaning is: they are a people happy, above all others, not only in life, but at death, from their knowledge of the true God, and their hope through His grace. Balaam is a representative of a large class in the world, who express a wish for the blessedness which Christ has promised to His people but are averse to imitate the mind that was in Him.

13-15. Come, ... with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them — Surprised and disappointed at this unexpected eulogy on Israel, Balak hoped that, if seen from a different point of observation, the prophet would give utterance to different feelings; and so, having made the same solemn preparations, Balaam retired, as before, to wait the divine afflatus.

- **14.** *he brought him into the field of Zophim ... top of Pisgah* a flat surface on the summit of the mountain range, which was cultivated land. Others render it "the field of sentinels," an eminence where some of Balak's guards were posted to give signals [CALMET].
- **18, 19.** *Rise up* As Balak was already standing (\*\*Numbers 23:17), this expression is equivalent to "now attend to me." The counsels and promises of God respecting Israel are unchangeable; and no attempt to prevail on Him to reverse them will succeed, as they may with a man.
- **21.** *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob* Many sins were observed and punished in this people. But no such universal and hopeless apostasy had as yet appeared, to induce God to abandon or destroy them.

the Lord his God is with him — has a favor for them.

and the shout of a king is among them — such joyful acclamations as of a people rejoicing in the presence of a victorious prince.

- **22.** *he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn* Israel is not as they were at the Exodus, a horde of poor, feeble, spiritless people, but powerful and invincible as a *reem* that is, a rhinoceros (\*\*\*\*Job 39:9\*\*\*Psalm 22:21 \*\*\*\*Py2:10).
- **23.** Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob No art can ever prevail against a people who are under the shield of Omnipotence, and for whom miracles have been and yet shall be performed, which will be a theme of admiration in succeeding ages.
- **26.** All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do a remarkable confession that he was divinely constrained to give utterances different from what it was his purpose and inclination to do.
- **28.** *Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor* or, Beth-peor (\*\*Deuteronomy 3:29), the eminence on which a temple of Baal stood.

*that looketh toward Jeshimon* — the desert tract in the south of Palestine, on both sides of the Dead Sea.

## **ODDINUMBERS** 24:1-25.

#### BALAAM FORETELLS ISRAEL'S HAPPINESS.

- **1.** to seek for that is, to use enchantments. His experience on the two former occasions (\*\*Numbers 23:3,15) had taught him that these superstitious accompaniments of his worship were useless, and therefore he now simply looked towards the camp of Israel, either with a secret design to curse them, or to await the divine afflatus.
- **2.** he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes that is, in the orderly distribution of the camp (\*\*\* Numbers 2:1-34).
- the spirit of God came upon him Before the regular ministry of the prophets was instituted, God made use of various persons as the instruments through whom He revealed His will, and Balaam was one of these (\*\*Deuteronomy 23:5).
- **3.** the man whose eyes are open that is, a seer (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 9:9), a prophet, to whom the visioned future was disclosed sometimes when falling into a sleep (\*\*\*\*\* Genesis 15:12-15), frequently into "a trance."
- **5-7.** How goodly are thy tents, ... O Israel! a fine burst of admiration, expressed in highly poetical strains. All travelers describe the beauty which the circular area of Bedouin tents impart to the desert. How impressive, then, must have been the view, as seen from the heights of Abarim, of the immense camp of Israel extended over the subjacent plains.
- **6.** As the valleys Hebrew, "brooks," the watercourses of the mountains.
- *lign aloes* an aromatic shrub on the banks of his native Euphrates, the conical form of which suggested an apt resemblance to a tent. The redundant imagery of these verses depicts the humble origin, rapid progress, and prosperity of Israel.

- **7.** his king shall be higher than Agag The Amalekites were then the most powerful of all the desert tribes, and "Agag" a title common to their kings.
- **10-14.** Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together The "smiting of the hands together" is, among Oriental people, an indication of the most violent rage (see \*\*Ezekiel 21:17\*\*22:13) and ignominious dismissal.
- **15.** *he took his parable* or prophecy, uttered in a poetical style.
- **17.** *I shall see him* rather, "I do see" or "I have seen him" a prophetic sight, like that of Abraham (\*\*\*John 8:56).

**him** — that is, Israel.

there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel

— This imagery, in the hieroglyphic language of the East, denotes some eminent ruler — primarily David; but secondarily and pre-eminently, the Messiah (see on Genesis 49:10).

**corners** — or, "smite through the princes of Moab"; "corners," or border, often used for a whole country (\*\*Exodus 8:2\*\*\*Psalm 74:17).

*children of Sheth* — some prince of Moab; or, according to some, "the children of the East."

**18.** *Edom shall be a possession* — This prophecy was accomplished by David (\*\*2 Samuel 8:14).

**19.** *Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion* — David, and particularly Christ.

*that remaineth of the city* — those who flee from the field to fortified places (\*\*\*Psalm 60:9).

**20.** Amalek ... his latter end shall be that he perish for ever — Their territory was seen at the remote extremity of the desert. (See on Exodus 17:13; also 15:1-35).

- **21.** Kenites ... nest in a rock Though securely established among the clefts in the high rocks of En-gedi towards the west, they should be gradually reduced by a succession of enemies till the Assyrian invader carried them into captivity (\*\*Judges 1:16 4:11,16,17; also\*\* 2 Kings 15:29 17:6).
- **23.** *who shall live when God doeth this*! Few shall escape the desolation that shall send a Nebuchadnezzar to scourge all those regions.
- **24.** *Chittim* the countries lying on the Mediterranean, particularly Greece and Italy (\*\*Daniel 11:29,30). The Assyrians were themselves to be overthrown first, by the Greeks under Alexander the Great and his successors; secondly, by the Romans.

**Eber** — the posterity of the Hebrews (\*\*Genesis 10:24).

*he also shall perish* — that is, the conqueror of Asher and Eber, namely, the Greek and Roman empires.

**25.** *Balaam rose up*, *and went* ... *to his place* — Mesopotamia, to which, however, he did not return. (See on "Numbers 31:8).

## **NUMBERS 25:1-18.**

# THE ISRAELITES' WHOREDOM AND IDOLATRY WITH MOAB.

- **1.** *Israel abode in Shittim* a verdant meadow, so called from a grove of acacia trees which lined the eastern side of the Jordan. (See Numbers 33:49).
- **3.** Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor Baal was a general name for "lord," and Peor for a "mount" in Moab. The real name of the idol was Chemosh, and his rites of worship were celebrated by the grossest obscenity. In participating in this festival, then, the Israelites committed the double offense of idolatry and licentiousness.
- **4.** The Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up Israelite criminals, who were capitally punished, were first stoned or slain, and then gibbeted. The persons ordered here for execution were the principal delinquents in the Baal-peor outrage the subordinate officers, rulers of tens or hundreds.

**before the Lord** — for vindicating the honor of the true God.

- against the sun that is, as a mark of public ignominy; but they were to be removed towards sunset (\*\*D2\*Deuteronomy 21:23).
- **5.** *judges of Israel* the seventy elders, who were commanded not only to superintend the execution within their respective jurisdictions, but to inflict the punishment with their own hands. (See on <sup>40558</sup>1 Samuel 15:33).
- **6, 7.** behold, one of the children of Israel ... brought ... a Midianitish woman This flagitious act most probably occurred about the time when the order was given and before its execution.

- who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle Some of the rulers and well-disposed persons were deploring the dreadful wickedness of the people and supplicating the mercy of God to avert impending judgments.
- **8.** *the plague* some sudden and widespread mortality.
- **11-13.** *Phinehas* ... *hath turned my wrath away* This assurance was a signal mark of honor that the stain of blood, instead of defiling, confirmed him in office and that his posterity should continue as long as the national existence of Israel.
- **14.** Zimri, ... a prince ... among the Simeonites Hebrew, "house of a father." The slaughter of a man of such high rank is mentioned as a proof of the undaunted zeal of Phinehas, for there might be numerous avengers of his blood.
- **17.** *Vex the Midianites, and smite them* They seem to have been the most guilty parties. (Compare \*\*OZD\*\*Numbers 22:4 31:8).
- **18.** *they vex you with their wiles* Instead of open war, they plot insidious ways of accomplishing your ruin by idolatry and corruption.

their sister — their countrywoman.

### OROL NUMBERS 26:1-51.

#### ISRAEL NUMBERED.

- **1.** after the plague That terrible visitation had swept away the remnant of the old generation, to whom God sware in His wrath that they should not enter Canaan (\*\*\*Psalm 95:11).
- **2.** Take the sum of all the congregation The design of this new census, after a lapse of thirty-eight years, was primarily to establish the vast multiplication of the posterity of Abraham in spite of the severe judgments inflicted upon them; secondarily, it was to preserve the distinction of families and to make arrangements, preparatory to an entrance into the promised land, for the distribution of the country according to the relative population of the tribes.
- **10.** the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with **Korah** rather, "the things of Korah." (See on Numbers 16:35; compare Psalm 106:17).
- **11.** Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not Either they were not parties to their father's crime, or they withdrew from it by timely repentance. His descendants became famous in the time of David, and are often mentioned in the Psalms [\*\*Psalm 42:1\*\*44:1\*\*45:1\*\*46:1\*\*47:1\*\*48:1\*\*49:1\*\*84:1\*\*85:1\*\*85:1\*\*87:1\*\*88:1], also in \*\*\*\*100. Chronicles 6:22,38.
- **12.** *The sons of Simeon* It is supposed that this tribe had been preeminent in the guilt of Baal-peor and had consequently been greatly

reduced in numbers. Thus God's justice and holiness, as well as His truth and faithfulness, were strikingly displayed: His justice and holiness in the sweeping judgments that reduced the ranks of some tribes; and His truth and faithfulness in the extraordinary increase of others so that the posterity of Israel continued a numerous people.

- **53.** *the land shall be divided according to the number of names* The portion of each tribe was to be greater or less, according to its populousness.
- **54.** *To many thou shalt give the more inheritance* that is, to the more numerous tribes a larger allotment shall be granted.

according to those that were numbered — the number of persons twenty years old at the time of the census being made, without taking into account either the increase of those who might have attained that age, when the land should be actually distributed, or the diminution from that amount, occasioned during the war of invasion.

- 55. the land shall be divided by lot The appeal to the lot did not place the matter beyond the control of God; for it is at His disposal (Proverbs 16:33), and He has fixed to all the bounds of their habitation. The manner in which the lot was taken has not been recorded. But it is evident that the lot was cast for determining the section of the country in which each tribe should be located not the quantity of their possessions. In other words, when the lot had decided that a particular tribe was to be settled in the north or the south, the east or the west, the extent of territory was allocated according to the rule (Numbers 26:54).
- **58.** *families of the Levites* The census of this tribe was taken separately, and on a different principle from the rest. (See Exodus 6:16-19).
- **62.** *twenty and three thousand* so that there was an increase of a thousand (\*\*Numbers 3:39).

males from a month old and upward — (See on Numbers 3:14).

**64.** among these there was not a man ... numbered ... in the wilderness of **Sinai** — The statement in this verse must not be considered absolute. For,

besides Caleb and Joshua, there were alive at this time Eleazar and Ithamar, and in all probability a considerable number of Levites, who had no participation in the popular defections in the wilderness. The tribe of Levi, having neither sent a spy into Canaan, nor being included in the enumeration at Sinai, must be regarded as not coming within the range of the fatal sentence; and therefore it would exhibit a spectacle not to be witnessed in the other tribes of many in their ranks above sixty years of age.

Tribes Chap. 1 Chap. 26 Increase Decrease

**Reuben** 46,500 43,730 — 2,770

**Simeon** 59,300 22,200 — 37,100

**Gad** 45,650 40,500 — 5,150

**Judah** 74,600 76,500 1,900 —

**Issachar** 54,400 64,300 9,900 —

**Zebulun** 57,400 60,500 3,100 —

**Ephraim** 40,500 32,500 — 8,000

**Manasseh** 32,200 52,700 20,500 —

**Benjamin** 35,400 45,600 10,200 —

**Daniel** 62,700 64,400 1,700 —

**Asher** 41,500 53,400 11,900 —

**Naphtali** 53,400 45,400 — 8,000

**Total** 603,550 601,730 59,200 61,020

Total decrease 1,820

### **NUMBERS 27:1-11.**

# THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD ASK FOR AN INHERITANCE.

3. Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not ... in the company of ... Korah — This declaration might be necessary because his death might have occurred about the time of that rebellion; and especially because, as the children of these conspirators were involved along with their fathers in the awful punishment, their plea appeared the more proper and forcible that their father did not die for any cause that doomed his family to lose their lives or their inheritance

*died in his own sin* — that is, by the common law of mortality to which men, through sin, are subject.

**4.** Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father — Those young women perceived that the males only in families had been registered in the census. Because there were none in their household, their family was omitted. So they made known their grievance to Moses, and the authorities conjoined with him in administering justice. The case was important; and as the peculiarity of daughters being the sole members of a family would be no infrequent or uncommon occurrence, the law of inheritance, under divine authority, was extended not only to meet all similar cases, but other cases also — such as when there were no children left by the proprietor, and no brothers to succeed him. A distribution of the promised land was about to be made; and it is interesting to know the legal provision made in these comparatively rare cases for preserving a patrimony from being alienated to another tribe. (See on Numbers 36:5).

### **NUMBERS 27:12-17.**

# MOSES BEING TOLD OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH, ASKS FOR A SUCCESSOR.

- **12.** The Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land Although the Israelites were now on the confines of the promised land, Moses was not privileged to cross the Jordan, but died on one of the Moabitic range of mountains, to which the general name of Abarim was given (\*\*\*Numbers 33:47\*). The privation of this great honor was owing to the unhappy conduct he had manifested in the striking of the rock at Meribah [\*\*\*Numbers 20:12]; and while the pious leader submitted with meek acquiescence to the divine decree, he evinced the spirit of genuine patriotism in his fervent prayers for the appointment of a worthy and competent successor (\*\*\*OPTS\*\*Numbers 27:15-17\*).
- **16.** God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation The request was most suitably made to God in this character, as the Author of all the intellectual gifts and moral graces with which men are endowed, and who can raise up qualified persons for the most arduous duties and the most difficult situations.

### OUTS NUMBERS 27:18-23.

#### JOSHUA APPOINTED TO SUCCEED HIM.

- **18.** Take thee Joshua ... a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him A strong testimony is here borne to the personality of the divine Spirit the imposition of hands was an ancient ceremony. (See Genesis 48:14 \*\*\* Leviticus 1:4 \*\*\* Timothy 4:14).
- **20, 21.** *Thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him* In the whole history of Israel there arose no prophet or ruler in all respects like unto Moses till the Messiah appeared, whose glory eclipsed all. But Joshua was honored and qualified in an eminent degree, through the special service of the high priest, who asked counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord.

### **OROLNUMBERS** 28:1-31.

#### OFFERINGS TO BE OBSERVED.

**2.** Command the children of Israel, and say unto them — The repetition of several laws formerly enacted, which is made in this chapter, was seasonable and necessary, not only on account of their importance and the frequent neglect of them, but because a new generation had sprung up since their first institution and because the Israelites were about to be settled in the land where those ordinances were to be observed.

*My offering, and my bread* — used generally for the appointed offerings, and the import of the prescription is to enforce regularity and care in their observance.

- **9, 10.** *This is the burnt offering of every sabbath* There is no previous mention of a Sabbath burnt offering, which was additional to the daily sacrifices.
- **11-15.** And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord These were held as sacred festivals; and though not possessing the character of solemn feasts, they were distinguished by the blowing of trumpets over the sacrifices (\*\*Numbers 10:10), by the suspension of all labor except the domestic occupations of women (\*\*\*Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebration of public worship (\*\*\*\*Diagrams\*\* Amos 8:5), by the celebrati

and assuming this to have been one of the objects contemplated, it will account for one of the kids being offered unto the Lord (\*\*Numbers 28:15), not unto the moon, as the Egyptians and Syrians did. The Sabbath and the new moon are frequently mentioned together.

- **16-25.** *in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover* The law for that great annual festival is given (\*\*DE\*\*Leviticus 23:5), but some details are here introduced, as certain specified offerings are prescribed to be made on each of the seven days of unleavened bread [\*\*OES\*\*Numbers 28:18-25].
- **26, 27.** *in the day of the first-fruits ... offer the burnt offering* A new sacrifice is here ordered for the celebration of this festival, in addition to the other offering, which was to accompany the first-fruits (\*\*\*Leviticus 23:18).

### NUMBERS 29:1-40.

#### THE OFFERING AT THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS.

**1.** in the seventh month — of the ecclesiastical year, but the first month of the civil year, corresponding to our September. It was, in fact, the New Year's Day, which had been celebrated among the Hebrews and other contemporary nations with great festivity and joy and ushered in by a flourish of trumpets. This ordinance was designed to give a religious character to the occasion by associating it with some solemn observances. (Compare \*\*DEXODUST 12:2\*\*\* Leviticus 23:24).

it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you — This made it a solemn preparation for the sacred feasts — a greater number of which were held during this month than at any other season of the year. Although the institution of this feast was described before, there is more particularity here as to what the burnt offering should consist of; and, in addition to it, a sin offering is prescribed. The special offerings, appointed for certain days, were not to interfere with the offerings usually requisite on these days, for in "Dumbers 29:6 it is said that the daily offerings, as well as those for the first day of the month, were to take place in their ordinary course.

**7-11.** *ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation* — This was the great day of atonement. Its institution, together with the observance to which that day was devoted, was described (\*\*E\*Leviticus 16:29,30\*). But additional offerings seem to be noticed, namely, the large animal sacrifice for a general expiation, which was a sweet savor unto the Lord, and the sin offering to atone for the sins that mingled with that day's services. The prescriptions in this passage appear supplementary to the former statement in Leviticus.

**12-34.** *on the fifteenth day* — was to be held the feast of booths or tabernacles. (See Leviticus 23:34,35). The feast was to last seven days,

the first and last of which were to be kept as Sabbaths, and a particular offering was prescribed for each day, the details of which are given with a minuteness suited to the infant state of the church. Two things are deserving of notice: First, that this feast was distinguished by a greater amount and variety of sacrifices than any other — partly because, occurring at the end of the year, it might be intended to supply any past deficiencies — partly because, being immediately after the ingathering of the fruits, it ought to be a liberal acknowledgment — and partly, perhaps, because God consulted the weakness of mankind, who naturally grow weary both of the charge and labor of such services when they are long-continued, and made them every day less toilsome and expensive [PATRICK]. Secondly, it will be remarked that the sacrifices varied in a progressive ratio of decrease every day.

- **18.** *after the manner* according to the ritual order appointed by divine authority that for meat offerings (\*\*Numbers 29:3-10), and drink offerings (\*\*Numbers 28:7,14).
- **35-40.** On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly The feast of tabernacles was brought to a close on the eighth day, which was the great day (\*\*Deviticus 23:39). Besides the common routine sacrifices, there were special offerings appointed for that day though these were fewer than on any of the preceding days; and there were also, as was natural on that occasion when vast multitudes were convened for a solemn religious purpose, many spontaneous gifts and services, so that there was full scope for the exercise of a devout spirit in the people, both for their obedience to the statutory offerings, and by the presentation of those which were made by free will or in consequence of vows.
- **39.** These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts From the statements made in this and the preceding chapter, it appears that the yearly offerings made to the altar at the public expense, without taking into account a vast number of voluntary vow and trespass offerings, were calculated at the following amount: goats, fifteen; kids, twenty-one; rams, seventy-two; bullocks, one hundred thirty-two; lambs, 1,101; sumtotal of animals sacrificed at public cost, 1,241. This, of course, is exclusive of the prodigious addition of lambs slain at the passover, which

in later times, according to JOSEPHUS, amounted in a single year to the immense number of 255,600.

### **NUMBERS 30:1-16.**

#### VOWS ARE NOT TO BE BROKEN.

- 1. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded The subject of this chapter relates to vowing, which seems to have been an ancient usage, allowed by the law to remain, and by which some people declared their intention of offering some gift on the altar or abstaining from particular articles of meat or drink, of observing a private fast, or doing something to the honor or in the service of God, over and above what was authoritatively required. In "Numbers 29:39, mention was made of "vows and freewill offerings," and it is probable, from the explanatory nature of the rules laid down in this chapter, that these were given for the removal of doubts and difficulties which conscientious persons had felt about their obligation to perform their vows in certain circumstances that had arisen.
- **2.** If a man vow a vow unto the Lord A mere secret purpose of the mind was not enough to constitute a vow; it had to be actually expressed in words; and though a purely voluntary act, yet when once the vow was made, the performance of it, like that of every other promise, became an indispensable duty all the more because, referring to a sacred thing, it could not be neglected without the guilt of prevarication and unfaithfulness to God.

he shall not break his word — literally, "profane his word" — render it vain and contemptible ("Psalm 55:20 89:34). But as it would frequently happen that parties would vow to do things which were neither good in themselves nor in their power to perform, the law ordained that their natural superiors should have the right of judging as to the propriety of those vows, with discretionary power to sanction or interdict their fulfillment. Parents were to determine in the case of their children, and husbands in that of their wives — being, however, allowed only a day for

deliberation after the matter became known to them; and their judgment, if unfavorable, released the devotee from all obligation [\*\*Numbers 30:3-8].

- **3.** If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth Girls only are specified; but minors of the other sex, who resided under the parental roof, were included, according to Jewish writers, who also consider the name "father" as comprehending all guardians of youth. We are also told that the age at which young people were deemed capable of vowing was thirteen for boys and twelve for girls. The judgment of a father or guardian on the vow of any under his charge might be given either by an expressed approval or by silence, which was to be construed as approval. But in the case of a husband who, after silence from day to day, should ultimately disapprove or hinder his wife's vow, the sin of non-performance was to be imputed to him and not to her [-0005] Numbers 30:15].

### **OBION NUMBERS** 31:1-54.

#### THE MIDIANITES SPOILED AND BALAAM SLAIN.

- 1, 2. the Lord spake unto Moses, Avenge the children of Israel of the *Midianites* — a semi-nomad people, descended from Abraham and Keturah, occupying a tract of country east and southeast of Moab, which lay on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. They seem to have been the principal instigators of the infamous scheme of seduction, planned to entrap the Israelites into the double crime of idolatry and licentiousness Numbers 25:1-3,17,18] by which, it was hoped, the Lord would withdraw from that people the benefit of His protection and favor. Moreover, the Midianites had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious by entering into a hostile league with the Amorites ( Joshua 13:21). The Moabites were at this time spared in consideration of Lot Deuteronomy 2:9) and because the measure of their iniquities was not yet full. God spoke of avenging "the children of Israel" ( Numbers 31:2); Moses spoke of avenging the Lord (\*\*Numbers 31:3), as dishonor had been done to God and an injury inflicted on His people. The interests were identical. God and His people have the same cause, the same friends, and the same assailants. This, in fact, was a religious war, undertaken by the express command of God against idolaters, who had seduced the Israelites to practice their abominations.
- **3.** *Arm some of yourselves* This order was issued but a short time before the death of Moses. The announcement to him of that approaching event [\*\*ONUMBERS\* 31:2] seems to have accelerated, rather than retarded, his warlike preparations.
- **5.** *there were delivered* that is, drafted, chosen, an equal amount from each tribe, to prevent the outbreak of mutual jealousy or strife. Considering the numerical force of the enemy, this was a small quota to

furnish. But the design was to exercise their faith and animate them to the approaching invasion of Canaan.

**6.** Moses sent ... Eleazar the priest, to the war — Although it is not expressly mentioned, it is highly probable that Joshua was the general who conducted this war. The presence of the priest, who was always with the army (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:2), was necessary to preside over the Levites, who accompanied the expedition, and to inflame the courage of the combatants by his sacred services and counsels.

holy instruments — As neither the ark nor the Urim and Thummim were carried to the battlefield till a later period in the history of Israel, the "holy instruments" must mean the "trumpets" (\*\*\*Numbers 10:9). And this view is agreeable to the text, by simply changing "and" into "even," as the *Hebrew* particle is frequently rendered.

7. they slew all the males — This was in accordance with a divine order in all such cases (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:13). But the destruction appears to have been only partial — limited to those who were in the neighborhood of the Hebrew camp and who had been accomplices in the villainous plot of Baal-peor (\*\*Numbers 25:1-3), while a large portion of the Midianites were absent on their pastoral wanderings or had saved themselves by flight. (Compare \*\*This younges 6:1).

**8.** *the kings of Midian* — so called, because each was possessed of absolute power within his own city or district; called also dukes or princes of Sihon (GEE) Joshua 13:21), having been probably subject to that Amorite ruler, as it is not uncommon in the East to find a number of governors or pachas tributary to one great king.

**Zur** — father of Cozbi (\*\*Numbers 25:15).

Balaam also ... they slew with the sword — This unprincipled man, on his dismissal from Balak, set out for his home in Mesopotamia (\*\*Numbers 24:25). But, either diverging from his way to tamper with the Midianites, he remained among them without proceeding farther, to incite them against Israel and to watch the effects of his wicked counsel; or, learning in his own country that the Israelites had fallen into the snare which he had laid and which he doubted not would lead to their ruin, he had, under the

impulse of insatiable greed, returned to demand his reward from the Midianites. He was an object of merited vengeance. In the immense slaughter of the Midianitish people — in the capture of their women, children, and property and in the destruction of all their places of refuge — the severity of a righteous God fell heavily on that base and corrupt race. But, more than all others, Balaam deserved and got the just reward of his deeds. His conduct had been atrociously sinful, considering the knowledge he possessed, and the revelations he had received, of the will of God. For any one in his circumstances to attempt defeating the prophecies he had himself been the organ of uttering, and plotting to deprive the chosen people of the divine favor and protection, was an act of desperate wickedness, which no language can adequately characterize.

- 13. Moses, and Eleazar the priest, ... went forth to meet them without the camp partly as a token of respect and congratulation on their victory, partly to see how they had executed the Lord's commands, and partly to prevent the defilement of the camp by the entrance of warriors stained with blood.
- **14-18.** And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host The displeasure of the great leader, though it appears the ebullition of a fierce and sanguinary temper, arose in reality from a pious and enlightened regard to the best interests of Israel. No order had been given for the slaughter of the women, and in ancient war they were commonly reserved for slaves. By their antecedent conduct, however, the Midianitish women had forfeited all claims to mild or merciful treatment; and the sacred character, the avowed object of the war (\*\*ORO\*\*\*Numbers 31:2,3), made their slaughter necessary without any special order. But why "kill every male among the little ones"? It was designed to be a war of extermination, such as God Himself had ordered against the people of Canaan, whom the Midianites equalled in the enormity of their wickedness.

tents, to everything on which a dead body had lain, which had been touched by the blood-stained hands of the Israelitish warriors, or which had been the property of idolaters. This became a standing ordinance in all time coming (\*\*Deviticus 6:28 11:33 15:12).

**25-39.** Take the sum of the prey that was taken — that is, of the captives and cattle, which, having been first lumped together according to ancient usage (\*\*Exodus 15:9\*\* Judges 5:30), were divided into two equal parts: the one to the people at large, who had sustained a common injury from the Midianites and who were all liable to serve: and the other portion to the combatants, who, having encountered the labors and perils of war, justly received the largest share. From both parts, however, a certain deduction was taken for the sanctuary, as a thank offering to God for preservation and for victory. The soldiers had greatly the advantage in the distribution; for a five-hundredth part only of their half went to the priest, while a fiftieth part of the congregation's half was given to the Levites.

**32-47.** the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught — Some of the captives having been killed (\*\*\*\*Numbers 31:17) and part of the cattle taken for the support of the army, the total amount of the booty remaining was in the following proportions:

**Prey Total** Amount Half to Soldiers Deducted to God Half to Congregation Deducted to Levites

**Sheep** 675,000 337,500 675 337,500 6,750

Beeves 72,000 36,000 72 36,000 720

Asses 61,000 30,500 61 30,500 610

Persons 32,000 16,000 32 16,000 320

**48-54.** *officers* ... *said* ... *there lacketh not one man of us* — A victory so signal, and the glory of which was untarnished by the loss of a single Israelitish soldier, was an astonishing miracle. So clearly betokening the direct interposition of Heaven, it might well awaken the liveliest feelings of grateful acknowledgment to God (\*\*PPsalm 44:2,3). The oblation they brought for the Lord "was partly an atonement" or reparation for their error (\*\*PNUmbers 31:14-16), for it could not possess any expiatory virtue,

and partly a tribute of gratitude for the stupendous service rendered them. It consisted of the "spoil," which, being the acquisition of individual valor, was not divided like the "prey," or livestock, each soldier retaining it in lieu of pay; it was offered by the "captains" alone, whose pious feelings were evinced by the dedication of the spoil which fell to their share. There were jewels to the amount of 16,750 shekels, or about \$305,000.

### NUMBERS 32:1-42.

#### THE REUBENITES AND GADITES ASK FOR AN INHERITANCE.

1-5. the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead — A complete conquest had been made of the country east of the Jordan, comprising "the land of Jazer," which formed the southern district between the Arnon and Jabbok and "the land of Gilead," the middle region between the Jabbok and Jarmouk, or Hieromax, including Bashan, which lay on the north of that river. The whole of this region is now called the Belka. It has always been famous for its rich and extensive pastures, and it is still the favorite resort of the Bedouin shepherds, who frequently contend for securing to their immense flocks the benefit of its luxuriant vegetation. In the camp of ancient Israel, Reuben and Gad were pre-eminently pastoral; and as these two tribes, being placed under the same standard, had frequent opportunities of conversing and arranging about their common concerns, they united in preferring a request that the trans-jordanic region, so well suited to the habits of a pastoral people, might be assigned to them.

**6-19.** Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here — Their language was ambiguous; and Moses, suspicious that this proposal was an act of unbelief, a scheme of self-policy and indolence to escape the perils of warfare and live in ease and safety, addressed to them a reproachful and passionate remonstrance. Whether they had really meditated such a withdrawal from all share in the war of invasion, or the effect of their leader's expostulation was to drive them from their original purpose, they now, in answer to his impressive appeal, declared it to be their sincere intention to co-operate with their brethren; but, if so, they ought to have been more explicit at first.

**16.** *they came near* — The narrative gives a picturesque description of this scene. The suppliants had shrunk back, dreading from the undisguised

emotions of their leader that their request would be refused. But, perceiving, from the tenor of his discourse, that his objection was grounded only on the supposition that they would not cross the Jordan to assist their brethren, they became emboldened to approach him with assurances of their goodwill.

We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones—that is, rebuild, repair. It would have been impossible within two months to found new cities, or even to reconstruct those which had been razed to the ground. Those cities of the Amorites were not absolutely demolished, and they probably consisted only of mud-built, or dry-stone walls.

**17.** and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land — There was good policy in leaving a sufficient force to protect the conquered region lest the enemy should attempt reprisals; and as only forty thousand of the Reubenites and the Gadites, and a half of Manasseh, passed over the Jordan (\*\*Toshua 4:13), there were left for the security of the new possessions 70,580 men, besides women and children under twenty years (compare \*\*Numbers 26:7,18,34).

We ourselves will go ready armed — that is, all of us in a collective body, or as many as may be deemed necessary, while the rest of our number shall remain at home to provide for the sustenance and secure the protection of our families and flocks. (See on Joshua 4:12).

**20-33.** *Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing* — with sincerity and zeal.

go before the Lord to war — The phrase was used in allusion to the order of march in which the tribes of Reuben and Gad immediately preceded the ark (\*\*Numbers 10:18-21), or to the passage over the Jordan, in which the ark stood in mid-channel, while all the tribes marched by in succession (\*\*Toshua 3:4), of course including those of Reuben and Gad, so that, literally, they passed over before the Lord and before the rest of Israel (\*\*Toshua 4:13). Perhaps, however, the phrase is used merely in a general sense to denote their marching on an expedition, the purpose of which was blessed with the presence, and destined to promote the glory, of God. The

displeasure which Moses had felt on the first mention of their proposal had disappeared on the strength of their solemn assurances. But a lurking suspicion of their motives seems still to have been lingering in his mind — he continued to speak to them in an admonitory strain; and he concluded by warning them that in case of their failing to redeem their pledge, the judgments of an offended God would assuredly fall upon them. This emphatic caution against such an eventuality throws a strong doubt on the honesty of their first intentions; and yet, whether through the opposing attitude or the strong invectives of Moses they had been brought to a better state of mind, their final reply showed that now all was right.

**28-32.** concerning them Moses commanded — The arrangement itself, as well as the express terms on which he assented to it, was announced by the leader to the public authorities. The pastoral country the two tribes had desired was to be granted them on condition that they would lend their aid to their brethren in the approaching invasion of Canaan. If they refused or failed to perform their promise, those possessions should be forfeited, and they themselves compelled to go across the Jordan and fight for a settlement like the rest of their brethren.

33. half the tribe of Manasseh — It is nowhere explained in the record how they were incorporated with the two tribes, or what broke this great tribe into two parts, of which one was left to follow the fortunes of its brethren in the settled life of the western hills, while the other was allowed to wander as a nomadic tribe over the pasture lands of Gilead and Bashan. They are not mentioned as accompanying Reuben and Gad in their application to Moses [\*\*Numbers 32:1]; neither were they included in his first directions (\*\*\*Numbers 32:25); but as they also were a people addicted to pastoral pursuits and possessed as immense flocks as the other two, Moses invited the half of them to remain, in consequence, probably, of finding that this region was more than sufficient for the pastoral wants of the others, and he may have given them the preference, as some have conjectured, for their valorous conduct in the contests with the Amorites (compare \*\*Numbers 32:39, with \*\*\*Orthogonal Total T

**34-36.** And the children of Gad built — (See on Numbers 32:16).

**Dibon** — identified with Dheban, now in ruins, an hour's distance from the Arnon (Mojeb).

**Ataroth** (*Hebrew*, "crowns") — There are several towns so called in Scripture, but this one in the tribe of Gad has not been identified.

**Aroer** — now Arair, standing on a precipice on the north bank of the Arnon.

- 35-38. Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, etc. Jaazer, near a famed fountain, Ain Hazier, the waters of which flow into Wady Schaib, about fifteen miles from Hesbon. Beth-nimrah, now Nimrin; Heshbon, now Hesban; Elealeh (*Hebrew*, "the high"), now Elaal; Kirjathaim (*Hebrew*, "the double city"); Nebo, now Neba, near the mountain of that name; Baal-meon, now Myoun, in ruins, where was a temple of Baal ("Toshua 13:17" Jeremiah 48:23); Shibmah, or Shebam ("Toshumbers 32:3), near Heshbon, famous for vines ("Toshua 16:9,10" Jeremiah 48:32).
- **38.** (*their names being changed*) either because it was the general custom of conquerors to do so; or, rather, because from the prohibition to *mention the names of other gods* (\*\*Exodus 23:13), as Nebo and Baal were, it was expedient on the first settlement of the Israelites to obliterate all remembrance of those idols. (See \*\*IJoshua 13:17-20).
- **39.** *Gilead* now Jelud.
- **41.** *Havoth-jair* that is, "tent-villages." Jair, who captured them, was a descendant of Manasseh on his mother's side (\*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 1:21,22).
- **42.** *Nobah* also a distinguished person connected with the eastern branch of the tribe of Manasseh.

### **NUMBERS 33:1-15.**

# TWO AND FORTY JOURNEYS OF THE ISRAELITES — FROM EGYPT TO SINAI.

1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel — This chapter may be said to form the winding up of the history of the travels of the Israelites through the wilderness; for the three following chapters relate to matters connected with the occupation and division of the promised land. As several apparent discrepancies will be discovered on comparing the records here given of the journeyings from Sinai with the detailed accounts of the events narrated in the Book of Exodus and the occasional notices of places that are found in that of Deuteronomy, it is probable that this itinerary comprises a list of only the "most important" stations in their journeys — those where they formed prolonged encampments, and whence they dispersed their flocks and herds to pasture on the adjacent plains till the surrounding herbage was exhausted. The catalogue extends from their departure out of Egypt to their arrival on the plains of Moab.

went forth ... with their armies — that is, a vast multitude marshalled in separate companies, but regular order.

- **2.** Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord The wisdom of this divine order is seen in the importance of the end to which it was subservient namely, partly to establish the truth of the history, partly to preserve a memorial of God's marvellous interpositions on behalf of Israel, and partly to confirm their faith in the prospect of the difficult enterprise on which they were entering, the invasion of Canaan.
- **3.** *Rameses* generally identified with Heroopoils, now the modern Abu-Keisheid (see on Exodus 12:37), which was probably the capital of Goshen, and, by direction of Moses, the place of general rendezvous previous to their departure.

- **4.** *upon their gods* used either according to Scripture phraseology to denote their rulers (the first-born of the king and his princes) or the idolatrous objects of Egyptian worship.
- **5.** *pitched in Succoth* that is, "booths" a place of no note except as a temporary halting place, at Birketel-Hadji, the Pilgrim's Pool [CALMET].
- **6.** *Etham* edge, or border of all that part of Arabia-Petræa which lay contiguous to Egypt and was known by the general name of Shur.
- 7. *Pi-hahiroth*, *Baal-zephon* ... *Migdol* (See on <sup>40141</sup>Exodus 14:2).
- **8.** *Marah* thought to be Ain Howarah, both from its position and the time (three days) it would take them with their children and flocks to march from the water of Ayun Musa to that spot.
- **9.** *Elim* supposed to be Wady Ghurundel (see on Exodus 15:27).
- **10.** *encamped by the Red Sea* The road from Wady Ghurundel leads into the interior, in consequence of a high continuous ridge which excludes all view of the sea. At the mouth of Wady-et-Tayibeh, after about three days' march, it opens again on a plain along the margin of the Red Sea. The minute accuracy of the Scripture narrative, in corresponding so exactly with the geographical features of this region, is remarkably shown in describing the Israelites as proceeding by the only practicable route that could be taken. This plain, where they encamped, was the Desert of Sin (see on Exodus 16:1).
- **12-14.** *Dophkah* ... *Alush* ... *Rephidim* These three stations, in the great valleys of El Sheikh and Feiran, would be equivalent to four days' journey for such a host. Rephidim (\*\*Exodus 17:6) was in Horeb, the burnt region a generic name for a hot, mountainous country. [See on Exodus 17:1.]
- **15.** *wilderness of Sinai* the Wady Er-Raheh.

### OBSIGNUMBERS 33:16-56.

#### FROM SINAI TO KADESH AND PLAINS OF MOAB.

**16-37.** *Kibroth-Hattaavah* ("the graves of lust," see on Numbers 11:34) — The route, on breaking up the encampment at Sinai, led down Wady Sheikh; then crossing Jebel-et-Tih, which intersected the peninsula, they descended into Wady Zalaka, pitching successively at two brief, though memorable, stations (\*\*Deuteronomy 9:22); then they encamped at Hazeroth ("unwalled villages"), supposed to be at Ain-Hadera (see on Numbers 11:35). Kadesh, or Kadesh-barnea, is supposed to be the great valley of the Ghor, and the city Kadesh to have been situated on the border of this valley [Burckhardt; Robinson]. But as there are no less than eighteen stations inserted between Hazeroth and Kadesh, and only eleven days were spent in performing that journey (\*\*Deuteronomy 1:2), it is evident that the intermediate stations here recorded belong to another and totally different visit to Kadesh. The first was when they left Sinai in the second month (Numbers 1:11 13:20), and were in Kadesh in August (\*\*Deuteronomy 1:45), and "abode many days" in it. Then, murmuring at the report of the spies, they were commanded to return into the desert "by the way of the Red Sea." The arrival at Kadesh, mentioned in this catalogue, corresponds to the *second* sojourn at that place, being the first month, or April (\*\*\*Numbers 20:1). Between the two visits there intervened a period of thirty-eight years, during which they wandered hither and thither through all the region of El-Tih ("wanderings"), often returning to the same spots as the pastoral necessities of their flocks required; and there is the strongest reason for believing that the stations named between Hazeroth (\*\*\*Numbers 33:8) and Kadesh (\*\*\*Numbers 33:36) belong to the long interval of wandering. No certainty has yet been attained in ascertaining the locale of many of these stations. There must have been more than are recorded; for it is probable that those only are noted where they remained some time, where the tabernacle was pitched, and where Moses and the elders encamped, the people being scattered for pasture in various directions. From Ezion-geber, for instance, which stood at the head of the gulf of Akaba, to Kadesh, could not be much less than the whole length of the great valley of the Ghor, a distance of not less than

a hundred miles, whatever might be the exact situation of Kadesh; and, of course, there must have been several intervening stations, though none are mentioned. The incidents and stages of the rest of the journey to the plains of Moab are sufficiently explicit from the preceding chapters.

- **18.** *Rithmah* ("the place of the broom") a station possibly in some wady extending westward of the Ghor.
- 19. Rimmon-parez, or Rimmon a city of Judah and Simeon (\*\*Joshua 15:32); Libnah, so called from its white poplars (\*\*Joshua 10:29), or, as some think, a white hill between Kadesh and Gaza (\*\*Joshua 10:29); Rissah (El-arish); mount Shapher (Cassius); Moseroth, adjacent to mount Hor, in Wady Mousa. Ezion-geber, near Akaba, a seaport on the western shore of the Elanitic gulf; Wilderness of Zin, on the east side of the peninsula of Sinai; Punon, in the rocky ravines of mount Hor and famous for the mines and quarries in its vicinity as well as for its fruit trees, now Tafyle, on the border of Edom; Abarim, a ridge of rugged hills northwest of the Arnon the part called Nebo was one of its highest peaks opposite Jericho. (See on \*\*Deuteronomy 10:6).
- **50-53.** *ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you* not, however, by expulsion, but extermination ( Deuteronomy 7:1).

and destroy all their pictures — obelisks for idolatrous worship (see on Leviticus 26:1).

and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places — by metonymy for all their groves and altars, and materials of worship on the tops of hills.

- 55. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you No associations were to be formed with the inhabitants; otherwise, "if ye let remain, they will be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides" that is, they would prove troublesome and dangerous neighbors, enticing to idolatry, and consequently depriving you of the divine favor and blessing. The neglect of the counsel against union with the idolatrous

inhabitants became fatal to them. This earnest admonition given to the Israelites in their peculiar circumstances conveys a salutary lesson to us to allow no lurking habits of sin to remain in us. That spiritual enemy must be eradicated from our nature; otherwise it will be ruinous to our present peace and future salvation.

### OBOL NUMBERS 34:1-29.

#### THE BORDERS OF THE LAND OF CANAAN.

- **2.** *this is the* ... *land of Canaan* The details given in this chapter mark the general boundary of the inheritance of Israel west of the Jordan. The Israelites never actually possessed all the territory comprised within these boundaries, even when it was most extended by the conquests of David and Solomon.
- **3-5.** *your south quarter* The line which bounded it on the south is the most difficult to trace. According to the best biblical geographers, the leading points here defined are as follows: The southwest angle of the southern boundary should be where the wilderness of Zin touches the border of Edom, so that the southern boundary should extend eastward from the extremity of the Dead Sea, wind around the precipitous ridge of Akrabbim ("scorpions"), thought to be the high and difficult Pass of Safeh, which crosses the stream that flows from the south into the Jordan that is, the great valley of the Arabah, reaching from the Dead to the Red Sea.
- **5.** *river of Egypt* the ancient brook Sihor, the Rhinocolura of the Greeks, a little to the south of El-Arish, where this wady gently descends towards the Mediterranean (\*\*\* Joshua 13:3).
- **6.** *the western border* There is no uncertainty about this boundary, as it is universally allowed to be the Mediterranean, which is called "the great sea" in comparison with the small inland seas or lakes known to the Hebrews.
- **7-9.** *north border* The principal difficulty in understanding the description here arises from what our translators have called mount Hor. The Hebrew words, however, *Hor-ha-Hor*, properly signify "the mountain of the mountain," or "the high double mountain," which, from

the situation, can mean nothing else than the mountain Amana (So 4:8), a member of the great Lebanon range ( drif) Joshua 13:5).

**8.** *entrance of Hamath* — The northern plain between those mountain ranges, now the valley of Balbeck (see on Numbers 13:21).

**Zedad** — identified as the present Sudud (\*\*Ezekiel 47:15).

**9. Ziphron** — ("sweet odor").

*Hazar-enan* — ("village of fountains"); but the places are unknown. "An imaginary line from mount Cassius, on the coast along the northern base of Lebanon to the entering into the Bekaa (Valley of Lebanon) at the Kamosa Hermel," must be regarded as the frontier that is meant [VAN DE VELDE].

- **10-12.** *east border* This is very clearly defined. Shepham and Riblah, which were in the valley of Lebanon, are mentioned as the boundary line, which commenced a little higher than the sources of the Jordan. Ain is supposed to be the source of that river; and thence the eastern boundary extended along the Jordan, the sea of Chinnereth (Lake of Tiberias), the Jordan; and again terminated at the Dead Sea. The line being drawn on the east of the river and the seas included those waters within the territory of the western tribes.
- 13-15. The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan The conquered territories of Sihon and Og, lying between the Arnon and mount Hermon, were allotted to them that of Reuben in the most southerly part, Gad north of it, and the half Manasseh in the northernmost portion.
- **16-29.** names of the men ... which shall divide the land This appointment by the Lord before the Jordan tended not only to animate the Israelites faith in the certainty of the conquest, but to prevent all subsequent dispute and discontent, which might have been dangerous in presence of the natives. The nominees were ten princes for the nine and a half tribes, one of them being selected from the western section of Manasseh, and all subordinate to the great military and ecclesiastical chiefs, Joshua and Eleazar. The names are mentioned in the exact order in which the tribes obtained possession of the land, and according to brotherly connection.

#### NUMBERS 35:1-5.

#### EIGHT AND FORTY CITIES GIVEN TO THE LEVITES.

2. give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to **dwell in** — As the Levites were to have no territorial domain allocated to them like the other tribes on the conquest of Canaan, they were to be distributed throughout the land in certain cities appropriated to their use; and these cities were to be surrounded by extensive suburbs. There is an apparent discrepancy between Numbers 35:4 and Numbers 35:5, with regard to the extent of these suburbs; but the statements in the two verses refer to totally different things — the one to the extent of the suburbs from the walls of the city, the other to the space of two thousand cubits from their extremity. In point of fact, there was an extent of ground, amounting to three thousand cubits, measured from the wall of the city. One thousand were most probably occupied with outhouses for the accommodation of shepherds and other servants, with gardens, vineyards, or oliveyards. And these which were portioned out to different families ( Chronicles 6:60) might be sold by one Levite to another, but not to any individual of another tribe (\*\*\*Jeremiah 32:7). The other two thousand cubits remained a common for the pasturing of cattle (\*\*\*Leviticus 25:34) and, considering their number, that space would be fully required.

NUMBERS 35:6-8.

#### CITIES OF REFUGE.

**6.** there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer — The establishment of those privileged sanctuaries among the cities of the Levites is probably traceable to the idea, that they would be the most suitable and impartial judges — that their presence and counsels

might calm or restrain the stormy passions of the blood avenger — and that, from their being invested with the sacred character, they might be types of Christ, in whom sinners find a refuge from the destroyer (see Deuteronomy 4:43 ORING Joshua 20:8).

**8.** the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel — The burden of furnishing those places for the residence and support of the Levitical order was to fall in equitable proportions upon the different tribes (see \*\*Numbers 33:54 \*\*\*Toshua 20:7).

NUMBERS 35:9-34.

#### THE BLOOD AVENGER.

# 11. that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares — The practice of Goelism, that is, of the nearest relation of an individual who was killed being bound to demand satisfaction from the author of his

who was killed being bound to demand satisfaction from the author of his death, existed from a very remote antiquity (\*\*Genesis 4:14\*\*27:45). It seems to have been an established usage in the age of Moses; and although in a rude and imperfect state of society, it is a natural and intelligible principle of criminal jurisprudence, it is liable to many great abuses; the chief of the evils inseparable from it is that the kinsman, who is bound in duty and honor to execute justice, will often be precipitate — little disposed, in the heat of passion or under the impulse of revenge, to examine into the circumstances of the case, to discriminate between the premeditated purpose of the assassin and the misfortune of the unintentional homicide. Moreover, it had a tendency, not only to foster a vindictive spirit, but in case of the Goel being unsuccessful in finding his victim, to transmit animosities and feuds against his descendants from one generation to another. This is exemplified among the Arabs in the present day. Should an Arab of one tribe happen to kill one of another tribe, there is "blood" between the tribes, and the stain can only be wiped out by the death of some individual of the tribe with which the offense originated. Sometimes the penalty is commuted by the payment of a stipulated number of sheep or camels. But such an equivalent, though offered, is as often refused, and blood has to be repaid only by blood. This practice of

Goelism obtained among the Hebrews to such an extent that it was not perhaps expedient to abolish it; and Moses, while sanctioning its continuance, was directed, by divine authority, to make some special regulations, which tended both to prevent the unhappy consequences of sudden and personal vengeance, and, at the same time, to afford an accused person time and means of proving his innocence. This was the humane and equitable end contemplated in the institution of cities of refuge. There were to be six of these legalized asyla, three on the east of Jordan, both because the territory there was equal in length, though not in breadth, to Canaan, and because it might be more convenient for some to take refuge across the border. They were appointed for the benefit, not of the native Israelites only, but of all resident strangers.

**16-21.** *If he smite him with an instrument of iron*, *so that he die*, etc. — Various cases are here enumerated in which the Goel or avenger was at liberty to take the life of the murderer; and every one of them proves a premeditated purpose.

22-28. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, etc. — Under the excitement of a sudden provocation, or violent passion, an injury might be inflicted issuing in death; and for a person who had thus undesignedly committed slaughter, the Levitical cities offered the benefit of full protection. Once having reached the nearest, for one or other of them was within a day's journey of all parts of the land, he was secure. But he had to "abide in it." His confinement within its walls was a wise and salutary rule, designed to show the sanctity of human blood in God's sight, as well as to protect the manslayer himself, whose presence and intercourse in society might have provoked the passions of the deceased's relatives. But the period of his release from this confinement was not until the death of the high priest. That was a season of public affliction, when private sorrows were sunk or overlooked under a sense of the national calamity, and when the death of so eminent a servant of God naturally led all to serious consideration about their own mortality. The moment, however, that the refugee broke through the restraints of his confinement and ventured beyond the precincts of the asylum, he forfeited the privilege, and, if he was discovered by his pursuer, he might be slain with impunity.

29-34. these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations — The law of the blood-avenger, as thus established by divine authority, was a vast improvement on the ancient practice of Goelism. By the appointment of cities of refuge, the manslayer was saved, in the meantime, from the blind and impetuous fury of vindictive relatives; but he might be tried by the local court, and, if proved guilty on sufficient evidence, condemned and punished as a murderer, without the possibility of deliverance by any pecuniary satisfaction. The enactment of Moses, which was an adaptation to the character and usages of the Hebrew people, secured the double advantage of promoting the ends both of humanity and of justice.

### **OROTH NUMBERS** 36:1-13.

#### THE INCONVENIENCE OF THE INHERITANCE.

1. the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead — Being the tribal governors in Manasseh, they consulted Moses on a case that affected the public honor and interests of their tribe. It related once more to the daughters of Zelophehad. Formerly they had applied, at their own instance, to be recognized, for want of male heirs in their family, as entitled to inherit their father's property [\*\*ONUMBERS\* 27:1-11]; now the application was made on behalf of the tribe to which they belonged — that steps might be taken to prevent the alienation of their patrimony by their alliance with husbands of another tribe. The unrestricted marriages of daughters in such circumstances threatened seriously to affect the tenure of land in Israel, as their inheritance would go to their children, who, by the father's side, would belong to another tribe, and thus lead, through a complication of interests and the confusion of families, to an evil for which even the Jubilee could not afford a remedy. (See on \*\*ONUMBERS\*\*).

5-12. Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord — The plea appeared just and reasonable; and, accordingly an enactment was made by which the daughters of Zelophehad, while left to the free choice of their husbands, were restricted to marry not only within their own tribe, but within the family of their father's tribe — that is, one of their cousins. This restriction, however, was imposed only on those who were heiresses. The law was not applicable to daughters in different circumstances (1200) 1 Chronicles 23:22) — for they might marry into another tribe; but if they did so, they were liable to forfeit their patrimonial inheritance, which, on the death of their father or brothers, went to the nearest of the family kinsmen. Here was an instance of progressive legislation (see also 1200) Exodus 18:27) in Israel, the enactments made being suggested by circumstances. But it is deserving of special notice that those additions to, or modifications of, the law were confined

to civil affairs; while the slightest change was inadmissible in the laws relating to worship or the maintenance of religion.

13. These are the commandments and the judgments, which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab — The Israelitish encampment was on an extensive plateau north of the Arnon, which, though wrested from the Moabites by Sihon and Og, still retained the name of its original possessors. The particular site, as indicated by the words "Jordan near Jericho," is now called El-Koura — a large plain lying not far from Nebo, between the Arnon and a small tributary stream, the Wael [Burckhardt]. It was a desert plain on the eastern bank, and marked only by groves of the wild, thorny acacia tree.

#### THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

# **DEUTERONOMY**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

DEUTERONOMY 1:1-46.

#### MOSES' SPEECH AT THE END OF THE FORTIETH YEAR.

1. These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel — The mental condition of the people generally in that infantine age of the Church, and the greater number of them being of young or tender years, rendered it expedient to repeat the laws and counsels which God had given. Accordingly, to furnish a recapitulation of the leading branches of their faith and duty was among the last public services which Moses rendered

to Israel. The scene of their delivery was on the plains of Moab where the encampment was pitched

*on this side Jordan* — or, as the *Hebrew* word may be rendered "on the bank of the Jordan."

in the wilderness, in the plain — the Arabah, a desert plain, or steppe, extended the whole way from the Red Sea north to the Sea of Tiberias. While the high tablelands of Moab were "cultivated fields," the Jordan valley, at the foot of the mountains where Israel was encamped, was a part of the great desert plain, little more inviting than the desert of Arabia. The locale is indicated by the names of the most prominent places around it. Some of these places are unknown to us. The *Hebrew* word, *Suph*, "red" (for "sea," which our translators have inserted, is not in the original, and Moses was now farther from the Red Sea than ever), probably meant a place noted for its reeds (\*\*OPI\*\*Numbers 21:14).

**Tophel** — identified as Tafyle or Tafeilah, lying between Bozrah and Kerak.

*Hazeroth* — is a different place from that at which the Israelites encamped after leaving "the desert of Sinai."

2. There are eleven days' journey from Horeb — Distances are computed in the East still by the hours or days occupiesd by the journey. A day's journey on foot is about twenty miles — on camels, at the rate of three miles an hour, thirty miles — and by caravans, about twenty-five miles. But the Israelites, with children and flocks, would move at a slow rate. The length of the Ghor from Ezion-geber to Kadesh is a hundred miles. The days here mentioned were not necessarily successive days [ROBINSON], for the journey can be made in a much shorter period. But this mention of the *time* was made to show that the great number of years spent in travelling from Horeb to the plain of Moab was not owing to the length of the way, but to a very different cause; namely, banishment for their apostasy and frequent rebellions.

*mount Seir* — the mountainous country of Edom.

**3-8.** *in the fortieth year ... Moses spake unto the children of Israel*, etc. — This impressive discourse, in which Moses reviewed all that God had

done for His people, was delivered about a month before his death, and after peace and tranquillity had been restored by the complete conquest of Sihon and Og.

**4.** *Ashtaroth* — the royal residence of Og, so called from Astarte ("the moon"), the tutelary goddess of the Syrians. Og was slain at

**Edrei** — now Edhra, the ruins of which are fourteen miles in circumference [Burckhardt]; its general breadth is about two leagues.

- 5. On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law that is, explain this law. He follows the same method here that he elsewhere observes; namely, that of first enumerating the marvellous doings of God in behalf of His people, and reminding them what an unworthy requital they had made for all His kindness then he rehearses the law and its various precepts.
- **6.** The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount Horeb was the general name of a mountainous district; literally, "the parched" or "burnt region," whereas Sinai was the name appropriated to a particular peak [see on Exodus 19:2]. About a year had been spent among the recesses of that wild solitude, in laying the foundation, under the immediate direction of God, of a new and peculiar community, as to its social, political, and, above all, religious character; and when this purpose had been accomplished, they were ordered to break up their encampment in Horeb. The command given them was to march straight to Canaan, and possess it [-1000] Deuteronomy 1:7].
- **7.** *the mount of the Amorites* the hilly tract lying next to Kadesh-barnea in the south of Canaan.
- to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon that is, Phoenicia, the country of Sidon, and the coast of the Mediterranean from the Philistines to Lebanon. The name "Canaanite" is often used synonymously with that of "Phoenician."
- **8.** *I have set the land before you* literally, "before your faces" it is accessible; there is no impediment to your occupation. The order of the journey as indicated by the places mentioned would have led to a course of invasion, the opposite of what was eventually followed; namely, from the

seacoast eastward — instead of from the Jordan westward (see on Numbers 20:1).

- **9-18.** I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone a little before their arrival in Horeb. Moses addresses that new generation as the representatives of their fathers, in whose sight and hearing all the transactions he recounts took place. A reference is here made to the suggestion of Jethro (\*\*Exodus 18:18). In noticing his practical adoption of a plan by which the administration of justice was committed to a select number of subordinate officers, Moses, by a beautiful allusion to the patriarchal blessing, ascribed the necessity of that memorable change in the government to the vast increase of the population.
- **10.** *ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude* This was neither an Oriental hyperbole nor a mere empty boast. Abraham was told (\*\*Genesis 15:5,6) to look to the stars, and though they "appear" innumerable, yet those seen by the naked eye amount, in reality, to no more than three thousand ten in both hemispheres. The Israelites already far exceeded that number, being at the last census above six hundred thousand (\*\*\*Numbers 26:51). It was a seasonable memento, calculated to animate their faith in the accomplishment of other parts of the divine promise.
- **19-21.** we went through all that great and terrible wilderness of Paran, which included the desert and mountainous space lying between the wilderness of Shur westward, or towards Egypt and mount Seir, or the land of Edom eastwards; between the land of Canaan northwards, and the Red Sea southwards; and thus it appears to have comprehended really the wilderness of Sin and Sinai [FISK]. It is called by the Arabs El Tih, "the wandering." It is a dreary waste of rock and of calcareous soil covered with black sharp flints; all travelers, from a feeling of its complete isolation from the world, describe it as a great and terrible wilderness.
- **22-33.** ye came ... and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land The proposal to despatch spies emanated from the people through unbelief; but Moses, believing them sincere, gave his cordial assent to this measure, and God on being consulted permitted them

to follow the suggestion (see on Numbers 13:1). The issue proved disastrous to them, only through their own sin and folly.

**28.** the cities are great, and walled up to heaven — an Oriental metaphor, meaning very high. The Arab marauders roam about on horseback, and hence the walls of St. Catherine's monastery on Sinai are so lofty that travelers are drawn up by a pulley in a basket.

Anakims — (See on Mumbers 13:33). The honest and uncompromising language of Moses, in reminding the Israelites of their perverse conduct and outrageous rebellion at the report of the treacherous and fainthearted scouts, affords a strong evidence of the truth of this history as well as of the divine authority of his mission. There was great reason for his dwelling on this dark passage in their history, as it was their unbelief that excluded them from the privilege of entering the promised land (Mebrews 3:19); and that unbelief was a marvellous exhibition of human perversity, considering the miracles which God had wrought in their favor, especially in the daily manifestations they had of His presence among them as their leader and protector.

- **34-36.** *the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth* In consequence of this aggravated offense (unbelief followed by open rebellion), the Israelites were doomed, in the righteous judgment of God, to a life of wandering in that dreary wilderness till the whole adult generation had disappeared by death. The only exceptions mentioned are Caleb and Joshua, who was to be Moses' successor.
- **37.** Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes This statement seems to indicate that it was on this occasion Moses was condemned to share the fate of the people. But we know that it was several years afterwards that Moses betrayed an unhappy spirit of distrust at the waters of strife (Psalm 106:32,33). This verse must be considered therefore as a parenthesis.
- **39.** your children ... who in that day had no knowledge between good and evil All ancient versions read "to-day" instead of "that day"; and the sense is "your children who now know," or "who know not as yet good or evil." As the children had not been partakers of the sinful outbreak, they were spared to obtain the privilege which their unbelieving

parents had forfeited. God's ways are not as man's ways [ saiah 55:8,9].

40-45. turn you, and take your journey into the ... Red Sea — This command they disregarded, and, determined to force an onward passage in spite of the earnest remonstrances of Moses, they attempted to cross the heights then occupied by the combined forces of the Amorites and Amalekites (compare Numbers 14:43), but were repulsed with great loss. People often experience distress even while in the way of duty. But how different their condition who suffer in situations where God is with them from the feelings of those who are conscious that they are in a position directly opposed to the divine will! The Israelites were grieved when they found themselves involved in difficulties and perils; but their sorrow arose not from a sense of the guilt so much as the sad effects of their perverse conduct; and "though they wept," they were not true penitents. So the Lord would not hearken to their voice, nor give ear unto them.

**46.** So ye abode at Kadesh many days — That place had been the site of their encampment during the absence of the spies, which lasted forty days, and it is supposed from this verse that they prolonged their stay there after their defeat for a similar period.

### DEUTERONOMY 2:1-37.

#### STORY IS CONTINUED.

1. Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea — After their unsuccessful attack upon the Canaanites, the Israelites broke up their encampment at Kadesh, and journeying southward over the west desert of Tih as well as through the great valley of the Ghor and Arabah, they extended their removals as far as the gulf of Akaba.

we compassed mount Seir many days — In these few words Moses comprised the whole of that wandering nomadic life through which they passed during thirty-eight years, shifting from place to place, and regulating their stations by the prospect of pasturage and water. Within the interval they went northward a second time to Kadesh, but being refused a passage through Edom and opposed by the Canaanites and Amalekites, they again had no alternative but to traverse once more the great Arabah southwards to the Red Sea, where turning to the left and crossing the long, lofty mountain chain to the eastward of Ezion-geber Numbers 21:4,5), they issued into the great and elevated plains, which are still traversed by the Syrian pilgrims in their way to Mecca. They appear to have followed northward nearly the same route, which is now taken by the Syrian hadji, along the western skirts of this great desert, near the mountains of Edom [ROBINSON]. It was on entering these plains they received the command, "Ye have compassed this mountain (this hilly tract, now Jebel Shera) long enough, turn ye northward" [\*\*Deuteronomy 2:3].

**4.** the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir ... shall be afraid of you — The same people who had haughtily repelled the approach of the Israelites from the western frontier were alarmed now that they had come round upon the weak side of their country.

5-7. Meddle not with them — that is, "which dwell in Seir" Deuteronomy 2:4) — for there was another branch of Esau's posterity, namely, the Amalekites, who were to be fought against and destroyed Genesis 36:12 Exodus 17:14 Deuteronomy 25:17). But the people of Edom were not to be injured, either in their persons or property. And although the approach of so vast a nomadic horde as the Israelites naturally created apprehension, they were to take no advantage of the prevailing terror to compel the Edomites to accept whatever terms they imposed. They were merely to pass "through" or along their border, and to buy meat and water of them for money (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:6). The people, kinder than their king, did sell them bread, meat, fruits, and water in their passage along their border (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:29), in the same manner as the Syrian caravan of Mecca is now supplied by the people of the same mountains, who meet the pilgrims as at a fair or market on the hadji route [ROBINSON]. Although the Israelites still enjoyed a daily supply of the manna, there was no prohibition against their eating other food when opportunity afforded. Only they were not to cherish an inordinate desire for it. Water is a scarce commodity and is often paid for by travelers in those parts. It was the more incumbent on the Israelites to do so, as, by the blessing of God, they possessed plenty of means to purchase, and the long-continued experience of the extraordinary goodness of God to them, should inspire such confidence in Him as would suppress the smallest thought of resorting to fraud or violence in supplying their wants.

**8-18.** we passed ... through the way of the plain — the Arabah or great valley, from Elath ("trees") (the Ailah of the Greeks and Romans). The site of it is marked by extensive mounds of rubbish.

Ezion-geber — now Akaba, both were within the territory of Edom; and after making a circuit of its southeastern boundary, the Israelites reached the border of Moab on the southeast of the Salt Sea. They had been forbidden by divine command to molest the Moabites in any way; and this special honor was conferred on that people not on their own account, for they were very wicked, but in virtue of their descent from Lot. (See on Deuteronomy 23:3). Their territory comprised the fine country on the south, and partly on the north of the Arnon. They had won it by their arms from the original inhabitants, the Emims, a race, terrible, as their

name imports, for physical power and stature (\*\*Genesis 14:5), in like manner as the Edomites had obtained their settlement by the overthrow of the original occupiers of Seir, the Horims (\*\*Genesis 14:6), who were troglodytes, or dwellers in caves. Moses alluded to these circumstances to encourage his countrymen to believe that God would much more enable them to expel the wicked and accursed Canaanites. At that time, however, the Moabites, having lost the greater part of their possessions through the usurpations of Sihon, were reduced to the small but fertile region between the Zered and the Arnon.

13. Now rise up, and get you over the brook Zered — The southern border of Moab, Zered ("woody"), now Wady Ahsy, separates the modern district of Kerak from Jebal, and, indeed, forms a natural division of the country between the north and south. Ar, called in later times Rabbah, was the capital of Moab and situated twenty-five miles south of the Arnon on the banks of a small but shady stream, the Beni Hamed. It is here mentioned as representative of the country dependent on it, a rich and well-cultivated country, as appears from the numerous ruins of cities, as well as from the traces of tillage still visible on the fields.

### 16. all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people

— The outbreak at Kadesh on the false report of the spies had been the occasion of the fatal decree by which God doomed the whole grown-up population to die in the wilderness [\*\*Numbers 14:29]; but that outbreak only filled up the measure of their iniquities. For that generation, though not universally abandoned to heathenish and idolatrous practices, yet had all along displayed a fearful amount of ungodliness in the desert, which this history only hints at obscurely, but which is expressly asserted elsewhere (\*\*\*Ezekiel 20:25,26 \*\*\*\*Amos 5:25,27 \*\*\*\*\*Acts 7:42,43).

19-37. when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them — The Ammonites, being kindred to the Moabites, were, from regard to the memory of their common ancestor, to remain undisturbed by the Israelites. The territory of this people had been directly north from that of Moab. It extended as far as the Jabbok, having been taken by them from a number of small Canaanitish tribes, namely, the Zamzummins, a bullying, presumptuous band of giants, as their name indicates; and the Avims, the aborigines of the district

extending from Hazerim or Hazeroth (El Hudhera) even unto Azzah (Gaza), but of which they had been dispossessed by the Caphtorim (Philistines), who came out of Caphtor (Lower Egypt) and settled in the western coast of Palestine. The limits of the Ammonites were now compressed; but they still possessed the mountainous region beyond the Jabbok (\*\*ID\*Joshua 11:2). What a strange insight does this parenthesis of four verses give into the early history of Palestine! How many successive wars of conquest had swept over its early state — what changes of dynasty among the Canaanitish tribes had taken place long prior to the transactions recorded in this history!

**24-36.** Rise ye up ... and pass over the river Arnon — At its mouth, this stream is eighty-two feet wide and four deep. It flows in a channel banked by perpendicular cliffs of sandstone. At the date of the Israelitish migration to the east of the Jordan, the whole of the fine country lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok including the mountainous tract of Gilead, had been seized by the Amorites, who, being one of the nations doomed to destruction (see Deuteronomy 7:2 20:16), were utterly exterminated. Their country fell by right of conquest into the hands of the Israelites. Moses, however, considering this doom as referring solely to the Amorite possessions west of Jordan, sent a pacific message to Sihon, requesting permission to go through his territories, which lay on the east of that river. It is always customary to send messengers before to prepare the way; but the rejection of Moses' request by Sihon and his opposition to the advance of the Israelites (Numbers 21:23 Judges 11:26) drew down on himself and his Amorite subjects the predicted doom on the first pitched battlefield with the Canaanites. It secured to Israel not only the possession of a fine and pastoral country, but, what was of more importance to them, a free access to the Jordan on the east.

### DEUTERONOMY 3:1-20.

#### CONQUEST OF OG, KING OF BASHAN.

**1.** we turned, and went up the way to Bashan — Bashan ("fruitful" or "flat"), now El-Bottein, lay situated to the north of Gilead and extended as far as Hermon. It was a rugged mountainous country, valuable however for its rich and luxuriant pastures.

*Og the king of Bashan came out against us* — Without provocation, he rushed to attack the Israelites, either disliking the presence of such dangerous neighbors, or burning to avenge the overthrow of his friends and allies.

- **2.** The Lord said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand Og's gigantic appearance and the formidable array of forces he will bring to the field, need not discourage you; for, belonging to a doomed race, he is destined to share the fate of Sihon [-ODE Numbers 21:25].
- **3-8.** *Argob* was the capital of a district in Bashan of the same name, which, together with other fifty-nine cities in the same province, were conspicuous for their lofty and fortified walls. It was a war of extermination. Houses and cities were razed to the ground; all classes of people were put to the sword; and nothing was saved but the cattle, of which an immense amount fell as spoil into the hands of the conquerors. Thus, the two Amorite kings and the entire population of their dominions were extirpated. The whole country east of the Jordan first upland downs from the torrent of the Arnon on the south to that of the Jabbok on the north; next the high mountain tract of Gilead and Bashan from the deep ravine of Jabbok became the possession of the Israelites.
- **9.** *Hermon* now Jebel-Es-Sheick the majestic hill on which the long and elevated range of Anti-Lebanon terminates. Its summit and the ridges

on its sides are almost constantly covered with snow. It is not so much one high mountain as a whole cluster of mountain peaks, the highest in Palestine. According to the survey taken by the English Government Engineers in 1840, they were about 9376 feet above the sea. Being a mountain chain, it is no wonder that it should have received different names at different points from the different tribes which lay along the base — all of them designating extraordinary height: Hermon, the lofty peak; "Sirion," or in an abbreviated form "Sion" (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:48), the upraised, glittering; "Shenir," the glittering breastplate of ice.

11. only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants — literally, "of Rephaim." He was not the last giant, but the only living remnant in the trans-jordanic country (\*\*\*\*Joshua 15:14), of a certain gigantic race, supposed to be the most ancient inhabitants of Palestine.

behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron — Although beds in the East are with the common people nothing more than a simple mattress, bedsteads are not unknown. They are in use among the great, who prefer them of iron or other metals, not only for strength and durability, but for the prevention of the troublesome insects which in warm climates commonly infest wood. Taking the cubit at half a yard, the bedstead of Og would measure thirteen and a half feet, so that as beds are usually a little larger than the persons who occupy them, the stature of the Amorite king may be estimated at about eleven or twelve feet; or he might have caused his bed to be made much larger than was necessary, as Alexander the Great did for each of his foot soldiers, to impress the Indians with an idea of the extraordinary strength and stature of his men [LE CLERC]. But how did Og's bedstead come to be in Rabbath, of the children of Ammon? In answer to this question, it has been said, that Og had, on the eve of engagement, conveyed it to Rabbath for safety. Or it may be that Moses, after capturing it, may have sold it to the Ammonites, who had kept it as an antiquarian curiosity till their capital was sacked in the time of David. This is a most unlikely supposition, and besides renders it necessary to consider the latter clause of this verse as an interpolation inserted long after the time of Moses. To avoid this, some eminent critics take the Hebrew word rendered "bedstead" to mean "coffin." They think that the king of Bashan having been wounded in battle, fled to Rabbath, where he

died and was buried; hence the dimensions of his "coffin" are given [Dathe, Roos].

- 12, 13. this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer ... gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites The whole territory occupied by Sihon was parcelled out among the pastoral tribes of Reuben and Gad. It extended from the north bank of the Arnon to the south half of mount Gilead a small mountain ridge, now called Djelaad, about six or seven miles south of the Jabbok, and eight miles in length. The northern portion of Gilead and the rich pasture lands of Bashan a large province, consisting, with the exception of a few bleak and rocky spots, of strong and fertile soil was assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh.
- **14.** Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob The original inhabitants of the province north of Bashan, comprising sixty cities (\*\*Deuteronomy 3:4), not having been extirpated along with Og, this people were afterwards brought into subjection by the energy of Jair. This chief, of the tribe of Manasseh, in accordance with the pastoral habits of his people, called these newly acquired towns by a name which signifies "Jair's Bedouin Villages of Tents."

*unto this day* — This remark must evidently have been introduced by Ezra, or some of the pious men who arranged and collected the books of Moses.

- **15.** *I gave Gilead unto Machir* It was only the half of Gilead (\*\*Deuteronomy 3:12,13) which was given to the descendants of Machir, who was now dead.
- **16.** *from Gilead* that is, not the mountainous region, but the town Ramoth-gilead,

even unto the river Arnon half the valley — The word "valley" signifies a wady, either filled with water or dry, as the Arnon is in summer, and thus the proper rendering of the passage will be — "even to the half middle of the river Arnon" (compare "Joshua 12:2). This prudent arrangement of the boundaries was evidently made to prevent all disputes between the adjacent tribes about the exclusive right to the water.

**25.** I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon — The natural and very earnest wish of Moses to be allowed to cross the Jordan was founded on the idea that the divine threatening might be conditional and revertible. "That goodly mountain" is supposed by Jewish writers to have pointed to the hill on which the temple was to be built (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 12:5\*\*Exodus 15:2). But biblical scholars now, generally, render the words — "that goodly mountain, even Lebanon," and consider it to be mentioned as typifying the beauty of Palestine, of which hills and mountains were so prominent a feature.

**26.** *speak no more unto me of this matter* — that is, My decree is unalterable.

### DEUTERONOMY 4:1-13.

#### AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE.

- **1.** hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you By statutes were meant all ordinances respecting religion and the rites of divine worship; and by judgments, all enactments relative to civil matters. The two embraced the whole law of God.
- **2.** Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you by the introduction of any heathen superstition or forms of worship different from those which I have appointed (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:32 \*\*Numbers 15:39 \*\*\*Matthew 15:9).

neither shall ye diminish aught from it — by the neglect or omission of any of the observances, however trivial or irksome, which I have prescribed. The character and provisions of the ancient dispensation were adapted with divine wisdom to the instruction of that infant state of the church. But it was only a temporary economy; and although God here authorizes Moses to command that all its institutions should be honored with unfailing observance, this did not prevent Him from commissioning other prophets to alter or abrogate them when the end of that dispensation was attained

- **3, 4.** Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor ... the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you It appears that the pestilence and the sword of justice overtook only the guilty in that affair (\*\*ONT\*\*Numbers 25:1-9) while the rest of the people were spared. The allusion to that recent and appalling judgment was seasonably made as a powerful dissuasive against idolatry, and the fact mentioned was calculated to make a deep impression on people who knew and felt the truth of it.
- 5, 6. this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes Moses predicted that the

faithful observance of the laws given them would raise their national character for intelligence and wisdom. In point of fact it did do so; for although the heathen world generally ridiculed the Hebrews for what they considered a foolish and absurd exclusiveness, some of the most eminent philosophers expressed the highest admiration of the fundamental principle in the Jewish religion — the unity of God; and their legislators borrowed some laws from the constitution of the Hebrews.

- **7-9.** what nation is there so great Here he represents their privileges and their duty in such significant and comprehensive terms, as were peculiarly calculated to arrest their attention and engage their interest. The former, their national advantages, are described (\*\*TD\*\*Deuteronomy 4:7,8), and they were twofold:
  - 1. God's readiness to hear and aid them at all times; and
  - **2.** the excellence of that religion in which they were instructed, set forth in the "statutes and judgments so righteous" which the law of Moses contained.

Their duty corresponding to these pre-eminent advantages as a people, was also twofold:

- 1. their own faithful obedience to that law; and
- **2.** their obligation to imbue the minds of the young and rising generation with similar sentiments of reverence and respect for it.
- **10.** the day that thou stoodest before the Lord ... in Horeb The delivery of the law from Sinai was an era never to be forgotten in the history of Israel. Some of those whom Moses was addressing had been present, though very young; while the rest were federally represented by their parents, who in their name and for their interest entered into the national covenant.
- **12.** *ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude* Although articulate sounds were heard emanating from the mount, no form or representation of the Divine Being who spoke was seen to indicate His nature or properties according to the notions of the heathen.

### DEUTERONOMY 4:14-40.

#### A PARTICULAR DISSUASIVE AGAINST IDOLATRY.

15. Take ... good heed ... for ye saw no manner of similitude — The extreme proneness of the Israelites to idolatry, from their position in the midst of surrounding nations already abandoned to its seductions, accounts for their attention being repeatedly drawn to the fact that God did not appear on Sinai in any visible form; and an earnest caution, founded on that remarkable circumstance, is given to beware, not only of making representations of false gods, but also any fancied representation of the true God.

**16-19.** Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image — The things are here specified of which God prohibited any image or representation to be made for the purposes of worship; and, from the variety of details entered into, an idea may be formed of the extensive prevalence of idolatry in that age. In whatever way idolatry originated, whether from an intention to worship the true God through those things which seemed to afford the strongest evidences of His power, or whether a divine principle was supposed to reside in the things themselves, there was scarcely an element or object of nature but was deified. This was particularly the case with the Canaanites and Egyptians, against whose superstitious practices the caution, no doubt, was chiefly directed. The former worshipped Baal and Astarte, the latter Osiris and Isis, under the figure of a male and a female. It was in Egypt that animal-worship most prevailed, for the natives of that country deified among beasts the ox, the heifer, the sheep, and the goat, the dog, the cat, and the ape; among birds, the ibis, the hawk, and the crane; among reptiles, the crocodile, the frog, and the beetle; among fishes, all the fish of the Nile; some of these, as Osiris and Isis, were worshipped over all Egypt, the others only in particular provinces. In addition they embraced the Zabian superstition, the adoration of the Egyptians, in common with that of many other people, extending to the whole starry host. The very circumstantial details here given of the Canaanitish and Egyptian idolatry were owing to the past and prospective familiarity of the Israelites with it in all these forms.

- **20.** But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace that is, furnace for smelting iron. A furnace of this kind is round, sometimes thirty feet deep, and requiring the highest intensity of heat. Such is the tremendous image chosen to represent the bondage and affliction of the Israelites [ROSENMULLER].
- *to be unto him a people of inheritance* His peculiar possession from age to age; and therefore for you to abandon His worship for that of idols, especially the gross and debasing system of idolatry that prevails among the Egyptians, would be the greatest folly the blackest ingratitude.
- **26.** I call heaven and earth to witness against you This solemn form of adjuration has been common in special circumstances among all people. It is used here figuratively, or as in other parts of Scripture where inanimate objects are called up as witnesses ( Deuteronomy 32:1 Zin Isaiah 1:2).
- **28.** there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands The compulsory measures of their tyrannical conquerors would force them into idolatry, so that their choice would become their punishment.
- **30.** in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God either towards the destined close of their captivities, when they evinced a returning spirit of repentance and faith, or in the age of Messiah, which is commonly called "the latter days," and when the scattered tribes of Israel shall be converted to the Gospel of Christ. The occurrence of this auspicious event will be the most illustrious proof of the truth of the promise made in Deuteronomy 4:31.
- **41-43.** Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan (See on Joshua 20:7).
- **44-49.** *this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel* This is a preface to the rehearsal of the law, which, with the addition of various explanatory circumstances, the following chapters contain.
- **46.** *Beth-peor* that is, "house" or "temple of Peor." It is probable that a temple of this Moabite idol stood in full view of the Hebrew camp, while Moses was urging the exclusive claims of God to their worship, and this allusion would be very significant if it were the temple where so many of the Israelites had grievously offended.

**49.** *The springs of Pisgah* — more frequently, Ashdoth-pisgah (\*\*Deuteronomy 3:17 \*\*Joshua 12:3 \*\*13:20), the roots or foot of the mountains east of the Jordan.

### DEUTERONOMY 5:1-29.

#### A COMMEMORATION OF THE COVENANT IN HOREB.

- **1.** Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments Whether this rehearsal of the law was made in a solemn assembly, or as some think at a general meeting of the elders as representatives of the people, is of little moment; it was addressed either directly or indirectly to the Hebrew people as principles of their peculiar constitution as a nation; and hence, as has been well observed, "the Jewish law has no obligation upon Christians, unless so much of it as given or commanded by Jesus Christ; for whatever in this law is conformable to the laws of nature, obliges us, not as given by Moses, but by virtue of an antecedent law common to all rational beings" [BISHOP WILSON].
- 3. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us The meaning is, "not with our fathers" only, "but with us" also, assuming it to be "a covenant" of grace. It may mean "not with our fathers" at all, if the reference is to the peculiar establishment of the covenant of Sinai; a law was not given to them as to us, nor was the covenant ratified in the same public manner and by the same solemn sanctions. Or, finally, the meaning may be "not with our fathers" who died in the wilderness, in consequence of their rebellion, and to whom God did not give the rewards promised only to the faithful; but "with us," who alone, strictly speaking, shall enjoy the benefits of this covenant by entering on the possession of the promised land.
- **4.** The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount not in a visible and corporeal form, of which there was no trace (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:12,15), but freely, familiarly, and in such a manner that no doubt could be entertained of His presence.
- **5.** I stood between the Lord and you at that time as the messenger and interpreter of thy heavenly King, bringing near two objects formerly

removed from each other at a vast distance, namely, God and the people (\*\*Galatians 3:19). In this character Moses was a type of Christ, who is the only mediator between God and men (\*\*\*Timothy 2:5), the Mediator of a better covenant (\*\*Thebrews 8:6 \*\*\*Signature\*\*):15 \*\*\*Signature\*\*:12:24).

to show you the word of the Lord — not the ten commandments — for they were proclaimed directly by the Divine Speaker Himself, but the statutes and judgments which are repeated in the subsequent portion of this book.

- **6-20.** *I* am the Lord thy God The word "Lord" is expressive of authority or dominion; and God, who by natural claim as well as by covenant relation was entitled to exercise supremacy over His people Israel, had a sovereign right to establish laws for their government. [See on Exodus 20:2.] The commandments which follow are, with a few slight verbal alterations, the same as formerly recorded (Exodus 20:1-17), and in some of them there is a distinct reference to that promulgation.
- **12.** Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee that is, keep it in mind as a sacred institution of former enactment and perpetual obligation. (See on Exodus 20:8).
- This is a different reason for the observance of the Sabbath from what is assigned in Exodus 20:8-11, where that day is stated to be an appointed memorial of the creation. But the addition of another motive for the observance does not imply any necessary contrariety to the other; and it has been thought probable that, the commemorative design of the institution being well known, the other reason was specially mentioned on this repetition of the law, to secure the privilege of sabbatic rest to servants, of which, in some Hebrew families, they had been deprived. In this view, the allusion to the period of Egyptian bondage (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 5:15), when they themselves were not permitted to observe the Sabbath either as a day of rest or of public devotion, was peculiarly seasonable and significant, well fitted to come home to their business and bosoms.
- **16.** *that it may go well with thee* This clause is not in Exodus, but admitted into Ephesians 6:3.

- 21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, ... house, his field An alteration is here made in the words (see Exodus 20:17), but it is so slight ("wife" being put in the first clause and "house" in the second) that it would not have been worth while noticing it, except that the interchange proves, contrary to the opinion of some eminent critics, that these two objects are included in one and the same commandment.
- **22.** *he added no more* (\*\*Exodus 20:1). The pre-eminence of these ten commandments was shown in God's announcing them directly: other laws and institutions were communicated to the people through the instrumentality of Moses.
- **23-28.** *And* ... *ye came near unto me* (See on Exodus 20:19).
- **29.** *Oh*, *that there were such an heart in them*, *that they would fear me* God can bestow such a heart, and has promised to give it, wherever it is asked (and Jeremiah 32:40). But the wish which is here expressed on the part of God for the piety and steadfast obedience of the Israelites did not relate to them as individuals, so much as a nation, whose religious character and progress would have a mighty influence on the world at large.

### DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25.

# MOSES EXHORTS ISRAEL TO HEAR GOD AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

1-9. Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them ... whither ye go to possess it — The grand design of all the institutions prescribed to Israel was to form a religious people, whose national character should be distinguished by that fear of the Lord their God which would ensure their divine observance of His worship and their steadfast obedience to His will. The basis of their religion was an acknowledgment of the unity of God with the understanding and the love of God in the heart (\*\*Deuteronomy 6:4,5). Compared with the religious creed of all their contemporaries, how sound in principle, how elevated in character, how unlimited in the extent of its moral influence on the heart and habits of the people! Indeed, it is precisely the same basis on which rests the purer and more spiritual form of it which Christianity exhibits Matthew 22:37 Mark 12:30 Luke 10:27). Moreover, to help in keeping a sense of religion in their minds, it was commanded that its great principles should be carried about with them wherever they went, as well as meet their eyes every time they entered their homes. A further provision was made for the earnest inculcation of them on the minds of the young by a system of parental training, which was designed to associate religion with all the most familiar and oft-recurring scenes of domestic life. It is probable that Moses used the phraseology in Deuteronomy 6:7 merely in a figurative way, to signify assiduous, earnest, and frequent instruction; and perhaps he meant the metaphorical language in Deuteronomy 6:8 to be taken in the same sense also. But as the Israelites interpreted it literally, many writers suppose that a reference was made to a superstitious custom borrowed from the Egyptians, who wore jewels and ornamental trinkets on the forehead and arm, inscribed

with certain words and sentences, as amulets to protect them from danger. These, it has been conjectured, Moses intended to supersede by substituting sentences of the law; and so the Hebrews understood him, for they have always considered the wearing of the Tephilim, or frontlets, a permanent obligation. The form was as follows: Four pieces of parchment, inscribed, the first with Exodus 13:2-10; the second with Exodus 13:11-16; the third with Deuteronomy 6:1-8; and the fourth with Deuteronomy 11:18-21, were enclosed in a square case or box of tough skin, on the side of which was placed the Hebrew letter (shin), and bound round the forehead with a thong or ribbon. When designed for the arms, those four texts were written on one slip of parchment, which, as well as the ink, was carefully prepared for the purpose. With regard to the other usage supposed to be alluded to, the ancient Egyptians had the lintels and imposts of their doors and gates inscribed with sentences indicative of a favorable omen [WILKINSON]; and this is still the case, for in Egypt and other Mohammedan countries, the front doors of houses (in Cairo, for instance) are painted red, white, and green, bearing conspicuously inscribed upon them such sentences from the Koran, as "God is the Creator," "God is one, and Mohammed is his prophet." Moses designed to turn this ancient and favorite custom to a better account and ordered that, instead of the former superstitious inscriptions, there should be written the words of God, persuading and enjoining the people to hold the laws in perpetual remembrance.

**20-25.** when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying — The directions given for the instruction of their children form only an extension of the preceding counsels.

### DEUTERONOMY 7:1-26.

#### ALL COMMUNION WITH THE NATIONS FORBIDDEN.

1. *the Hittites* — This people were descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan (\*\*Genesis 10:15), and occupied the mountainous region about Hebron, in the south of Palestine.

the Girgashites — supposed by some to be the same as the Gergesenes (\*\*Matthew 8:28), who lay to the east of Lake Gennesareth; but they are placed on the west of Jordan (\*\*GENTJOShua 24:11), and others take them for a branch of the large family of the Hivites, as they are omitted in nine out of ten places where the tribes of Canaan are enumerated; in the tenth they are mentioned, while the Hivites are not.

*the Amorites* — descended from the fourth son of Canaan. They occupied, besides their conquest on the Moabite territory, extensive settlements west of the Dead Sea, in the mountains.

*the Canaanites* — located in Phoenicia, particularly about Tyre and Sidon, and being sprung from the oldest branch of the family of Canaan, bore his name.

*the Perizzites* — that is, *villagers*, a tribe who were dispersed throughout the country and lived in unwalled towns.

*the Hivites* — who dwelt about Ebal and Gerizim, extending towards Hermon. They are supposed to be the same as the Avims.

the Jebusites — resided about Jerusalem and the adjacent country.

seven nations greater and mightier than thou — Ten were formerly mentioned (\*\*Genesis 15:19-21). But in the lapse of near five hundred years, it cannot be surprising that some of them had been extinguished in the many intestine feuds that prevailed among those warlike tribes. It is

more than probable that some, stationed on the east of Jordan, had fallen under the victorious arms of the Israelites.

- 2-6. thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them — This relentless doom of extermination which God denounced against those tribes of Canaan cannot be reconciled with the attributes of the divine character, except on the assumption that their gross idolatry and enormous wickedness left no reasonable hope of their repentance and amendment. If they were to be swept away like the antediluvians or the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as incorrigible sinners who had filled up the measure of their iniquities, it mattered not to them in what way the judgment was inflicted; and God, as the Sovereign Disposer, had a right to employ any instruments that pleased Him for executing His judgments. Some think that they were to be exterminated as unprincipled usurpers of a country which God had assigned to the posterity of Eber and which had been occupied ages before by wandering shepherds of that race, till, on the migration of Jacob's family into Egypt through the pressure of famine, the Canaanites overspread the whole land, though they had no legitimate claim to it, and endeavored to retain possession of it by force. In this view their expulsion was just and proper. The strict prohibition against contracting any alliances with such infamous idolaters was a prudential rule, founded on the experience that "evil communications corrupt good manners" [ Corinthians 15:33], and its importance or necessity was attested by the unhappy examples of Solomon and others in the subsequent history of Israel.
- 5. thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, etc. The removal of the temples, altars, and everything that had been enlisted in the service, or might tend to perpetuate the remembrance, of Canaanite idolatry, was likewise highly expedient for preserving the Israelites from all risk of contamination. It was imitated by the Scottish Reformers, and although many ardent lovers of architecture and the fine arts have anathematized their proceedings as vandalism, yet there was profound wisdom in the favorite maxim of Knox "pull down the nests, and the rooks will disappear."
- **6-10.** For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God that is, set apart to the service of God, or chosen to execute the important purposes

of His providence. Their selection to this high destiny was neither on account of their numerical amount (for, till after the death of Joseph, they were but a handful of people); nor because of their extraordinary merits (for they had often pursued a most perverse and unworthy conduct); but it was in consequence of the covenant or promise made with their pious forefathers; and the motives that led to that special act were such as tended not only to vindicate God's wisdom, but to illustrate His glory in diffusing the best and most precious blessings to all mankind.

- 11-26. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day In the covenant into which God entered with Israel, He promised to bestow upon them a variety of blessings so long as they continued obedient to Him as their heavenly King. He pledged His veracity that His infinite perfections would be exerted for this purpose, as well as for delivering them from every evil to which, as a people, they would be exposed. That people accordingly were truly happy as a nation, and found every promise which the faithful God made to them amply fulfilled, so long as they adhered to that obedience which was required of them. See a beautiful illustration of this in Psalm 144:12-15.
- **15.** the evil diseases of Egypt (See Exodus 15:26). Besides those with which Pharaoh and his subjects were visited, Egypt has always been dreadfully scourged with diseases. The testimony of Moses is confirmed by the reports of many modern writers, who tell us that, notwithstanding its equal temperature and sereneness, that country has some indigenous maladies which are very malignant, such as ophthalmia, dysentery, smallpox, and the plague.
- **20.** Moreover the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them (See on on the 24:12 [and Exodus 23:28]).
- **22.** *lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee* (See on Exodus 23:29). The omnipotence of their Almighty Ruler could have given them possession of the promised land at once. But, the unburied corpses of the enemy and the portions of the country that might have been left desolate for a while, would have drawn an influx of dangerous beasts. This evil would be prevented by a progressive conquest and by the use of ordinary means, which God would bless.

### DEUTERONOMY 8:1-20.

#### AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE.

**1.** All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live — In all the wise arrangements of our Creator duty has been made inseparably connected with happiness; and the earnest enforcement of the divine law which Moses was making to the Israelites was in order to secure their being a happy (because a moral and religious) people: a course of prosperity is often called "life" (Genesis 17:18 Troverbs 3:2).

*live*, *and multiply* — This reference to the future increase of their population proves that they were too few to occupy the land fully at first.

- 2, 3. thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness — The recapitulation of all their checkered experience during that long period was designed to awaken lively impressions of the goodness of God. First, Moses showed them the object of their protracted wanderings and varied hardships. These were trials of their obedience as well as chastisements for sin. Indeed, the discovery of their infidelity, inconstancy, and their rebellions and perverseness which this varied discipline brought to light, was of eminently practical use to the Israelites themselves, as it has been to the church in all subsequent ages. Next, he enlarged on the goodness of God to them, while reduced to the last extremities of despair, in the miraculous provision which, without anxiety or labor, was made for their daily support (see on Exodus 16:4). Possessing no nutritious properties inherent in it, this contributed to their sustenance, as indeed all food does Matthew 4:4) solely through the ordinance and blessing of God. This remark is applicable to the means of spiritual as well as natural life.
- **4.** Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years What a striking miracle was this! No doubt the Israelites

might have brought from Egypt more clothes than they wore at their outset; they might also have obtained supplies of various articles of food and raiment in barter with the neighboring tribes for the fleeces and skins of their sheep and goats; and in furnishing them with such opportunities the care of Providence appeared. But the strong and pointed terms which Moses here uses (see also Deuteronomy 29:5) indicate a special or miraculous interposition of their loving Guardian in preserving them amid the wear and tear of their nomadic life in the desert. Thirdly, Moses expatiated on the goodness of the promised land.

**7.** For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land — All accounts, ancient and modern, concur in bearing testimony to the natural beauty and fertility of Palestine, and its great capabilities if properly cultivated.

a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills — These characteristic features are mentioned first, as they would be most striking; and all travelers describe how delightful and cheerful it is, after passing through the barren and thirsty desert, to be among running brooks and swelling hills and verdant valleys. It is observable that water is mentioned as the chief source of its ancient fertility.

**8.** A land of wheat, and barley — These cereal fruits were specially promised to the Israelites in the event of their faithful allegiance to the covenant of God (\*\*Psalm 81:16\*\*147:14). The wheat and barley were so abundant as to yield sixty and often an hundredfold (\*\*Genesis 26:12\*\*Matthew 13:8).

*vines*, *and fig trees*, *and pomegranates* — The limestone rocks and abrupt valleys were entirely covered, as traces of them still show, with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees. Though in a southern latitude, its mountainous formations tempered the excessive heat, and hence, figs, pomegranates, etc. were produced in Palestine equally with wheat and barley, the produce of northern regions.

**honey** — The word "honey" is used often in a loose, indeterminate sense, very frequently to signify a syrup of dates or of grapes, which under the name of *dibs* is much used by all classes, wherever vineyards are found, as a condiment to their food. It resembles thin molasses, but is more pleasant

to the taste [ROBINSON]. This is esteemed a great delicacy in the East, and it was produced abundantly in Palestine.

**9.** *a land whose stones are iron* — The abundance of this metal in Palestine, especially among the mountains of Lebanon, those of Kesraoun, and elsewhere, is attested not only by Josephus, but by Volney, Buckingham, and other travelers.

brass — not the alloy brass, but the ore of copper. Although the mines may now be exhausted or neglected, they yielded plenty of those metals anciently (1218) 1 Chronicles 22:3 1 Chronicles 29:2-7 23:15 Saiah 60:17).

- **11-20.** Beware that thou forget not the Lord After mentioning those instances of the divine goodness, Moses founded on them an argument for their future obedience.
- **15.** Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions Large and venomous reptiles are found in great numbers there still, particularly in autumn. Travellers must use great caution in arranging their tents and beds at night; even during the day the legs not only of men, but of the animals they ride, are liable to be bitten.

who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint — (See on Deuteronomy 9:21).

### DEUTERONOMY 9:1-25.

# MOSES DISSUADES THEM FROM THE OPINION OF THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**1.** *this day* — means *this time*. The Israelites had reached the confines of the promised land, but were obliged, to their great mortification, to return. But now they certainly were to enter it. No obstacle could prevent their possession; neither the fortified defenses of the towns, for the resistance of the gigantic inhabitants of whom they had received from the spies so formidable a description.

cities great and fenced up to heaven — Oriental cities generally cover a much greater space than those in Europe; for the houses often stand apart with gardens and fields intervening. They are almost all surrounded with walls built of burnt or sun-dried bricks, about forty feet in height. All classes in the East, but especially the nomad tribes, in their ignorance of engineering and artillery, would have abandoned in despair the idea of an assault on a walled town, which to-day would be demolished in a few hours.

**4-6.** Speak not thou in thine heart, ... saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land — Moses takes special care to guard his countrymen against the vanity of supposing that their own merits had procured them the distinguished privilege. The Canaanites were a hopelessly corrupt race, and deserved extermination; but history relates many remarkable instances in which God punished corrupt and guilty nations by the instrumentality of other people as bad as themselves. It was not for the sake of the Israelites, but for His own sake, for the promise made to their pious ancestors, and in furtherance of high and comprehensive purposes of good to the world, that God was about to give them a grant of Canaan.

- 7. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord To dislodge from their minds any presumptuous idea of their own righteousness, Moses rehearses their acts of disobedience and rebellion committed so frequently, and in circumstances of the most awful and impressive solemnity, that they had forfeited all claims to the favor of God. The candor and boldness with which he gave, and the patient submission with which the people bore, his recital of charges so discreditable to their national character, has often been appealed to as among the many evidences of the truth of this history.
- **8.** *Also in Horeb* rather, "even in Horeb," where it might have been expected they would have acted otherwise.
- 12-29. Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people ... have corrupted themselves With a view to humble them effectually, Moses proceeds to particularize some of the most atrocious instances of their infidelity. He begins with the impiety of the golden calf an impiety which, while their miraculous emancipation from Egypt, the most stupendous displays of the Divine Majesty that were exhibited on the adjoining mount, and the recent ratification of the covenant by which they engaged to act as the people of God, were fresh in memory, indicated a degree of inconstancy or debasement almost incredible.
- 17. I took the two tables, ... and broke them before your eyes not in the heat of intemperate passion, but in righteous indignation, from zeal to vindicate the unsullied honor of God, and by the suggestion of His Spirit to intimate that the covenant had been broken, and the people excluded from the divine favor.
- **18.** *I fell down before the Lord* The sudden and painful reaction which this scene of pagan revelry produced on the mind of the pious and patriotic leader can be more easily imagined than described. Great and public sins call for seasons of extraordinary humiliation, and in his deep affliction for the awful apostasy, he seems to have held a miraculous fast as long as before.
- **20.** The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him By allowing himself to be overborne by the tide of popular clamor, Aaron became a partaker in the guilt of idolatry and would have suffered the

penalty of his sinful compliance, had not the earnest intercession of Moses on his behalf prevailed.

### 21. I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount

— that is, "the smitten rock" (El Leja) which was probably contiguous to, or a part of, Sinai. It is too seldom borne in mind that though the Israelites were supplied with water from this rock when they were stationed at Rephidim (Wady Feiran), there is nothing in the Scripture narrative which should lead us to suppose that the rock was in the immediate neighborhood of that place (see on Exodus 17:5). The water on this smitten rock was probably the brook that descended from the mount. The water may have flowed at the distance of many miles from the rock, as the winter torrents do now through the wadies of Arabia-Petræa (SPsalm 78:15,16). And the rock may have been smitten at such a height, and at a spot bearing such a relation to the Sinaitic valleys, as to furnish in this way supplies of water to the Israelites during the journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir and Kadesh-barnea (\*\*Deuteronomy 1:1,2). On this supposition new light is, perhaps, cast on the figurative language of the apostle, when he speaks of "the rock following" the Israelites (400) Corinthians 10:4) [WILSON, Land of the Bible].

**25.** Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first — After the enumeration of various acts of rebellion, he had mentioned the outbreak at Kadesh-barnea, which, on a superficial reading of this verse, would seem to have led Moses to a third and protracted season of humiliation. But on a comparison of this passage with Wumbers 14:5, the subject and language of this prayer show that only the second act of intercession (\*\*Deuteronomy 9:18) is now described in fuller detail.

### DEUTERONOMY 10:1-22.

#### GOD'S MERCY IN RESTORING THE TWO TABLES.

- 1. At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first It was when God had been pacified through the intercessions of Moses with the people who had so greatly offended Him by the worship of the golden calf. The obedient leader executed the orders he had received as to the preparation both of the hewn stones, and the ark or chest in which those sacred archives were to be laid.
- **3.** And I made an ark of shittim wood It appears, however, from Exodus 37:1, that the ark was not framed till his return from the mount, or most probably, he gave instructions to Bezaleel, the artist employed on the work, before he ascended the mount that, on his descent, it might be finished, and ready to receive the precious deposit.
- **4, 5.** *he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing* that is, not Moses, who under the divine direction acted as amanuensis, but God Himself who made this inscription a second time with His own hand, to testify the importance He attached to the ten commandments. Different from other stone monuments of antiquity, which were made to stand upright and in the open air, those on which the divine law was engraven were portable, and designed to be kept as a treasure. JOSEPHUS says that each of the tables contained five precepts. But the tradition generally received, both among Jewish and Christian writers is, that one table contained four precepts, the other six.
- 5. I ... put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me Here is another minute, but important circumstance, the public mention of which at the time attests the veracity of the sacred historian.

- 6-9. the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera — So sudden a change from a spoken discourse to a historical narrative has greatly puzzled the most eminent biblical scholars, some of whom reject the parenthesis as a manifest interpolation. But it is found in the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts, and, believing that all contained in this book was given by inspiration and is entitled to profound respect, we must receive it as it stands, although acknowledging our inability to explain the insertion of these encampment details in this place. There is another difficulty in the narrative itself. The stations which the Israelites are said successively to have occupied are enumerated here in a different order from Numbers 33:31. That the names of the stations in both passages are the same there can be no doubt; but, in Numbers, they are probably mentioned in reference to the *first* visit of the Hebrews during the long wandering southwards, before their return to Kadesh the second time; while here they have a reference to the second passage of the Israelites, when they again marched south, in order to compass the land of Edom. It is easy to conceive that Mosera (Hor) and the wells of Jaakan might lie in such a direction that a nomadic horde might, in different years, at one time take the former *first* in their way, and at another time the latter [ROBINSON].
- **10-22.** Moses here resumes his address, and having made a passing allusion to the principal events in their history, concludes by exhorting them to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully.
- **16.** Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart Here he teaches them the true and spiritual meaning of that rite, as was afterwards more strongly urged by Paul (\*\*Romans 2:25,29), and should be applied by us to our baptism, which is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" [\*\*Peter 3:21].

### DEUTERONOMY 11:1-32.

#### AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE.

1. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge—
The reason for the frequent repetition of the same or similar counsels is to be traced to the infantine character and state of the church, which required line upon line and precept upon precept. Besides, the Israelites were a headstrong and perverse people, impatient of control, prone to rebellion, and, from their long stay in Egypt, so violently addicted to idolatry, that they ran imminent risk of being seduced by the religion of the country to which they were going, which, in its characteristic features, bore a strong resemblance to that of the country they had left.

2-9. I speak not with your children which have not known ... But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did — Moses is here giving a brief summary of the marvels and miracles of awful judgment which God had wrought in effecting their release from the tyranny of Pharaoh, as well as those which had taken place in the wilderness. He knew that he might dwell upon these, for he was addressing many who had been witnesses of those appalling incidents. For it will be remembered that the divine threatening that they should die in the wilderness, and its execution, extended only to males from twenty years and upward, who were able to go forth to war. No males under twenty years of age, no females, and none of the tribe of Levi, were objects of the denunciation (see Numbers 14:28-30 16:49). There might, therefore, have been many thousands of the Israelites at that time of whom Moses could say, "Your eyes have seen all the great acts which He did"; and with regard to those the historic review of Moses was well calculated to stir up their minds to the duty and advantages of obedience.

10-12. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out — The physical features of Palestine

present a striking contrast to those of the land of bondage. A widely extending plain forms the cultivated portion of Egypt, and on the greater part of this low and level country rain never falls. This natural want is supplied by the annual overflow of the Nile, and by artificial means from the same source when the river has receded within its customary channel. Close by the bank the process of irrigation is very simple. The cultivator opens a small sluice on the edge of the square bed in which seed has been sown, making drill after drill; and when a sufficient quantity of water has poured in, he shuts it up with his foot. Where the bank is high, the water is drawn up by hydraulic engines, of which there are three kinds used, of different power, according to the subsidence of the stream. The water is distributed in small channels or earthen conduits, simple in construction, worked by the foot, and formed with a mattock by the gardener who directs their course, and which are banked up or opened, as occasion may require, by pressing in the soil with the foot. Thus was the land watered in which the Israelites had dwelt so long. Such vigilance and laborious industry would not be needed in the promised land. Instead of being visited with moisture only at one brief season and left during the rest of the year under a withering blight, every season it would enjoy the benign influences of a genial climate. The hills would attract the frequent clouds, and in the refreshing showers the blessing of God would especially rest upon the land.

- **12.** A land which the Lord thy God careth for that is, watering it, as it were, with His own hands, without human aid or mechanical means.

**15-17.** *I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle* — Undoubtedly the special blessing of the former and the latter rain [ Deuteronomy 11:14] was one principal cause of the extraordinary fertility of Canaan in ancient times. That blessing was promised to the Israelites as a temporal reward for their fidelity to the national covenant [ Deuteronomy 11:13]. It was threatened to be withdrawn on their disobedience or apostasy; and most signally is the execution of that threatening seen in the present sterility of Palestine. MR. LOWTHIAN, an English farmer, who was struck during his journey from Joppa to Jerusalem by not seeing a blade of grass, where even in the poorest localities of Britain some wild vegetation is found, directed his attention particularly to the subject, and pursued the inquiry during a month's residence in Jerusalem, where he learned that a miserably small quantity of milk is daily sold to the inhabitants at a dear rate, and that chiefly asses' milk. "Most clearly," says he, "did I perceive that the barrenness of large portions of the country was owing to the cessation of the early and latter rain, and that the absence of grass and flowers made it no longer the land (\*Deuteronomy 11:9) flowing with milk and honey."

**18-25.** *lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them* — (See on GREED Deuteronomy 6:1).

**24.** Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours
— not as if the Jews should be lords of the world, but of very place within the promised land. It should be granted to them and possessed by them, on conditions of obedience:

from the wilderness — the Arabah on the south;

**Lebanon** — the northern limit;

**Euphrates** — their boundary on the east. Their grant of dominion extended so far, and the right was fulfilled to Solomon.

even unto the uttermost sea — the Mediterranean.

**26-32.** *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse* — (See on Deuteronomy 27:11).

## DEUTERONOMY 12:1-15.

#### MONUMENTS OF IDOLATRY TO BE DESTROYED.

- 1. These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe Having in the preceding chapter inculcated upon the Israelites the general obligation to fear and love God, Moses here enters into a detail of some special duties they were to practice on their obtaining possession of the promised land.
- 2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods This divine command was founded on the tendencies of human nature; for to remove out of sight everything that had been associated with idolatry, that it might never be spoken of and no vestige of it remain, was the only effectual way to keep the Israelites from temptations to it. It is observable that Moses does not make any mention of temples, for such buildings were not in existence at that early period. The "places" chosen as the scene of heathen worship were situated either on the summit of a lofty mountain, or on some artificial mound, or in a grove, planted with particular trees, such as oaks, poplars, and elms (\*\*Tsaiah 57:5-7\*\*\*Hosea 4:13). The reason for the selection of such sites was both to secure retirement and to direct the attention upward to heaven; and the "place" was nothing else than a consecrated enclosure, or at most, a canopy or screen from the weather.
- **3.** And ye shall overthrow their altars piles of turf or small stones. and break their pillars Before the art of sculpture was known, the statues of idols were only rude blocks of colored stones.
- **5.** unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose ... to put his name there ... thou shalt come They were forbidden to worship either in the impure superstitious manner of the heathen, or in any of the places frequented by them. A particular place for the general rendezvous of all

the tribes would be chosen by God Himself; and the choice of one common place for the solemn rites of religion was an act of divine wisdom, for the security of the true religion. It was admirably calculated to prevent the corruption which would otherwise have crept in from their frequenting groves and high hills — to preserve uniformity of worship and keep alive their faith in Him to whom all their sacrifices pointed. The place was successively Mizpeh, Shiloh, and especially Jerusalem. But in all the references made to it by Moses, the name is never mentioned. This studied silence was maintained partly lest the Canaanites within whose territories it lay might have concentrated their forces to frustrate all hopes of obtaining it; partly lest the desire of possessing a place of such importance might have become a cause of strife or rivalry amongst the Hebrew tribes, as about the appointment to the priesthood (\*\*Numbers 16:1-30).

- 7. there ye shall eat before the Lord of the things mentioned (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:6); but of course, none of the parts assigned to the priests before the Lord in the place where the sanctuary should be established, and in those parts of the Holy City which the people were at liberty to frequent and inhabit.
- **12.** *ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God*, *ye*, *and your sons*, *and your daughters*, etc. Hence it appears that, although males only were commanded to appear before God at the annual solemn feasts (\*\*\*Exodus 23:17), the women were allowed to accompany them (\*\*\*\*I Samuel 1:3-23).
- 15. Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates Every animal designed for food, whether ox, goat, or lamb, was during the abode in the wilderness ordered to be slain as a peace offering at the door of the tabernacle; its blood to be sprinkled, and its fat burnt upon the altar by the priest. The encampment, being then round about the altar, made this practice, appointed to prevent idolatry, easy and practicable. But on the settlement in the promised land, the obligation to slay at the tabernacle was dispensed with. The people were left at liberty to prepare their meat in their cities or homes.

according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee

— The style of living should be accommodated to one's condition and
means — profuse and riotous indulgence can never secure the divine
blessing.

the unclean and the clean may eat thereof — The unclean here are those who were under some slight defilement, which, without excluding them from society, yet debarred them from eating any of the sacred meats (\*\*Euriticus 7:20). They were at liberty freely to partake of common articles of food.

of the roebuck — the gazelle.

and as of the hart — The Syrian deer (*Cervus barbatus*) is a species between our red and fallow deer, distinguished by the want of a bis-antler, or second branch on the horns, reckoning from below, and for a spotted livery which is effaced only in the third or fourth year.

## **™**DEUTERONOMY 12:16-25.

#### BLOOD PROHIBITED.

The prohibition against eating or drinking blood as an unnatural custom accompanied the announcement of the divine grant of animal flesh for food (Genesis 9:4), and the prohibition was repeatedly renewed by Moses with reference to the great objects of the law (GETT) Leviticus 17:12), the prevention of idolatry, and the consecration of the sacrificial blood to God. In regard, however, to the blood of animals slain for food, it might be shed without ceremony and poured on the ground as a common thing like water — only for the sake of decency, as well as for preventing all risk of idolatry, it was to be covered over with earth (GETT) Leviticus 17:13), in opposition to the practice of heathen sportsmen, who left it exposed as an offering to the god of the chase.

22-28. Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so shalt thou eat them, etc. — Game when procured in the wilderness had not been required to be brought to the door of the tabernacle. The people were now to be as free in the killing of domestic cattle as of wild animals. The permission to hunt and use venison for food was doubtless a great boon to the Israelites, not only in the wilderness, but on their settlement in Canaan, as the mountainous ranges of Lebanon, Carmel, and Gilead, on which deer

abounded in vast numbers, would thus furnish them with a plentiful and luxuriant repast.

## **\*\*DEUTERONOMY** 12:26-32.

#### HOLY THINGS TO BE EATEN IN THE HOLY PLACE.

**26.** Only thy holy things which thou hast — The tithes mentioned (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:17) are not to be considered ordinary tithes, which belonged to the Levites, and of which private Israelites had a right to eat; but they are other extraordinary tithes or gifts, which the people carried to the sanctuary to be presented as peace offerings, and on which, after being offered and the allotted portion given to the priest, they feasted with their families and friends (\*\*ETT)\*Leviticus 27:30).

29, 30. Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them ... saying, How did these nations serve their gods? — The Israelites, influenced by superstitious fear, too often endeavored to propitiate the deities of Canaan. Their Egyptian education had early impressed that bugbear notion of a set of local deities, who expected their dues of all who came to inhabit the country which they honored with their protection, and severely resented the neglect of payment in all newcomers [WARBURTON]. Taking into consideration the prevalence of this idea among them, we see that against an Egyptian influence was directed the full force of the wholesome caution with which this chapter closes.

## DEUTERONOMY 13:1-5.

#### ENTICERS TO IDOLATRY TO BE PUT TO DEATH.

**1.** If there arise among you a prophet — The special counsels which follow arose out of the general precept contained in Deuteronomy 12:32; and the purport of them is, that every attempt to seduce others from the course of duty which that divine standard of faith and worship prescribes must not only be strenuously resisted, but the seducer punished by the law of the land. This is exemplified in three cases of enticement to idolatry.

a prophet — that is, some notable person laying claim to the character and authority of the prophetic office (Numbers 12:6 one) Samuel 10:6), performing feats of dexterity or power in support of his pretensions, or even predicting events which occurred as he foretold; as, for instance, an eclipse which a knowledge of natural science might enable him to anticipate (or, as Caiaphas, of John 18:14). Should the aim of such a one be to seduce the people from the worship of the true God, he is an impostor and must be put to death. No prodigy, however wonderful, no human authority, however great, should be allowed to shake their belief in the divine character and truth of a religion so solemnly taught and so awfully attested (compare Galatians 1:8). The modern Jews appeal to this passage as justifying their rejection of Jesus Christ. But He possessed all the characteristics of a true prophet, and He was so far from alienating the people from God and His worship that the grand object of His ministry was to lead to a purer, more spiritual and perfect observance of the law.

## DEUTERONOMY 13:6-18.

#### WITHOUT REGARD TO NEARNESS OF RELATION.

- **6.** If thy brother ... entice thee secretly This term being applied very loosely in all Eastern countries (Genesis 20:13), other expressions are added to intimate that no degree of kindred, however intimate, should be allowed to screen an enticer to idolatry, to conceal his crime, or protect his person. Piety and duty must overcome affection or compassion, and an accusation must be lodged before a magistrate.
- 9. thou shalt surely kill him not hastily, or in a private manner, but after trial and conviction; and his relative, as informer, was to cast the first stone (see on Deuteronomy 17:2 and Acts 7:58). It is manifest that what was done in secret could not be legally proved by a single informer; and hence Jewish writers say that spies were set in some private part of the house, to hear the conversation and watch the conduct of a person suspected of idolatrous tendencies.
- **14.** Then shalt thou inquire that is, the magistrate, to whom it officially belonged to make the necessary investigation. In the event of the report proving true, the most summary proceedings were to be commenced against the apostate inhabitants. The law in this chapter has been represented as stern and sanguinary, but it was in accordance with the national constitution of Israel. God being their King, idolatry was treason, and a city turned to idols put itself into a state, and incurred the punishment, of rebellion.
- **16.** *it shall be an heap for ever*; *it shall not be built again* Its ruins shall be a permanent monument of the divine justice, and a beacon for the warning and terror of posterity.
- **17.** there shall cleave naught of the cursed thing to thine hand No spoil shall be taken from a city thus solemnly devoted to destruction.

Every living creature must be put to the sword — everything belonging to it reduced to ashes — that nothing but its infamy may remain.

## DEUTERONOMY 14:1,2.

# GOD'S PEOPLE MUST NOT DISFIGURE THEMSELVES IN MOURNING.

1. ye shall not cut yourselves ... for the dead — It was a common practice of idolaters, both on ceremonious occasions of their worship (\*\*\*18:28), and at funerals (compare \*\*\*30 Jeremiah 16:6\*\*\*41:5), to make ghastly incisions on their faces and other parts of their persons with their finger nails or sharp instruments. The making a large bare space between the eyebrows was another heathen custom in honor of the dead (see on \*\*\*Leviticus 19:27,28 and \*\*\*\*Leviticus 21:5). Such indecorous and degrading usages, being extravagant and unnatural expressions of hopeless sorrow (\*\*\*\*\*1 Thessalonians 4:13), were to be carefully avoided by the Israelites, as derogatory to the character, and inconsistent with the position, of those who were the people of God (\*\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 14:2).

## DEUTERONOMY 14:3-21.

## WHAT MAY BE EATEN, AND WHAT NOT.

**3.** Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing — that is, anything forbidden as unclean (see on Leviticus 11:1).

## DEUTERONOMY 14:4-8.

#### OF BEASTS.

**5.** *The hart* — (see on Deuteronomy 12:15).

*fallow deer* — The Hebrew word (*Jachmur*) so rendered, does not represent the fallow deer, which is unknown in Western Asia, but an antelope (*Oryx leucoryx*), called by the Arabs, *jazmar*. It is of a white color, black at the extremities, and a bright red on the thighs. It was used at Solomon's table.

wild goat — The word akko is different from that commonly used for a wild goat (\*\*Proverbs 5:19), and it is supposed to be a goat-deer, having the body of a stag, but the head, horns, and beard of a goat. An animal of this sort is found in the East, and called Lerwee [Shaw, Travels].

**pygarg** — a species of antelope (*Oryx addax*) with white buttocks, wreathed horns two feet in length, and standing about three feet seven inches high at the shoulders. It is common in the tracks which the Israelites had frequented [SHAW].

wild ox — supposed to be the *Nubian Oryx*, which differs from the *Oryx leucoryx* (formerly mentioned) by its black color; and it is, moreover, of larger stature and more slender frame, with longer and more curved horns. It is called *Bekkar-El-Wash* by the Arabs.

*chamois* — rendered by the *Septuagint* Cameleopard; but, by others who rightly judge it must have been an animal more familiar to the Hebrews, it is thought to be the *Kebsch* (*Ovis tragelaphus*), rather larger than a common sheep, covered not with wool, but with reddish hair — a Syrian sheep-goat.

## DEUTERONOMY 14:11-20.

#### OF BIRDS.

- **11-20.** Of all clean birds ye shall eat (See on delical Leviticus 11:21).
- **13.** *glede* thought to be the same as that rendered *vulture* ( see on Leviticus 11:14).
- **15.** *the cuckow* more probably the sea-gull. [See on Leviticus 11:16].

- **16.** *the swan* rather, the goose [MICHAELIS]. [See on <sup>CRIII</sup>Leviticus 11:18].
- **17.** *gier eagle* The Hebrew word *Rachemah* is manifestly identical with *Rachamah*, the name which the Arabs give to the common vulture of Western Asia and Egypt (*Neophron percnopterus*). (See on Leviticus 11:18).
- **cormorant** rather, the *plungeon*; a seafowl. [See on \*\*Eleviticus 11:17].
- **18.** *the lapwing* the upupa or hoop: a beautiful bird, but of the most unclean habits. [See on <sup>48110</sup>Leviticus 11:19].
- **21.** Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself (See on Leviticus 17:15 and Leviticus 22:8).

thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates — not a proselyte, for he, as well as an Israelite, was subject to this law; but a heathen traveler or sojourner.

**Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk** — This is the third place in which the prohibition is repeated [4250 Exodus 23:19 34:26]. It was pointed against an annual pagan ceremony (see on 4250 Exodus 23:19).

Deuteronomy 14:22-29. Law Of The Tithe].

- **22-27.** Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed The dedication of a tenth part of the year's produce in everything was then a religious duty. It was to be brought as an offering to the sanctuary; and, where distance prevented its being taken in kind, it was by this statute convertible into money.
- **28, 29.** At the end of three years ... the Levite ... shall come, etc. The Levites having no inheritance like the other tribes, the Israelites were not to forget them, but honestly to tithe their increase [\*\*Numbers 18:24]. Besides the tenth of all the land produce, they had forty-eight cities, with the surrounding grounds [\*\*\*Numbers 35:7], "the best of the land," and a certain proportion of the sacrifices as their allotted perquisites. They had, therefore, if not an affluent, yet a comfortable and independent, fund for their support.

## DEUTERONOMY 15:1-11.

#### THE SEVENTH YEAR, A YEAR OF RELEASE FOR THE POOR.

- **1.** At the end of every seven years during the last of the seven, that is, the sabbatical year (\*\*Exodus 21:2 23:11 \*\*Exodus 25:4 \*\*\*Jeremiah 34:14).
- **2.** Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it not by an absolute discharge of the debt, but by passing over that year without exacting payment. The relief was temporary and peculiar to that year during which there was a total suspension of agricultural labor.

*he shall not exact it ... of his brother* — that is, an Israelite, so called in opposition to a stranger or foreigner.

because it is called the Lord's release — The reason for acquitting a debtor at that particular period proceeded from obedience to the command, and a regard for the honor, of God; an acknowledgment of holding their property of Him, and gratitude for His kindness.

- **3.** Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again Admission to all the religious privileges of the Israelites was freely granted to heathen proselytes, though this spiritual incorporation did not always imply an equal participation of civil rights and privileges (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 25:44\*\*\* Jeremiah 34:14; compare \*\*\*\* Chronicles 22:2\*\*\* Chronicles 2:17).
- **4.** Save when there shall be no poor man among you Apparently a qualifying clause added to limit the application of the foregoing statement [Deuteronomy 15:3]; so that "the brother" to be released pointed to a poor borrower, whereas it is implied that if he were rich, the restoration of the loan might be demanded even during that year. But the words may properly be rendered (as on the Margin) to the end, in order that there may be no poor among you that is, that none be reduced to inconvenient

straits and poverty by unseasonable exaction of debts at a time when there was no labor and no produce, and that all may enjoy comfort and prosperity, which will be the case through the special blessing of God on the land, provided they are obedient.

- 7-11. If there be among you a poor man ... thou shalt not harden thine heart Lest the foregoing law should prevent the Israelites lending to the poor, Moses here admonishes them against so mean and selfish a spirit and exhorts them to give in a liberal spirit of charity and kindness, which will secure the divine blessing (\*\*Romans 12:8\*\*\* Corinthians 9:7).
- **11.** For the poor shall never cease out of the land Although every Israelite on the conquest of Canaan became the owner of property, yet in the providence of God who foresaw the event, it was permitted, partly as a punishment of disobedience and partly for the exercise of benevolent and charitable feelings, that "the poor should never cease out of the land."

## DEUTERONOMY 15:12-19.

#### HEBREW SERVANTS' FREEDOM.

- 12. if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee The last extremity of an insolvent debtor, when his house or land was not sufficient to cancel his debt, was to be sold as a slave with his family (\*\*\*Leviticus 25:39 \*\*\*Leviticus 25:39 \*\*\*Nehemiah 5:1-13 \*\*\*\*Job 24:9 \*\*\*Matthew 18:25). The term of servitude could not last beyond six years. They obtained their freedom either after six years from the time of their sale or before the end of the seventh year. At the year of jubilee, such slaves were emancipated even if their six years of service were not completed [see on \*\*\*Eviticus 25:39].
- **13-15.** *thou shalt not let him go away empty* A seasonable and wise provision for enabling a poor unfortunate to regain his original status in society, and the motive urged for his kindness and humanity to the Hebrew slave was the remembrance that the whole nation was once a degraded and persecuted band of helots in Egypt. Thus, kindness towards their slaves, unparalleled elsewhere in those days, was inculcated by the

Mosaic law; and in all their conduct towards persons in that reduced condition, leniency and gentleness were enforced by an appeal which no Israelite could resist.

- **16, 17.** *if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee* If they declined to avail themselves of the privilege of release and chose to remain with their master, then by a peculiar form of ceremony they became a party to the transaction, voluntarily sold themselves to their employer, and continued in his service till death.
- **18.** he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee that is, he is entitled to double wages because his service was more advantageous to you, being both without wages and for a length of time, whereas hired servants were engaged yearly (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 25:53), or at most for three years (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 16:14).
- **19.** All the firstling males of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God (See on Exodus 13:2; also see Exodus 22:30).

thou shalt do not work with the firstling of thy bullock — that is, the second firstlings (see Deuteronomy 12:17,18 4123).

## DEUTERONOMY 16:1-22.

#### THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

**1.** Observe the month of Abib — or first-fruits. It comprehended the latter part of our March and the beginning of April. Green ears of the barley, which were then full, were offered as first-fruits, on the second day of the passover.

for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of Egypt by night — This statement is apparently at variance with the prohibition (\*\*DEX\*\*) as well as with the recorded fact that their departure took place in the morning (\*\*DEX\*\*) Numbers 33:3). But it is susceptible of easy reconciliation. Pharaoh's permission, the first step of emancipation, was extorted during the night, the preparations for departure commenced, the rendezvous at Rameses made, and the march entered on in the morning.

- **2.** Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover not the paschal lamb, which was strictly and properly the passover. The whole solemnity is here meant, as is evident from the mention of the additional victims that required to be offered on the subsequent days of the feast (Numbers 28:18,19 Chronicles 35:8,9), and from the allusion to the continued use of unleavened bread for seven days, whereas the passover itself was to be eaten at once. The words before us are equivalent to "thou shalt observe the feast of the passover."
- **3.** seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread a sour, unpleasant, unwholesome kind of bread, designed to be a memorial of their Egyptian misery and of the haste with which they departed, not allowing time for their morning dough to ferment.
- **5, 6.** Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates The passover was to be observed nowhere but in the court of the

tabernacle or temple, as it was not a religious feast or sacramental occasion merely, but an actual sacrifice (\*\*Exodus 12:27\*\*23:18\*\*34:25). The blood had to be sprinkled on the altar and in the place where the true Passover was afterwards to be sacrificed for us "at even, at the going down of the sun" — literally, "between the evenings."

**6.** at the season — that is, the month and day, though not perhaps the precise hour. The immense number of victims that had to be immolated on the eve of the passover — that is, within a space of four hours — has appeared to some writers a great difficulty. But the large number of officiating priests, their dexterity and skill in the preparation of the sacrifices, the wide range of the court, the extraordinary dimensions of the altar of burnt offering and orderly method of conducting the solemn ceremonial, rendered it easy to do that in a few hours, which would otherwise have required as many days.

7. thou shalt roast and eat it — (See on Exodus 12:8; compare Note, Chronicles 35:13).

thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents — The sense of this passage, on the first glance of the words, seems to point to the morning after the first day — the passover eve. Perhaps, however, the divinely appointed duration of this feast, the solemn character and important object, the journey of the people from the distant parts of the land to be present, and the recorded examples of their continuing all the time (4802) Chronicles 30:21), (though these may be considered extraordinary, and therefore exceptional occasions), may warrant the conclusion that the leave given to the people to return home was to be on the morning after the completion of the seven days.

9-12. Seven weeks shalt thou number — The feast of weeks, or a WEEK OF WEEKS: the feast of pentecost (see on Exodus 23:10; also see Exodus 34:22 ACts 2:1). As on the second day of the passover a sheaf of new barley, reaped on purpose, was offered, so on the second day of pentecost a sheaf of new wheat was presented as first-fruits (Exodus 23:16 Numbers 28:26), a freewill, spontaneous tribute of gratitude to God for His temporal bounties. This feast was instituted in memory of the giving of the law, that spiritual food by which man's soul is nourished (EXECUTED Deuteronomy 8:3).

- 13-17. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days (See on Exodus 23:14; Eviticus 23:34; and Exodus 29:12). Various conjectures have been formed to account for the appointment of this feast at the conclusion of the whole harvest. Some imagine that it was designed to remind the Israelites of the time when they had no cornfields to reap but were daily supplied with manna; others think that it suited the convenience of the people better than any other period of the year for dwelling in booths; others that it was the time of Moses' second descent from the mount; while a fourth class are of opinion that this feast was fixed to the time of the year when the Word was made flesh and dwelt literally, "tabernacled" among us (Exodus John 1:14), Christ being actually born at that season.
- **15.** *in all the works of thine hands ... rejoice* that is, praising God with a warm and elevated heart. According to Jewish tradition, no marriages were allowed to be celebrated during these great festivals, that no personal or private rejoicings might be mingled with the demonstrations of public and national gladness.
- **16.** Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God No command was laid on women to undertake the journeys, partly from regard to the natural weakness of their sex, and partly to their domestic cares.
- **18-20.** *Judges and officers shalt thou make* These last meant heralds or bailiffs, employed in executing the sentence of their superiors.
- *in all thy gates* The gate was the place of public resort among the Israelites and other Eastern people, where business was transacted and cases decided. The Ottoman Porte derived its name from the administration of justice at its gates.
- **21.** Thou shalt not plant thee a grove A grove has in Scripture a variety of significations a group of overshadowing trees, or a grove adorned with altars dedicated to a particular deity, or a wooden image in a grove ( Tudges 6:25 Zight Kings 23:4-6). They might be placed near the earthen and temporary altars erected in the wilderness, but they could not exist either at the tabernacle or temples. They were places, which, with

their usual accompaniments, presented strong allurements to idolatry; and therefore the Israelites were prohibited from planting them.

**22.** Neither shalt thou set thee up any image — erroneously rendered so for "pillar"; pillars of various kinds, and materials of wood or stone were erected in the neighborhood of altars. Sometimes they were conical or oblong, at other times they served as pedestals for the statues of idols. A superstitious reverence was attached to them, and hence they were forbidden.

## DEUTERONOMY 17:1.

#### THINGS SACRIFICED MUST BE SOUND.

1. Thou shalt not sacrifice ... any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish — Under the name of bullock were comprehended bulls, cows, and calves; under that of sheep, rams, lambs, kids, he- and she-goats. An ox, from mutilation, was inadmissible. The qualifications required in animals destined for sacrifice are described (\*\*PEX\*\*Exodus 12:5\*\*\*Leviticus 1:3).

## DEUTERONOMY 17:2-7.

#### IDOLATERS MUST BE SLAIN.

**2-7.** If there be found among you ... man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness — The grand object contemplated in choosing Israel was to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God; and hence idolatry of any kind, whether of the heavenly bodies or in some grosser form, is called "a transgression of His covenant." No rank or sex could palliate this crime. Every reported case, even a flying rumor of the perpetration of so heinous an offense, was to be judicially examined; and if proved by the testimony of competent witnesses, the offender was to be taken without the gates and stoned to death, the witnesses casting the first stone at him. The object of this special arrangement was partly to deter the witnesses from making a rash accusation by the prominent part they had to act as executioners, and partly to give a public assurance that the crime had met its due punishment.

## DEUTERONOMY 17:8-13.

# THE PRIESTS AND JUDGES TO DETERMINE CONTROVERSIES.

8-13. If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment — In all civil or criminal cases, where there was any doubt or difficulty in giving a decision, the local magistrates were to submit them by reference to the tribunal of the Sanhedrim — the supreme council, which was composed partly of civil and partly of ecclesiastical persons. "The priests and Levites," should rather be "the priests — the Levites"; that is, the Levitical priests, including the high priest, who were members of the legislative assembly; and who, as forming one body, are called "the judge." Their sittings were held in the neighborhood of the sanctuary because in great emergencies the high priest had to consult God by Urim (\*\*PN\*\*Umbers 27:21). From their judgment there was no appeal; and if a person were so perverse and refractory as to refuse obedience to their sentences, his conduct, as inconsistent with the maintenance of order and good government, was then to be regarded and punished as a capital crime.

## DEUTERONOMY 17:14-20.

#### THE ELECTION AND DUTY OF A KING.

14. When thou ... shalt say, I will set a king over me — In the following passage Moses prophetically announces a revolution which should occur at a later period in the national history of Israel. No sanction or recommendation was indicated; on the contrary, when the popular clamor had effected that constitutional change on the theocracy by the appointment of a king, the divine disapproval was expressed in the most unequivocal terms (\*\*\* Samuel 8:7). Permission at length was granted, God reserving to Himself the nomination of the family and the person who should be elevated to the regal dignity (\*\*\* Samuel 9:15 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 16:12 \*\*\* 10:24 \*\*\* 10:

provides to a certain extent for such an emergency and lays down the principles on which a king in Israel must act. He was to possess certain indispensable requisites. He was to be an Israelite, of the same race and religion, to preserve the purity of the established worship, as well as be a type of Christ, a spiritual king, one of their brethren.

- 15. thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother—that is, by their free and voluntary choice. But God, in the retributions of His providence, did allow foreign princes to usurp the dominion (ANT) Jeremiah 38:17 ANT) Matthew 22:17).
- **16.** *he shall not multiply horses to himself* The use of these animals was not absolutely prohibited, nor is there any reason to conclude that they might not be employed as part of the state equipage. But the multiplication of horses would inevitably lead to many evils, to increased intercourse with foreign nations, especially with Egypt, to the importation of an animal to which the character of the country was not suited, to the establishment of an Oriental military despotism, to proud and pompous parade in peace, to a dependence upon Egypt in time of war, and a consequent withdrawal of trust and confidence in God. (1001) Samuel 8:4
- 17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away There were the strongest reasons for recording an express prohibition on this point, founded on the practice of neighboring countries in which polygamy prevailed, and whose kings had numerous harems; besides, the monarch of Israel was to be absolutely independent of the people and had nothing but the divine law to restrain his passions. The mischievous effects resulting from the breach of this condition were exemplified in the history of Solomon and other princes, who, by trampling on the restrictive law, corrupted themselves as well as the nation.

*neither shall he greatly multiply ... silver and gold* — that is, the kings were forbidden to accumulate money for private purposes.

**18-20.** *he shall write him a copy of this law in a book* — The original scroll of the ancient Scriptures was deposited in the sanctuary under the strict custody of the priests (see on 6500 Deuteronomy 31:26 and 6200 E Kings

- 22:8). Each monarch, on his accession, was to be furnished with a true and faithful copy, which he was to keep constantly beside him, and daily peruse it, that his character and sentiments being cast into its sanctifying mould, he might discharge his royal functions in the spirit of faith and piety, of humility and a love or righteousness.
- **20.** that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children From this it appears that the crown in Israel was to be hereditary, unless forfeited by personal crime.

## DEUTERONOMY 18:1-8.

# THE LORD IS THE PRIESTS' AND THE LEVITES' INHERITANCE.

- **1.** The priests the Levites ... shall eat the offerings As the tribe of Levi had no inheritance allotted them like the other tribes but were wholly consecrated to the priestly office, their maintenance was to arise from tithes, first-fruits, and certain portions of the oblations presented on the altar, which God having by express appointment reserved to Himself made over, after being offered, to His ministers.
- **3.** *this shall be the priest's due from the people* All who offered sacrifices of thanksgiving or peace offerings (\*\*\*Leviticus 7:31-33) were ordered to give the breast and shoulder as perquisites to the priests. Here "the two cheeks" or head and "the maw" or stomach, deemed anciently a great dainty, are specified. But whether this is a new injunction, or a repetition of the old with the supplement of more details, it is not easy to determine.
- 6-8. if a Levite ... come with all the desire of his mind It appears that the Levites served in rotation from the earliest times; but, from their great numbers, it was only at infrequent intervals they could be called into actual service. Should any Levite, however, under the influence of eminent piety, resolve to devote himself wholly and continually to the sacred duties of the sanctuary, he was allowed to realize his ardent wishes; and as he was admitted to a share of the work, so also to a share of the remuneration. Though he might have private property, that was to form no ground for withholding or even diminishing his claim to maintenance like the other ministering priests. The reason or principle of the enactment is obvious (4001) Corinthians 9:13). At the same time, while every facility was afforded for the admission of such a zealous and self-denying officer, this admission was to be in an orderly manner: he was to minister "as all

his brethren" — that is, a Gershonite with Gershonites; a Merarite with Merarites; so that there might be no derangement of the established courses.

## DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14.

#### THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE NATIONS ARE TO BE AVOIDED.

**9-14.** thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations— (See on Eleviticus 18:21, Eleviticus 19:26, Eleviticus 19:31, and Eleviticus 20:4). In spite of this express command, the people of Canaan, especially the Philistines, were a constant snare and stumbling block to the Israelites, on account of their divinations and superstitious practices.

## DEUTERONOMY 18:15-19.

#### CHRIST THE PROPHET IS TO BE HEARD.

**15-19.** The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet — The insertion of this promise, in connection with the preceding prohibition, might warrant the application (which some make of it) to that order of true prophets whom God commissioned in unbroken succession to instruct, to direct, and warn His people; and in this view the purport of it is, "There is no need to consult with diviners and soothsayers, as I shall afford you the benefit of divinely appointed prophets, for judging of whose credentials a sure criterion is given" (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). But the prophet here promised was pre-eminently the Messiah, for He alone was "like unto Moses" (see on Deuteronomy 34:10) "in His mediatorial character; in the peculiar excellence of His ministry; in the number, variety, and magnitude of His miracles; in His close and familiar communion with God; and in His being the author of a new dispensation of religion." This prediction was fulfilled fifteen hundred years afterwards and was expressly applied to Jesus Christ by Peter (\*\*Acts 3:22,23), and by Stephen (\*\*Acts 7:37).

**19.** whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him — The direful consequences of unbelief in Christ, and disregard of His mission, the Jewish people have been experiencing during eighteen hundred years.

## DEUTERONOMY 19:1-13.

#### OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

2. Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land — Goelism, or the duty of the nearest kinsmen to avenge the death of a slaughtered relative, being the customary law of that age (as it still is among the Arabs and other people of the East), Moses incorporated it in an improved form with his legislative code. For the protection of the unintentional homicide, he provided certain cities of refuge — three had been destined for this purpose on the east of Jordan (\*\*THE\*Deuteronomy 4:41\*\* Numbers 35:11); three were to be invested with the same privilege on the west of that river when Canaan should be conquered.

*in the midst of thy land* — in such a position that they would be conspicuous and accessible, and equidistant from the extremities of the land and from each other.

**3.** Thou shalt prepare thee a way — The roads leading to them were to be kept in good condition and the brooks or rivers to be spanned by good bridges; the width of the roads was to be thirty-two cubits; and at all the crossroads signposts were to be erected with the words, Mekeleth, Mekeleth, "refuge, refuge," painted on them.

divide the coasts of thy land ... into three parts — the whole extent of the country from the south to the north. The three cities on each side of Jordan were opposite to each other, "as two rows of vines in a vineyard" (see on "Joshua 20:7).

**6,7.** Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot

— This verse is a continuation of Deuteronomy 19:3 (for

Deuteronomy 19:4,5, which are explanatory, are in a parenthetical form), and the meaning is that if the kinsman of a person inadvertently killed should, under the impulse of sudden excitement and without

inquiring into the circumstances, inflict summary vengeance on the homicide, however guiltless, the law tolerated such an act; it was to pass with impunity. But to prevent such precipitate measures, the cities of refuge were established for the reception of the homicide, that "innocent blood might not be shed in thy land" (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 19:10). In the case of premeditated murder (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 19:11,12), they afforded no immunity; but, if it were only manslaughter, the moment the fugitive was within the gates, he found himself in a safe asylum (\*\*\*Numbers 35:26-28\*\*\*Joshua 20:6).

8, 9. And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast — Three additional sanctuaries were to be established in the event of their territory extending over the country from Hermon and Gilead to the Euphrates (see Genesis 15:18 Exodus 23:31). But it was obscurely hinted that this last provision would never be carried into effect, as the Israelites would not fulfill the conditions, namely, "that of keeping the commandments, to love the Lord, and walk ever in his ways." In point of fact, although that region was brought into subjection by David and Solomon, we do not find that cities of refuge were established; because those sovereigns only made the ancient inhabitants tributary, instead of sending a colony of Israelites to possess it. The privilege of sanctuary cities, however, was given only for Israelites; and besides, that conquered territory did not remain long under the power of the Hebrew kings.

## DEUTERONOMY 19:14.

#### THE LANDMARK IS NOT TO BE REMOVED.

**14.** Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old have set in thine inheritance — The state of Palestine in regard to enclosures is very much the same now as it has always been. Though gardens and vineyards are surrounded by dry-stone walls or hedges of prickly pear, the boundaries of arable fields are marked by nothing but by a little trench, a small cairn, or a single erect stone, placed at certain intervals. It is manifest that a dishonest person could easily fill the gutter with earth, or remove these stones a few feet without much risk of

detection and so enlarge his own field by a stealthy encroachment on his neighbor's. This law, then, was made to prevent such trespasses.

## DEUTERONOMY 19:15.

#### TWO WITNESSES REQUIRED.

**15.** One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity — The following rules to regulate the admission of testimony in public courts are founded on the principles of natural justice. A single witness shall not be admitted to the condemnation of an accused person.

## 

#### PUNISHMENT OF A FALSE WITNESS.

**16-21.** But if convicted of perjury, it will be sufficient for his own condemnation, and his punishment shall be exactly the same as would have overtaken the object of his malignant prosecution. (See on Exodus 21:23; see also Leviticus 24:20).

## DEUTERONOMY 20:1-20.

# THE PRIESTS' EXHORTATION TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO BATTLE.

- **1.** When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies In the approaching invasion of Canaan, or in any just and defensive war, the Israelites had reason to expect the presence and favor of God.
- **4.** your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you According to Jewish writers, the ark was always taken into the field of combat. But there is no evidence of this in the sacred history; and it must have been a sufficient ground of encouragement to be assured that God was on their side.
- **5-8.** And the officers shall speak unto the people literally, Shoterim, who are called "scribes" or "overseers" (\*\*\*Exodus 5:6). They might be keepers of the muster-roll, or perhaps rather military heralds, whose duty it was to announce the orders of the generals (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 26:11). This

proclamation (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:5-8) must have been made previous to the priest's address, as great disorder and inconvenience must have been occasioned if the serried ranks were broken by the departure of those to whom the privilege was granted. Four grounds of exemption are expressly mentioned:

- (1) The dedication of a new house, which, as in all Oriental countries still, was an important event, and celebrated by festive and religious ceremonies (\*\*Nehemiah 12:27); exemption for a year.
- (2) The planting of a vineyard. The fruit of the first three years being declared unfit for use, and the first-fruits producible on the fourth, the exemption in this case lasted at least four years.
- (3) The betrothal of a wife, which was always a considerable time before marriage. It was deemed a great hardship to leave a house unfinished, a new property half cultivated, and a recently contracted marriage; and the exemptions allowed in these cases were founded on the principle that a man's heart being deeply engrossed by something at a distance, he would not be very enthusiastic in the public service.
- (4) The ground of exemption was cowardice. From the composition of the Israelitish army, which was an irregular militia, all above twenty years being liable to serve, many totally unfit for war must have been called to the field; and it was therefore a prudential arrangement to rid the army of such unwarlike elements persons who could render no efficient service, and the contagion of whose craven spirit might lead to panic and defeat.
- **9.** they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people When the exempted parties have withdrawn, the combatants shall be ranged in order of battle.
- **10-20.** When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it An important principle is here introduced into the war law of Israel regarding the people they fought against and the cities they besieged. With "the cities of those people which God doth give thee" in Canaan, it was to be a war of utter extermination (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 20:17,18). But when on a just occasion, they went against other nations,

they were first to make a proclamation of peace, which if allowed by a surrender, the people would become dependent (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:11), and in the relation of tributaries the conquered nations would receive the highest blessings from alliance with the chosen people; they would be brought to the knowledge of Israel's God and of Israel's worship, as well as a participation of Israel's privileges. But if the besieged city refused to capitulate and be taken, a universal massacre was to be made of the males while the women and children were to be preserved and kindly treated (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:13,14). By this means a provision was made for a friendly and useful connection being established between the captors and the captives; and Israel, even through her conquests, would prove a blessing to the nations.

## 19. thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them

— In a protracted siege, wood would be required for various purposes, both for military works and for fuel. But fruit-bearing trees were to be carefully spared; and, indeed, in warm countries like India, where the people live much more on fruit than we do, the destruction of a fruit tree is considered a sort of sacrilege.

## 20. thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee

— It is evident that some sort of military engines were intended; and accordingly we know, that in Egypt, where the Israelites learned their military tactics, the method of conducting a siege was by throwing up banks, and making advances with movable towers, or with the testudo [WILKINSON].

## DEUTERONOMY 21:1-9.

#### EXPIATION OF UNCERTAIN MURDER.

1-6. If one be found slain ... lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him — The ceremonies here ordained to be observed on the discovery of a slaughtered corpse show the ideas of sanctity which the Mosaic law sought to associate with human blood, the horror which murder inspired, as well as the fears that were felt lest God should avenge it on the country at large, and the pollution which the land was supposed to contract from the effusion of innocent, unexpiated blood. According to Jewish writers, the Sanhedrin, taking charge of such a case, sent a deputation to examine the neighborhood. They reported to the nearest town to the spot where the body was found. An order was then issued by their supreme authority to the elders or magistrates of that town, to provide the heifer at the civic expense and go through the appointed ceremonial. The engagement of the public authorities in the work of expiation, the purchase of the victim heifer, the conducting it to a "rough valley" which might be at a considerable distance, and which, as the original implies, was a wady, a perennial stream, in the waters of which the polluting blood would be wiped away from the land, and a desert withal, incapable of cultivation; the washing of the hands, which was an ancient act symbolical of innocence — the whole of the ceremonial was calculated to make a deep impression on the Jewish, as well as on the Oriental, mind generally; to stimulate the activity of the magistrates in the discharge of their official duties; to lead to the discovery of the criminal, and the repression of crime.

## DEUTERONOMY 21:10-23.

#### THE TREATMENT OF A CAPTIVE TAKEN TO WIFE.

10-14. When thou goest to war ... and seest among the captives a beautiful woman ... that thou wouldest have her to thy wife — According to the war customs of all ancient nations, a female captive became the slave of the victor, who had the sole and unchallengeable control of right to her person. Moses improved this existing usage by special regulations on the subject. He enacted that, in the event that her master was captivated by her beauty and contemplated a marriage with her, a month should be allowed to elapse, during which her perturbed feelings might be calmed, her mind reconciled to her altered condition, and she might bewail the loss of her parents, now to her the same as dead. A month was the usual period of mourning with the Jews, and the circumstances mentioned here were the signs of grief — the shaving of the head, the allowing the nails to grow uncut, the putting off her gorgeous dress in which ladies, on the eve of being captured, arrayed themselves to be the more attractive to their captors. The delay was full of humanity and kindness to the female slave, as well as a prudential measure to try the strength of her master's affections. If his love should afterwards cool and he become indifferent to her person, he was not to lord it over her, neither to sell her in the slave market, nor retain her in a subordinate condition in his house; but she was to be free to go where her inclinations led her.

15-17. If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated — In the original and all other translations, the words are rendered "have had," referring to events that have already taken place; and that the "had" has, by some mistake, been omitted in our version, seems highly probable from the other verbs being in the past tense — "hers that was hated," not "hers that is hated"; evidently intimating that she (the first wife) was dead at the time referred to. Moses, therefore, does not here legislate upon the case of a man who has two wives at the same time, but on that of a man who has married twice in succession, the second wife after the decease of the first; and there was an obvious necessity for legislation in these circumstances; for the first wife, who was hated, was dead, and the second wife, the favorite, was alive; and with the feelings of a stepmother, she would urge

her husband to make her own son the heir. This case has no bearing upon polygamy, which there is no evidence that the Mosaic code legalized.

- **18-21.** *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son* A severe law was enacted in this case. But the consent of both parents was required as a prevention of any abuse of it; for it was reasonable to suppose that they would not both agree to a criminal information against their son except from absolute necessity, arising from his inveterate and hopeless wickedness; and, in that view, the law was wise and salutary, as such a person would be a pest and nuisance to society. The punishment was that to which blasphemers were doomed [\*\*Deviticus 24:23]; for parents are considered God's representatives and invested with a portion of his authority over their children.
- 22, 23. if a man have committed a sin ... and thou hang him on a tree Hanging was not a Hebrew form of execution (gibbeting is meant), but the body was not to be left to rot or be a prey to ravenous birds; it was to be buried "that day," either because the stench in a hot climate would corrupt the air, or the spectacle of an exposed corpse bring ceremonial defilement on the land.

## DEUTERONOMY 22:1-4.

#### OF HUMANITY TOWARD BRETHREN.

**1.** Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them, etc. — "Brother" is a term of extensive application, comprehending persons of every description; not a relative, neighbor, or fellow countryman only, but any human being, known or unknown, a foreigner, and even an enemy (\*\*Exodus 23:4\*). The duty inculcated is an act of common justice and charity, which, while it was taught by the law of nature, was more clearly and forcibly enjoined in the law delivered by God to His people. Indifference or dissimulation in the circumstances supposed would not only be cruelty to the dumb animals, but a violation of the common rights of humanity; and therefore the dictates of natural feeling, and still more the authority of the divine law, enjoined that the lost or missing property of another should be taken care of by the finder, till a proper opportunity occurred of restoring it to the owner.

## DEUTERONOMY 22:5-12.

#### THE SEX TO BE DISTINGUISHED BY APPAREL.

**5.** The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment — Though disguises were assumed at certain times in heathen temples, it is probable that a reference was made to unbecoming levities practiced in common life. They were properly forbidden; for the adoption of the habiliments of the one sex by the other is an outrage on decency, obliterates the distinctions of nature by fostering softness and effeminacy in the man, impudence and boldness in the woman as well as levity and hypocrisy in both; and, in short, it opens

the door to an influx of so many evils that all who wear the dress of another sex are pronounced "an abomination unto the Lord."

- 6, 7. If a bird's nest chance to be before thee This is a beautiful instance of the humanizing spirit of the Mosaic law, in checking a tendency to wanton destructiveness and encouraging a spirit of kind and compassionate tenderness to the tiniest creatures. But there was wisdom as well as humanity in the precept; for, as birds are well known to serve important uses in the economy of nature, the extirpation of a species, whether of edible or ravenous birds, must in any country be productive of serious evils. But Palestine, in particular, was situated in a climate which produced poisonous snakes and scorpions; and the deserts and mountains would have been overrun with them as well as immense swarms of flies, locusts, mice, and vermin of various kinds if the birds which fed upon them were extirpated [MICHAELIS]. Accordingly, the counsel given in this passage was wise as well as humane, to leave the hen undisturbed for the propagation of the species, while the taking of the brood occasionally was permitted as a check to too rapid an increase.
- **8.** thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence The tops of houses in ancient Judea, as in the East still, were flat, being composed of branches or twigs laid across large beams, and covered with a cement of clay or strong plaster. They were surrounded by a parapet breast high. In summer the roof is a favorite resort for coolness, and accidents would frequently happen from persons incautiously approaching the edge and falling into the street or court; hence it was a wise and prudent precaution in the Jewish legislator to provide that a stone balustrade or timber railing round the roof should form an essential part of every new house.
- **9.** Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds (See on Leviticus 19:19).
- **10.** Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together Whether this association, like the mixture of seeds, had been dictated by superstitious motives and the prohibition was symbolical, designed to teach a moral lesson (\*\*\* Corinthians 6:14), may or may not have been the case. But the prohibition prevented a great inhumanity still occasionally practiced by the poorer sort in Oriental countries. An ox and ass, being of

different species and of very different characters, cannot associate comfortably, nor unite cheerfully in drawing a plough or a wagon. The ass being much smaller and his step shorter, there would be an unequal and irregular draft. Besides, the ass, from feeding on coarse and poisonous weeds, has a fetid breath, which its yoke fellow seeks to avoid, not only as poisonous and offensive, but producing leanness, or, if long continued, death; and hence, it has been observed always to hold away its head from the ass and to pull only with one shoulder.

- **11.** thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts The essence of the crime (\*\*\*DE\*Zephaniah 1:8) consisted, not in wearing a woollen and a linen robe, but in the two stuffs being woven together, according to a favorite superstition of ancient idolaters (see on \*\*DE\*Leviticus 19:19).
- **12.** thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters or, according to some eminent biblical interpreters, tassels on the coverlet of the bed. The precept is not the same as \*\*Numbers 15:38.
- 13-30. If a man take a wife, etc. The regulations that follow might be imperatively needful in the then situation of the Israelites; and yet, it is not necessary that we should curiously and impertinently inquire into them. So far was it from being unworthy of God to leave such things upon record, that the enactments must heighten our admiration of His wisdom and goodness in the management of a people so perverse and so given to irregular passions. Nor is it a better argument that the Scriptures were not written by inspiration of God to object that this passage, and others of a like nature, tend to corrupt the imagination and will be abused by evildisposed readers, than it is to say that the sun was not created by God, because its light may be abused by wicked men as an assistant in committing crimes which they have meditated [HORNE].

### DEUTERONOMY 23:1-25.

# WHO MAY AND WHO MAY NOT ENTER INTO THE CONGREGATION.

- 1-3. He that is wounded ..., shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord "To enter into the congregation of the Lord" means either admission to public honors and offices in the Church and State of Israel, or, in the case of foreigners, incorporation with that nation by marriage. The rule was that strangers and foreigners, for fear of friendship or marriage connections with them leading the people into idolatry, were not admissible till their conversion to the Jewish faith. But this passage describes certain limitations of the general rule. The following parties were excluded from the full rights and privileges of citizenship:
  - (1) **Eunuchs** It was a very ancient practice for parents in the East by various arts to mutilate their children, with a view to training them for service in the houses of the great.
  - (2) **Bastards** Such an indelible stigma in both these instances was designed as a discouragement to practices that were disgraceful, but too common from intercourse with foreigners.
  - (3) Ammonites and Moabites Without provocation they had combined to engage a soothsayer to curse the Israelites; and had further endeavored, by ensnaring them into the guilt and licentious abominations of idolatry, to seduce them from their allegiance to God.
- 3. even to the their tenth generation shall they not enter Many eminent writers think that this law of exclusion was applicable only to males; at all events that a definite is used for an indefinite number (\*\*TNehemiah 13:1 \*\*Ruth 4:10 \*\*\*Z\*\* Kings 10:2). Many of the Israelites being established on the east side of Jordan in the immediate neighborhood of those people, God raised this partition wall between them to prevent

the consequences of evil communications. More favor was to be shown to Edomites and Egyptians — to the former from their near relationship to Israel; and to the latter, from their early hospitalities to the family of Jacob, as well as the many acts of kindness rendered them by private Egyptians at the Exodus (\*\*PExodus 12:36). The grandchildren of Edomite or Egyptian proselytes were declared admissible to the full rights of citizenship as native Israelites; and by this remarkable provision, God taught His people a practical lesson of generosity and gratitude for special deeds of kindness, to the forgetfulness of all the persecution and ill services sustained from those two nations.

- **9-14.** When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing from the excesses incident to camp life, as well as from habits of personal neglect and impurity.
- **15, 16.** Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which has escaped from his master unto thee evidently a servant of the Canaanites or some of the neighboring people, who was driven by tyrannical oppression, or induced, with a view of embracing the true religion, to take refuge in Israel.
- **19, 20.** Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother ... Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury The Israelites lived in a simple state of society, and hence they were encouraged to lend to each other in a friendly way without any hope of gain. But the case was different with foreigners, who, engaged in trade and commerce, borrowed to enlarge their capital, and might reasonably be expected to pay interest on their loans.
- **21, 22.** When thou shalt vow a vow (See on <sup>QRID</sup>Numbers 30:2).
- **24, 25.** When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure Vineyards, like cornfields mentioned in the next verse [ Deuteronomy 23:25], were often unenclosed. In vine-growing countries grapes are amazingly cheap; and we need not wonder, therefore, that all within reach of a person's arm, was free; the quantity plucked was a loss never felt by the proprietor, and it was a kindly privilege afforded to the poor and wayfaring man.

### DEUTERONOMY 24:1-22.

#### OF DIVORCES.

- **1-4.** When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes It appears that the practice of divorces was at this early period very prevalent amongst the Israelites, who had in all probability become familiar with it in Egypt [LANE]. The usage, being too deep-rooted to be soon or easily abolished, was tolerated by Moses (\*\*Matthew 19:8). But it was accompanied under the law with two conditions, which were calculated greatly to prevent the evils incident to the permitted system; namely:
  - (1) The act of divorcement was to be certified on a written document, the preparation of which, with legal formality, would afford time for reflection and repentance; and
  - (2) In the event of the divorced wife being married to another husband, she could not, on the termination of that second marriage, be restored to her first husband, however desirous he might be to receive her.
- **5.** When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war This law of exemption was founded on good policy and was favorable to matrimony, as it afforded a full opportunity for the affections of the newly married pair being more firmly rooted, and it diminished or removed occasions for the divorces just mentioned.
- **6.** No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge The "upper" stone being concave, covers the "nether" like a lid; and it has a small aperture, through which the corn is poured, as well as a handle by which it is turned. The propriety of the law was founded on the custom of grinding corn every morning for daily consumption. If either of the stones, therefore, which composed the handmill was wanting, a person would be deprived of his necessary provision.

- **7.** If a man be found stealing any of his brethren (See \*\*\*Exodus 21:16).
- 10-13. When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge The course recommended was, in kind and considerate regard, to spare the borrower's feelings. In the case of a poor man who had pledged his cloak, it was to be restored before night, as the poor in Eastern countries have commonly no other covering for wrapping themselves in when they go to sleep than the garment they have worn during the day.
- 14, 15. Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy—Hired servants in the East are paid at the close of the day; and for a master to defraud the laborer of his hire, or to withhold it wrongfully for a night, might have subjected a poor man with his family to suffering and was therefore an injustice to be avoided (\*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 19:13).
- **16-18.** The fathers shall not be put to death for the children The rule was addressed for the guidance of magistrates, and it established the equitable principle that none should be responsible for the crimes of others.
- **19-22.** When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field The grain, pulled up by the roots or cut down with a sickle, was laid in loose sheaves; the fruit of the olive was obtained by striking the branches with long poles; and the grape clusters, severed by a hook, were gathered in the hands of the vintager. Here is a beneficent provision for the poor. Every forgotten sheaf in the harvest-field was to lie; the olive tree was not to be beaten a second time; nor were grapes to be gathered, in order that, in collecting what remained, the hearts of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow might be gladdened by the bounty of Providence.

### DEUTERONOMY 25:1-19.

#### STRIPES MUST NOT EXCEED FORTY.

- **2, 3.** *if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten* In judicial sentences, which awarded punishment short of capital, scourging, like the Egyptian bastinado, was the most common form in which they were executed. The Mosaic law, however, introduced two important restrictions; namely:
  - (1) The punishment should be inflicted in presence of the judge instead of being inflicted in private by some heartless official; and
  - (2) The maximum amount of it should be limited to forty stripes, instead of being awarded according to the arbitrary will or passion of the magistrate.

The Egyptian, like Turkish and Chinese rulers, often applied the stick till they caused death or lameness for life. Of what the scourge consisted at first we are not informed; but in later times, when the Jews were exceedingly scrupulous in adhering to the letter of the law and, for fear of miscalculation, were desirous of keeping within the prescribed limit, it was formed of three cords, terminating in leathern thongs, and thirteen strokes of this counted as thirty-nine stripes (and 2 Corinthians 11:24).

- **4.** Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn In Judea, as in modern Syria and Egypt, the larger grains were beaten out by the feet of oxen, which, yoked together, day after day trod round the wide open spaces which form the threshing-floors. The animals were allowed freely to pick up a mouthful, when they chose to do so: a wise as well as humane regulation, introduced by the law of Moses (compare 4099)1 Corinthians 9:9 50071 Timothy 5:17,18).
- 5-10. the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother ... shall take her to him to wife This usage existed

before the age of Moses (\*\*\*Genesis 38:8). But the Mosaic law rendered the custom obligatory (\*\*\*Matthew 22:25) on younger brothers, or the nearest kinsman, to marry the widow (\*\*\*Ruth 4:4), by associating the natural desire of perpetuating a brother's name with the preservation of property in the Hebrew families and tribes. If the younger brother declined to comply with the law, the widow brought her claim before the authorities of the place at a public assembly (the gate of the city); and he having declared his refusal, she was ordered to loose the thong of his shoe — a sign of degradation — following up that act by spitting on the ground — the strongest expression of ignominy and contempt among Eastern people. The shoe was kept by the magistrate as an evidence of the transaction, and the parties separated.

**13-16.** Thou shalt not have ... divers weights — Weights were anciently made of stone and are frequently used still by Eastern shopkeepers and traders, who take them out of the bag and put them in the balance. The man who is not cheated by the trader and his bag of divers weights must be blessed with more acuteness than most of his fellows [ROBERTS]. (Compare \*\*ORTP Proverbs 16:11 \*\*TRODE 20:10).

**17-19.** *Remember what Amalek did* — This cold-blooded and dastardly atrocity is not narrated in the previous history (\*Exodus 17:14). It was an unprovoked outrage on the laws of nature and humanity, as well as a daring defiance of that God who had so signally shown His favor towards Israel.

### DEUTERONOMY 26:1-15.

# THE CONFESSION OF HIM THAT OFFERS THE BASKET OF FIRST FRUITS.

- 2. Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth The Israelites in Canaan, being God's tenants-at-will, were required to give Him tribute in the form of first-fruits and tithes. No Israelite was at liberty to use any productions of his field until he had presented the required offerings. The tribute began to be exigible after the settlement in the promised land, and it was yearly repeated at one of the great feasts (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 2:14 \*\*\*\*23:10\*\*\*23:15 \*\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 16:9). Every master of a family carried it on his shoulders in a little basket of osier, peeled willow, or palm leaves, and brought it to the sanctuary.
- **5.** thou shalt say ... A Syrian ready to perish was my father rather, "a wandering Syrian." The ancestors of the Hebrews were nomad shepherds, either Syrians by birth as Abraham, or by long residence as Jacob. When they were established as a nation in the possession of the promised land, they were indebted to God's unmerited goodness for their distinguished privileges, and in token of gratitude they brought this basket of first-fruits.
- **11.** *thou shalt rejoice* feasting with friends and the Levites, who were invited on such occasions to share in the cheerful festivities that followed oblations (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:7 16:10-15).
- **12-15.** When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year Among the Hebrews there were two tithings. The first was appropriated to the Levites (\*\*Numbers 18:21). The second, being the tenth of what remained, was brought to Jerusalem in kind; or it was converted into money, and the owner, on arriving in the capital, purchased sheep, bread, and oil (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 14:22,23). This was done for two consecutive years. But this second tithing was eaten at

home, and the third year distributed among the poor of the place (\*\*Deuteronomy 14:28,29).

- **13.** thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house This was a solemn declaration that nothing which should be devoted to the divine service had been secretly reserved for personal use.
- **14.** *I have not eaten thereof in my mourning* in a season of sorrow, which brought defilement on sacred things; under a pretense of poverty, and grudging to give any away to the poor.

**neither** ... for any unclean use — that is, any common purpose, different from what God had appointed and which would have been a desecration of it.

*nor given ought thereof for the dead* — on any funeral service, or, to an *idol*, which is a dead thing.

### DEUTERONOMY 27:1-10.

#### THE PEOPLE ARE TO WRITE THE LAW UPON STONES.

**2.** it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan — "Day" is often put for "time"; and it was not till some days after the passage that the following instructions were acted upon.

thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister—
These stones were to be taken in their natural state, unhewn, and unpolished—the occasion on which they were used not admitting of long or elaborate preparation; and they were to be daubed over with paint or whitewash, to render them more conspicuous. Stones and even rocks are seen in Egypt and the peninsula of Sinai, containing inscriptions made three thousand years ago, in paint or plaister. By some similar method those stones may have been inscribed, and it is most probable that Moses learned the art from the Egyptians.

- **3.** thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law It might be, as some think, the Decalogue; but a greater probability is that it was "the blessings and curses," which comprised in fact an epitome of the law (\*\*Toshua 8:34).
- **5-10.** *there shalt thou build an altar ... of whole stones* The stones were to be in their natural state, as if a chisel would communicate pollution to them. The stony pile was to be so large as to contain all the conditions of the covenant, so elevated as to be visible to the whole congregation of Israel; and the religious ceremonial performed on the occasion was to consist: first, of the elementary worship needed for sinful men; and secondly, of the peace offerings, or lively, social feasts, that were suited to the happy people whose God was the Lord. There were thus, the law which condemned, and the typical expiation the two great principles of revealed religion.

### DEUTERONOMY 27:11-13.

#### THE TRIBES DIVIDED ON GERIZIM AND EBAL.

12-15. These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people ... these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse — Those long, rocky ridges lay in the province of Samaria, and the peaks referred to were near Shechem (Nablous), rising in steep precipices to the height of about eight hundred feet and separated by a green, well-watered valley of about five hundred yards wide. The people of Israel were here divided into two parts. On mount Gerizim (now Jebel-et-Tur) were stationed the descendants of Rachel and Leah, the two principal wives of Jacob, and to them was assigned the most pleasant and honorable office of pronouncing the benedictions; while on the twin hill of Ebal (now Imad-el-Deen) were placed the posterity of the two secondary wives, Zilpah and Bilhah, with those of Reuben, who had lost the primogeniture, and Zebulun, Leah's youngest son; to them was committed the necessary but painful duty of pronouncing the maledictions (see on Judges 9:7). The ceremony might have taken place on the lower spurs of the mountains, where they approach more closely to each other; and the course observed was as follows: Amid the silent expectations of the solemn assembly, the priests standing round the ark in the valley below, said aloud, looking to Gerizim, "Blessed is the man that maketh not any graven image," when the people ranged on that hill responded in full simultaneous shouts of "Amen"; then turning round to Ebal, they cried, "Cursed is the man that maketh any graven image"; to which those that covered the ridge answered, "Amen." The same course at every pause was followed with all the blessings and curses (see on Soshua 8:33,34). These curses attendant on disobedience to the divine will, which had been revealed as a law from heaven, be it observed, are given in the form of a declaration, not a wish, as the words should be rendered, "Cursed is he," and not, "Cursed be he."

### DEUTERONOMY 28:1-68.

#### THE BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE.

- 1. if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God In this chapter the blessings and curses are enumerated at length, and in various minute details, so that on the first entrance of the Israelites into the land of promise, their whole destiny was laid before them, as it was to result from their obedience or the contrary.
- **2.** *all these blessings shall come on thee* Their national obedience was to be rewarded by extraordinary and universal prosperity.
- **7.** *flee before thee seven ways* that is, in various directions, as always happens in a rout.
- **10.** *called by the name of the Lord* That they are really and actually His people (\*\*Deuteronomy 14:1 \*\*28\*\*26:18).
- **11.** *the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods* Beside the natural capabilities of Canaan, its extraordinary fruitfulness was traceable to the special blessing of Heaven.
- **12.** The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure The seasonable supply of the early and latter rain was one of the principal means by which their land was so uncommonly fruitful.
- thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow that is, thou shalt be in such affluent circumstances, as to be capable, out of thy superfluous wealth, to give aid to thy poorer neighbors.
- **13, 14.** *the head, and not the tail* an Oriental form of expression, indicating the possession of independent power and great dignity and acknowledged excellence (\*\*Isaiah 9:14\*\*\*19:15).

15-20. But ... if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord —

Curses that were to follow them in the event of disobedience are now enumerated, and they are almost exact counterparts of the blessings which were described in the preceding context as the reward of a faithful adherence to the covenant.

- **21.** *pestilence* some fatal epidemic. There is no reason, however, to think that the plague, which is the great modern scourge of the East, is referred to.
- **22.** *a consumption* a wasting disorder; but the modern tuberculosis is almost unknown in Asia.

**fever ... inflammation ... extreme burning** — Fever is rendered "burning ague" (\*\*Leviticus 26:16), and the others mentioned along with it evidently point to those febrile affections which are of malignant character and great frequency in the East.

*the sword* — rather, "dryness" — the effect on the human body of such violent disorders.

**blasting**, and with mildew — two atmospheric influences fatal to grain.

- **23.** *heaven* ... *brass* ... *earth* ... *iron* strong Oriental figures used to describe the effects of long-continued drought. This want of regular and seasonable rain is allowed by the most intelligent observers to be one great cause of the present sterility of Palestine.
- **24.** *the rain of thy land powder and dust* an allusion probably to the dreadful effects of tornadoes in the East, which, raising the sands in immense twisted pillars, drive them along with the fury of a tempest. These shifting sands are most destructive to cultivated lands; and in consequence of their encroachments, many once fertile regions of the East are now barren deserts.
- **27.** *the botch of Egypt* a troublesome eruption, marked by red pimples, to which, at the rising of the Nile, the Egyptians are subject.

*emerods* — fistulæ or piles.

*scab* — scurvy.

- *itch* the disease commonly known by that name; but it is far more malignant in the East than is ever witnessed in our part of the world.
- **28.** *madness*, *and blindness*, *and astonishment of heart* They would be bewildered and paralyzed with terror at the extent of their calamities.
- **29-33.** *thou shalt grope at noonday* a general description of the painful uncertainty in which they would live. During the Middle Ages the Jews were driven from society into hiding-places which they were afraid to leave, not knowing from what quarter they might be assailed and their children dragged into captivity, from which no friend could rescue, and no money ransom them.
- **35.** *the Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs* This is an exact description of elephantiasis, a horrible disease, something like leprosy, which attacks particularly the lower extremities.
- **36.** The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king, etc. This shows how widespread would be the national calamity; and at the same time how hopeless, when he who should have been their defender shared the captive fate of his subjects.
- there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone The Hebrew exiles, with some honorable exceptions, were seduced or compelled into idolatry in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities (\*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 44:17-19). Thus, the sin to which they had too often betrayed a perverse fondness, a deeprooted propensity, became their punishment and their misery.
- **37.** And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee, etc. The annals of almost every nation, for eighteen hundred years, afford abundant proofs that this has been, as it still is, the case the very name of Jew being a universally recognized term for extreme degradation and wretchedness.
- **49.** The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far the invasion of the Romans "they came from far." The soldiers of the invading army were taken from France, Spain, and Britain then considered "the end of the earth." Julius Severus, the commander, afterwards Vespasian and Hadrian, left Britain for the scene of contest. Moreover, the ensign on the standards of the Roman army was "an eagle"; and the dialects spoken by

the soldiers of the different nations that composed that army were altogether unintelligible to the Jews.

- **50.** *A nation of fierce countenance* a just description of the Romans, who were not only bold and unyielding, but ruthless and implacable.
- **51.** he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, etc. According to the Jewish historian, every district of the country through which they passed was strewn with the wrecks of their devastation.
- **52.** he shall besiege thee ... until thy high and fenced walls come down
   All the fortified places to which the people betook themselves for safety were burnt or demolished, and the walls of Jerusalem itself razed to the ground.
- **53-57.** And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body (See 22 Kings 6:29 Lamentations 4:10). Such were the dreadful extremities to which the inhabitants during the siege were reduced that many women sustained a wretched existence by eating the flesh of their own children. Parental affection was extinguished, and the nearest relatives were jealously, avoided, lest they should discover and demand a share of the revolting viands.
- **62.** *ye shall be left few in number* There has been, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, only an inconsiderable remnant of Jews existing in that land aliens in the land of their fathers; and of all classes of the inhabitants they are the most degraded and miserable beings, dependent for their support on contributions from other lands.
- **63.** *ye shall be plucked from off the land* Hadrian issued a proclamation, forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines.
- **64.** *the Lord shall scatter thee among all people* There is, perhaps, not a country in the world where Jews are not to be found. Who that looks on this condition of the Hebrews is not filled with awe, when he considers the fulfillment of this prophecy?
- **68.** The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships The accomplishment of this prediction took place under Titus, when, according

to Josephus, multitudes of Jews were transported in ships to the land of the Nile, and sold as slaves. "Here, then, are instances of prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago; and yet, as we see, being fulfilled in the world at this very time; and what stronger proofs can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others I know not; but for myself, I must acknowledge, they not only convince but amaze and astonish me beyond expression; they are truly, as Moses foretold (\*\*Deuteronomy 28:45,46) they would be, 'a sign and a wonder for ever'" [BISHOP NEWTON].

### DEUTERONOMY 29:1-29.

#### AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE.

**1.** These are the words of the covenant — The discourse of Moses is continued, and the subject of that discourse was Israel's covenant with God, the privileges it conferred, and the obligations it imposed.

beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb — It was substantially the same; but it was renewed now, in different circumstances. They had violated its conditions. Moses rehearses these, that they might have a better knowledge of its conditions and be more disposed to comply with them.

#### 2. Moses called unto all Israel, ... Ye have seen all that the Lord did, etc.

— This appeal to the experience of the people, though made generally, was applicable only to that portion of them who had been very young at the period of the Exodus, and who remembered the marvellous transactions that preceded and followed that era. Yet, alas! those wonderful events made no good impression upon them (\*\*Deuteronomy 29:4). They were strangers to that grace of wisdom which is liberally given to all who ask it; and their insensibility was all the more inexcusable that so many miracles had been performed which might have led to a certain conviction of the presence and the power of God with them. The preservation of their clothes and shoes, the supply of daily food and fresh water — these continued without interruption or diminution during so many years' sojourn in the desert. They were miracles which unmistakably proclaimed the immediate hand of God and were performed for the express purpose of training them to a practical knowledge of, and habitual confidence in, Him. Their experience of this extraordinary goodness and care, together with their remembrance of the brilliant successes by which, with little exertion or loss on their part, God enabled them to acquire the valuable territory on which they stood, is mentioned

again to enforce a faithful adherence to the covenant, as the direct and sure means of obtaining its promised blessings.

**10-29.** Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God — The whole congregation of Israel, of all ages and conditions, all — young as well as old; menials as well as masters; native Israelites as well as naturalized strangers — all were assembled before the tabernacle to renew the *Sinaitic* covenant. None of them were allowed to consider themselves as exempt from the terms of that national compact, lest any lapsing into idolatry might prove a root of bitterness, spreading its noxious seed and corrupt influence all around (compare "Hebrews 12:15). It was of the greatest consequence thus to reach the heart and conscience of everyone, for some might delude themselves with the vain idea that by taking the oath by which they engaged themselves in covenant with God, they would surely secure its blessings. Then, even though they would not rigidly adhere to His worship and commands, but would follow the devices and inclinations of their own hearts, yet they would think that He would wink at such liberties and not punish them. It was of the greatest consequence to impress all with the strong and abiding conviction, that while the covenant of grace had special blessings belonging to it, it at the same time had curses in reserve for transgressors, the infliction of which would be as certain, as lasting and severe. This was the advantage contemplated in the law being rehearsed a second time. The picture of a once rich and flourishing region, blasted and doomed in consequence of the sins of its inhabitants, is very striking, and calculated to awaken awe in every reflecting mind. Such is, and long has been, the desolate state of Palestine; and, in looking at its ruined cities, its blasted coast, its naked mountains, its sterile and parched soil — all the sad and unmistakable evidences of a land lying under a curse — numbers of travelers from Europe, America, and the Indies ("strangers from a far country," Deuteronomy 29:22) in the present day see that the Lord has executed His threatening. Who can resist the conclusion that it has been inflicted "because the inhabitants had forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers....and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book"?

**29.** The secret things belong unto the Lord — This verse has no apparent connection with the thread of discourse. It is thought to have been said in

answer to the looks of astonishment or the words of inquiry as to whether they would be ever so wicked as to deserve such punishments. The recorded history of God's providential dealings towards Israel presents a wonderful combination of "goodness and severity." There is much of it involved in mystery too profound for our limited capacities to fathom; but, from the comprehensive wisdom displayed in those parts which have been made known to us, we are prepared to enter into the full spirit of the apostle's exclamation, "How unsearchable are his judgments" (\*\*Romans 11:33).

### DEUTERONOMY 30:1-10.

#### GREAT MERCIES PROMISED UNTO THE PENITENT.

1-10. when all these things are come upon thee, ... and [thou] shalt return ... then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity — The hopes of the Hebrew people are ardently directed to this promise, and they confidently expect that God, commiserating their forlorn and fallen condition, will yet rescue them from all the evils of their long dispersion. They do not consider the promise as fulfilled by their restoration from the captivity in Babylon, for Israel was not then scattered in the manner here described — "among all the nations," unto the utmost parts of heaven" Deuteronomy 30:4). When God recalled them from that bondage, all the Israelites were not brought back. They were not multiplied above their fathers (\*\*Deuteronomy 30:5), nor were their hearts and those of their children circumcised to love the Lord (\*\*Deuteronomy 30:6). It is not, therefore, of the Babylonish captivity that Moses was speaking in this passage; it must be of the dispersed state to which they have been doomed for eighteen hundred years. This prediction may have been partially accomplished on the return of the Israelites from Babylon; for, according to the structure and design of Scripture prophecy, it may have pointed to several similar eras in their national history; and this view is sanctioned by the prayer of Nehemiah (\*\*Nehemiah 1:8,9). But undoubtedly it will receive its full and complete accomplishment in the conversion of the Jews to the Gospel of Christ. At the restoration from the Babylonish captivity, that people were changed in many respects for the better. They were completely weaned from idolatry; and this outward reformation was a prelude to the higher attainments they are destined to reach in the age of Messiah, "when the Lord God will circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their seed to love the Lord." The course pointed out seems clearly to be this: that the hearts of the Hebrew people shall be circumcised Colossians 2:2); in other words, by the combined influences of the

Word and spirit of God, their hearts will be touched and purified from all their superstition and unbelief. They will be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ as their Messiah — a spiritual deliverer, and the effect of their conversion will be that they will return and obey the voice (the Gospel, the evangelical law) of the Lord. The words may be interpreted either wholly in a spiritual sense (\*\*IS\*John 11:51,52), or, as many think, in a literal sense also (\*\*IS\*Romans 11:1-36). They will be recalled from all places of the dispersion to their own land and enjoy the highest prosperity. The mercies and favors of a bountiful Providence will not then be abused as formerly (\*\*IS\*Deuteronomy 31:20 32:15). They will be received in a better spirit and employed to nobler purposes. They will be happy, "for the Lord will again rejoice over them for good, as He rejoiced over their fathers."

## DEUTERONOMY 30:11-14.

#### THE COMMANDMENT IS MANIFEST.

11-14. For this commandment ... is not hidden ... neither is it far off — That law of loving and obeying God, which was the subject of Moses' discourse, was well known to the Israelites. They could not plead ignorance of its existence and requirements. It was not concealed as an impenetrable mystery in heaven, for it had been revealed; nor was it carefully withheld from the people as a dangerous discovery; for the youngest and humblest of them were instructed in those truths, which were subjects of earnest study and research among the wisest and greatest of other nations. They were not under a necessity of undertaking long journeys or distant voyages, as many ancient sages did in quest of knowledge. They enjoyed the peculiar privilege of a familiar acquaintance with it. It was with them a subject of common conversation, engraven on their memories, and frequently explained and inculcated on their hearts. The apostle Paul (\*\*Romans 10:6-8) has applied this passage to the Gospel, for the law of Christ is substantially the same as that of Moses, only exhibited more clearly in its spiritual nature and extensive application; and, accompanied with the advantages of Gospel grace, it is practicable and easy.

## DEUTERONOMY 30:15-20.

#### DEATH AND LIFE ARE SET BEFORE THE ISRAELITES.

15-20. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil — the alternative of a good and happy, or a disobedient and miserable life. Love of God and compliance with His will are the only ways of securing the blessings and avoiding the evils described. The choice was left to them, and in urging upon them the inducements to a wise choice, Moses warmed as he proceeded into a tone of solemn and impressive earnestness similar to that of Paul to the elders of Ephesus (\*\*Acts 20:26,27).

### DEUTERONOMY 31:1-8.

#### MOSES ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE AND JOSHUA.

- **1.** *Moses went and spake* It is probable that this rehearsal of the law extended over several successive days; and it might be the last and most important day on which the return of Moses to the place of assembly is specially noticed. In drawing his discourse towards a conclusion, he adverted to his advanced age; and although neither his physical nor intellectual powers had suffered any decay (\*\*Deuteronomy 34:7), yet he knew, by a special revelation, that the time had arrived when he was about to be withdrawn from the superintendence and government of Israel.
- **2-8.** *also the Lord hath said* should be "for the Lord hath said" thou shalt not go over this Jordan. While taking a solemn leave of the people, Moses exhorted them not to be intimidated by the menacing opposition of enemies; to take encouragement from the continued presence of their covenanted God; and to rest assured that the same divine power, which had enabled them to discomfit their first assailants on the east of Jordan, would aid them not less effectually in the adventurous enterprise which they were about to undertake, and by which they would obtain possession of "the land which He had sworn unto their fathers to give them."

## DEUTERONOMY 31:9-13.

# HE DELIVERS THE LAW TO THE PRIESTS, TO READ IT EVERY SEVENTH YEAR TO THE PEOPLE.

**9-13.** And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests — The law thus committed to writing was either the whole book of Deuteronomy, or the important part of it contained between the twenty-seventh and thirtieth chapters. It was usual in cases of public or private

contract for two copies of the engagement to be made — one to be deposited in the national archives or some secure place for reference, should occasion require. The other was to remain in the hands of the contracting parties (\*\* Jeremiah 32:12-14). The same course was followed on this renewal of the covenant between God and Israel. Two written copies of the law were prepared, the one of which was delivered to the public representatives of Israel; namely, the priests and the elders.

*all the elders of Israel* — They were assistants to the priests and overseers to take care of the preservation, rehearsal, and observance of the law.

10, 11. At the end of every seven years, ... thou shalt read this law — At the return of the sabbatic year and during the feast of tabernacles, the law was to be publicly read. This order of Moses was a future and prospective arrangement; for the observance of the sabbatic year did not commence till the conquest and peaceful occupation of Canaan. The ordinance served several important purposes. For, while the people had opportunities of being instructed in the law every Sabbath and daily in their own homes, this public periodical rehearsal at meetings in the courts of the sanctuary, where women and children of twelve years were present (as they usually were at the great festivals), was calculated to produce good and pious impressions of divine truth amid the sacred associations of the time and place. Besides, it formed a public guarantee for the preservation, integrity, and faithful transmission of the Sacred Book to successive ages.

**14, 15.** the Lord said unto Moses, ...call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation — Joshua had been publicly designated to the office of commander by Moses [\*\*PNumbers 27:22,23]; and God was pleased to confirm his appointment by the visible symbols of His presence and approval. As none but the priests were privileged to enter the sanctuary, it is probable that this significant manifestation of the

cloudy pillar was made while the leaders stood at the door of the tabernacle.

- **16-22.** *the Lord said unto Moses*, ... *this people will rise up* In this remarkable interview, Moses was distinctly apprised of the infidelity of Israel, their corruptions of the true religion through intercourse with the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan (\*\*\*Amos 5:26), and their chastisements in consequence of those national defections.
- 17. Then my anger shall be kindled, ... and I will hide my face from them an announcement of the withdrawal of the divine favor and protection of which the Shekinah was the symbol and pledge. It never appeared in the second temple; and its non-appearance was a prelude of "all the evils that came upon them, because their God was not among them."
- **19.** Now therefore write ye this song National songs take deep hold of the memories and have a powerful influence in stirring the deepest feelings of a people. In accordance with this principle in human nature, a song was ordered to be composed by Moses, doubtless under divine inspiration, which was to be learnt by the Israelites themselves and to be taught to their children in every age, embodying the substance of the preceding addresses, and of a strain well suited to inspire the popular mind with a strong sense of God's favor to their nation.
- **26.** Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark The second copy of the law (see on Deuteronomy 31:9) was deposited for greater security and reverence in a little chest beside the ark of the covenant, for there was nothing contained within it but the tables of stone (TKings 8:9). Others think it was put within the ark, it being certain, from the testimony of Paul (THebrews 9:4), that there were once other things inside the ark, and that this was the copy found in the time of Josiah (TKings 22:8).

### DEUTERONOMY 32:1-43.

# MOSES' SONG, WHICH SETS FORTH THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

- **1.** Give ear, O ye heavens; ... hear, O earth The magnificence of the exordium, the grandeur of the theme, the frequent and sudden transitions, the elevated strain of the sentiments and language, entitle this song to be ranked amongst the noblest specimens of poetry to be found in the Scriptures.
- **2, 3.** *My doctrine shall drop*, etc. The language may justly be taken as uttered in the form of a wish or prayer, and the comparison of wholesome instruction to the pure, gentle, and insinuating influence of rain or dew, is frequently made by the sacred writers (and Isaiah 5:6 and 5:10,11).
- **4.** He is the Rock a word expressive of power and stability. The application of it in this passage is to declare that God had been true to His covenant with their fathers and them. Nothing that He had promised had failed; so that if their national experience had been painfully checkered by severe and protracted trials, notwithstanding the brightest promises, that result was traceable to their own undutiful and perverse conduct; not to any vacillation or unfaithfulness on the part of God (\*\*\*James 1:17), whose procedure was marked by justice and judgment, whether they had been exalted to prosperity or plunged into the depths of affliction.
- **5.** They have corrupted themselves that is, the Israelites by their frequent lapses and their inveterate attachment to idolatry.

*their spot is not the spot of his children* — This is an allusion to the marks which idolaters inscribe on their foreheads or their arms with paint or other substances, in various colors and forms — straight, oval, or circular, according to the favorite idol of their worship.

**6.** *is not he thy father that hath bought thee* — or emancipated thee from Egyptian bondage.

*and made thee* — advanced the nation to unprecedented and peculiar privileges.

8, 9. When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance — In the division of the earth, which Noah is believed to have made by divine direction (\*\*Genesis 10:5\*\* Deuteronomy 2:5-9\*\* Acts 17:26,27), Palestine was reserved by the wisdom and goodness of Heaven for the possession of His peculiar people and the display of the most stupendous wonders. The theater was small, but admirably suited for the convenient observation of the human race — at the junction of the two great continents of Asia and Africa, and almost within sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the report of God's wonderful works, the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience and sufferings of His own eternal Son, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe.

he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel — Another rendering, which has received the sanction of eminent scholars, has been proposed as follows: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam and set the bounds of every people, the children of Israel were few in numbers, when the Lord chose that people and made Jacob His inheritance" (compare \*\*GETS\*\* Deuteronomy 30:5\*\* Genesis 34:30\*\* Psalm 105:9-12).

**10.** *found him in a desert land* — took him into a covenant relation at Sinai, or rather "sustained," "provided for him" in a desert land.

*a waste howling wilderness* — a common Oriental expression for a desert infested by wild beasts.

11. As an eagle ... . fluttereth over her young — This beautiful and expressive metaphor is founded on the extraordinary care and attachment which the female eagle cherishes for her young. When her newly fledged progeny are sufficiently advanced to soar in their native element, she, in their first attempts at flying, supports them on the tip of her wing, encouraging, directing, and aiding their feeble efforts to longer and sublimer

flights. So did God take the most tender and powerful care of His chosen people; He carried them out of Egypt and led them through all the horrors of the wilderness to the promised inheritance.

- 13, 14. He made him ride on the high places, etc. All these expressions seem to have peculiar reference to their home in the transjordanic territory, that being the extent of Palestine that they had seen at the time when Moses is represented as uttering these words. "The high places" and "the fields" are specially applicable to the tablelands of Gilead as are the allusions to the herds and flocks, the honey of the wild bees which hive in the crevices of the rocks, the oil from the olive as it grew singly or in small clumps on the tops of hills where scarcely anything else would grow, the finest wheat (\*\*PPsalm 81:16\*\*147:14), and the prolific vintage.
- **15.** But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked This is a poetical name for Israel. The metaphor here used is derived from a pampered animal, which, instead of being tame and gentle, becomes mischievous and vicious, in consequence of good living and kind treatment. So did the Israelites conduct themselves by their various acts of rebellion, murmuring, and idolatrous apostasy.
- **17.** They sacrificed unto devils (See on Eleviticus 17:7).
- **21.** *those which are not a people* that is, not favored with such great and peculiar privileges as the Israelites (or, rather poor, despised heathens). The language points to the future calling of the Gentiles.
- **23.** *I* will spend mine arrows upon them War, famine, pestilence (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 77:17) are called in Scripture the arrows of the Almighty.
- **29.** *Oh*, ... *that they would consider their latter end* The terrible judgments, which, in the event of their continued and incorrigible disobedience, would impart so awful a character to the close of their national history.
- **32.** *vine of Sodom ... grapes of gall* This fruit, which the Arabs call "Lot's Sea Orange," is of a bright yellow color and grows in clusters of three or four. When mellow, it is tempting in appearance, but on being struck, explodes like a puffball, consisting of skin and fiber only.

- **44-47.** *Moses* ... *spake all the words of this song in the ears*, etc. It has been beautifully styled "the Song of the Dying Swan" [LOWTH]. It was designed to be a national anthem, which it should be the duty and care of magistrates to make well known by frequent repetition, to animate the people to right sentiments towards a steadfast adherence to His service.
- **48-51.** Get thee up ... and die ... Because ye trespassed ... at Meribah (See on ORDNumbers 20:13).
- **52.** thou shalt see the land, but thou shalt not go thither (\*\*\*Numbers 27:12). Notwithstanding so severe a disappointment, not a murmur of complaint escapes his lips. He is not only resigned but acquiescing; and in the near prospect of his death, he pours forth the feelings of his devout heart in sublime strains and eloquent blessings.

### DEUTERONOMY 33:1-28.

#### THE MAJESTY OF GOD.

- **1.** *Moses the man of God* This was a common designation of a prophet (\*\*\*\*9:5), and it is here applied to Moses, when, like Jacob, he was about to deliver ministerially before his death, a prophetic benediction to Israel.
- **2-4.** *The Lord came* Under a beautiful metaphor, borrowed from the dawn and progressive splendor of the sun, the Majesty of God is sublimely described as a divine light which appeared in Sinai and scattered its beams on all the adjoining region in directing Israel's march to Canaan. In these descriptions of a *theophania*, God is represented as coming from the south, and the allusion is in general to the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai; but other mountains in the same direction are mentioned with it. The location of Seir was on the east of the Ghor; mount Paran was either the chain on the west of the Ghor, or rather the mountains on the southern border of the desert towards the peninsula [ROBINSON]. (Compare Judges 5:4,5 Judges

*ten thousands of saints* — rendered by some, "with the ten thousand of Kadesh," or perhaps better still, "from Meribah" [EWALD].

a fiery law — so called both because of the thunder and lightning which accompanied its promulgation (\*\*Exodus 19:16-18\*\*Deuteronomy 4:11), and the fierce, unrelenting curse denounced against the violation of its precepts (\*\*CP\*\*2 Corinthians 3:7-9). Notwithstanding those awe-inspiring symbols of Majesty that were displayed on Sinai, the law was really given in kindness and love, as a means of promoting both the temporal and eternal welfare of the people. And it was "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob," not only from the hereditary obligation under which that people were laid to observe it, but from its being the grand distinction, the peculiar privilege of the nation.

- 6. Let Reuben live, and not die Although deprived of the honor and privileges of primogeniture, he was still to hold rank as one of the tribes of Israel. He was more numerous than several other tribes (\*\*\*Numbers 1:21\*\*\*11). Yet gradually he sank into a mere nomadic tribe, which had enough to do merely "to live and not die." Many eminent biblical scholars, resting on the most ancient and approved manuscripts of the Septuagint, consider the latter clause as referring to Simeon; "and Simeon, let his men be few," a reading of the text which is in harmony with other statements of Scripture respecting this tribe (\*\*\*Numbers 25:6-14\*\*\*\*1:23\*\*\*26:14\*\*\*\*
  Joshua 19:1).
- **7.** *this is the blessing of Judah* Its general purport points to the great power and independence of Judah, as well as its taking the lead in all military expeditions.
- 8-10. of Levi he said The burden of this blessing is the appointment of the Levites to the dignified and sacred office of the priesthood (\*\*Deviticus 10:11 \*\*Deuteronomy 22:8 \*\*T17:8-11), a reward for their zeal in supporting the cause of God, and their unsparing severity in chastising even their nearest and dearest relatives who had participated in the idolatry of the molten calf (\*\*\*Exodus 32:25-28; compare \*\*\*Malachi 2:4-6).
- **12.** *of Benjamin he said* A distinguishing favor was conferred on this tribe in having its portion assigned near the temple of God.
- **between his shoulders** that is, on his sides or borders. Mount Zion, on which stood the city of Jerusalem, belonged to Judah; but Mount Moriah, the site of the sacred edifice, lay in the confines of Benjamin.
- 13-17. of Joseph he said The territory of this tribe, diversified by hill and dale, wood and water, would be rich in all the productions olives, grapes, figs, etc., which are reared in a mountainous region, as well as in the grain and herbs that grow in the level fields. "The firstling of the bullock and the horns of the unicorn" (rhinoceros), indicate glory and strength, and it is supposed that under these emblems were shadowed forth the triumphs of Joshua and the new kingdom of Jeroboam, both of whom were of Ephraim (compare "HEO" Genesis 48:20).

- **18, 19.** *Rejoice*, *Zebulun*, *in thy going out* on commercial enterprises and voyages by sea.
- and, Issachar in thy tents preferring to reside in their maritime towns.
- **19.** shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand Both tribes should traffic with the Phoenicians in gold and silver, pearl and coral, especially in *murex*, the shellfish that yielded the famous Tyrian dye, and in glass, which was manufactured from the sand of the river Belus, in their immediate neighborhood.
- 20, 21. of Gad he said Its possessions were larger than they would have been had they lain west of Jordan; and this tribe had the honor of being settled by Moses himself in the first portion of land conquered. In the forest region, south of the Jabbok, "he dwelt as a lion" (compare "Genesis 30:11 49:19). Notwithstanding, they faithfully kept their engagement to join the "heads of the people" ("Deuteronomy 33:21) in the invasion of Canaan.
- **22.** *Daniel is a lion's whelp* His proper settlement in the south of Canaan being too small, he by a sudden and successful irruption, established a colony in the northern extremity of the land. This might well be described as the leap of a young lion from the hills of Bashan.
- **23.** of Naphtali he said The pleasant and fertile territory of this tribe lay to "the west," on the borders of lakes Merom and Chinnereth, and to "the south" of the northern Danites.
- **24**, **25**. *of Asher he said* The condition of this tribe is described as combining all the elements of earthly felicity.
- *dip his foot in oil* These words allude either to the process of extracting the oil by foot presses, or to his district as particularly fertile and adapted to the culture of the olive.
- **25.** *shoes of iron and brass* These shoes suited his rocky coast from Carmel to Sidon. Country people as well as ancient warriors had their lower extremities protected by metallic greaves (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 17:6\*\*\*\*\* Ephesians 6:15) and iron-soled shoes.

**26-29.** *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun* — The chapter concludes with a congratulatory address to Israel on their peculiar happiness and privilege in having Jehovah for their God and protector.

who rideth upon the heaven in thy help — an evident allusion to the pillar of cloud and fire, which was both the guide and shelter of Israel.

**28.** *the fountain of Jacob* — The posterity of Israel shall dwell in a blessed and favored land.

### DEUTERONOMY 34:1-12.

#### MOSES FROM MOUNT NEBO VIEWS THE LAND.

**1.** *Moses went up from the plains of Moab* — This chapter appears from internal evidence to have been written subsequently to the death of Moses, and it probably formed, at one time, an introduction to the Book of Joshua.

unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah — literally, the head or summit of the Pisgah; that is, the height (compare Numbers 23:14 Deuteronomy 3:17-27 H:49). The general name given to the whole mountain range east of Jordan, was Abarim (compare Deuteronomy 32:49), and the peak to which Moses ascended was dedicated to the heathen Nebo, as Balaam's standing place had been consecrated to Peor. Some modern travelers have fixed on Jebel Attarus, a high mountain south of the Jabbok (Zurka), as the Nebo of this passage [Burckhardt, Seetzen, etc.]. But it is situated too far north for a height which, being described as "over against Jericho," must be looked for above the last stage of the Jordan.

the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead — That pastoral region was discernible at the northern extremity of the mountain line on which he stood, till it ended, far beyond his sight in Dan. Westward, there were on the horizon, the distant hills of "all Naphtali." Coming nearer, was "the land of Ephraim and Manasseh." Immediately opposite was "all the land of Judah," a title at first restricted to the portion of this tribe, beyond which were "the utmost sea" (the Mediterranean) and the Desert of the "South." These were the four great marks of the future inheritance of his people, on which the narrative fixes our attention. Immediately below him was "the circle" of the plain of Jericho, with its oasis of palm trees; and far away on his left, the last inhabited spot before the great desert "Zoar." The foreground of the picture alone was clearly discernible. There was no

miraculous power of vision imparted to Moses. That he should see all that is described is what any man could do, if he attained sufficient elevation. The atmosphere of the climate is so subtle and free from vapor that the sight is carried to a distance of which the beholder, who judges from the more dense air of Europe, can form no idea [VERE MONRO]. But between him and that "good land," the deep valley of the Jordan intervened; "he was not to go over thither."

- **5.** *Moses* ... *died* After having governed the Israelites forty years.
- **6.** *he buried him* or, "he was buried in a valley," that is, a ravine or gorge of the Pisgah. Some think that he entered a cave and there died, being, according to an ancient tradition of Jews and Christians, buried by angels ("TU)Jude 1:9 "Numbers 21:20).

*no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day* — This concealment seems to have been owing to a special and wise arrangement of Providence, to prevent its being ranked among "holy places," and made the resort of superstitious pilgrims or idolatrous veneration, in after ages.

- **8.** wept for Moses ... thirty days Seven days was the usual period of mourning, but for persons in high rank or official eminence, it was extended to thirty (Genesis 50:3-10 Numbers 20:29).
- **9.** Joshua ... was full of the spirit of wisdom He was appointed to a peculiar and extraordinary office. He was not the successor of Moses, for he was not a prophet or civil ruler, but the general or leader, called to head the people in the war of invasion and the subsequent allocation of the tribes.
- **10-12.** *there arose not a prophet since* In whatever light we view this extraordinary man, the eulogy pronounced in these inspired words will appear just. No Hebrew prophet or ruler equalled him in character or official dignity, or in knowledge of God's will and opportunities of announcing it.

### THE BOOK OF

# **JOSHUA**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

••••JOSHUA 1:1-18.

#### THE LORD APPOINTS JOSHUA TO SUCCEED MOSES.

**1.** Now after the death of Moses — Joshua, having been already appointed and designated leader of Israel (\*\*Numbers 27:18-23), in all probability assumed the reins of government *immediately* "after the death of Moses."

*the servant of the Lord* — This was the official title of Moses as invested with a special mission to make known the will of God; and it conferred great honor and authority.

the Lord spake unto Joshua — probably during the period of public mourning, and either by a direct revelation to the mind of Joshua, or by means of Urim and Thummim (\*\*\*Numbers 27:21). This first communication gave a pledge that the divine instructions which, according to the provisions of the theocracy, had been imparted to Moses, would be continued to the new leader, though God might not perhaps speak to him "mouth to mouth" (\*\*\*Numbers 12:8).

Joshua — The original name, Oshea, ("Numbers 13:8), which had been, according to Eastern usage, changed like those of Abram and Sarai ("Genesis 17:5-15) into Jehoshua or Joshua (that is, "God's salvation") was significant of the services he was to render, and typified those of a greater Savior ("Hebrews 4:8).

- *Moses' minister* that is, his official attendant, who, from being constantly employed in important services and early initiated into the principles of the government, would be well trained for undertaking the leadership of Israel.
- **2-9.** *now therefore arise*, *go over this Jordan* Joshua's mission was that of a military leader. This passage records his call to begin the work, and the address contains a literal repetition of the promise made to Moses (IIII) Deuteronomy 11:24,25 (IIIII) 31:6-8,23).
- 3, 4. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given you meaning, of course, not universal dominion, but only the territory comprised within the boundaries here specified (see on Deuteronomy 19:8).
- **4.** *all the land of the Hittites* These occupied the southern extremities and were the dominant tribe of Canaan. Their superior power and the extent of their dominions are attested by the mention of them under the name of Khita, on the Assyrian inscriptions, and still more frequently on the Egyptian inscriptions of the eighteenth and nineteenth Dynasties. What life and encouragement must have been imparted to Joshua by the assurance that his people, who had been overwhelmed with fear of that gigantic race, were to possess "all the land of the Hittites"!
- **5-9.** There shall not any man be able to stand before thee Canaan was theirs by a divine grant; and the renewed confirmation of that grant to Joshua when about to lead the people into it, intimated not only a certain but an easy conquest. It is remarkable, however, that his courage and hope of victory were made to depend (see on Deuteronomy 17:18) on his firm and inflexible adherence to the law of God, not only that regarding the extirpation of the Canaanites, but the whole divine code.
- **10-18.** Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people These were the Shoterim (see on Exodus 5:6 and Deuteronomy 20:5).
- **11-13.** *command the people*, *saying*, *Prepare you victuals* not manna, which, though it still fell, would not keep; but corn, sheep, and articles of food procurable in the conquered countries.

for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan — that is, the third day, according to Hebrew idiom — the time allotted for getting ready before the encampment in Abel-Shittim broke up and they removed to the desert bank of the river where no victuals were available. At the same time Joshua himself convened the two and a half tribes which had settled east of Jordan, to remind them of their promise (\*\*Thumbers 32:1-42) to assist their brethren in the conquest of western Canaan. Their readiness to redeem their pledge and the terms in which they answered the appeal of Joshua displayed to great advantage their patriotic and pious feelings at so interesting a crisis.

**14.** *ye shall pass ... armed* — that is, officered or marshalled under five leaders in the old and approved caravan order (see on Exodus 13:18).

all the mighty men of valor — The words are not to be interpreted strictly as meaning the whole, but only the flower or choice of the fighting men (see on only Joshua 4:12).

### **™JOSHUA** 2:1-7.

#### RAHAB RECEIVES AND CONCEALS THE TWO SPIES.

1. Joshua ... sent ... two men to spy secretly — Faith is manifested by an active, persevering use of means (\*\*\*James 2:22); and accordingly Joshua, while confident in the accomplishment of the divine promise (\*\*\*Joshua 1:3), adopted every precaution which a skillful general could think of to render his first attempt in the invasion of Canaan successful. Two spies were despatched to reconnoitre the country, particularly in the neighborhood of Jericho; for in the prospect of investing that place, it was desirable to obtain full information as to its site, its approaches, the character, and resources of its inhabitants. This mission required the strictest privacy, and it seems to have been studiously concealed from the knowledge of the Israelites themselves, test any unfavorable or exaggerated report, publicly circulated, might have dispirited the people, as that of the spies did in the days of Moses.

Jericho — Some derive this name from a word signifying "new moon," in reference to the crescent-like plain in which it stood, formed by an amphitheater of hills; others from a word signifying "its scent," on account of the fragrance of the balsam and palm trees in which it was embosomed. Its site was long supposed to be represented by the small mud-walled hamlet Er-Riha; but recent researches have fixed on a spot about half an hour's journey westward, where large ruins exist about six or eight miles distant from the Jordan. It was for that age a strongly fortified town, the key of the eastern pass through the deep ravine, now called Wady-Kelt, into the interior of Palestine.

they ... came into an harlot's house — Many expositors, desirous of removing the stigma of this name from an ancestress of the Savior (\*\*Matthew 1:5), have called her a hostess or tavern keeper. But Scriptural usage (\*\*\*Leviticus 21:7-14 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 23:18 \*\*\*Mulges

- 11:1 Tkings 3:16), the authority of the *Septuagint*, followed by the apostles (\*\*Hebrews 11:31 \*\*James 2:25), and the immemorial style of Eastern khans, which are never kept by women, establish the propriety of the term employed in our version. Her house was probably recommended to the spies by the convenience of its situation, without any knowledge of the character of the inmates. But a divine influence directed them in the choice of that lodging-place.
- **2, 3.** *it was told the king* by the sentinels who at such a time of threatened invasion would be posted on the eastern frontier and whose duty required them to make a strict report to headquarters of the arrival of all strangers.
- **4-6.** *the woman took the two men, and hid them* literally, "him," that is, each of them in separate places, of course previous to the appearance of the royal messengers and in anticipation of a speedy search after her guests. According to Eastern manners, which pay an almost superstitious respect to a woman's apartment, the royal messengers did not demand admittance to search but asked her to bring the foreigners out.
- **5.** the time of shutting of the gates The gates of all Oriental cities are closed at sunset, after which there is no possibility either of admission or egress.

the men went out — This was a palpable deception. But, as lying is a common vice among heathen people, Rahab was probably unconscious of its moral guilt, especially as she resorted to it as a means for screening her guests; and she might deem herself bound to do it by the laws of Eastern hospitality, which make it a point of honor to preserve the greatest enemy, if he has once eaten one's salt. Judged by the divine law, her answer was a sinful expedient; but her infirmity being united with faith, she was graciously pardoned and her service accepted (SUZSJames 2:25).

**6.** she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax — Flax, with other vegetable productions, is at a certain season spread out on the flat roofs of Eastern houses to be dried in the sun; and, after lying awhile, it is piled up in numerous little stacks, which, from the luxuriant growth of the flax, rise to a height of three or four feet. Behind some of these stacks Rahab concealed the spies.

7. the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords — That river is crossed at several well-known fords. The first and second immediately below the sea of Galilee; the third and fourth immediately above and below the pilgrims' bathing-place, opposite Jericho.

as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate — This precaution was to ensure the capture of the spies, should they have been lurking in the city.

## **™**JOSHUA 2:8-21.

#### THE COVENANT BETWEEN HER AND THEM.

- 8-13. she came up unto them upon the roof and said Rahab's dialogue is full of interest, as showing the universal panic and consternation of the Canaanites on the one hand ( Double Joshua 24:11 Double Toshua 24:11 Double Toshua 25), and her strong convictions on the other, founded on a knowledge of the divine promise, and the stupendous miracles that had opened the way of the Israelites to the confines of the promised land. She was convinced of the supremacy of Jehovah, and her earnest stipulations for the preservation of her relatives amid the perils of the approaching invasion, attest the sincerity and strength of her faith.
- **14.** the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business This was a solemn pledge a virtual oath, though the name of God is not mentioned; and the words were added, not as a condition of their fidelity, but as necessary for her safety, which might be endangered if the private agreement was divulged.
- **15.** her house was upon the town wall In many Oriental cities houses are built on the walls with overhanging windows; in others the town wall forms the back wall of the house, so that the window opens into the country. Rahab's was probably of this latter description, and the cord or rope sufficiently strong to bear the weight of a man.
- **16-21.** *she said* rather "she had said," for what follows must have been part of the previous conversation.

Get you to the mountain — A range of white limestone hills extends on the north, called Quarantania (now Jebel Karantu), rising to a height of from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred feet, and the sides of which are perforated with caves. Some one peak adjoining was familiarly known to the inhabitants as "the mountain." The prudence and propriety of the advice to flee in that direction rather than to the ford, were made apparent by the sequel.

**21.** *she bound the scarlet line in the window* — probably soon after the departure of the spies. It was not formed, as some suppose, into network, as a lattice, but simply to hang down the wall. Its red color made it conspicuous, and it was thus a sign and pledge of safety to Rahab's house, as the bloody mark on the lintels of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt to that people.

## **GOOD JOSHUA** 3:1-6.

#### JOSHUA COMES TO JORDAN.

- **1.** Joshua rose early in the morning On the day following that on which the spies had returned with their encouraging report. The camp was broken up in "Shittim" (the acacia groves), and removed to the eastern bank of the Jordan. The duration of their stay is indicated (\*\*Toshua 3:2), being, according to Hebrew reckoning, only one entire day, including the evening of arrival and the morning of the passage; and such a time would be absolutely necessary for so motley an assemblage of men, women, and children, with all their gear and cattle to make ready for going into an enemy's country.
- **2-4.** the officers went through the host; And they commanded the people

   The instructions given at this time and in this place were different from those described (\*\*\*III) oshua 1:11).
- **3, 4.** When ye see the ark ..., and the priests the Levites bearing it The usual position of the ark, when at rest, was in the center of the camp; and, during a march, in the middle of the procession. On this occasion it was to occupy the van, and be borne, not by the Kohathite Levites, but the priests, as on all solemn and extraordinary occasions (compare Numbers 4:15 Only Joshua 6:6 Only Kings 8:3-6).

then ye shall ... go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it

— These instructions refer exclusively to the advance into the river. The
distance which the people were to keep in the rear of the ark was nearly a
mile. Had they crowded too near the ark, the view would have been
intercepted, and this intervening space, therefore, was ordered, that the
chest containing the sacred symbols might be distinctly visible to all parts
of the camp, and be recognized as their guide in the untrodden way.

- **5.** *Joshua said unto the people* rather "had said," for as he speaks of "to-morrow," the address must have been made previous to the day of crossing, and the sanctification was in all probability the same as Moses had commanded before the giving of the law, consisting of an outward cleansing (\*\*Exodus 19:10-15) preparatory to that serious and devout state of mind with which so great a manifestation should be witnessed.
- **6.** Joshua spake unto the priests This order to the priests would be given privately, and involving as it did an important change in the established order of march, it must be considered as announced in the name and by the authority of God. Moreover, as soon as the priests stepped into the waters of Jordan, they were to stand still. The ark was to accomplish what had been done by the rod of Moses.

## 

#### THE LORD ENCOURAGES JOSHUA.

**7, 8.** the Lord said to Joshua, This day will I ... magnify thee in the sight of all Israel — Joshua had already received distinguished honors (\*\*Exodus 24:13 \*\*Deuteronomy 31:7). But a higher token of the divine favor was now to be publicly bestowed on him, and evidence given in the same unmistakable manner that his mission and authority were from God as was that of Moses (\*\*DEE) Exodus 14:31).

### **™JOSHUA** 3:9-13.

#### JOSHUA ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE.

**9-13.** Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord — It seems that the Israelites had no intimation how they were to cross the river till shortly before the event. The premonitory address of Joshua, taken in connection with the miraculous result exactly as he had described it, would tend to increase and confirm their faith in the God of their fathers as not a dull, senseless, inanimate thing like the idols of the nations, but a Being of life, power, and activity to defend them and work for them.

## **™JOSHUA** 3:14-17.

#### THE WATERS OF JORDAN ARE DIVIDED.

14-16. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, etc.

— To understand the scene described we must imagine the band of priests with the ark on their shoulders, standing on the depressed edge of the river, while the mass of the people were at a mile's distance. Suddenly the whole bed of the river was dried up; a spectacle the more extraordinary in that it took place in the time of harvest, corresponding to our April or May — when "the Jordan overfloweth all its banks." The original words may be more properly rendered "fills all its banks." Its channel, snow-fed from Lebanon, was at its greatest height — brimful; a translation which gives the only true description of the state of Jordan in harvest as observed by modern travelers. The river about Jericho is, in ordinary appearance, about fifty or sixty yards in breadth. But as seen in harvest, it is twice as broad; and in ancient times, when the hills on the right and left were much more drenched with rain and snow than since the forests have disappeared, the river must, from a greater accession of water, have been broader still than at harvest-time in the present day.

**16.** the waters which came down from above — that is, the Sea of Galilee

**stood and rose up upon a heap** — "in a heap," a firm, compact barrier (\*\*Exodus 15:8 \*\*Psalm 18:13);

very far — high up the stream;

from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan — near mount Sartabeh, in the northern part of the Ghor ( TKings 7:46); that is, a distance of thirty miles from the Israelitish encampment; and

those that came down toward the sea of the desert — the Dead Sea — were cut off (\*\*Psalm 114:2,3). The river was thus dried up as far as the eye could reach. This was a stupendous miracle; Jordan takes its name, "the Descender," from the force of its current, which, after passing the Sea of Galilee, becomes greatly increased as it plunges through twenty-seven "horrible rapids and cascades," besides a great many lesser through a fall of

a thousand feet, averaging from four to five miles an hour [LYNCH]. When swollen "in time of harvest," it flows with a vastly accelerated current.

*the people passed over right against Jericho* — The exact spot is unknown; but it cannot be that fixed by Greek tradition — the pilgrims' bathing-place — both because it is too much to the north, and the eastern banks are there sheer precipices ten or fifteen feet high.

**17.** *the priests* ... *and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground* — the river about Jericho has a firm pebbly bottom, on which the host might pass, without inconvenience when the water was cleared off.

### 4:1-8.

# TWELVE STONES TAKEN FOR A MEMORIAL OUT OF JORDAN.

- **1-3.** *the Lord spake unto Joshua*, *Take you twelve men* each representing a tribe. They had been previously chosen for this service (\*\*OSP\*Joshua 3:12), and the repetition of the command is made here solely to introduce the account of its execution. Though Joshua had been divinely instructed to erect a commemorative pile, the representatives were not apprised of the work they were to do till the time of the passage.
- **4, 5.** *Joshua called the twelve men* They had probably, from a feeling of reverence, kept back, and were standing on the eastern bank. They were now ordered to advance. Picking up each a stone, probably as large as he could carry, from around the spot "where the priests stood," they pass over before the ark and deposit the stones in the place of next encampment ("Tophua 4:19,20), namely, Gilgal.
- **6, 7.** That this may be a sign among you The erection of cairns, or huge piles of stones, as monuments of remarkable incidents has been common among all people, especially in the early and crude periods of their history. They are the established means of perpetuating the memory of important transactions, especially among the nomadic people of the East. Although there be no inscription engraved on them, the history and object of such simple monuments are traditionally preserved from age to age. Similar was the purpose contemplated by the conveyance of the twelve stones to Gilgal: it was that they might be a standing record to posterity of the miraculous passage of the Jordan.
- **8.** the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded that is, it was done by their twelve representatives.

## OSHUA 4:9.

#### TWELVE STONES SET UP IN THE MIDST OF JORDAN.

**9.** Joshua set up twelve stones ... in the place where the feet of the priests ... stood — In addition to the memorial just described, there was another memento of the miraculous event, a duplicate of the former, set up in the river itself, on the very spot where the ark had rested. This heap of stones might have been a large and compactly built one and visible in the ordinary state of the river. As nothing is said where these stones were obtained, some have imagined that they might have been gathered in the adjoining fields and deposited by the people as they passed the appointed spot.

they are there unto this day — at least twenty years after the event, if we reckon by the date of this history (\*\*\*Joshua 24:26), and much later, if the words in the latter clause were inserted by Samuel or Ezra.

#### THE PEOPLE PASS OVER.

- **10.** the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan This position was well calculated to animate the people, who probably crossed below the ark, as well as to facilitate Joshua's execution of the minutest instructions respecting the passage (\*\*PNumbers 27:21-23). The unfaltering confidence of the priests contrasts strikingly with the conduct of the people, who "hasted and passed over." Their faith, like that of many of God's people, was, through the weakness of nature, blended with fears. But perhaps their "haste" may be viewed in a more favorable light, as indicating the alacrity of their obedience, or it might have been enjoined in order that the the whole multitude might pass in one day.
- 11. the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people The ark is mentioned as the efficient cause; it had been the first to move it was the last to leave and its movements arrested the deep attention of the people, who probably stood on the opposite bank, wrapt in admiration and awe of this closing scene. It was a great miracle, greater

even than the passage of the Red Sea in this respect: that, admitting the fact, there is no possibility of rationalistic insinuations as to the influence of natural causes in producing it, as have been made in the former case.

- 12, 13. the children of Reuben ... passed over armed before the children of Israel There is no precedency to the other tribes indicated here; for there is no reason to suppose that the usual order of march was departed from; but these are honorably mentioned to show that, in pursuance of their promise (\*\*Toshua 1:16-18), they had sent a complement of fighting men to accompany their brethren in the war of invasion.
- **13.** *to the plains of Jericho* That part of the Arabah or Ghor, on the west, is about seven miles broad from the Jordan to the mountain entrance at Wady-Kelt. Though now desert, this valley was in ancient times richly covered with wood. An immense palm forest, seven miles long, surrounded Jericho.

## **™JOSHUA** 4:14-24.

#### GOD MAGNIFIES JOSHUA.

- 14-17. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel
- It appeared clear from the chief part he acted, that he was the divinely appointed leader; for even the priests did not enter the river or quit their position, except at his command; and thenceforward his authority was as firmly established as that of his predecessor.
- 18. it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark ... were come out of the midst of Jordan ... that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place
- Their crossing, which was the final act, completed the evidence of the miracle; for then, and not till then, the suspended laws of nature were restored, the waters returned to their place, and the river flowed with as full a current as before.
- 19. the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month
- that is, the month Nisan, four days before the passover, and the very day when the paschal lamb required to be set apart, the providence of God

having arranged that the entrance into the promised land should be at the feast.

and encamped in Gilgal — The name is here given by anticipation (see on OSEPHUS, fifty stadia (six and one-half miles) from Jordan, and ten stadia (one and one-fourth miles) from Jericho, at the eastern outskirts of the palm forest, now supposed to be the spot occupied by the village Riha.

**20-24.** those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal — Probably to render them more conspicuous, they might be raised on a foundation of earth or turf. The pile was designed to serve a double purpose — that of impressing the heathen with a sense of the omnipotence of God, while at the same time it would teach an important lesson in religion to the young and rising Israelites in after ages.

### OSHUA 5:1.

#### THE CANAANITES AFRAID.

1. the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea — Under the former designation were included the people who inhabited the mountainous region, and under the latter those who were on the seacoast of Palestine.

heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan ... that their heart melted — They had probably reckoned on the swollen river interposing for a time a sure barrier of defense. But seeing it had been completely dried up, they were completely paralyzed by so incontestable a proof that God was on the side of the invaders. In fact, the conquest had already begun in the total prostration of spirit among the native chiefs. "Their heart melted," but unhappily not into faith and penitent submission.

**™JOSHUA** 5:2-12.

#### CIRCUMCISION IS RENEWED.

**2.** At that time — on the encampment being made after the passage.

the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives — Stone knives, collect and make them ready. Flints have been used in the early times of all people; and although the use of iron was known to the Hebrews in the days of Joshua, probably the want of a sufficient number of metallic implements dictated the employment of flints on this occasion (compare Exodus 4:25).

*circumcise again the children of Israel the second time* — literally, "return and circumcise." The command did not require him to repeat the

operation on those who had undergone it, but to resume the observance of the rite, which had been long discontinued. The language, however, evidently points to a general circumcising on some previous occasion, which, though unrecorded, must have been made before the celebration of the passover at Sinai (compare Exodus 12:48 Numbers 9:5), as a mixed multitude accompanied the camp. "The second time" of general circumcising was at the entrance into Canaan.

- **3.** at the hill probably one of the argillaceous hills that form the highest terrace of the Jordan, on a rising ground at the palm forest.
- **4-7.** *this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise* The omission to circumcise the children born in the wilderness might have been owing to the incessant movements of the people; but it is most generally thought that the true cause was a temporary suspension of the covenant with the unbelieving race who, being rejected of the Lord, were doomed to perish in the wilderness, and whose children had to bear the iniquity of their fathers (\*\*Wumbers 14:33), though, as the latter were to be brought into the promised land, the covenant would be renewed with them.
- 8. when they had done circumcising all the people As the number of those born in the wilderness and uncircumcised must have been immense, a difficulty is apt to be felt how the rite could have been performed on such a multitude in so short a time. But it has been calculated that the proportion between those already circumcised (under twenty when the doom was pronounced) and those to be circumcised, was one to four, and consequently the whole ceremony could easily have been performed in a day. Circumcision being the sign and seal of the covenant, its performance was virtually an investment in the promised land, and its being delayed till their actual entrance into the country was a wise and gracious act on the part of God, who postponed this trying duty till the hearts of the people, animated by the recent astonishing miracle, were prepared to obey the divine will.

*they abode in their places ... till they were whole* — It is calculated that, of those who did not need to be circumcised, more than fifty thousand were left to defend the camp if an attack had been then made upon it.

**9.** the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt — The taunts industriously cast by that people upon Israel as nationally rejected by God by the cessation of circumcision and the renewal of that rite was a practical announcement of the restoration of the covenant [KEIL].

Gilgal — No trace either of the name or site is now to be found; but it was about two miles from Jericho [JOSEPHUS], and well suited for an encampment by the advantages of shade and water. It was the first place pronounced "holy" in the Holy Land (\*\*\*Joshua 5:15).

- **10.** *kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even* The time fixed by the law (see on Exodus 12:17; Eviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16). Thus the national existence was commenced by a solemn act of religious dedication.
- **11, 12.** *And they did eat of the old corn of the land* found in storehouses of the inhabitants who had fled into Jericho.

**parched corn** — new grain (see on describing Leviticus 23:10), probably lying in the fields. This abundance of food led to the discontinuance of the manna; and the fact of its then ceasing, viewed in connection with its seasonable appearance in the barren wilderness, is a striking proof of its miraculous origin.

### 4653 OSHUA 5:13-15

#### AN ANGEL APPEARS TO JOSHUA.

**13.** when Joshua was by Jericho — in the immediate vicinity of that city, probably engaged in surveying the fortifications, and in meditating the best plan of a siege.

there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn — It is evident from the strain of the context that this was not a mere vision, but an actual appearance; the suddenness of which surprised, but did not daunt, the intrepid leader.

**14.** *the host of the Lord* — either the Israelitish people (\*\*Exodus 7:4 12:41 \*\*\*Isaiah 55:4), or the angels (\*\*Psalm 148:2), or both included, and the Captain of it was the angel of the covenant, whose visible manifestations were varied according to the occasion. His attitude of equipment betokened his approval of, and interest in, the war of invasion.

Joshua fell on his face ..., and did worship — The adoption by Joshua of this absolute form of prostration demonstrates the sentiments of profound reverence with which the language and majestic bearing of the stranger inspired him. The real character of this personage was disclosed by His accepting the homage of worship (compare Acts 10:25,26 Revelation 19:10), and still further in the command, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot" (INTEXOLUS 3:5).

### **™JOSHUA** 6:1-7.

#### JERICHO SHUT UP.

- **1.** Now Jericho was straitly shut up This verse is a parenthesis introduced to prepare the way for the directions given by the Captain of the Lord's host.
- **2.** See, I have given into thine hand Jericho The language intimates that a purpose already formed was about to be carried into immediate execution; and that, although the king and inhabitants of Jericho were fierce and experienced warriors, who would make a stout and determined resistance, the Lord promised a certain and easy victory over them.
- 3-5. ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war... Thus shalt thou do six days, etc. Directions are here given as to the mode of procedure. Hebrew, "horns of jubilee"; that is, the bent or crooked trumpets with which the jubilee was proclaimed. It is probable that the horns of this animal were used at first; and that afterwards, when metallic trumpets were introduced, the primitive name, as well as form of them, was traditionally continued. The design of this whole proceeding was obviously to impress the Canaanites with a sense of the divine omnipotence, to teach the Israelites a memorable lesson of faith and confidence in God's promises, and to inspire sentiments of respect and reverence for the ark as the symbol of His presence. The length of time during which those circuits were made tended the more intensely to arrest the attention, and to deepen the impressions, both of the Israelites and the enemy. The number seven was among the Israelites the symbolic seal of the covenant between God and their nation [Keil, Hengstenberg].
- **6, 7.** *Joshua* ... *called the priests* The pious leader, whatever military preparations he had made, surrendered all his own views, at once and unreservedly, to the declared will of God.

## **MSJOSHUA** 6:8-19.

#### THE CITY COMPASSED SIX DAYS.

- **8-11.** the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets ... passed on before the Lord before the ark, called "the ark of the covenant," for it contained the tables on which the covenant was inscribed. The procession was made in deep and solemn silence, conforming to the instructions given to the people by their leader at the outset, that they were to refrain from all acclamation and noise of any kind until he should give them a signal. It must have been a strange sight; no mound was raised, no sword drawn, no engine planted, no pioneers undermining here were armed men, but no stroke given; they must walk and not fight. Doubtless the people of Jericho made themselves merry with the spectacle [BISHOP HALL].
- **12-14.** Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord The second day's procession seems to have taken place in the morning. In all other respects, down even to the smallest details, the arrangements of the first day continued to be the rule followed on the other six.
- **15.** on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city ... seven times on account of the seven circuits they had to make that day. It is evident, however, that the militia only of the Israelites had been called to the march for it is inconceivable that two millions of people could have gone so frequently round the city in a day.
- **16.** it came to pass at the seventh time, ... Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city This delay brought out their faith and obedience in so remarkable a manner, that it is celebrated by the apostle (\*\*Hebrews 11:30).
- **17-19.** And the city shall be accursed (See on GETE Leviticus 27:28). The *cherem*, or "anathema," was a devotion to utter destruction (GETE Deuteronomy 7:2 20:17 GETE Samuel 15:3). When such a ban was pronounced against a hostile city, the men and animals were killed no booty was allowed to be taken. The idols and all the precious ornaments

on them were to be burned (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:25; compare \*\*\*Chronicles 14:12). Everything was either to be destroyed or consecrated to the sanctuary. Joshua pronounced this ban on Jericho, a great and wealthy city, evidently by divine direction. The severity of the doom, accordant with the requirements of a law which was holy, just, and good, was justified, not only by the fact of its inhabitants being part of a race who had filled up their iniquities, but by their resisting the light of the recent astonishing miracle at the Jordan. Besides, as Jericho seems to have been defended by reinforcements from all the country (\*\*\*Joshua 24:11), its destruction would paralyze all the rest of the devoted people, and thus tend to facilitate the conquest of the land; showing, as so astounding a military miracle did, that it was done, not by man, but by the power and through the anger, of God.

**MJOSHUA** 6:20,21.

#### THE WALLS FALL DOWN.

**20, 21.** So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets — Towards the close of the seventh circuit, the signal was given by Joshua, and on the Israelites raising their loud war cry, the walls fell down, doubtless burying multitudes of the inhabitants in the ruins, while the besiegers, rushing in, consigned everything animate and inanimate to indiscriminate destruction (4500) Deuteronomy 20:16,17). Jewish writers mention it as an immemorial tradition that the city fell on the Sabbath. It should be remembered that the Canaanites were incorrigible idolaters,

addicted to the most horrible vices, and that the righteous judgment of God might sweep them away by the sword, as well as by famine or pestilence. There was mercy mingled with judgment in employing the sword as the instrument of punishing the guilty Canaanites, for while it was directed against one place, time was afforded for others to repent.

### 4622-25.

#### RAHAB IS SAVED.

- 22, 23. Joshua had said ... Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath It is evident that the town walls were not demolished universally, at least all at once, for Rahab's house was allowed to stand until her relatives were rescued according to promise.
- **23.** they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of **Israel** a temporary exclusion, in order that they might be cleansed from the defilement of their native idolatries and gradually trained for admission into the society of God's people.
- **24.** burned the city ... and all ... therein except the silver, gold, and other metals, which, as they would not burn, were added to the treasury of the sanctuary.
- **25.** *she* Rahab

*dwelleth in Israel unto this day* — a proof that this book was written not long after the events related.

## 

#### THE REBUILDER OF JERICHO CURSED.

**26.** *Joshua adjured them at that time* — that is, imposed upon his countrymen a solemn oath, binding on themselves as well as their posterity, that they would never rebuild that city. Its destruction was

designed by God to be a permanent memorial of His abhorrence of idolatry and its attendant vices.

Cursed be the man ... that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho — that is, makes the daring attempt to build.

he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it — shall become childless — the first beginning being marked by the death of his oldest son, and his only surviving child dying at the time of its completion. This curse was accomplished five hundred fifty years after its denunciation (see on Kings 16:34).

### ONJOSHUA 7:1.

#### ACHAN'S TRESPASS.

**1.** the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing — There was one transgressor against the *cherem*, or ban, on Jericho, and his transgression brought the guilt and disgrace of sin upon the whole nation.

**Achan** — called afterwards "Achar" ("trouble") ("I Chronicles 2:7).

**Zabdi** — or Zimri ( Chronicles 2:6).

**Zerah** — or Zarah, son of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38:30). His genealogy is given probably to show that from a parentage so infamous the descendants would not be carefully trained in the fear of God.

**™JOSHUA** 7:2-26.

#### THE ISRAELITES SMITTEN AT AI.

**2.** Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai — After the sacking of Jericho, the next step was to penetrate into the hills above. Accordingly, spies went up the mountain pass to view the country. The precise site of Ai, or Hai, is indicated with sufficient clearness (Genesis 12:8 13:3) and has been recently discovered in an isolated tell, called by the natives Tell-el-Hajar, "the mount of stones," at two miles', or thirty-five minutes' distance, east southeast from Beth-el [VAN DE VELDE].

**Beth-aven** — ("house of vanity") — a name afterwards given derisively (\*\*\*\*\*\*5:8 \*\*\*\*\*5:8, on account of its idolatries, to Beth-el, "house of God," but here referred to another place, about six miles east of Beth-el and three north of Ai.

- **3.** Let not all the people go up, ... for they are but few As the population of Ai amounted to twelve thousand ( GEE Joshua 8:25), it was a considerable town; though in the hasty and distant reconnoitre made by the spies, it probably appeared small in comparison to Jericho; and this may have been the reason for their proposing so small a detachment to capture it.
- **4, 5.** they fled before the men of Ai An unexpected resistance, and the loss of thirty-six of their number diffused a panic, which ended in an ignominious rout.
- **5.** chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim that is, unto the "breakings" or "fissures" at the opening of the passes.

and smote them in the going down — that is, the declivity or slope of the deep, rugged, adjoining wady.

wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water — It is evident that the troops engaged were a tumultuary, undisciplined band, no better skilled in military affairs than the Bedouin Arabs, who become disheartened and flee on the loss of ten or fifteen men. But the consternation of the Israelites arose from another cause — the evident displeasure of God, who withheld that aid on which they had confidently reckoned.

6-9. Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth ... before the ark ... he and the elders — It is evident, from those tokens of humiliation and sorrow, that a solemn fast was observed on this occasion. The language of Joshua's prayer is thought by many to savor of human infirmity and to be wanting in that reverence and submission he owed to God. But, although apparently breathing a spirit of bold remonstrance and complaint, it was in reality the effusion of a deeply humbled and afflicted mind, expressing his belief that God could not, after having so miraculously brought His people over Jordan into the promised land, intend to destroy them, to expose them to the insults of their triumphant enemies, and bring reproach upon His own name for inconstancy or unkindness to His people, or inability to resist their enemies. Unable to understand the cause of the present calamity, he owned the hand of God.

- **10-15.** *the Lord said unto Joshua*, *Get thee up* The answer of the divine oracle was to this effect: the crisis is owing not to unfaithfulness in Me, but sin in the people. The conditions of the covenant have been violated by the reservation of spoil from the doomed city; wickedness, emphatically called folly, has been committed in Israel (\*\*PSalm 14:1), and dissimulation, with other aggravations of the crime, continues to be practiced. The people are liable to destruction equally with the accursed nations of Canaan (\*\*Deuteronomy 7:26). Means must, without delay, be taken to discover and punish the perpetrator of this trespass that Israel may be released from the ban, and things be restored to their former state of prosperity.
- 16-18. So Joshua rose up early, and brought Israel by their tribes that is, before the tabernacle. The lot being appealed to (\*\*Proverbs 16:33), he proceeded in the inquiry from heads of tribes to heads of families, and from heads of households in succession to one family, and to particular persons in that family, until the criminal was found to be Achan, who, on Joshua's admonition, confessed the fact of having secreted for his own use, in the floor of his tent, spoil both in garments and money [\*\*Types\*\*]oshua 7:19-21]. How dreadful must have been his feelings when he saw the slow but certain process of discovery! (\*\*\*Types\*\*)umbers 32:23).
- **19.** *Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give ... glory to God* a form of adjuration to tell the truth.
- **21.** *a goodly Babylonish garment* literally, "a mantle of Shinar." The plain of Shinar was in early times celebrated for its gorgeous robes, which were of brilliant and various colors, generally arranged in figured patterns, probably resembling those of modern Turkish carpets, and the colors were either interwoven in the loom or embroidered with the needle.

*two hundred shekels of silver* — about \$200 according to the old Mosaic shekel, or the half of that sum, reckoning by the common shekel.

- *a wedge of gold* literally, an ingot or bar in the shape of a tongue, worth about \$500.
- **22, 23.** *Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent* from impatient eagerness not only to test the truth of the story, but to clear

Israel from the imputation of guilt. Having discovered the stolen articles, they laid them out before the Lord, "as a token of their belonging to Him" on account of the ban.

24-26. Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan — He with his children and all his property, cattle as well as movables, were brought into one of the long broad ravines that open into the Ghor, and after being stoned to death (\*\*ONUMBERS\*\* 15:30-35), his corpse, with all belonging to him, was consumed to ashes by fire. "All Israel" was present, not only as spectators, but active agents, as many as possible, in inflicting the punishment — thus testifying their abhorrence of the sacrilege, and their intense solicitude to regain the divine favor. As the divine law expressly forbade the children to be put to death for their father's sins (\*\*ODE\*\*\* Deuteronomy 24:16), the conveyance of Achan's "sons and daughters" to the place of execution might be only as spectators, that they might take warning by the parental fate; or, if they shared his punishment (\*\*ODE\*\*\* Joshua 22:20), they had probably been accomplices in his crime, and, indeed, he could scarcely have dug a hole within his tent without his family being aware of it.

**26.** *they raised over him a great heap of stones* — It is customary to raise cairns over the graves of criminals or infamous persons in the East still.

the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor — ("trouble"),

unto this day — So painful an episode would give notoriety to the spot, and it is more than once noted by the sacred writers of a later age (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 65:10 \*\*\*\*\*Hosea 2:15).

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#### GOD ENCOURAGES JOSHUA.

**1, 2.** The Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not — By the execution of justice on Achan, the divine wrath was averted, the Israelites were reassured, defeat was succeeded by victory; and thus the case of Ai affords a striking example of God's disciplinary government, in which chastisements for sin are often made to pave the way for the bestowment of those temporal benefits, which, on account of sin, have been withdrawn, or withheld for a time. Joshua, who had been greatly dispirited, was encouraged by a special communication promising him (see \*\* Doshua 1:6 \*\* Deuteronomy 31:6-8) success in the next attempt, which, however, was to be conducted on different principles.

take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai — The number of fighting men amounted to six hundred thousand, and the whole force was ordered on this occasion, partly because the spies, in their self-confidence, had said that a few were sufficient to attack the place (Table Joshua 7:3), partly to dispel any misgivings which the memory of the late disaster might have created, and partly that the circumstance of the first spoil obtained in Canaan being shared among all, might operate both as a reward for obedience in refraining from the booty of Jericho, and as an incentive to future exertions (Table Deuteronomy 6:10). The rest of the people, including the women and children, remained in the camp at Gilgal. Being in the plains of Jericho, it was an ascent to Ai, which was on a hill.

I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land ... lay thee an ambush for the city — God assured Joshua of Ai's capture, but allowed him to follow his own tactics in obtaining the possession.

**3.** So Joshua ... chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valor — Joshua despatched thirty thousand men under cover of night, to station

- **4.** behind the city is rendered ( on 8:9), "on the west side of Ai."
- **9.** between Beth-el and Ai Beth-el, though lying quite near in the direction of west by north, cannot be seen from Tell-el-hajar; two rocky heights rise between both places, in the wady El-Murogede, just as the laying of an ambush to the west of Ai would require [VAN DE VELDE; ROBINSON].
- **10.** Joshua ... numbered the people that is, the detachment of liers-inwait; he did this, to be furnished with clear evidence afterwards, that the work had been done without any loss of men, whereby the people's confidence in God would be strengthened and encouragement given them to prosecute the war of invasion with vigor.

he and the elders of Israel — the chief magistrates and rulers, whose presence and official authority were necessary to ensure that the cattle and spoil of the city might be equally divided between the combatants and the rest of the people (\*\*Numbers 31:27) — a military rule in Israel, that would have been very liable to be infringed, if an excited soldiery, eager for booty, had been left to their own will.

- **11-14.** there was a valley between them and Ai literally, "the valley."
- 13. Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley The deep and steep-sided glen to the north of Tell-el-hajar, into which one looks down from the tell, fully agrees with this account [VAN DE VELDE]. Joshua himself took up his position on the north side of "the ravine" the deep chasm of the wady El-Murogede; "that night" means, while it was dark, probably after midnight, or very early in the morning (\*\*Tohn 20:1). The king of Ai, in the early dawn, rouses his slumbering subjects and makes a hasty sally with all his people who were capable of bearing arms, once more to surprise and annihilate them.
- **14.** *at a time appointed* either an hour concocted between the king and people of Ai and those of Beth-el, who were confederates in this

enterprise, or perhaps they had fixed on the same time of day, as they had fought successfully against Israel on the former occasion, deeming it a lucky hour (\*\*TIB\*Judges 20:38).

but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city — It is evident that this king and his subjects were little experienced in war; otherwise they would have sent out scouts to reconnoitre the neighborhood; at all events, they would not have left their town wholly unprotected and open. Perhaps an ambuscade may have been a war stratagem hitherto unknown in that country, and among that people.

the pretended flight in the direction of the wilderness; that is, southeast, into the Ghor, the desert valley of the Jordan, decoyed all the inhabitants of Ai out of the city, while the people of Beth-el hastened to participate in the expected victory. It is supposed by some, from "the city," and not "cities," being spoken of, that the effective force of Beth-el had been concentrated in Ai, as the two places were closely contiguous, and Ai the larger of the two. (See "Joshua 12:9). It may be remarked, however, that the words, "or Beth-el," are not in the *Septuagint*, and are rejected by some eminent scholars, as an interpolation not found in the most ancient manuscripts.

**18-25.** Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city — The uplifted spear had probably a flag, or streamer on it, to render it the more conspicuous from the height where he stood. At the sight of this understood signal the ambush nearest the city, informed by their scouts, made a sudden rush and took possession of the city, telegraphing to their brethren by raising a smoke from the walls. Upon seeing this, the main body, who had been reigning a flight, turned round at the head of the pass upon their pursuers, while the twenty-five thousand issuing from their ambuscade, fell back upon their rear. The Ai-ites surprised, looked back, and found their situation now desperate.

**23.** the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua — to be reserved for a more ignominious death, as a greater criminal in God's sight than his subjects. In the mingled attack from before and behind, all the men were massacred.

- **24.** all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword the women, children, and old persons left behind, amounting, in all, to twelve thousand people [\*\*GES\*\*Joshua 8:25].
- **26.** *Joshua drew not his hand back* Perhaps, from the long continuance of the posture, it might have been a means appointed by God, to animate the people, and kept up in the same devout spirit as Moses had shown, in lifting up his hands, until the work of slaughter had been completed the ban executed. (See on \*\*Exodus 17:10).
- **28.** Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever "For ever" often signifies "a long time" (\*\*Genesis 6:3). One of the remarkable things with regard to the tell we have identified with Ai is its name the tell of the heap of stones a name which to this day remains [VAN DE VELDE].

### **™JOSHUA** 8:29.

#### THE KING HANGED.

**29.** The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide — that is, gibbeted. In ancient, and particularly Oriental wars, the chiefs, when taken prisoners, were usually executed. The Israelites were obliged, by the divine law, to put them to death. The execution of the king of Ai would tend to facilitate the conquest of the land, by striking terror into the other chiefs, and making it appear a judicial process, in which they were inflicting the vengeance of God upon His enemies.

take his carcass down ... and raise thereon a great heap of stones — It was taken down at sunset, according to the divine command (\*\*Deuteronomy 21:23), and cast into a pit dug "at the entering of the gate," because that was the most public place. An immense cairn was raised over his grave — an ancient usage, still existing in the East, whereby is marked the sepulcher of persons whose memory is infamous.

## **SHUA** 8:30,31.

#### JOSHUA BUILDS AN ALTAR.

30,31. Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal — (See on Deuteronomy 27:2). This spot was little short of twenty miles from Ai. The march through a hostile country and the unmolested performance of the religious ceremonial observed at this mountain, would be greatly facilitated, through the blessing of God, by the disastrous fall of Ai. The solemn duty was to be attended to at the first convenient opportunity after the entrance into Canaan (Deuteronomy 27:2); and with this in view Joshua seems to have conducted the people through the mountainous region that intervened though no details of the journey have been recorded. Ebal was on the north, opposite to Gerizim, which was on the south side of the town Sichem (Nablous).

**31.** *an altar of whole stones* — according to the instructions given to Moses (\*\*Exodus 20:25 \*\*Deuteronomy 27:5).

over which no man hath lifted up any iron — that is, iron tool. The reason for this was that every altar of the true God ought properly to have been built of earth (\*\*Exodus 20:24); and if it was constructed of stone, rough, unhewn stones were to be employed that it might retain both the appearance and nature of earth, since every bloody sacrifice was connected with sin and death, by which man, the creature of earth, is brought to earth again [Keil].

they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings — This had been done when the covenant was established (\*\*Exodus 24:5); and by the observance of these rites (\*\*Deuteronomy 27:6), the covenant was solemnly renewed — the people were reconciled to God by the burnt offering, and this feast accompanying the peace or thank offering, a happy communion with God was enjoyed by all the families in Israel.

**32.** he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses — (See on Deuteronomy 27:2,3,5); that is, the blessings and curses of the law. Some think that the stones which contained this inscription were the

stones of the altar: but this verse seems rather to indicate that a number of stone pillars were erected alongside of the altar, and on which, after they were plastered, this duplicate of the law was inscribed.

**33.** all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side — One half of Israel was arranged on Gerizim, and the other half on Ebal — along the sides and base of each.

before the priests the Levites — in full view of them.

- **34.** afterward he read all the words of the law caused the priests or Levites to read it (\*\*Deuteronomy 27:14). Persons are often said in Scripture to do that which they only command to be done.
- **35.** There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not It appears that a much larger portion of the law was read on this occasion than the brief summary inscribed on the stones; and this must have been the essence of the law as contained in Deuteronomy (\*\*THE\*\*Deuteronomy 4:44 \*\*THE\*\*C:9\*\*TEXT\*\*27:8). It was not written on the stones, but on the plaster. The immediate design of this rehearsal was attained by the performance of the act itself. It only related to posterity, in so far as the record of the event would be handed down in the Book of Joshua, or the documents which form the groundwork of it [Hengstenberg]. Thus faithfully did Joshua execute the instructions given by Moses. How awfully solemn must have been the assemblage and the occasion! The eye and the ear of the people being both addressed, it was calculated to leave an indelible impression; and with spirits elevated by their brilliant victories in the land of promise, memory would often revert to the striking scene on mounts Ebal and Gerizim, and in the vale of Sychar.

**™JOSHUA** 9:1-29.

#### THE KINGS COMBINE AGAINST ISRAEL.

**1.** all the kings which were on this side — that is, the western side of Jordan.

in the hills, and in ther valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea—
This threefold distinction marks out very clearly a large portion of Canaan.
The first designates the hill country, which belonged afterwards to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim: the second, all the low country from Carmel to Gaza; and the third, the shores of the Mediterranean, from the Isthmus of Tyre to the plain of Joppa. (As for the tribes mentioned, see on Numbers 13:29).

*heard thereof* — that is, of the sacking of Jericho and Ai, as well as the rapid advance of the Israelites into the interior of the country.

2. they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord — Although divided by separate interests and often at war with each other, a sense of common danger prompted them to suspend their mutual animosities, that by their united forces they might prevent the land from falling into the hands of foreign masters.

● JOSHUA 9:3-15.

#### THE GIBEONITES OBTAIN A LEAGUE BY CRAFT.

**3-15.** when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard — This town, as its name imports, was situated on a rocky eminence, about six miles northwest from Jerusalem, where the modern village of El Jib now stands. It was the capital of the Hivites, and a large important city ( Joshua 10:2). It seems to have formed, in union with a few other towns in the neighborhood, a

free independent state ( Toshua 9:17) and to have enjoyed a republican government ( Toshua 9:11).

**4.** *They did work wilily* — They acted with dexterous policy, seeking the means of self-preservation, not by force, which they were convinced would be unavailing, but by artful diplomacy.

*took old sacks upon their asses* — Travellers in the East transport their luggage on beasts of burden; the poorer sort stow all their necessaries, food, clothes, utensils together, in a woollen or hair-cloth sack, laid across the shoulders of the beast they ride upon.

wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up — Goat-skins, which are better adapted for carrying liquor of any kind fresh and good, than either earthenware, which is porous, or metallic vessels, which are soon heated by the sun. These skin bottles are liable to be rent when old and much used; and there are various ways of mending them — by inserting a new piece of leather, or by gathering together the edges of the rent and sewing them in the form of a purse, or by putting a round flat splinter of wood into the hole.

**5.** *old shoes and clouted* — Those who have but one ass or mule for themselves and baggage frequently dismount and walk — a circumstance which may account for the worn shoes of the pretended travelers.

bread ... dry and mouldy — This must have been that commonly used by travelers — a sort of biscuit made in the form of large rings, about an inch thick, and four or five inches in diameter. Not being so well baked as our biscuits, it becomes hard and mouldy from the moisture left in the dough. It is usually soaked in water previous to being used.

- **6-14.** *they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal* Arrived at the Israelitish headquarters, the strangers obtained an interview with Joshua and the elders, to whom they opened their business.
- 7. the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us The answer of the Israelites implied that they had no discretion, that their orders were imperative, and that if the strangers belonged to any of the native tribes, the idea of an alliance with them was unlawful since God had forbidden it (\*\*Exodus 23:32 34:12 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:2).

- **9.** From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord thy God They pretended to be actuated by religious motives in seeking to be allied with His people. But their studied address is worthy of notice in appealing to instances of God's miraculous doings at a distance, while they pass by those done in Canaan, as if the report of these had not yet reached their ears.
- **14, 15.** the men took of their victuals and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord The mouldy appearance of their bread was, after examination, accepted as guaranteeing the truth of the story. In this precipitate conclusion the Israelites were guilty of excessive credulity and culpable negligence, in not asking by the high priest's Urim and Thummim the mind of God, before entering into the alliance. It is not clear, however, that had they applied for divine direction they would have been forbidden to spare and connect themselves with any of the Canaanite tribes who renounced idolatry and embraced and worshipped the true God. At least, no fault was found with them for making a covenant with the Gibeonites; while, on the other hand, the violation of it was severely punished (\*\*\*DE\*\*2\*\* Samuel 21:1; and \*\*\*GIB\*\*Joshua 11:19,20).
- **16, 17.** at the end of three days ... they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them This information was obtained in their further progress through the country; for as obtained in their further progress through the country; for as of Israel journeyed, they came to their cities." Gibeon was about eighteen or twenty miles from Gilgal.
- **17.** *Chephirah* ( Joshua 18:26 Ezra 2:25 Nehemiah 7:29).

**Beeroth** — (\*\*\*\* Samuel 4:2), now *El Berich*, about twenty minutes' distance from El Jib (Gibeon).

*Kirjath-jearim* — "the city of forests," now Kuryet-el-Enab [ROBINSON].

**18-27.** *the children of Israel smote them not* — The moral character of the Gibeonites stratagem was bad. The princes of the congregation did not vindicate either the expediency or the lawfulness of the connection they had formed; but they felt the solemn obligations of their oath; and, although the popular clamor was loud against them, caused either by disappointment at losing the spoils of Gibeon, or by displeasure at the

apparent breach of the divine commandment, they determined to adhere to their pledge, "because they had sworn by the Lord God of Israel." The Israelitish princes acted conscientiously; they felt themselves bound by their solemn promise; but to prevent the disastrous consequences of their imprudent haste, they resolved to degrade the Gibeonites to a servile condition as a means of preventing their people from being ensnared into idolatry, and thus acted up, as they thought, to the true spirit and end of the law.

## **™JOSHUA** 10:1-5.

#### FIVE KINGS WAR AGAINST GIBEON.

**1.** *Adoni-zedek* — "lord of righteousness" — nearly synonymous with Melchizedek, "king of righteousness." These names were common titles of the Jebusite kings.

Jerusalem — The original name, "Salem" (\*\*Genesis 14:18 \*\*\*Psalm 76:2), was superseded by that here given, which signifies "a peaceful possession," or "a vision of peace," in allusion, as some think, to the strikingly symbolic scene (\*\*\*Genesis 22:14) represented on the mount whereon that city was afterwards built.

inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them — that is, the Israelites; had made an alliance with that people, and acknowledging their supremacy, were living on terms of friendly intercourse with them.

**2.** *they feared greatly* — The dread inspired by the rapid conquests of the Israelites had been immensely increased by the fact of a state so populous and so strong as Gibeon having found it expedient to submit to the power and the terms of the invaders.

as one of the royal cities — Although itself a republic (\*\*\*Joshua 9:3), it was large and well-fortified, like those places in which the chiefs of the country usually established their residence.

3, 4. Wherefore Adoni-zedek ... sent, ... saying, Come up unto me, and help me — A combined attack was meditated on Gibeon, with a view not only to punish its people for their desertion of the native cause, but by its overthrow to interpose a barrier to the farther inroads of the Israelites. This confederacy among the mountaineers of Southern Palestine was formed and headed by the king of Jerusalem, because his territory was

most exposed to danger, Gibeon being only six miles distant, and because he evidently possessed some degree of pre-eminence over his royal neighbors.

**5.** the five kings of the Amorites — The settlement of this powerful and warlike tribe lay within the confines of Moab; but having also acquired extensive possessions on the southwest of the Jordan, their name, as the ruling power, seems to have been given to the region generally ( Samuel 21:2), although Hebron was inhabited by Hittites or Hivites ( Hib Joshua 11:19), and Jerusalem by Jebusites ( Joshua 15:63).

## •••••JOSHUA 10:6-9.

#### JOSHUA RESCUES IT.

- 6-8. the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua Their appeal was urgent and their claim to protection irresistible, on the ground, not only of kindness and sympathy, but of justice. In attacking the Canaanites, Joshua had received from God a general assurance of success (\*\*Toshua 1:5\*). But the intelligence of so formidable a combination among the native princes seems to have depressed his mind with the anxious and dispiriting idea that it was a chastisement for the hasty and inconsiderate alliance entered into with the Gibeonites. It was evidently to be a struggle of life and death, not only to Gibeon, but to the Israelites. And in this view the divine communication that was made to him was seasonable and animating. He seems to have asked the counsel of God and received an answer, before setting out on the expedition.
- **9.** Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly This is explained in the following clause, where he is described as having accomplished, by a forced march of picked men, in one night, a distance of twenty-six miles, which, according to the slow pace of Eastern armies and caravans, had formerly been a three days' journey (4007) Joshua 9:17).

# 4000JOSHUA 10:10,11.

#### GOD FIGHTS AGAINST THEM WITH HAILSTONES.

**10, 11.** *the Lord discomfited them* — *Hebrew*, "terrified," confounded the Amorite allies, probably by a fearful storm of lightning and thunder. So the word is usually employed (\*\*\*\* Samuel 7:10 \*\*\*\* Psalm 18:13 144:6).

and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon — This refers to the attack of the Israelites upon the besiegers. It is evident that there had been much hard fighting around the heights of Gibeon, for the day was far spent before the enemy took to flight.

chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon — that is, "the House of Caves," of which there are still traces existing. There were two contiguous villages of that name, upper and nether. Upper Beth-horon was nearest Gibeon — about ten miles distant, and approached by a gradual ascent through a long and precipitous ravine. This was the first stage of the flight. The fugitives had crossed the high ridge of Upper Beth-horon, and were in full flight down the descent to Beth-horon the Nether. The road between the two places is so rocky and rugged that there is a path made by means of steps cut in the rock [ROBINSON]. Down this pass Joshua continued his victorious rout. Here it was that the Lord interposed, assisting His people by means of a storm, which, having been probably gathering all day, burst with such irresistible fury, that "they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." The Oriental hailstorm is a terrific agent; the hailstones are masses of ice, large as walnuts, and sometimes as two fists; their prodigious size, and the violence with which they fall, make them always very injurious to property, and often fatal to life. The miraculous feature of this tempest, which fell on the Amorite army, was the entire preservation of the Israelites from its destructive ravages.

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# THE SUN AND MOON STAND STILL AT THE WORD OF JOSHUA.

12-15. Then spake Joshua to the Lord ... and ... he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still ... and thou, Moon — The inspired author here breaks off the thread of his history of this miraculous victory to introduce a quotation from an ancient poem, in which the mighty acts of that day were commemorated. The passage, which is parenthetical, contains a poetical description of the victory which was miraculously gained by the help of God, and forms an extract from "the book of Jasher," that is, "the upright" — an anthology, or collection of national songs, in honor of renowned and eminently pious heroes. The language of a poem is not to be literally interpreted; and therefore, when the sun and moon are personified, addressed as intelligent beings, and represented as standing still, the explanation is that the light of the sun and moon was supernaturally prolonged by the same laws of refraction and reflection that ordinarily cause the sun to appear above the horizon, when it is in reality below it [KEIL, BUSH]. Gibeon ("a hill") was now at the back of the Israelites, and the height would soon have intercepted the rays of the setting sun. The valley of Ajalon ("stags") was before them, and so near that it was sometimes called "the valley of Gibeon" ( Isaiah 28:21). It would seem, from Joshua 10:14, that the command of Joshua was in reality a prayer to God for the performance of this miracle; and that, although the prayers of eminently good men like Moses often prevailed with God, never was there on any other occasion so astonishing a display of divine power made in behalf of His people, as in answer to the prayer of Joshua. Oshua 10:14 is the end of the quotation from Jasher; and it is necessary to notice this, as the fact described in it is recorded in due course, and the same words, by the sacred historian (\*\*\*Joshua 10:43).

## 4006JOSHUA 10:16-27.

#### THE FIVE KINGS HANGED.

**16-27.** these five kings ... hid themselves in a cave — Hebrew, "the cave."

at Makkedah — The pursuit was continued, without interruption, to Makkedah at the foot of the western mountains, where Joshua seems to have halted with the main body of his troops while a detachment was sent forward to scour the country in pursuit of the remaining stragglers, a few of whom succeeded in reaching the neighboring cities. The last act, probably the next day, was the disposal of the prisoners, among whom the five kings were consigned to the infamous doom of being slain (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:16,17); and then their corpses were suspended on five trees till the evening.

**24.** *put your feet upon the necks of these kings* — not as a barbarous insult, but a symbolical action, expressive of a complete victory (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 33:29 \*\*\*\*Psalm 110:5 \*\*\*\*Malachi 4:3).

# SEVEN MORE KINGS CONQUERED.

**28-42.** *that day Joshua took Makkedah* — In this and the following verses is described the rapid succession of victory and extermination which swept the whole of southern Palestine into the hands of Israel. "All these kings and their land did Joshua take *at one time*, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

### **™JOSHUA** 11:1-9.

#### DIVERS KINGS OVERCOME AT THE WATERS OF MEROM.

1-9. And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things — The scene of the sacred narrative is here shifted to the north of Canaan, where a still more extensive confederacy was formed among the ruling powers to oppose the further progress of the Israelites. Jabin ("the Intelligent"), which seems to have been a hereditary title ("Judges 4:2), took the lead, from Hazor being the capital of the northern region ("Joshua 11:10). It was situated on the borders of lake Merom. The other cities mentioned must have been in the vicinity though their exact position is unknown.

**2.** the kings that were on the north of the mountains — the Anti-libanus district.

*the plains south of Chinneroth* — the northern part of the Arabah, or valley of the Jordan.

*the valley* — the low and level country, including the plain of Sharon.

**borders of Dor on the west** — the highlands of Dor, reaching to the town of Dor on the Mediterranean coast, below mount Carmel.

**3.** the Canaanites on the east and on the west — a particular branch of the Canaanitish population who occupied the western bank of the Jordan as far northward as the Sea of Galilee, and also the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea.

*under Hermon* — now Jebel-es-sheikh. It was the northern boundary of Canaan on the east of the Jordan.

land of Mizpeh — now Coelo-Syria.

# 4, 5. they went out, ... as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude

— The chiefs of these several tribes were summoned by Jabin, being all probably tributary to the kingdom of Hazor. Their combined forces, according to Josephus, amounted to three hundred thousand infantry, ten thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand war chariots.

with horses and chariots very many — The war chariots were probably like those of Egypt, made of wood, but nailed and tipped with iron. These appear for the first time in the Canaanite war, to aid this last determined struggle against the invaders; and "it was the use of these which seems to have fixed the place of rendezvous by the lake Merom (now Huleh), along whose level shores they could have full play for their force." A host so formidable in numbers, as well as in military equipments, was sure to alarm and dispirit the Israelites. Joshua, therefore, was favored with a renewal of the divine promise of victory (\*\*Toshua 11:6\*), and thus encouraged, he, in the full confidence of faith, set out to face the enemy.

**6-8.** *to-morrow*, *about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel* — As it was impossible to have marched from Gilgal to Merom in one day, we must suppose Joshua already moving northward and within a day's distance of the Canaanite camp, when the Lord gave him this assurance of success. With characteristic energy he made a sudden advance, probably during the night, and fell upon them like a thunderbolt, when scattered along the rising grounds (*Septuagint*), before they had time to rally on the plain. In the sudden panic "the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them." The rout was complete; some went westward, over the mountains, above the gorge of the Leontes, to Sidon and Misrephothmaim ("glass-smelting houses"), in the neighborhood, and others eastward to the plain of Mizpeh.

- **8.** *they left none remaining* of those whom they overtook. All those who fell into their hands alive were slain.
- **9.** Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him (See Good Joshua 11:6). Houghing the horses is done by cutting the sinews and arteries of their hinder legs, so that they not only become hopelessly lame, but bleed to death. The reasons for this special command were that the Lord designed to lead the Israelites to trust in Him, not in military resources (Good Psalm 20:7); to show that in the land of promise there was no use of horses; and,

finally, to discourage their travelling as they were to be an agricultural, not a trading, people.

- **11.** *he burnt Hazor with fire* calmly and deliberately, doubtless, according to divine direction.
- **13.** as for the cities that stood still in their strength literally, "on their heaps." It was a Phoenician custom to build cities on heights, natural or artificial [HENGSTENBERG].
- **16.** *So Joshua took all that land* Here follows a general view of the conquest. The division of the country there into five parts; namely, the hills, the land of Goshen, that is, a pastoral land near Gibeon ( Toshua 10:41); the valley, the plains and the mountains of Israel.
- 17. from the mount Halak Hebrew, "the smooth mountain."

that goeth up to Seir — an irregular line of white naked hills, about eighty feet high, and seven or eight geographical miles in length that cross the whole Ghor, eight miles south of the Dead Sea, probably "the ascent of Akrabbim" [ROBINSON].

unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon — the city or temple of the god of destiny, in Baalbec.

**23.** *Joshua took the whole land* — The battle of the take of Merom was to the north what the battle of Beth-horon was to the south; more briefly told and less complete in its consequences; but still the, decisive conflict by which the whole northern region of Canaan fell into the hands of Israel [Stanley].

## **™JOSHUA** 12:1-6.

# THE TWO KINGS WHOSE COUNTRIES MOSES TOOK AND DISPOSED OF.

**1.** Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan — This chapter contains a recapitulation of the conquests made in the promised land, with the additional mention of some places not formerly noted in the sacred history. The river Arnon on the south and mount Hermon on the north were the respective boundaries of the land acquired by the Israelites beyond Jordan (see Numbers 21:21-24 Deuteronomy 3:3-16 [and see on Deuteronomy 2:24]).

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# THE ONE AND THIRTY KINGS ON THE WEST SIDE OF JORDAN, WHICH JOSHUA SMOTE.

7. Baal-gad ... even unto ... Halak — (See on dell'Joshua 11:17). A list of thirty-one chief towns is here given; and, as the whole land contained a superficial extent of only fifteen miles in length by fifty in breadth, it is evident that these capital cities belonged to petty and insignificant kingdoms. With a few exceptions, they were not the scenes of any important events recorded in the sacred history, and therefore do not require a particular notice.

# JOSHUA 13:1-33.

#### BOUNDS OF THE LAND NOT YET CONQUERED.

- **1.** Now Joshua was old and stricken in years He was probably above a hundred years old; for the conquest and survey of the land occupied about seven years, the partition one; and he died at the age of one hundred ten years ( Joshua 24:29). The distribution, as well as the conquest of the land, was included in the mission of Joshua; and his advanced age supplied a special reason for entering on the immediate discharge of that duty; namely, of allocating Canaan among the tribes of Israel not only the parts already won, but those also which were still to be conquered.
- **2-6.** This is the land that yet remaineth that is, to be acquired. This section forms a parenthesis, in which the historian briefly notices the districts yet unsubdued; namely, first, the whole country of the Philistines a narrow tract stretching about sixty miles along the Mediterranean coast, and that of the Geshurites to the south of it (\*\*\* Samuel 27:8). Both included that portion of the country "from Sihor, which is before Egypt," a small brook near El-Arish, which on the east was the southern boundary of Canaan, to Ekron, the most northerly of the five chief lordships or principalities of the Philistines.
- **3, 4.** *also the Avites*: *From* [on] *the south* The two clauses are thus connected in the *Septuagint* and many other versions. On being driven out (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:23), they established themselves in the south of Philistia. The second division of the unconquered country comprised
- **4.** all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah ("the cave")

*that is beside the Sidonians* — a mountainous region of Upper Galilee, remarkable for its caves and fastnesses.

unto Aphek — now Afka; eastward, in Lebanon.

*to the borders of the Amorites* — a portion of the northeastern territory that had belonged to Og. The third district that remained unsubdued:

**5.** *all the land of the Giblites* — Their capital was Gebal or Bylbos (*Greek*), on the Mediterranean, forty miles north of Sidon.

*all Lebanon, toward the sunrising* — that is, Anti-libanus; the eastern ridge, which has its proper termination in Hermon.

entering into Hamath — the valley of Baalbec.

**6,7.** All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-main — (See on Gold Joshua 11:8) — that is, "all the Sidonians and Phoenicians."

**them will I drive out** — The fulfillment of this promise was conditional. In the event of the Israelites proving unfaithful or disobedient, they would not subdue the districts now specified; and, in point of fact, the Israelites never possessed them though the inhabitants were subjected to the power of David and Solomon.

only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance — The parenthetic section being closed, the historian here resumes the main subject of this chapter — the order of God to Joshua to make an immediate allotment of the land. The method of distribution by lot was, in all respects, the best that could have been adopted, as it prevented all ground of discontent, as well as charges of arbitrary or partial conduct on the part of the leaders; and its announcement in the life of Moses Numbers 33:54), as the system according to which the allocations to each tribe should be made, was intended to lead the people to the acknowledgment of God as the proprietor of the land and as having the entire right to its disposal. Moreover, a solemn appeal to the lot showed it to be the dictate not of human, but divine, wisdom. It was used, however, only in determining the part of the country where a tribe was to be settled — the extent of the settlement was to be decided on a different principle Numbers 26:54). The overruling control of God is conclusively proved because each tribe received the possession predicted by Jacob (Genesis 49:3-28) and by Moses (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 33:6-25).

8. With whom — Hebrew, "him." The antecedent is evidently to Manasseh, not, however, the half-tribe just mentioned, but the other half; for the historian, led, as it were, by the sound of the word, breaks off to describe the possessions beyond Jordan already assigned to Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh (see on "Numbers 32:1;" Numbers 32:33; also see "Deuteronomy 3:8-17). It may be proper to remark that it was wise to put these boundaries on record. In case of any misunderstanding or dispute arising about the exact limits of each district or property, an appeal could always be made to this authoritative document, and a full knowledge as well as grateful sense obtained of what they had received from God (\*\*Psalm 16:5,6).

## **™JOSHUA 14:1-5.**

# THE NINE TRIBES AND A HALF TO HAVE THEIR INHERITANCE BY LOT.

- **1.** these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan This chapter forms the introduction to an account of the allocation of the land west of Jordan, or Canaan proper, to the nine tribes and a half. It was also made by lot in presence of a select number of superintendents, appointed according to divine directions given to Moses (see on Numbers 34:16). In everything pertaining to civil government, and even the division of the land, Joshua was the acknowledged chief. But in a matter to be determined by lot, a solemn appeal was made to God, and hence Eleazar, as high priest, is named before Joshua.
- **4.** The children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim As two and a half tribes were settled on the east Jordan, and the Levites had no inheritance assigned them in land, there would have been only eight and a half tribes to provide for. But Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, had been constituted two tribes (\*\*Genesis 48:5), and although Levi was excluded, the original number of the tribes of Israel was still preserved.
- **5.** the children of Israel ... divided the land that is, they made the preliminary arrangements for the work. A considerable time was requisite for the survey and measurement.

# 

# CALEB BY PRIVILEGE REQUESTS AND OBTAINS HEBRON.

**6-11.** Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb ... said — This incident is recorded here because it occurred while the preparations were being made for casting the lots, which, it appears, were begun in Gilgal. The claim of Caleb to the mountains of Hebron as his personal and family possessions was founded on a solemn promise of Moses, forty-five years before (Numbers 14:24 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 1:36 \*\*\*Joshua 14:10), to give him that land on account of his fidelity. Being one of the nominees appointed to preside over the division of the country, he might have been charged with using his powers as a commissioner to his own advantage, had he urged his request in private; and therefore he took some of his brethren along with him as witness of the justice and propriety of his conduct.

**12.** give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day — this highland region.

for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there — The report of the spies, who tried to kindle the flame of sedition and discontent, related chiefly to the people and condition of this mountain district, and hence it was promised as the reward of Caleb's truth, piety, and faithfulness.

- 13, 14. Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb Hebron for an inheritance Joshua, who was fully cognizant of all the circumstances, not only admitted the claim, but in a public and earnest manner prayed for the divine blessing to succor the efforts of Caleb in driving out the idolatrous occupiers.
- **15.** *Kirjath-arba* that is, the city of Arba, a warrior among the native race remarkable for strength and stature.

*the land had rest from war* — Most of the kings having been slain and the natives dispirited, there was no general or systematic attempt to resist the progress and settlement of the Israelites.

# 

#### BORDERS OF THE LOT OF JUDAH.

- 1. This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah In what manner the lot was drawn on this occasion the sacred historian does not say; but it is probable that the method adopted was similar to that described in Joshua 18:10. Though the general survey of the country had not been completed, some rough draft or delineation of the first conquered part must have been made, and satisfactory evidence obtained that it was large enough to furnish three cantons, before all the tribes cast lots for them; and they fell to Judah, Ephraim, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The lot of Judah came first, in token of the pre-eminence of that tribe over all the others; and its destined superiority thus received the visible sanction of God. The territory, assigned to it as a possession, was large and extensive, being bounded on the south by the wilderness of Zin, and the southern extremity of the Salt Sea (\*\*Numbers 34:3-5); on the east, by that sea, extending to the point where it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the north, by a line drawn nearly parallel to Jerusalem, across the country, from the northern extremity of the Salt Sea to the southern limits of the Philistine territory, and to the Mediterranean; and on the west this sea was its boundary, as far as Sihor (Wady El-Arish).
- **2.** *the bay Hebrew*, "tongue." It pushes its waters out in this form to a great distance [ROBINSON].
- **3.** *Maaleh-akrabbim Hebrew*, "the ascent of scorpions"; a pass in the "bald mountain" (see on "Joshua 11:17), probably much infested by these venomous reptiles.
- **5.** the end that is, the mouth of the Jordan.

**6.** *Beth-hogla* — now Ain Hadjla, a fine spring of clear and sweet water, at the northern extremity of the Dead Sea, about two miles from the Jordan [ROBINSON].

**Beth-arabah** — "the house," or "place of solitude," in the desert of Judah ("TJoshua 15:61).

stone of Bohan the son of Reuben — the sepulchral monument of a Reubenite leader, who had been distinguished for his bravery, and had fallen in the Canaanite war.

**7.** *Achor* — (see on Joshua 7:26).

**Adummim** — a rising ground in the wilderness of Jericho, on the south of the little brook that flowed near Jericho ( Gold Joshua 16:1).

**En-shemesh** — "the fountain of the sun"; "either the present well of the apostle, below Bethany, on the road to Jericho, or the fountain near to St. Saba" [ROBINSON].

**En-rogel** — "the fuller's fountain," on the southeast of Jerusalem, below the spot where the valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom unite.

# 4053 JOSHUA 15:13-15.

## CALEB'S PORTION AND CONQUEST.

- **13.** unto Caleb he gave a part among the children of Judah (See on Joshua 14:6).
- **14.** drove thence the three sons of Anak rather three chiefs of the Anakim race. This exploit is recorded to the honor of Caleb, as the success of it was the reward of his trust in God.
- **15.** *Debir* "oracle." Its former name, Kirjath-sepher, signifies "city of the book," being probably a place where public registers were kept.

# 40516JOSHUA 15:16-20.

## OTHNIEL, FOR HIS VALOR, HAS ACHSAH TO WIFE.

**16-20.** *He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher* — This offer was made as an incentive to youthful bravery (see on <sup>40725</sup>1 Samuel 17:25)"; and the prize was won by Othniel, Caleb's *younger* brother (<sup>40015</sup>Judges 1:13 3:9). This was the occasion of drawing out the latent energies of him who was destined to be the first judge in Israel.

18, 19. as she came unto him — that is, when about to remove from her father's to her husband's house. She suddenly alighted from her travelling equipage — a mark of respect to her father, and a sign of making some request. She had urged Othniel to broach the matter, but he not wishing to do what appeared like evincing a grasping disposition, she resolved herself to speak out. Taking advantage of the parting scene when a parent's heart was likely to be tender, she begged (as her marriage portion consisted of a field which, having a southern exposure, was comparatively an arid and barren waste) he would add the adjoining one, which abounded in excellent springs. The request being reasonable, it was granted; and the story conveys this important lesson in religion, that if earthly parents are ready to bestow on their children that which is good, much more will our heavenly Father give every necessary blessing to them who ask Him.

#### CITIES OF JUDAH.

21-63. the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah — There is given a list of cities within the tribal territory of Judah, arranged in four divisions, corresponding to the districts of which it consisted — the cities in the southern part (\*\*\*Joshua 15:21-32), those in the lowlands (\*\*\*Joshua 15:33-47), those in the highlands (\*\*\*Joshua 15:48-60), and those in the desert (\*\*\*Joshua 15:61,62). One gets the best idea of the relative situation of these cities by looking at the map.

### ••••JOSHUA 16:1-4.

#### THE GENERAL BORDERS OF THE SONS OF JOSEPH.

**1.** the lot of the children of Joseph fell — Hebrew, "went forth," referring either to the lot as drawn out of the urn, or to the tract of land thereby assigned. The first four verses describe the territory allotted to the family of Joseph in the rich domains of central Palestine. It was drawn in one lot, that the brethren might be contiguously situated; but it was afterwards divided. The southern boundary only is described here; that on the north being irregular and less defined (\*\*TO\*Joshua 17:10,11), is not mentioned.

water of Jericho — (\*\* Kings 2:19), at the joint of its junction with the Jordan.

*mount Beth-el* — the ridge south of Beth-el. Having described the position of Joseph's family generally the historian proceeds to define the territory; first, that of Ephraim.

# 

#### THE BORDERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF EPHRAIM.

- **5-9.** *the border of their inheritance ... was Ataroth-addar* Ataroth-addar (now Atara), four miles south of Jetta [ROBINSON], is fixed on as a center, through which a line is drawn from Upper Beth-horon to Michmethah, showing the western limit of their actual possessions. The tract beyond that to the sea was still unconquered.
- **6, 7.** *Michmethah on the north side* The northern boundary is traced from this point eastward to the Jordan.

- **8.** *from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah* It is retraced from east to west, to describe the prospective and intended boundary, which was to reach to the sea. Kanah ("reedy") flows into the Mediterranean.
- **9.** separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of Manasseh (\*\*\*T\*\*\*Joshua 17:9), because it was found that the tract allotted to Ephraim was too small in proportion to its population and power.
- 10. they drave not out the Canaanites ... but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute This is the first mention of the fatal policy of the Israelites, in neglecting the divine command (\*\*Deuteronomy 20:16) to exterminate the idolaters.

## **™JOSHUA 17:1-6.**

#### LOT OF MANASSEH.

**1-6.** There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh — Ephraim was mentioned, as the more numerous and powerful branch of the family of Joseph (\*\*\*Genesis 48:19,20); but Manasseh still retained the right of primogeniture and had a separate inheritance assigned.

**Machir** — his descendants.

the father of Gilead — Though he had a son of that name (\*\*Numbers 26:29 27:1), yet, as is evident from the use of the Hebrew article, reference is made, not to the person, but the province of Gilead. "Father" here means lord or possessor of Gilead. This view is confirmed by the fact that it was not Machir, but his descendants, who subdued Gilead and Bashan (\*\*\*Numbers 32:41 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 3:13-15). These Machirites had their portion on the east side of Jordan. The western portion of land, allotted to the tribe of Manasseh, was divided into ten portions because the male descendants who had sons consisted of five families, to which, consequently, five shares were given; and the sixth family, namely, the posterity of Hepher, being all women, the five daughters of Zelophehad were, on application to the valuators, endowed each with an inheritance in land (see on \*\*Numbers 27:4).

**JOSHUA** 17:7-11.

#### THIS COAST.

**7-11.** *the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah* — The southern boundary is here traced from the east. Asher (now Yasir), the

starting point, was a town fifteen Roman miles east of Shechem, and anciently a place of importance.

- 9. the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river The line which separated the possessions of the two brothers from each other ran to the south of the stream. Thus the river was in the territory of Manasseh; but the cities which were upon the river, though all were within the limits of Manasseh's possessions, were assigned partly to Ephraim, and partly to Manasseh; those on the south side being given to the former; those upon the north to the latter [Keil]. It appears (and Joshua 17:10) that Manasseh was still further interlaced with other neighboring tribes.
- **11.** Beth-shean and her towns Greek, "Scythopolis" (now Beisan), in the valley of the Jordan, towards the east end of the plain of Jezreel. "Beth-shean" means "house of rest," so called from its being the halting place for caravans travelling between Syria or Midian, and Egypt, and the great station for the commerce between these countries for many centuries.

**Ibleam and her towns** — in the neighborhood of Megiddo (\*\*2 Kings 9:27).

*the inhabitants of Dor and her towns* — (now Tantoura), anciently a strong fortress; a wall of wild precipitous rock defended the shore fortifications against attack from the land side.

**En-dor and her towns** — situated on a rocky eminence, four Roman miles south of Tabor.

**Taanach and ... Megiddo** — These were near to each other, and they are generally mentioned in Scripture together. They were both royal and strongly fortified places (see on <sup>4002</sup>Judges 1:27).

*three countries* — districts or provinces. It is computed that Manasseh possessed in Asher and Issachar portions of ground to the extent of more than two hundred square miles.

# 46772JOSHUA 17:12,13.

#### CANAANITES NOT DRIVEN OUT.

**12, 13.** Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out those cities — probably due to indolence, a love of ease. Perhaps a mistaken humanity, arising from a disregard or forgetfulness of the divine command, and a decreasing principle of faith and zeal in the service of God, were the causes of their failure.

# **™JOSHUA** 17:14-18.

#### THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH ASK FOR ANOTHER LOT.

- **14-18.** *the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua* The two tribes join in laying a complaint before the leader, as to the narrow boundaries of their allotment and its insufficiency to be the residence of tribes so vastly increased. But Joshua's answer was full of wisdom as well as patriotism. Knowing their character, he treated them accordingly, and sarcastically turned all their arguments against themselves. Thus he rebuked their unbelief and cowardice.
- **15.** *mount Ephraim* called so here by anticipation. The Gilboa range between Beth-shean and the plain of Jezreel is meant, anciently covered with an extensive forest.
- **16.** *chariots of iron* unusually strengthened with that metal, and perhaps armed with projecting scythes.

### **680**JOSHUA 18:1.

#### THE TABERNACLE SET UP AT SHILOH.

1. the whole congregation ... assembled together at Shiloh — The main body of the Israelites had been diminished by the separation of the three tribes, Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh into their respective allotments; and the country having been in a great measure subdued, the camp was removed to Shiloh (now Seilun). It was twenty or twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem, twelve north of Beth-el, and ten south of Shechem, and embosomed in a rugged and romantic glen. This sequestered spot in the heart of the country might have been recommended by the dictates of convenience. There the allotment of the territory could be most conveniently made, north, south, east, and west, to the different tribes. But "the tabernacle of the congregation was also set up there," and its removal therefore must have been made or sanctioned by divine intimation (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:11). It remained in Shiloh for more than three hundred years (\*\*\*ODD\*\* Samuel 4:1-11).

**ONDJOSHUA** 18:2-9.

#### THE REMAINDER OF THE LAND DESCRIBED.

2. there remained ... seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance — The selection of Shiloh for the seat of worship, together with the consequent removal of the camp thither, had necessarily interrupted the casting of lots, which was commenced by fixing localities for the tribes of Judah and Joseph. Various causes led to a long delay in resuming it. The satisfaction of the people with their change to so pleasant and fertile a district, their preference of a nomad life, a love of ease, and reluctance to renew the war, seem to have made them indifferent to the

possession of a settled inheritance. But Joshua was too much alive to the duty laid on him by the Lord to let matters continue in that state; and accordingly, since a general conquest of the land had been made, he resolved to proceed immediately with the lot, believing that when each tribe should receive its inheritance, a new motive would arise to lead them to exert themselves in securing the full possession.

- 3. How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you This reproof conveys an impression that the seven tribes were dilatory to a criminal extent.
- **4-9.** Give out from among you three men for each tribe Though the lot determined the part of the country where each tribe was to be located, it could not determine the extent of territory which might be required; and the dissatisfaction of the children of Joseph with the alleged smallness of their possession gave reason to fear that complaints might arise from other quarters, unless precautions were taken to make a proper distribution of the land. For this purpose a commission was given to twenty-one persons three chosen from each of the seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance, to make an accurate survey of the country.
- **9.** The men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book dividing the land according to its value, and the worth of the cities which it contained, into seven equal portions. This was no light task to undertake. It required learning and intelligence which they or their instructors had, in all probability, brought with them out of Egypt. Accordingly, Josephus says that the survey was performed by men expert in geometry. And, in fact, the circumstantial account which is given of the boundaries of each tribe and its situation, well proves it to have been the work of no mean or incompetent hands.

### **680**JOSHUA 18:10.

#### DIVIDED BY LOT.

- **10.** Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord before the tabernacle, where the divine presence was manifested, and which associated with the lot the idea of divine sanction.
- **11.** *the lot of ... Benjamin came up* It has been supposed that there were two urns or vessels, from which the lots were drawn: one containing the names of the tribes, the other containing those of the seven portions; and that the two were drawn out simultaneously.

the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph — Thus the prophecy of Moses respecting the inheritance of Benjamin was remarkably accomplished. (See on Deuteronomy 33:12).

**™JOSHUA** 19:1-9.

#### THE LOT OF SIMEON.

**1.** the second lot came forth to Simeon — The next lot that was drawn at Shiloh, gave the tribe of Simeon his inheritance within the territory, which had been assigned to that of Judah. The knowledge of Canaan possessed by the Israelites, when the division of the land commenced, was but very general, being derived from the rapid sweep they had made over it during the course of conquest; and it was on the ground of that rough survey alone that the distribution proceeded, by which Judah received an inheritance. Time showed that this territory was too large ( Joshua 19:9), either for their numbers, however great, to occupy and their arms to defend, or too large in proportion to the allotments of the other tribes. Justice therefore required (what kind and brotherly feeling readily dictated) a modification of their possession; and a part of it was appropriated to Simeon. By thus establishing it within the original domain of another tribe, the prophecy of Jacob in regard to Simeon was fulfilled (\*\*Genesis 49:7); for from its boundaries being not traced, there is reason to conclude that its people were divided and dispersed among those of Judah; and though one group of its cities named (\*\*\*Joshua 19:2-6), gives the idea of a compact district, as it is usually represented by map makers, the other group Joshua 19:7,8) were situated, two in the south, and two elsewhere, with tracts of the country around them.

••••JOSHUA 19:10-16.

#### OF ZEBULUN.

**10-14.** *the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun* — The boundaries of the possession assigned to them extended from the Lake of

Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee) on the east, to the Mediterranean on the west. Although they do not seem at first to have touched on the western shore — a part of Manasseh running north into Asher (\*\*\*Toshua 17:10) — they afterwards did, according to the prediction of Moses (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 33:19). The extent from north to south cannot be very exactly traced; the sites of many of the places through which the boundary line is drawn being unknown. Some of the cities were of note.

# оми JOSHUA 19:17-23.

#### OF ISSACHAR.

**17-20.** *the fourth lot came out to Issachar* — Instead of describing the boundaries of this tribe, the inspired historian gives a list of its principal cities. These cities are all in the eastern part of the plain of Esdraelon.

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#### OF ASHER.

- **24-31.** *the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher* The western boundary is traced from north to south through the cities mentioned; the site of them, however, is unknown.
- **26.** to Carmel ... and to Shihor-libnath that is, the "black" or "muddy river"; probably the Nahr Belka, below Dor (Tantoura); for that town belonged to Asher ("Joshua 17:10). Thence the boundary line turned eastward to Beth-dagon, a town at the junction of Zebulun and Naphtali, and ran northwards as far as Cabul, with other towns, among which is mentioned ("Joshua 19:28) "great Zidon," so called on account of its being even then the flourishing metropolis of the Phoenicians. Though included in the inheritance of Asher, this town was never possessed by them ("Judges 1:31).
- **29.** and then the coast turneth to Ramah now El-Hamra, which stood where the Leontes (Litany) ends its southern course and flows westward.

and to the strong city Tyre — The original city appears to have stood on the mainland, and was well-fortified. From Tyre the boundary ran to Hosah, an inland town; and then, passing the unconquered district of Achzib (\*\*Tudges 1:31), terminated at the seacoast.

### 

#### OF NAPHTALI.

- **32-39.** *the sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali* Although the cities mentioned have not been discovered, it is evident, from Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh, that is, on the northwest of Lake Merom (\*\*\*Judges 4:11), that the boundary described (\*\*\*Joshua 19:34) ran from the southwest towards the northeast, up to the sources of the Jordan.
- **34.** *Aznoth-tabor* on the east of Tabor towards the Jordan, for the border ran thence to Hukkok, touching upon that of Zebulun; and as the territory of Zebulun did not extend as far as the Jordan, Aznoth-tabor and Hukkok must have been border towns on the line which separated Naphtali from Issachar.

to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising — The sixty cities, Havothjair, which were on the eastern side of the Jordan, opposite Naphtali, were reckoned as belonging to Judah, because Jair, their possessor, was a descendant of Judah (\*\*TINATION Chronicles 2:4-22) [KEIL].

# 19:40-48.

#### OF DAN.

- **40-46.** *the seventh lot came out for the tribe ... Daniel* It lay on the west of Benjamin and consisted of portions surrendered by Judah and Ephraim. Its boundaries are not stated, as they were easily distinguishable from the relative position of Daniel to the three adjoining tribes.
- **47.** the children of Daniel went up to fight against Leshem The Danites, finding their inheritance too small, decided to enlarge its

boundaries by the sword; and, having conquered Leshem (Laish), they planted a colony there, calling the new settlement by the name of Daniel (see on TRUJudges 18:7).

# JOSHUA 19:49-51.

# THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL GIVE AN INHERITANCE TO JOSHUA.

**50.** According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked — It was most proper that the great leader should receive an inheritance suited to his dignity, and as a reward for his public services. But the gift was not left to the spontaneous feelings of a grateful people. It was conferred "according to the word of the Lord" — probably an unrecorded promise, similar to what had been made to Caleb ("GAP) Joshua 14:9).

**Timnath-serah** — or Heres, on Mount Gaash (\*\*\*\*Judges 2:9). Joshua founded it, and was afterwards buried there (\*\*\*\*\*Joshua 24:30).

**51.** *These are the inheritances* — This verse is the formal close of the section which narrates the history of the land distribution; and to stamp it with due importance, the names of the commissioners are repeated, as well as the spot where so memorable a transaction took place.

## **™JOSHUA** 20:1-6.

#### THE LORD COMMANDS THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

1-3. The Lord spake unto Joshua ... Appoint out for you cities of refuge — (See ONNumbers 35:9-28 OD Deuteronomy 19:1-13). The command here recorded was given on their going to occupy their allotted settlements. The sanctuaries were not temples or altars, as in other countries, but inhabited cities; and the design was not to screen criminals, but only to afford the homicide protection from the vengeance of the deceased's relatives until it should have been ascertained whether the death had resulted from accident and momentary passion, or from premeditated malice. The institution of the cities of refuge, together with the rules prescribed for the guidance of those who sought an asylum within their walls, was an important provision, tending to secure the ends of justice as well as of mercy.

**4.** he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city — It was the place of public resort, and on arriving there he related his tale of distress to the elders, who were bound to give him shelter and the means of support, until the local authorities ( only Joshua 20:6), having carefully investigated the case, should have pronounced the decision. If found guilty, the manslayer was surrendered to the blood-avenger; if extenuating circumstances appeared, he was to remain in the city of refuge, where he would be safe from the vindictive feelings of his pursuers; but he forfeited the privilege of immunity the moment he ventured beyond the walls.

**6.** until the death of the high priest — His death secured the complete deliverance of the manslayer from his sin, only because he had been anointed with the holy oil (Numbers 35:25), the symbol of the Holy Ghost; and thus the death of the earthly high priest became a type of that of the heavenly one (\*\*Hebrews 9:14,15).

# **™JOSHUA** 20:7-9.

# THE ISRAELITES APPOINT BY NAME THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

**7-9.** *they appointed* ... *cities* — There were sis: three on the west, and three on the east, of Jordan. In the first instance, they were a provision of the criminal law of the Hebrews, necessary in the circumstances of that people (see on Numbers 35:11 and Deuteronomy 19:2). At the same time they were designed also typically to point out the sinner's way to Christ (\*\*\*Hebrews 6:18).

## 1000JOSHUA 21:1-8.

# EIGHT AND FORTY CITIES GIVEN BY LOT OUT OF THE OTHER TRIBES UNTO THE LEVITES.

- **1-3.** Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites The most venerable and distinguished members of the three Levitical families, on behalf of their tribe, applied for the special provision that had been promised them to be now awarded (see on Numbers 35:2). Their inheritance lay within the territory of every tribe. It was assigned in the same place and manner, and by the same commissioners as the other allotments. While the people, knowing the important duties they were to perform, are described (ODD) Joshua 21:3) as readily conceding this "peculiar" to them, it had most probably been specified and reserved for their use while the distribution of the land was in progress.
- **4-8.** *the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites* The Levites were divided into Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites. Among the former the family of Aaron were exclusively appointed to the priesthood, and all the rest were ranked in the common order of Levites. The first lot was drawn by the Kohathites; and the first of theirs again by the priests, to whom thirteen cities were granted, and ten to the rest of the Kohathites (\*\*\*Joshua 21:5); thirteen to the Gershonites (\*\*\*Joshua 21:6), and twelve to the Merarites (\*\*\*Joshua 21:7).

#### THE CITIES OF THE PRIESTS.

**9-40.** *they gave* ... *these cities which are here mentioned by name* — It was overruled by the unerring providence of the Divine Lawgiver that the cities of the priests lay within the territories of Judah and Benjamin. This

was a provision, the admirable wisdom and propriety of which were fully manifested on the schism that took place in the reign of Rehoboam.

**41.** All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs — This may appear too great a proportion compared with those of the other tribes. But it must be borne in mind that the list given here contains the names of every Levitical city (see on Chronicles 6:39-66); whereas only those cities of the other tribes are mentioned which lay on the frontier or along the boundary line. Besides, the Levites were not the exclusive inhabitants of those forty-eight cities; for there must have been also a considerable number of people kept there to cultivate the glebe lands and tend the cattle. Still further, the Levitical cities had nothing but "their suburbs round about them" [Chronicles 421:42]; whereas the other cities in Israel possessed a group of independent villages (see Chronicles 431:1-19:51).

\*\*\*JOSHUA 21:43-45.

#### GOD GAVE THEM REST.

43-45. the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers — This is a general winding up of the history from the thirteenth chapter, which narrates the occupation of the land by the Israelites. All the promises made, whether to the people or to Joshua (\*\*OTS\*\*Joshua 1:5), had been, or were in the course of being fulfilled; and the recorded experience of the Israelites (\*\*OTS\*\*Joshua 21:45), is a ground of hope and confidence to the people of God in every age, that all other promises made to the Church will, in due time, be accomplished.

## **™JOSHUA** 22:1-9.

# JOSHUA DISMISSES THE TWO TRIBES AND A HALF, WITH A BLESSING.

- 1. Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh The general war of invasion being ended and the enemy being in so dispirited and isolated a condition that each tribe, by its own resources or with the aid of its neighboring tribe, was able to repress any renewed hostilities, the auxiliary Israelites from the eastern side of the Jordan were now discharged from service. Joshua dismissed them with high commendations for their fidelity and earnest admonitions to cultivate perpetual piety in life. The redundancy of the language is remarkable [Institute of the venerable leader, a steadfast observance of the divine law was to personal happiness, as well as national prosperity.
- **3.** Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day for the space of seven years.
- **4-7.** *get you unto your tents* that is, home; for their families had been left in fortified towns (\*\*\*Numbers 32:17).
- **8.** he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches in cattle, clothes, and precious metals.

divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren — (See on Numbers 31:25; OBEN Numbers 31:32).

### **™JOSHUA** 22:10.

# THEY BUILD THE ALTAR OF TESTIMONY ON THEIR JOURNEY.

10. when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben ... built there an altar by Jordan — This altar was probably an immense pile of stones and earth. The generality of our translators supposes that it was reared on the banks of the Jordan, within the limits of Canaan proper. But a little closer examination seems to make the conclusion irresistible that its position was on the eastern side of the river, for these two reasons; first, because it is said ( Joshua 22:11) to have been built "over against," or in the sight of the land of Canaan — not within it; and secondly, because the declared motive of the trans-jordanic Israelites in erecting it was to prevent their brethren in Canaan ever saying, "in time to come, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you," etc. [ Joshua 22:24,25]. Such a taunt would be obviously prevented or confuted by the two tribes and a half having on the eastern side of Jordan, within their own land, a facsimile of the altar at Shiloh, as a witness that they acknowledged the same God and practiced the same rites of worship as the brethren in Canaan.

**4021**JOSHUA 22:11-29.

#### CONTENTION THEREUPON.

11-29. and the children of Israel heard say — Fame speedily spread intelligence of what the trans-jordanic tribes had done. The act being suspected of some idolatrous design, the tribes rose in a mass, and repairing to the tabernacle at Shiloh, resolved to declare war against the two tribes and a half as apostates from God. On calmer and more mature consideration, however, they determined, in the first instance, to send a deputation consisting of the son of the high priest, and ten eminent persons from each tribe, to make inquiry into this rumored rebellion against God (4533) Deuteronomy 13:13-15). The quality of the deputies

**21.** Then the children of Reuben ... answered — repudiating, in the strongest terms, the alleged crime, and deponing that so far from entertaining the intention imputed to them, their only object was to perpetuate the memory of their alliance with Israel [4023] Joshua 22:24,25], and their adherence to the worship of Israel's God [4023] Joshua 22:26,27].

1020JOSHUA 22:30-34.

#### THE DEPUTIES SATISFIED.

33, 34. the thing pleased the children of Israel — The explanation not only gave perfect satisfaction to the deputies, but elicited from them expressions of unbounded joy and thankfulness. "This day we perceive that the Lord is among us" [1023] Joshua 22:31], that is, by His gracious presence and preventing goodness, which has kept you from falling into the suspected sin and rescued the nation from the calamity of a fratricidal war or providential judgments. This episode reflects honor upon all parties and shows that piety and zeal for the honor and worship of God animated the people that entered Canaan to an extent far beyond what was exemplified in many other periods of the history of Israel.

# **JOSHUA 23:1,2.**

#### JOSHUA'S EXHORTATION BEFORE HIS DEATH.

- **1.** a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies about fourteen years after the conquest of Canaan, and seven after the distribution of that country among the tribes.
- **2.** Joshua called for all Israel The clause which follows seems to restrict this general expression as applicable only to the officers and representatives of the people. The place of assembly was most probably Shiloh. The occasion of convening it was the extreme age and approaching death of the venerable leader; and the purport of this solemn address was to animate the chosen people and their posterity to a faithful and unswerving continuance in the faith and worship of the God of Israel.

# **□205** JOSHUA 23:3.

#### BY FORMER BENEFITS.

3. ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you — The modesty and humility of Joshua are remarkably displayed at the commencement of this address. Dismissing all thoughts of his personal services, he ascribed the subjugation and occupation of Canaan entirely to the favoring presence and aid of God; and in doing so, he spoke not more piously than truly. This had been promised (\*\*TO\*\*Deuteronomy 1:30 3:22); and the reality of the divine aid was seen in the rapid overthrow of the Canaanites, which had already led to the division of the whole land among the tribes [\*\*TO\*\*Joshua 23:4].

# **™JOSHUA 23:5-11.**

#### BY PROMISES.

**11.** Take good heed, therefore, that ye love the Lord your God — The sum of his exhortation is comprised in the love of God, which is the end or fulfillment of the law (\*\*Deuteronomy 6:5 \*\*Matthew 22:37).

40202JOSHUA 23:12.

#### BY THREATENINGS IN CASE OF DISOBEDIENCE.

**12, 13.** Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations — As marriage connections with the idolatrous Canaanites would present many and strong temptations to transgress it, these were strictly prohibited (\*\*Exodus 34:12-16 \*\*Deuteronomy 7:3). With his eye, as it were, upon those prohibitions, Joshua threatens them with the certain withdrawal of the divine aid in the further expulsion of the Canaanites (a threat founded \*\*Exodus 23:33 \*\*Numbers 33:55 \*\*Deuteronomy 7:16).

## OSHUA 24:1.

#### JOSHUA ASSEMBLING THE TRIBES.

**1.** Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem — Another and final opportunity of dissuading the people against idolatry is here described as taken by the aged leader, whose solicitude on this account arose from his knowledge of the extreme readiness of the people to conform to the manners of the surrounding nations. This address was made to the representatives of the people convened at Shechem, and which had already been the scene of a solemn renewal of the covenant (\*\*Toshua 8:30,35\*\*). The transaction now to be entered upon being in principle and object the same, it was desirable to give it all the solemn impressiveness which might be derived from the memory of the former ceremonial, as well as from other sacred associations of the place (\*\*Toshua\*\*\*)35:2-4).

they presented themselves before God — It is generally assumed that the ark of the covenant had been transferred on this occasion to Shechem; as on extraordinary emergencies it was for a time removed (\*\*Judges 20:1-18\*\* Samuel 4:3 \*\*S2\* Samuel 15:24). But the statement, not necessarily implying this, may be viewed as expressing only the religious character of the ceremony [Hengstenberg].

#### RELATES GOD'S BENEFITS.

**2.** *Joshua said unto all the people* — His address briefly recapitulated the principal proofs of the divine goodness to Israel from the call of Abraham to their happy establishment in the land of promise; it showed them that

they were indebted for their national existence as well as their peculiar privileges, not to any merits of their own, but to the free grace of God.

*Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood* — The Euphrates, namely, at Ur.

Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor — (see Genesis 11:27). Though Terah had three sons, Nahor only is mentioned with Abraham, as the Israelites were descended from him on the mother's side through Rebekah and her nieces, Leah and Rachel.

**served other gods** — conjoining, like Laban, the traditional knowledge of the true God with the domestic use of material images (Genesis 31:19,34).

- 3. I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan It was an irresistible impulse of divine grace which led the patriarch to leave his country and relatives, to migrate to Canaan, and live a "stranger and pilgrim" in that land.
- **4.** I gave unto Esau mount Seir (See on Genesis 36:8). In order that he might be no obstacle to Jacob and his posterity being the exclusive heirs of Canaan.
- **12.** *I sent the hornet before you* a particular species of wasp which swarms in warm countries and sometimes assumes the scourging character of a plague; or, as many think, it is a figurative expression for uncontrollable terror (see on Exodus 23:28).
- 14-28. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth After having enumerated so many grounds for national gratitude, Joshua calls on them to declare, in a public and solemn manner, whether they will be faithful and obedient to the God of Israel. He avowed this to be his own unalterable resolution, and urged them, if they were sincere in making a similar avowal, "to put away the strange gods that were among them" a requirement which seems to imply that some were suspected of a strong hankering for, or concealed practice of, the idolatry, whether in the form of Zabaism, the fire-worship of their Chaldean ancestors, or the grosser superstitions of the Canaanites.

**26.** *Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God* — registered the engagements of that solemn covenant in the book of sacred history.

*took a great stone* — according to the usage of ancient times to erect stone pillars as monuments of public transactions.

**set it up there under an oak** — or terebinth, in all likelihood, the same as that at the root of which Jacob buried the idols and charms found in his family.

*that was by the sanctuary of the Lord* — either the spot where the ark had stood, or else the place around, so called from that religious meeting, as Jacob named Beth-el the house of God.

# JOSHUA 24:29,30.

#### HIS AGE AND DEATH.

- 29, 30. Joshua ... died LIGHTFOOT computes that he lived seventeen, others twenty-seven years, after the entrance into Canaan. He was buried, according to the Jewish practice, within the limits of his own inheritance. The eminent public services he had long rendered to Israel and the great amount of domestic comfort and national prosperity he had been instrumental in diffusing among the several tribes, were deeply felt, were universally acknowledged; and a testimonial in the form of a statue or obelisk would have been immediately raised to his honor, in all parts of the land, had such been the fashion of the times. The brief but noble epitaph by the historian is, Joshua, "the servant of the Lord."
- **31.** Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua The high and commanding character of this eminent leader had given so decided a tone to the sentiments and manners of his contemporaries and the memory of his fervent piety and many virtues continued so vividly impressed on the memories of the people, that the sacred historian has recorded it to his immortal honor. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua."

**32.** *the bones of Joseph* — They had carried these venerable relics with them in all their migrations through the desert, and deferred the burial, according to the dying charge of Joseph himself, till they arrived in the promised land. The sarcophagus, in which his mummied body had been put, was brought thither by the Israelites, and probably buried when the tribe of Ephraim had obtained their settlement, or at the solemn convocation described in this chapter.

in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought ... for an hundred pieces of silver — Kestitah translated, "piece of silver," is supposed to mean "a lamb," the weights being in the form of lambs or kids, which were, in all probability, the earliest standard of value among pastoral people. The tomb that now covers the spot is a Mohammedan Welce, but there is no reason to doubt that the precious deposit of Joseph's remains may be concealed there at the present time.

**33.** Eleazar the son of Aaron died, and they buried him in ... mount **Ephraim** — The sepulcher is at the modern village Awertah, which, according to Jewish travelers, contains the graves also of Ithamar, the brother of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar [VAN DE VELDE].

## THE BOOK OF

# **JUDGES**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

#### THE ACTS OF JUDAH AND SIMEON.

**1.** Now after the death of Joshua — probably not a long period, for the Canaanites seem to have taken advantage of that event to attempt recovering their lost position, and the Israelites were obliged to renew the war.

*the children of Israel asked the Lord* — The divine counsel on this, as on other occasions, was sought by Urim and Thummim, by applying to the high priest, who, according to JOSEPHUS, was Phinehas.

saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first — The elders, who exercised the government in their respective tribes, judged rightly, that in entering upon an important expedition, they should have a leader nominated by divine appointment; and in consulting the oracle, they adopted a prudent course, whether the object of their inquiry related to the choice of an individual commander, or to the honor of precedency among the tribes.

**2.** the Lord said, Judah shall go up — The predicted pre-eminence (\*Genesis 49:8) was thus conferred upon Judah by divine direction, and its appointment to take the lead in the ensuing hostilities was of great importance, as the measure of success by which its arms were crowned,

would animate the other tribes to make similar attempts against the Canaanites within their respective territories.

*I have delivered the land into his hand* — not the whole country, but the district assigned for his inheritance.

**3.** Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me ..., that we may fight against the Canaanites — Being conterminous tribes (\*\*\*\*\*Joshua 19:1,2), they had a common interest, and were naturally associated in this enterprise.

## **™JUDGES** 1:4-21.

## ADONI-BEZEK JUSTLY REQUITED.

**5, 6. Bezek** — This place lay within the domain of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem.

found Adoni-bezek — that is, "lord of Bezek" — he was "found," that is, surprised and routed in a pitched battle, whence he fled; but being taken prisoner, he was treated with a severity unusual among the Israelites, for they "cut off his thumbs and great toes." Barbarities of various kinds were commonly practiced on prisoners of war in ancient times, and the object of this particular mutilation of the hands and feet was to disable them for military service ever after. The infliction of such a horrid cruelty on this Canaanite chief would have been a foul stain on the character of the Israelites if there were not reason for believing it was done by them as an act of retributive justice, and as such it was regarded by Adoni-bezek himself, whose conscience read his atrocious crimes in their punishment.

- **7.** *Threescore and ten kings* So great a number will not appear strange, when it is considered that anciently every ruler of a city or large town was called a king. It is not improbable that in that southern region of Canaan, there might, in earlier times, have been even more till a turbulent chief like Adoni-bezek devoured them in his insatiable ambition.
- 8. Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it The capture of this important city, which ranks among the

early incidents in the war of invasion (\*\*\*Joshua 15:63), is here noticed to account for its being in the possession of the Judahites; and they brought Adoni-bezek thither [\*\*\*Judges 1:7], in order, probably, that his fate being rendered so public, might inspire terror far and wide. Similar inroads were made into the other unconquered parts of Judah's inheritance [\*\*\*Judges 1:9-11]. The story of Caleb's acquisition of Hebron is here repeated (\*\*\*Joshua 15:16-19). [See on \*\*\*Joshua 15:16.]

16. the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah — called "the Kenite," as probably descended from the people of that name (\*\*PNumbers 24:21,22). If he might not himself, his posterity did accept the invitation of Moses (\*\*PNumbers 10:32) to accompany the Israelites to Canaan. Their first encampment was in the "city of palm trees" — not Jericho, of course, which was utterly destroyed, but the surrounding district, perhaps Engedi, in early times called Hazezon-tamar (\*\*PGenesis 14:7), from the palm-grove which sheltered it. Thence they removed for some unknown cause, and associating themselves with Judah, joined in an expedition against Arad, in the southern part of Canaan (\*\*PNumbers 21:1). On the conquest of that district, some of this pastoral people pitched their tents there, while others migrated to the north (\*\*Total Judges 4:17).

**17-29.** And Judah went with Simeon his brother — The course of the narrative is here resumed from Judges 1:9, and an account given of Judah returning the services of Simeon (Judges 1:3), by aiding in the prosecution of the war within the neighboring tribes.

*slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath* — or Zephathah (<sup>4440</sup>2 Chronicles 14:10), a valley lying in the southern portion of Canaan.

**Hormah** — destroyed in fulfillment of an early vow of the Israelites (see on Numbers 21:2). The confederate tribes, pursuing their incursions in that quarter, came successively to Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, which they took. But the Philistines seem soon to have regained possession of these cities.

19. the Lord was with Judah; ... but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley — The war was of the Lord, whose omnipotent aid would have ensured their success in every encounter, whether on the

mountains or the plains, with foot soldiers or cavalry. It was distrust, the want of a simple and firm reliance on the promise of God, that made them afraid of the iron chariots (see on objection of the iron chariots).

21. the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem — Judah had expelled the people from their part of Jerusalem (TUB) Judges 1:8). The border of the two tribes ran through the city — Israelites and natives must have been closely intermingled.

## 

#### SOME CANAANITES LEFT.

- **24.** *the spies* ... *said*, ... *Show us*, ... *the entrance into the city* that is, the avenues to the city, and the weakest part of the walls.

we will show thee mercy — The Israelites might employ these means of getting possession of a place which was divinely appropriated to them: they might promise life and rewards to this man, though he and all the Canaanites were doomed to destruction (\*\*Toshua 2:12-14\*); but we may assume the promise was suspended on his embracing the true religion, or quitting the country, as he did. If they had seen him to be firmly opposed to either of these alternatives, they would not have constrained him by promises any more than by threats to betray his countrymen. But if they found him disposed to be serviceable, and to aid the invaders in executing the will of God, they might promise to spare him.

- **26.** *Luz* (See on Genesis 12:7; Genesis 28:18).
- **27-36.** The same course of subjugation was carried on in the other tribes to a partial extent, and with varying success. Many of the natives, no doubt, during the progress of this exterminating war, saved themselves by flight and became, it is thought, the first colonists in Greece, Italy, and other countries. But a large portion made a stout resistance and retained possession of their old abodes in Canaan. In other cases, when the natives

were vanquished, avarice led the Israelites to spare the idolaters, contrary to the express command of God; and their disobedience to His orders in this matter involved them in many troubles which this book describes.

## **™JUDGES** 2:1-10.

#### AN ANGEL SENT TO REBUKE THE PEOPLE AT BOCHIM.

**1-3.** an angel ... came from Gilgal to Bochim — We are inclined to think, from the authoritative tone of his language, that he was the Angel of the Covenant (\*\*Exodus 23:20 \*\*\*Ioshua 5:14); the same who appeared in human form and announced himself captain of the Lord's host. His coming from Gilgal had a peculiar significance, for there the Israelites made a solemn dedication of themselves to God on their entrance into the promised land [\*\*\*God\*\*Joshua 4:1-9]; and the memory of that religious engagement, which the angel's arrival from Gilgal awakened, gave emphatic force to his rebuke of their apostasy.

**Bochim** — "the weepers," was a name bestowed evidently in allusion to this incident or the place, which was at or near Shiloh.

I said, I will never break my covenant with you ... but ye have not obeyed my voice — The burden of the angel's remonstrance was that God would inviolably keep His promise; but they, by their flagrant and repeated breaches of their covenant with Him, had forfeited all claim to the stipulated benefits. Having disobeyed the will of God by voluntarily courting the society of idolaters and placing themselves in the way of temptation, He left them to suffer the punishment of their misdeeds.

**4, 5.** when the angel of the Lord spake these words ... the people lifted up their voice, and wept — The angel's expostulation made a deep and painful impression. But the reformation was but temporary, and the gratifying promise of a revival which this scene of emotion held out, was, ere long, blasted by speedy and deeper relapses into the guilt of defection and idolatry.

**6-10.** And when Joshua had let the people go — This passage is a repetition of Oshua 24:29-31. It was inserted here to give the reader the

reasons which called forth so strong and severe a rebuke from the angel of the Lord. During the lifetime of the first occupiers, who retained a vivid recollection of all the miracles and judgments which they had witnessed in Egypt and the desert, the national character stood high for faith and piety. But, in course of time, a new race arose who were strangers to all the hallowed and solemnizing experience of their fathers, and too readily yielded to the corrupting influences of the idolatry that surrounded them.

## **MUJUDGES** 2:11-19.

### WICKEDNESS OF THE NEW GENERATION AFTER JOSHUA.

**served Baalim** — The plural is used to include all the gods of the country.

- **13.** *Ashtaroth* Also a plural word, denoting all the female divinities, whose rites were celebrated by the most gross and revolting impurities.
- 14. the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them Adversities in close and rapid succession befell them. But all these calamities were designed only as chastisements a course of correctional discipline by which God brought His people to see and repent of their errors; for as they returned to faith and allegiance. He "raised up judges" (\*\*TIM\*\*Judges\*\* 2:16).
- 16. which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them The judges who governed Israel were strictly God's vicegerents in the government of the people, He being the supreme ruler. Those who were thus elevated retained the dignity as long as they lived; but there was no regular, unbroken succession of judges. Individuals, prompted by the inward, irresistible impulse of God's Spirit when they witnessed the

depressed state of their country, were roused to achieve its deliverance. It was usually accompanied by a special call, and the people seeing them endowed with extraordinary courage or strength, accepted them as delegates of Heaven, and submitted to their sway. Frequently they were appointed only for a particular district, and their authority extended no farther than over the people whose interests they were commissioned to protect. They were without pomp, equipage, or emoluments attached to the office. They had no power to make laws; for these were given by God; nor to explain them, for that was the province of the priests — but they were officially upholders of the law, defenders of religion, avengers of all crimes, particularly of idolatry and its attendant vices.

# **JUDGES** 3:1-4.

#### NATIONS LEFT TO PROVE ISRAEL.

**1.** these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel — This was the special design of these nations being left, and it evinces the direct influence of the theocracy under which the Israelites were placed. These nations were left for a double purpose: in the first instance, to be instrumental, by their inroads, in promoting the moral and spiritual discipline of the Israelites; and also to subserve the design of making them acquainted with war, in order that the young, more especially, who were total strangers to it, might learn the use of weapons and the art of wielding them.

**™JUDGES** 3:5-7.

# BY COMMUNION WITH THESE THE ISRAELITES COMMIT IDOLATRY.

**5-7.** *the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites* — The two peoples by degrees came to be on habits of intercourse. Reciprocal alliances were formed by marriage till the Israelites, relaxing the austerity of their principles, showed a growing conformity to the manners and worship of their idolatrous neighbors.

**TIBLIDGES** 3:8-11.

#### OTHNIEL DELIVERS ISRAEL.

**8-11.** *sold them* — that is, "delivered them"

*into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim* — or, Chushan, "the wicked." This name had been probably given him from his cruel and impious character.

*served Chushan-rishathaim eight years* — by the payment of a stipulated tribute yearly, the raising of which must have caused a great amount of labor and privation.

**9.** when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord — In their distress they had recourse to earnest prayer, accompanied by humble and penitent confession of their errors.

*Othniel* — (See on OSS Joshua 15:16; OUB Judges 1:13). His military experience qualified him for the work, while the gallant exploits he was known to have performed, gained him the full confidence of his countrymen in his ability as a leader.

**10.** The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel, and went out to war — Impelled by a supernatural influence, he undertook the difficult task of government at this national crisis — addressing himself to promote a general reformation of manners, the abolition of idolatry, and the revival of pure religion. After these preliminary measures, he collected a body of choice warriors to expel the foreign oppressors.

the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim — No details are given of this war, which, considering the resources of so potent a monarch, must have been a determined struggle. But the Israelitish arms were crowned through the blessing of God with victory, and Canaan regained its freedom and independence.

**11.** *Othniel* ... *died* — How powerful the influence of one good man is, in church or state, is best found in his loss [BISHOP HALL].

# **JUDGES** 3:12-30.

#### EHUD SLAYS EGLON.

**12-14.** *the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord* — The Israelites, deprived of the moral and political influences of Othniel, were not long in following their native bias to idolatry.

the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab — The reigning monarch's ambition was to recover that extensive portion of his ancient territory possessed by the Israelites. In conjunction with his neighbors, the Ammonites and the Amalekites, sworn enemies of Israel, he first subjected the eastern tribes; then crossing the Jordan, he made a sudden incursion on western Canaan, and in virtue of his conquests, erected fortifications in the territory adjoining Jericho [JOSEPHUS], to secure the frontier, and fixed his residence there. This oppressor was permitted, in the providence of God, to triumph for eighteen years.

**15.** *Ehud the son of Gera* — descended from Gera, one of Benjamin's sons (\*\*Genesis 46:21).

**left-handed** — This peculiarity distinguished many in the Benjamite tribe (\*\*\*Judges 20:16). But the original word is rendered in some versions "both-handed," a view countenanced by \*\*\*\* Chronicles 12:2.

by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab—the yearly tribute, which, according to Eastern fashion, would be borne with ostentatious ceremony and offered (\*\*\*Judges 3:18) by several messengers.

- **16.** Ehud made him a dagger ... and he did gird it ... upon his right thigh The sword was usually worn on the left side; so that Ehud's was the more likely to escape detection.
- **19.** *quarries* rather, "graven images" (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:25 \*\*\*Jeremiah 8:19 \*\*51:52); statues of Moabite idols, the sight of which kindled the patriotic zeal of Ehud to avenge this public insult to Israel on its author.

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence — "Privacy" — a signal for all to withdraw.

- **20.** *a summer parlour Hebrew*, "chamber of cooling" one of those retired edifices which Oriental grandees usually have in their gardens, and in which they repose during the heat of the day.
- **21-26.** *Ehud put forth his left hand* The whole circumstance of this daring act the death of Eglon without a shriek, or noise the locking of the doors the carrying off the key the calm, unhurried deportment of Ehud show the strength of his confidence that he was doing God service.
- **27.** *he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim* summoned to arms the people of that mountainous region, which, adjoining the territory of Benjamin, had probably suffered most from the grievous oppression of the Moabites.
- **28.** they went down after him, and took the fords (See on General Joshua 2:7). With the view of preventing all escape to the Moabite coast, and by the slaughter of ten thousand men [GREE] Judges 3:29], Ehud rescued his country from a state of ignominious vassalage.
- **31.** *after him was Shamgar* No notice is given of the tribe or family of this judge; and from the Philistines being the enemy that roused him into public service, the suffering seems to have been local confined to some of the western tribes.
- slew ... six hundred men with an oxgoad This instrument is eight feet long and about six inches in circumference. It is armed at the lesser end with a sharp prong for driving the cattle, and on the other with a small iron paddle for removing the clay which encumbers the plough in working. Such an instrument, wielded by a strong arm, would do no mean execution. We may suppose, however, for the notice is very fragmentary, that Shamgar was only the leader of a band of peasants, who by means of such implements of labor as they could lay hold of at the moment, achieved the heroic exploit recorded.

## **JUDGES** 4:1-17.

# DEBORAH AND BARAK DELIVER ISRAEL FROM JABIN AND SISERA.

- **1.** The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead The removal of the zealous judge Ehud again left his infatuated countrymen without the restraint of religion.
- **2, 3.** Jabin king of Canaan "Jabin," a royal title (see on Gold Joshua 11:1). The second Jabin built a new capital on the ruins of the old (Gold Joshua 11:10,11). The northern Canaanites had recovered from the effect of their disastrous overthrow in the time of Joshua, and now triumphed in their turn over Israel. This was the severest oppression to which Israel had been subjected. But it fell heaviest on the tribes in the north, and it was not till after a grinding servitude of twenty years that they were awakened to view it as the punishment of their sins and to seek deliverance from God.
- **4.** And Deborah, a prophetess A woman of extraordinary knowledge, wisdom, and piety, instructed in divine knowledge by the Spirit and accustomed to interpret His will; who acquired an extensive influence, and was held in universal respect, insomuch that she became the animating spirit of the government and discharged all the special duties of a judge, except that of military leader.

the wife of Lapidoth — rendered by some, "a woman of splendors."

- **5.** *she dwelt under the palm tree* or, collectively, "palm-grove." It is common still in the East to administer justice in the open air, or under the canopy of an umbrageous tree.
- **6.** she sent and called Barak by virtue of her official authority as judge.

*Kedesh-naphtali* — situated on an eminence, little north of the Sea of Galilee, and so called to distinguish it from another Kedesh in Issachar.

*Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded?* — a Hebrew form of making an emphatic communication.

Go and draw toward mount Tabor — an isolated mountain of Galilee, northeast corner of the plain of Esdraelon. It was a convenient place of rendezvous, and the enlistment is not to be considered as limited to ten thousand, though a smaller force would have been inadequate.

- **8.** Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go His somewhat singular request to be accompanied by Deborah was not altogether the result of weakness. The Orientals always take what is dearest to the battlefield along with them; they think it makes them fight better. The policy of Barak, then, to have the presence of the prophetess is perfectly intelligible as it would no less stimulate the valor of the troops, than sanction, in the eyes of Israel, the uprising against an oppressor so powerful as Jabin.
- **9.** the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman This was a prediction which Barak could not understand at the time; but the strain of it conveyed a rebuke of his unmanly fears.
- 11. Now Heber the Kenite ... pitched his tent It is not uncommon, even in the present day, for pastoral tribes to feed their flocks on the extensive commons that lie in the heart of inhabited countries in the East (see on Judges 1:16).
- **plain of Zaanaim** This is a mistranslation for "the oaks of the wanderers." The site of the encampment was under a grove of oaks, or terebinths, in the upland valley of Kedesh.
- **13.** *the river of Kishon* The plain on its bank was chosen as the battlefield by Sisera himself, who was unconsciously drawn thither for the ruin of his army.
- **14.** Barak went down from mount Tabor It is a striking proof of the full confidence Barak and his troops reposed in Deborah's assurance of

- victory, that they relinquished their advantageous position on the hill and rushed into the plain in face of the iron chariots they so much dreaded.
- **15.** *the Lord discomfited Sisera Hebrew*, "threw his army into confusion"; men, horses, and chariots being intermingled in wild confusion. The disorder was produced by a supernatural panic (see on <sup>(IIII)</sup> Judges 5:20).
- so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet— His chariot being probably distinguished by its superior size and elegance, would betray the rank of its rider, and he saw therefore that his only chance of escape was on foot.
- **16.** But Barak pursued ... unto Harosheth Broken and routed, the main body of Sisera's army fled northward; others were forced into the Kishon and drowned (see on Judges 5:21).
- 17, 18. Sisera fled ... to the tent of Jael According to the usages of nomadic people, the duty of receiving the stranger in the sheik's absence devolves on his wife, and the moment the stranger is admitted into his tent, his claim to be defended or concealed from his pursuers is established.
- **19.** *she* ... *gave him drink*, *and covered him* Sisera reckoned on this as a pledge of his safety, especially in the tent of a friendly sheik. This pledge was the strongest that could be sought or obtained, after he had partaken of refreshments, and been introduced in the inner or women's apartment.
- **20.** he said unto her, ... when any man doth come and enquire of thee and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No The privacy of the harem, even in a tent, cannot be intruded on without express permission.
- **21.** Then Jael took a nail of the tent most probably one of the pins with which the tent ropes are fastened to the ground. Escape was almost impossible for Sisera. But the taking of his life by the hand of Jael was murder. It was a direct violation of all the notions of honor and friendship that are usually held sacred among pastoral people, and for which it is impossible to conceive a woman in Jael's circumstances to have had any

motive, except that of gaining favor with the victors. Though predicted by Deborah [\*\*Tough Judges 4:9], it was the result of divine foreknowledge only — not the divine appointment or sanction; and though it is praised in the song [\*\*Tudges 5:24-27], the eulogy must be considered as pronounced not on the moral character of the woman and her deed, but on the public benefits which, in the overruling providence of God, would flow from it.

## **™JUDGES** 5:1-31.

#### DEBORAH AND BARAK'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING.

- **1.** Then sang Deborah and Barak ... on that day This noble triumphal ode was evidently the composition of Deborah herself.
- **2, 3.** The meaning is obscurely seen in our version; it has been better rendered thus, "Praise ye Jehovah; for the free are freed in Israel the people have willingly offered themselves" [ROBINSON].
- **4, 5.** Allusion is here made, in general terms, to God's interposition on behalf of His people.

Seir ... the field of Edom — represent the mountain range and plain extending along the south from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf.

*thou wentest out* — indicates the storm to have proceeded from the south or southeast.

- **6-8.** The song proceeds in these verses to describe the sad condition of the country, the oppression of the people, and the origin of all the national distress in the people's apostasy from God. Idolatry was the cause of foreign invasion and internal inability to resist it.
- **9.** expresses gratitude to the respective leaders of the tribes which participated in the contest; but, above all, to God, who inspired both the patriotic disposition and the strength.
- **10.** *Speak* that is, join in this song of praise.

white asses — Those which are purely white are highly prized, and being costly, are possessed only by the wealthy and great.

**Ye that sit in judgment** — has been rendered, "ye that repose on tapestries."

- 11-14. The wells which are at a little distance from towns in the East, are, in unsettled times, places of danger. But in peace they are scenes of pleasant and joyous resort. The poetess anticipates that this song may be sung, and the righteous acts of the Lord rehearsed at these now tranquil "places of drawing water." Deborah now rouses herself to describe, in terms suitable to the occasion, the preparation and the contest, and calls in a flight of poetic enthusiasm on Barak to parade his prisoners in triumphal procession. Then follows a eulogistic enumeration of the tribes which raised the commanded levy, or volunteered their services the soldiers of Ephraim who dwelt near the mount of the Amalekites, the small quota of Benjamin; "the governors," valiant leaders "out of Machir," the western Manasseh: out of Zebulun.
- **15.** Then comes a reproachful notice of the tribes which did not obey the summons to take the field against the common enemy of Israel. By the

**divisions** — that is, the watercourses which descend from the eastern hills unto the Jordan and Dead Sea.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart — They felt the patriotic impulse and determined, at first, to join the ranks of their western brethren, but resiled from the purpose, preferring their peaceful shepherd songs to the trumpet sound of war.

- **17, 18.** *Gilead abode beyond Jordan* that is, Both Gad and the eastern half to Manasseh chose to dwelt at ease in their Havoth-jair, or "villages of tents," while Daniel and Asher, both maritime tribes, continued with their ships and in their "breaches" ("havens"). The mention of these craven tribes (\*\*\*Undges 5:18) is concluded with a fresh burst of commendation on Zebulun and Naphtali.
- **19-22.** describes the scene of battle and the issue. It would seem ( 5:19) that Jabin was reinforced by the troops of other Canaanite princes. The battlefield was near Taanach (now Ta'annuk), on a tell or mound in the level plain of Megiddo (now Leijun), on its southwestern extremity, by the left bank of the Kishon.

they took no gain of money — They obtained no plunder.

- **20.** *the stars in their courses fought* A fearful tempest burst upon them and threw them into disorder.
- **21.** *the river of Kishon swept them away* The enemy was defeated near "the waters of Megiddo" the sources and side streams of the Kishon: they that fled had to cross the deep and marshy bed of the torrent, but the Lord had sent a heavy rain the waters suddenly rose the warriors fell into the quicksands, and sinking deep into them, were drowned or washed into the sea [VAN DE VELDE].
- **22.** Then were the horse hoofs broken by the means of the prancings Anciently, as in many parts of the East still, horses were not shod. The breaking of the hoofs denotes the hot haste and heavy irregular tramp of the routed foe.
- **23.** *Curse ye Meroz* a village on the confines of Issachar and Naphtali, which lay in the course of the fugitives, but the inhabitants declined to aid in their destruction.
- **24-27.** is a most graphic picture of the treatment of Sisera in the tent of Jael.
- **25.** *butter* curdled milk; a favorite beverage in the East.
- **28-30.** In these verses a sudden transition is made to the mother of the Canaanite general, and a striking picture is drawn of a mind agitated between hope and fear impatient of delay, yet anticipating the news of victory and the rewards of rich booty.

*the lattice* — a lattice window, common to the houses in warm countries for the circulation of air.

- **29.** her wise ladies maids of honor.
- **30.** to every man a damsel or two Young maidens formed always a valued part of Oriental conquerors' war-spoils. But Sisera's mother wished other booty for him; namely, the gold-threaded, richly embroidered, and scarlet-colored cloaks which were held in such high esteem. The ode concludes with a wish in keeping with the pious and patriotic character of the prophetess.

# **JUDGES** 6:1-6.

## THE ISRAELITES, FOR THEIR SINS, OPPRESSED BY MIDIAN.

1. and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian — Untaught by their former experiences, the Israelites again apostatized, and new sins were followed by fresh judgments. Midian had sustained a severe blow in the time of Moses (\*\*ONUMBERS\*\* 31:1-18); and the memory of that disaster, no doubt, inflamed their resentment against the Israelites. They were wandering herdsmen, called "children of the East," from their occupying the territory east of the Red Sea, contiguous to Moab. The destructive ravages they are described as at this time committing in the land of Israel are similar to those of the Bedouin Arabs, who harass the peaceful cultivators of the soil. Unless composition is made with them, they return annually at a certain season, when they carry off the grain, seize the cattle and other property; and even life itself is in jeopardy from the attacks of those prowling marauders. The vast horde of Midianites that overran Canaan made them the greatest scourge which had ever afflicted the Israelites.

**2.** *made* ... *dens* ... *in the mountains and caves* — not, of course, excavating them, for they were already, but making them fit for habitation.

**TITITUDGES** 6:7-10.

#### A PROPHET REBUKES THEM.

**8.** *the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel* — The curse of the national calamity is authoritatively traced to their infidelity as the cause.

# **JUDGES** 6:11-16.

### AN ANGEL SENDS GIDEON TO DELIVER THEM.

**11.** *there came an angel of the Lord* — He appeared in the character and equipments of a traveler ( "I'd Judges 6:21), who sat down in the shade to enjoy a little refreshment and repose. Entering into conversation on the engrossing topic of the times, the grievous oppression of the Midianites, he began urging Gideon to exert his well-known prowess on behalf of his country. Gideon, in replying, addresses him at first in a style equivalent (in *Hebrew*) to "sir," but afterwards gives to him the name usually applied to God.

an oak — Hebrew, "the oak" — as famous in after-times.

*Ophrah* — a city in the tribe of Manasseh, about sixteen miles north of Jericho, in the district belonging to the family of Abiezer (\*\*\*TD\*\*Joshua 17:2).

his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press — This incident tells emphatically the tale of public distress. The small quantity of grain he was threshing, indicated by his using a flail instead of the customary treading of cattle — the unusual place, near a wine-press, under a tree, and on the bare ground, not a wooden floor, for the prevention of noise — all these circumstances reveal the extreme dread in which the people were living.

**13.** *if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* — Gideon's language betrays want of reflection, for the very chastisements God had brought on His people showed His presence with, and His interest in, them.

14-16. the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might ... have not I sent thee? — The command and the promise made Gideon aware of the real character of his visitor; and yet like Moses, from a sense of humility, or a shrinking at the magnitude of the undertaking, he excused himself from entering on the enterprise. And even though assured that, with the divine aid, he would overcome the Midianites as easily as if they were but one man, he still hesitates and wishes to be better assured that the mission was really from God. He resembles Moses also in the desire for a sign; and in both cases it was the rarity of revelations in such periods

of general corruption that made them so desirous of having the fullest conviction of being addressed by a heavenly messenger. The request was reasonable, and it was graciously granted [4008]Judges 6:18].

## JUDGES 6:17-32.

#### GIDEON'S PRESENT CONSUMED BY FIRE.

- **18.** Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I ... bring forth my present Hebrew, my mincha, or "meat offering"; and his idea probably was to prove, by his visitor's partaking of the entertainment, whether or not he was more than man.
- **19-23.** Gideon went in, and made ready a kid; ... the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot (See on Genesis 18:7). The flesh seems to have been roasted, which is done by cutting it into kobab, that is, into small pieces, fixed on a skewer, and put before the fire. The broth was for immediate use; the other, brought in a hand-basket was intended to be a future supply to the traveler. The miraculous fire that consumed it and the vanishing of the stranger, not by walking, but as a spirit in the fire, filled Gideon with awe. A consciousness of demerit fills the heart of every fallen man at the thought of God, with fear of His wrath; and this feeling was increased by a belief prevalent in ancient times, that whoever saw an angel would forthwith die. The acceptance of Gideon's sacrifice betokened the acceptance of his person; but it required an express assurance of the divine blessing, given in some unknown manner, to restore his comfort and peace of mind.
- **24-32.** it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him The transaction in which Gideon is here described as engaged was not entered on till the night after the vision.
- **25.** *Take thy father's* ... *second bullock* The Midianites had probably reduced the family herd; or, as Gideon's father was addicted to idolatry, the best may have been fattened for the service of Baal; so that the second was the only remaining one fit for sacrifice to God.

*throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath* — standing upon his ground, though kept for the common use of the townsmen.

cut down the grove that is by it — dedicated to Ashtaroth. With the aid of ten confidential servants he demolished the one altar and raised on the appointed spot the altar of the Lord; but, for fear of opposition, the work had to be done under cover of night. A violent commotion was excited next day, and vengeance vowed against Gideon as the perpetrator. "Joash, his father, quieted the mob in a manner similar to that of the town clerk of Ephesus. It was not for them to take the matter into their own hands. The one, however, made an appeal to the magistrate; the other to the idolatrous god himself" [CHALMERS].

**JUDGES** 6:33-39.

#### THE SIGNS.

- **33.** *all the Midianites ... pitched in Jezreel* The confederated troops of Midian, Amalek, and their neighbors, crossing the Jordan to make a fresh inroad on Canaan, encamped in the plains of Esdraelon (anciently Jezreel). The southern part of the Ghor lies in a very low level, so that there is a steep and difficult descent into Canaan by the southern wadies. Keeping this in view, we see the reason why the Midianite army, from the east of Jordan, entered Canaan by the northern wadies of the Ghor, opposite Jezreel.
- **34.** *the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon* Called in this sudden emergency into the public service of his country, he was supernaturally endowed with wisdom and energy commensurate with the magnitude of the danger and the difficulties of his position. His summons to war was enthusiastically obeyed by all the neighboring tribes. On the eve of a perilous enterprise, he sought to fortify his mind with a fresh assurance of a divine call to the responsible office. The miracle of the fleece was a very remarkable one especially, considering the copious dews that fall in his country. The divine patience and condescension were wonderfully manifested in reversing the form of the miracle. Gideon himself seems to

have been conscious of incurring the displeasure of God by his hesitancy and doubts; but He bears with the infirmities of His people.

# **JUDGES** 7:1-8.

#### GIDEON'S ARMY.

- **1.** *Jerubbaal* This had now become Gideon's honorable surname, "the enemy of Baal."
- well rather "spring of Harod," that is, "fear, trembling"; probably the same as the fountain in Jezreel ("I Samuel 29:1). It was situated not far from Gilboa, on the confines of Manasseh, and the name "Harod" was bestowed on it with evident reference to the panic which seized the majority of Gideon's troops. The host of the Midianites were on the northern side of the valley, seemingly deeper down in the descent towards the Jordan, near a little eminence.
- **2.** the Lord said unto Gideon, The people ... are too many Although the Israelitish army mustered only thirty-two thousand (or one-sixth of the Midianitish host), the number was too great, for it was the Lord's purpose to teach Israel a memorable lesson of dependence on Him.
- 3. Now therefore ..., proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful ... let him return This proclamation was in terms of an established law (ADD) Deuteronomy 20:8).
- **4.** *too many* Two reductions were ordered, the last by the application of a test which was made known to Gideon alone.
- **5. bring them down unto the water** When the wandering people in Asia, on a journey or in haste, come to water, they do not stoop down with deliberation on their knees, but only bend forward as much as is necessary to bring their hand in contact with the stream, and throw it up with rapidity, and at the same time such address, that they do not drop a particle. The Israelites, it seems, were acquainted with the practice; and those who adopted it on this occasion were selected as fit for a work that

required expedition. The rest were dismissed according to the divine direction.

- 7. the Lord said, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you It is scarcely possible to conceive a more severe trial than the command to attack the overwhelming forces of the enemy with such a handful of followers. But Gideon's faith in the divine assurance of victory was steadfast, and it is for this he is so highly commended (\*\*Hebrews 11:32).
- **8.** *the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley* Attention to the relative position of the parties is of the greatest importance to an understanding of what follows.

# ••••JUDGES 7:9-15.

# HE IS ENCOURAGED BY THE DREAM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BARLEY CAKE.

- **9, 10.** Arise, get thee down unto the host ... But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant In ancient times it was reckoned no degradation for persons of the highest rank and character to act as spies on an enemy's camp; and so Gideon did on this occasion. But the secret errand was directed by God, who intended that he should hear something which might animate his own valor and that of his troops.
- **11.** the outside of the armed men that were in the host "Armed," means embodied under the five officers established by the ordinary laws and usages of encampments. The camp seems to have been unprotected by any rampart, since Gideon had no difficulty in reaching and overhearing a conversation, so important to him.
- 12. the Midianites and the Amalekites ... lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number a most graphic description of an Arab encampment. They lay wrapt in sleep, or resting from their day's plunder, while their innumerable camels were stretched round about them.

**13.** I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian — This was a characteristic and very expressive dream for an Arab in the circumstances. The rolling down the hill, striking against the tents, and overturning them, naturally enough connected it in his mind with the position and meditated attack of the Israelitish leader. The circumstance of the cake, too, was very significant. Barley was usually the food of the poor, and of beasts; but most probably, from the widespread destruction of the crops by the invaders, multitudes must have been reduced to poor and scanty fare.

**15.** when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation ... he worshipped — The incident originated in the secret overruling providence of God, and Gideon, from his expression of pious gratitude, regarded it as such. On his mind, as well as that of his followers, it produced the intended effect — that of imparting new animation and impulse to their patriotism.

•0006JUDGES 7:16-24.

#### HIS STRATAGEM AGAINST MIDIAN.

16-22. he divided the three hundred men into three companies — The object of dividing his forces was, that they might seem to be surrounding the enemy. The pitchers were empty to conceal the torches, and made of earthenware, so as to be easily broken; and the sudden blaze of the held-up lights — the loud echo of the trumpets, and the shouts of Israel, always terrifying (\*\*PNumbers 23:21), and now more terrible than ever by the use of such striking words, broke through the stillness of the midnight air. The sleepers started from their rest; not a blow was dealt by the Israelites; but the enemy ran tumultuously, uttering the wild, discordant cries peculiar to the Arab race. They fought indiscriminately, not knowing friend from foe. The panic being universal, they soon precipitately fled, directing their flight down to the Jordan, by the foot of the mountains of Ephraim, to places known as the "house of the acacia" [Beth-shittah], and "the meadow of the dance" [Abel-meholah].

- **23.** *the men of Israel gathered themselves together* These were evidently the parties dismissed, who having lingered at a little distance from the scene of contest, now eagerly joined in the pursuit southwestward through the valley.
- **24**, **25**. *Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim* The Ephraimites lay on the south and could render seasonable aid.

**Come ... take before them the waters unto Beth-barah** — (See on <sup>3128</sup>Judges 3:28). These were the northern fords of the Jordan, to the east-northeast of wady Maleh.

the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together ... unto Beth-barah — A new conflict ensued, in which two secondary chiefs were seized and slain on the spots where they were respectively taken. The spots were named after these chiefs, Oreb, "the Raven," and Zeeb, "the Wolf" — appropriate designations of Arab leaders.

# 

## THE EPHRAIMITES OFFENDED, BUT PACIFIED.

- 1. the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus? Where this complaint was made, whether before or after the crossing of the Jordan, cannot be determined. By the overthrow of the national enemy, the Ephraimites were benefited as largely as any of the other neighboring tribes. But, piqued at not having been sharers in the glory of the victory, their leading men could not repress their wounded pride; and the occasion only served to bring out an old and deep-seated feeling of jealous rivalry that subsisted between the tribes ( \*\*Isaiah 9:21). The discontent was groundless, for Gideon acted according to divine directions. Besides, as their tribe was conterminous with that of Gideon, they might, had they been really fired with the flame of patriotic zeal, have volunteered their services in a movement against the common enemy.
- **4.** *Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over* much exhausted, but eager to continue the pursuit till the victory was consummated.
- **5.** he said unto the men of Succoth that is, a place of tents or booths. The name seems to have been applied to the whole part of the Jordan valley on the west, as well as on the east side of the river, all belonging to the tribe of Gad (compare Genesis 33:17 Kings 7:46; with Sohua 13:27). Being engaged in the common cause of all Israel, he had a right to expect support and encouragement from his countrymen everywhere.

- **6.** the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand an insolent as well as a time-serving reply. It was insolent because it implied a bitter taunt that Gideon was counting with confidence on a victory which they believed he would not gain; and it was time-serving, because living in the near neighborhood of the Midianite sheiks, they dreaded the future vengeance of those roving chiefs. This contumelious manner of acting was heartless and disgraceful in people who were of Israelitish blood.
- 7. I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers
   a cruel torture, to which captives were often subjected in ancient times,
  by having thorns and briers placed on their naked bodies and pressed
  down by sledges, or heavy implements of husbandry being dragged over
  them.
- **8.** he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise a neighboring city, situated also in the territory of Gad, near the Jabbok, and honored with this name by Jacob (4000 Genesis 32:30,31).
- 9. he spake ..., When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower
   Intent on the pursuit, and afraid of losing time, he postponed the
  merited vengeance till his return. His confident anticipation of a
  triumphant return evinces the strength of his faith; and his specific threat
  was probably provoked by some proud and presumptuous boast, that in
  their lofty watchtower the Penuelites would set him at defiance.

**JUDGES** 8:10-27.

#### ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA TAKEN.

- **10.** *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor* a town on the eastern confines of Gad. The wreck of the Midianite army halted there.
- 11. Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east—He tracked the fugitives across the mountain range of Gilead to the northeast of the Jabbok, and there came upon them unexpectedly while they were resting secure among their own nomadic tribes. Jogbehah is supposed to be Ramoth-gilead; and, therefore, the Midianites must have

found refuge at or near Abela, "Abel-cheramim," "the plain of the vineyards."

- **12.** when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them A third conflict took place. His arrival at their last quarters, which was by an unwonted path, took the fugitives by surprise, and the conquest of the Midianite horde was there completed.
- **13.** Gideon returned from battle before the sun was up He seems to have returned by a nearer route to Succoth, for what is rendered in our version "before the sun was up," means "the heights of Heres, the sunhills."
- **14.** *he described* wrote the names of the seventy princes or elders. It was from them he had received so inhospitable a treatment.
- **16.** he took ... the thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth By refusing his soldiers refreshment, they had committed a public crime, as well as an act of inhumanity, and were subjected to a horrible punishment, which the great abundance and remarkable size of the thorn bushes, together with the thinness of clothing in the East, has probably suggested.
- 18. Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? This was one of the countless atrocities which the Midianite chiefs had perpetrated during their seven years' lawless occupancy. It is noticed now for the first time when their fate was about to be determined.

each one resembled the children of a king — An Orientalism for great beauty, majesty of appearance, uncommon strength, and grandeur of form.

- **19.** They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother That is, uterine brothers; but, in all countries where polygamy prevails, "the son of my mother" implies a closeness of relationship and a warmth of affection never awakened by the looser term, "brother."
- **20.** he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them The nearest of kin was the blood-avenger; but a magistrate might order any one to do the work of the executioner; and the person selected was always of a rank

equal or proportioned to that of the party doomed to suffer (\*\*\*128\*\*1 Kings 2:29). Gideon intended, then, by the order to Jether, to put an honor on his son, by employing him to slay two enemies of his country; and on the youth declining, he performed the bloody deed himself.

- 22, 23. the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us ... Gideon said unto them, the Lord shall rule over you Their unbounded admiration and gratitude prompted them, in the enthusiasm of the moment, to raise their deliverer to a throne, and to establish a royal dynasty in his house. But Gideon knew too well, and revered too piously the principles of the theocracy, to entertain the proposal for a moment. Personal and family ambition was cheerfully sacrificed to a sense of duty, and every worldly motive was kept in check by a supreme regard to the divine honor. He would willingly act as judge, but the Lord alone was King of Israel.
- **24-26.** Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you This was the contribution of an earring (singular). As the ancient Arabians (Ishmaelites and Midianites being synonymous terms, Genesis 37:25,28) were gorgeously adorned with barbaric pearl and gold, an immense amount of such valuable booty had fallen into the hands of the Israelitish soldiers. The contribution was liberally made, and the quantity of gold given to him equalled about \$25,000 in to-day's measure.
- **26.** *ornaments* crescent-like plates of gold suspended from the necks, or placed on the breasts of the camels.

collars — rather, "earrings," or drops of gold or pearl.

*purple* — a royal color. The ancient, as well as modern Arabs, adorned the necks, breasts, and legs, of their riding animals with sumptuous housing.

27. Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, ... Ophrah — That no idolatrous use was in view, nor any divisive course from Shiloh contemplated, is manifest from Tudges 8:33. Gideon proposed, with the gold he received, to make an ephod for his use *only* as a civil magistrate or ruler, as David did (Thronicles 15:27), and a magnificent pectoral or breastplate also. It would seem, from the history, that he was not blamable in making this ephod, as a civil robe or ornament merely, but that it

*afterward* became an object to which religious ideas were attached; whereby it proved a snare, and consequently an evil, by *perversion*, to Gideon and his house [Taylor, *Fragments*].

### JUDGES 8:28.

#### MIDIAN SUBDUED.

**28.** Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel — This invasion of the Arab hordes into Canaan was as alarming and desolating as the irruption of the Huns into Europe. It was the severest scourge ever inflicted upon Israel; and both it and the deliverance under Gideon lived for centuries in the minds of the people (\*\*Psalm 83:11).

### **JUDGES** 9:1-6.

#### ABIMELECH IS MADE KING BY THE SHECHEMITES.

**1.** Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem — The idolatry which had been stealthily creeping into Israel during the latter years of Gideon was now openly professed; Shechem was wholly inhabited by its adherents; at least, idolaters had the ascendency. Abimelech, one of Gideon's numerous sons, was connected with that place. Ambitious of sovereign power, and having plied successfully the arts of a demagogue with his maternal relatives and friends, he acquired both the influence and money by which he raised himself to a throne.

communed ... with all the family of the house of his mother's father — Here is a striking instance of the evils of polygamy — one son has connections and interests totally alien to those of his brothers.

- 2. Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, ... or that one reign over you a false insinuation, artfully contrived to stir up jealousy and alarm. Gideon had rejected, with abhorrence, the proposal to make himself or any of his family king, and there is no evidence that any of his other sons coveted the title.
- **4.** *the house of Baal-berith* either the temple, or the place where this idol was worshipped; Baal-berith, "god of the covenant," by invocation of whom the league of cities was formed.

Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him — idle, worthless vagabonds, the scum of society, who had nothing to lose, but much to gain from the success of a revolutionary movement.

**5.** went unto ... Ophrah, and slew his brethren — This is the first mention of a barbarous atrocity which has, with appalling frequency, been perpetrated in the despotic countries of the East — that of one son of the

deceased monarch usurping the throne and hastening to confirm himself in the possession by the massacre of all the natural or legitimate competitors. Abimelech slew his brethren *on one stone*, either by dashing them from one rock, or sacrificing them on one stone altar, in revenge for the demolition of Baal's altar by their father. This latter view is the more probable, from the Shechemites (\*\*TDB\*\*Judges 9:24\*) aiding in it.

*threescore and ten persons* — A round number is used, but it is evident that two are wanting to complete that number.

**6.** all the men of Shechem ..., and all the house of Millo — that is, a mound or rampart, so that the meaning is, all the men in the house or temple; namely, the priests of Baal.

made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar — rather, "by the oak near a raised mound" — so that the ceremony of coronation might be conspicuous to a crowd.

**JUDGES** 9:7-21.

#### JOTHAM BY A PARABLE REPROACHES THEM.

- **13.** wine, which cheereth God and man not certainly in the same manner. God might be said to be "cheered" by it, when the sacrifices were accepted, as He is said also to be honored by oil (""Judges 9:9).
- **21.** *Joatham* ... *went to Beer* the modern village El-Bireh, on the ridge which bounds the northern prospect of Jerusalem.

**112** JUDGES 9:22-49.

#### GAAL'S CONSPIRACY.

- **22.** When Abimelech had reigned three years His reign did not, probably at first, extend beyond Shechem; but by stealthy and progressive encroachments he subjected some of the neighboring towns to his sway. None could "reign" in Israel, except by rebellious usurpation; and hence the reign of Abimelech is expressed in the original by a word signifying "despotism," not that which describes the mild and divinely authorized rule of the judge.
- **23.** Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem In the course of providence, jealousy, distrust, secret disaffection, and smothered rebellion appeared among his subjects disappointed and disgusted with his tyranny; and God permitted those disorders to punish the complicated crimes of the royal fratricide and idolatrous usurper.
- **26.** Gaal ... came with his brethren ..., and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him An insurrection of the original Canaanites, headed by this man, at last broke out in Shechem.
- **28-45.** would to God this people were under my hand He seems to have been a boastful, impudent, and cowardly person, totally unfit to be a leader in a revolutionary crisis. The consequence was that he allowed himself to be drawn into an ambush, was defeated, the city of Shechem destroyed and strewn with salt. The people took refuge in the stronghold, which was set on fire, and all in it perished.

### JUDGES 9:50-57.

#### ABIMELECH SLAIN.

**50.** Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez — now Tubas — not far from Shechem.

51-53. all the men and women, ... gat them up to the top of the tower — The Canaanite forts were generally mountain fastnesses or keeps, and they often had a strong tower which served as a last refuge. The Assyrian basreliefs afford counterparts of the scene here described so vivid and exact, that we might almost suppose them to be representations of the same historic events. The besieged city — the strong tower within — the men and women crowding its battlements — the fire applied to the doors, and even the huge fragments of stone dropping from the hands of one of the garrison on the heads of the assailants, are all well represented to the life — just as they are here described in the narrative of inspired truth [GOSS].

### **JUDGES** 10:1-5.

#### TOLA JUDGES ISRAEL IN SHAMIR.

**1.** after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola — that is, "to save." Deliverance was necessary as well from intestine usurpation as from foreign aggression.

*the son of Puah* — He was uncle to Abimelech by the father's side, and consequently brother of Gideon; yet the former was of the tribe of Issachar, while the latter was of Manasseh. They were, most probably, uterine brothers.

*dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim* — As a central place, he made it the seat of government.

- 3. *Jair*, a *Gileadite* This judge was a different person from the conqueror of that northeastern territory, and founder of Havoth-jair, or "Jair's villages" (\*\*\*Numbers 32:41 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 3:14 \*\*\*\*Joshua 13:3 \*\*\*\*\*Deuteronicles 2:22).
- **4.** *he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts* This is a characteristic trait of Eastern manners in those early times; and the grant of a village to each of his thirty sons was a striking proof of his extensive possessions. His having thirty sons is no conclusive evidence that he had more than one wife, much less that he had more than one at a time. There are instances, in this country, of men having as many children by two successive wives.

### JUDGES 10:6-9.

#### ISRAEL OPPRESSED BY THE PHILISTINES AND AMMONITES.

- **6.** the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord This apostasy seems to have exceeded every former one in the grossness and universality of the idolatry practiced.
- **7.** *Philistines*, *and* ... *the children of Ammon* The predatory incursions of these two hostile neighbors were made naturally on the parts of the land respectively contiguous to them. But the Ammonites, animated with the spirit of conquest, carried their arms across the Jordan; so that the central and southern provinces of Canaan were extensively desolated.

• JUDGES 10:10-15.

#### THEY CRY TO GOD.

- **10.** The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee The first step of repentance is confession of sin, and the best proof of its sincerity is given by the transgressor, when he mourns not only over the painful consequences which have resulted from his offenses to himself, but over the heinous evil committed against God.
- **11.** *the Lord said* ... *Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians* The circumstances recorded in this and the following verses were not probably made through the high priest, whose duty it was to interpret the will of God.
- 12. Maonites that is, "Midianites."

### •706JUDGES 10:16-18.

### THEY REPENT; GOD PITIES THEM.

**16.** they put away the strange gods ... and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel — On their abandonment of idolatry and return to purity of worship, God graciously abridged the term of national affliction and restored times of peace.

**17, 18.** *the children of Ammon were gathered together* — From carrying on guerrilla warfare, the Ammonites proceeded to a continued campaign. Their settled aim was to wrest the whole of the trans-jordanic territory from its actual occupiers. In this great crisis, a general meeting of the Israelitish tribes was held at Mizpeh. This Mizpeh was in eastern Manasseh (\*\*GIDE\*\*Joshua 11:3).

### **♥#105JUDGES** 11:1-3.

#### JEPHTHAH.

### 1. Jephthah — "opener."

**son of an harlot** — a concubine, or foreigner; implying an inferior sort of marriage prevalent in Eastern countries. Whatever dishonor might attach to his birth, his own high and energetic character rendered him early a person of note.

Gilead begat Jephthah — His father seems to have belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (\*\*\* Chronicles 7:14,17).

- **2.** Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house As there were children by the legitimate wife, the son of the secondary one was not entitled to any share of the patrimony, and the prior claim of the others was indisputable. Hence, as the brothers of Jephthah seem to have resorted to rude and violent treatment, they must have been influenced by some secret ill-will.
- **3.** *Jephthah* ... *dwelt in the land of Tob* on the north of Gilead, beyond the frontier of the Hebrew territories (\*\*2 Samuel 10:6,8).

there were gathered vain men to Jephthah — idle, daring, or desperate.

and went out with him — followed him as a military chief. They led a freebooting life, sustaining themselves by frequent incursions on the Ammonites and other neighboring people, in the style of Robin Hood. The same kind of life is led by many an Arab or Tartar still, who as the leader of a band, acquires fame by his stirring or gallant adventures. It is not deemed dishonorable when the expeditions are directed against those out of his own tribe or nation. Jephthah's mode of life was similar to that of David when driven from the court of Saul.

### **♥##JUDGES** 11:4-11.

#### THE GILEADITES COVENANT WITH JEPHTHAH.

**4.** *in process of time* — on the return of the season.

the children of Ammon made war against Israel — Having prepared the way by the introduction of Jephthah, the sacred historian here resumes the thread of his narrative from Judges 10:17. The Ammonites seem to have invaded the country, and active hostilities were inevitable.

- **5, 6.** the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah All eyes were directed towards him as the only person possessed of the qualities requisite for the preservation of the country in this time of imminent danger; and a deputation of the chief men was despatched from the Hebrew camp at Mizpeh to solicit his services.
- 7-9. Jephthah said, Did not ye hate me? He gave them at first a haughty and cold reception. It is probable that he saw some of his brothers among the deputies. Jephthah was now in circumstances to make his own terms. With his former experience, he would have shown little wisdom or prudence without binding them to a clear and specific engagement to invest him with unlimited authority, the more especially as he was about to imperil his life in their cause. Although ambition might, to a certain degree, have stimulated his ready compliance, it is impossible to overlook the piety of his language, which creates a favorable impression that his roving life, in a state of social manners so different from ours, was not incompatible with habits of personal religion.
- 10, 11. the elders of Israel said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us Their offer being accompanied by the most solemn oath, Jephthah intimated his acceptance of the mission, and his willingness to accompany them. But to make "assurance doubly sure," he took care that the pledge given by the deputies in Tob should be ratified in a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh; and the language of the historian, "Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord," seems to imply that his inauguration with the character and extraordinary office of judge was solemnized by prayer for the divine blessing, or some religious ceremonial.

### **™III**JUDGES 11:12-28.

#### HIS EMBASSY TO THE KING OF AMMON.

- **12-28.** Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon This first act in his judicial capacity reflects the highest credit on his character for prudence and moderation, justice and humanity. The bravest officers have always been averse to war; so Jephthah, whose courage was indisputable, resolved not only to make it clearly appear that hostilities were forced upon him, but to try measures for avoiding, if possible, an appeal to arms: and in pursuing such a course he was acting as became a leader in Israel (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 20:10-18).
- 13. the king of Ammon ..., Because Israel took away my land (See on Deuteronomy 2:19). The subject of quarrel was a claim of right advanced by the Ammonite monarch to the lands which the Israelites were occupying. Jephthah's reply was clear, decisive, and unanswerable; first, those lands were not in the possession of the Ammonites when his countrymen got them, and that they had been acquired by right of conquest from the Amorites [ Judges 11:21]; secondly, the Israelites had now, by a lapse of three hundred years of undisputed possession, established a prescriptive right to the occupation [Judges 11:22,23]; and thirdly, having received a grant of them from the Lord, his people were entitled to maintain their right on the same principle that guided the Ammonites in receiving, from their god Chemosh, the territory they now occupied [ Judges 11:24]. This diplomatic statement, so admirable for the clearness and force of its arguments, concluded with a solemn appeal to God to maintain, by the issue of events, the cause of right and justice Judges 11:27].
- **28.** Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah His remonstrances to the aggressor were disregarded, and war being inevitable, preparations were made for a determined resistance.

### **JUDGES** 11:29-31.

#### HIS VOW.

**29, 30.** Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah — The calm wisdom, sagacious forethought, and indomitable energy which he was enabled to display, were a pledge to himself and a convincing evidence to his countrymen, that he was qualified by higher resources than his own for the momentous duties of his office.

he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh — the provinces most exposed and in danger, for the purpose of levying troops, and exciting by his presence a widespread interest in the national cause. Returning to the camp at Mizpeh, he then began his march against the enemy. There he made his celebrated vow, in accordance with an ancient custom for generals at the outbreak of a war, or on the eve of a battle, to promise the god of their worship a costly oblation, or dedication of some valuable booty, in the event of victory. Vows were in common practice also among the Israelites. They were encouraged by the divine approval as emanating from a spirit of piety and gratitude; and rules were laid down in the law for regulating the performance. But it is difficult to bring Jephthah's vow within the legitimate range (see on Leviticus 27:28).

31. whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me — This evidently points not to an animal, for that might have been a dog; which, being unclean, was unfit to be offered; but to a person, and it looks extremely as if he, from the first, contemplated a human sacrifice. Bred up as he had been, beyond the Jordan, where the Israelitish tribes, far from the tabernacle, were looser in their religious sentiments, and living latterly on the borders of a heathen country where such sacrifices were common, it is not improbable that he may have been so ignorant as to imagine that a similar immolation would be acceptable to God. His mind, engrossed with the prospect of a contest, on the issue of which the fate of his country depended, might, through the influence of superstition, consider the dedication of the object dearest to him the most likely to ensure success.

shall surely be the Lord's; and [or] I will offer it up for a burnt offering
— The adoption of the latter particle, which many interpreters suggest,

introduces the important alternative, that if it were a person, the dedication would be made to the service of the sanctuary; if a proper animal or thing, it would be offered on the altar.

### \*\*JUDGES 11:32,33.

#### HE OVERCOMES THE AMMONITES.

**32.** Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon ... and the Lord delivered them into his hands — He met and engaged them at Aroer, a town in the tribe of Gad, upon the Arnon. A decisive victory crowned the arms of Israel, and the pursuit was continued to Abel (plain of the vineyards), from south to north, over an extent of about sixty miles.

**34-40.** *Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances*— The return of the victors was hailed, as usual, by the joyous acclaim of a female band (<sup>ORTO</sup>1 Samuel 18:6), the leader of whom was Jephthah's daughter. The vow was full in his mind, and it is evident that it had not been communicated to anyone, otherwise precautions would doubtless have been taken to place another object at his door. The shriek, and other accompaniments of irrepressible grief, seem to indicate that her life was to be forfeited as a sacrifice; the nature of the sacrifice (which was abhorrent to the character of God) and distance from the tabernacle does not suffice to overturn this view, which the language and whole strain of the narrative plainly support; and although the lapse of two months might be supposed to have afforded time for reflection, and a better sense of his duty, there is but too much reason to conclude that he was impelled to the fulfillment by the dictates of a pious but unenlightened conscience.

### **JUDGES** 12:1-3.

#### THE EPHRAIMITES QUARRELLING WITH JEPHTHAH.

**1.** the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together — Hebrew, "were summoned."

*and went northward* — After crossing the Jordan, their route from Ephraim was, strictly speaking, in a northeasterly direction, toward Mizpeh.

the men of Ephraim ... said unto Jephthah, Wherefore ... didst [thou] not call us? — This is a fresh development of the jealous, rash, and irritable temper of the Ephraimites. The ground of their offense now was their desire of enjoying the credit of patriotism although they had not shared in the glory of victory.

- **2.** when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands The straightforward answer of Jephthah shows that their charge was false; their complaint of not being treated as confederates and allies entirely without foundation; and their boast of a ready contribution of their services came with an ill grace from people who had purposely delayed appearing till the crisis was past.
- 3. when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands A common form of speech in the East for undertaking a duty of imminent peril. This Jephthah had done, having encountered and routed the Ammonites with the aid of his Gileadite volunteers alone; and since the Lord had enabled him to conquer without requiring assistance from any other tribe, why should the Ephraimites take offense? They ought rather to have been delighted and thankful that the war had terminated without their incurring any labor and danger.

### **JUDGES** 12:4-15.

### DISCERNED BY THE WORD SIBBOLETH, ARE SLAIN BY THE GILEADITES.

**4-6.** the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim — The remonstrances of Jephthah, though reasonable and temperate, were not only ineffectual, but followed by insulting sneers that the Gileadites were reckoned both by the western Manassites and Ephraimites as outcasts — the scum and refuse of their common stock. This was addressed to a peculiarly sensitive people. A feud immediately ensued. The Gileadites, determined to chastise this public affront, gave them battle; and having defeated the Ephraimites, they chased their foul-mouthed but cowardly assailants out of the territory. Then rushing to the fords of the Jordan, they intercepted and slew every fugitive. The method adopted for discovering an Ephraimite was by the pronunciation of a word naturally suggested by the place where they stood. Shibboleth, means "a stream"; Sibboleth, "a burden." The Eastern tribe had, it seems, a dialectical provincialism in the sound of Shibboleth; and the Ephraimites could not bring their organs to pronounce it.

**7. Jephthah died** — After a government of six years, this mighty man of valor died; and however difficult it may be for us to understand some passages in his history, he has been ranked by apostolic authority among the worthies of the ancient church. He was followed by a succession of minor judges, of whom the only memorials preserved relate to the number of their families and their state [4028] Judges 12:8-15].

### **JUDGES** 13:1.

#### ISRAEL SERVES THE PHILISTINES FORTY YEARS.

1. the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years — The Israelites were represented (\*\*Tudges 10:6,7) as having fallen universally into a state of gross and confirmed idolatry, and in chastisement of this great apostasy, the Lord raised up enemies that harassed them in various quarters, especially the Ammonites and Philistines. The invasions and defeat of the former were narrated in the two chapters immediately preceding this; and now the sacred historian proceeds to describe the inroads of the latter people. The period of Philistine ascendency comprised forty years, reckoning from the time of Elon till the death of Samson.

### JUDGES 13:2-10.

#### AN ANGEL APPEARS TO MANOAH'S WIFE.

- **2. Zorah** a Danite town ( Joshua 15:33) lying on the common boundary of Judah and Dan, so that it was near the Philistine border.
- **3.** *the angel of the Lord* The messenger of the covenant, the divine personage who made so many remarkable appearances of a similar kind already described.
- **5.** *thou shalt conceive*, *and bear a son* This predicted child was to be a Nazarite. The mother was, therefore, for the sake of her promised offspring, required to practice the rigid abstinence of the Nazarite law (see on Numbers 6:2).

he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines — a prophecy encouraging to a patriotic man; the terms of it, however, indicated that the period of deliverance was still to be distant.

**6-8.** *then Manoah entreated the Lord* — On being informed by his wife of the welcome intimation, the husband made it the subject of earnest prayer to God. This is a remarkable instance, indicative of the connection which God has established between prayer and the fulfillment of His promises.

### 4731JUDGES 13:11-14.

#### THE ANGEL APPEARS TO MANOAH.

**11.** Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? — Manoah's intense desire for the repetition of the angel's visit was prompted not by doubts or anxieties of any kind, but was the fruit of lively faith, and of his great anxiety to follow out the instructions given. Blessed was he who had not seen, yet had believed.

### **JUDGES 13:15-23.**

#### MANOAH'S SACRIFICE.

- **15.** Manoah said unto the angel ..., I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid The stranger declined the intended hospitality and intimated that if the meat were to be an offering, it must be presented to the Lord [4000] Judges 13:6]. Manoah needed this instruction, for his purpose was to offer the prepared viands to him, not as the Lord, but as what he imagined him to be, not even an angel (4000) Judges 13:16), but a prophet or merely human messenger. It was on this account, and not as rejecting divine honors, that he spoke in this manner to Manoah. The angel's language was exactly similar to that of our Lord (4000) Matthew 19:17).
- **17-20.** *Manoah said unto the angel* ..., *What is thy name?* Manoah's request elicited the most unequivocal proofs of the divinity of his

supernatural visitor — in his name "secret" (in the *Margin*, "wonderful"), and in the miraculous flame that betokened the acceptance of the sacrifice.

## JUDGES 13:24,25.

#### SAMSON BORN.

- **24.** *the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson* The birth of this child of promise, and the report of the important national services he was to render, must, from the first, have made him an object of peculiar interest and careful instruction.
- **25.** *the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times* not, probably, as it moved the prophets, who were charged with an inspired message, but kindling in his youthful bosom a spirit of high and devoted patriotism.

**Eshtaol** — the free city. It, as well as Zorah, stood on the border between Judah and Dan.

### **MOJUDGES** 14:1-5.

#### SAMSON DESIRES A WIFE OF THE PHILISTINES.

**1, 2.** *Timnath* — now Tibna, about three miles from Zorah, his birthplace.

saw a woman ... of the Philistines; and told his father and his mother, and said, ... get her for me to wife — In the East parents did, and do in many cases still, negotiate the marriage alliances for their sons. During their period of ascendency, the Philistine invaders had settled in the towns; and the intercourse between them and the Israelites was often of such a friendly and familiar character as to issue in matrimonial relations. Moreover, the Philistines were not in the number of the seven devoted nations of Canaan [\*\*TD\*Deuteronomy 7:1-3] — with whom the law forbade them to marry.

**3, 4.** Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren — that is, "of thine own tribe" — a Danite woman.

Samson said ... Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well — literally, "she is right in mine eyes"; not by her beautiful countenance or handsome figure, but right or fit for his purpose. And this throws light on the historian's remark in reference to the resistance of his parents: they "knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines" — rather, "from the Philistines" — originating on their side. The Lord, by a course of retributive proceedings, was about to destroy the Philistine power, and the means which He meant to employ was not the forces of a numerous army, as in the case of the preceding judges, but the miraculous prowess of the single-handed champion of Israel. In these circumstances, the provocation to hostilities could only spring out of a private quarrel, and this marriage scheme was doubtless suggested by the secret influence of the Spirit as the best way of accomplishing the intended result.

### **₩**5JUDGES 14:5-9.

#### HE KILLS A LION.

- **5-9.** a young lion Hebrew, a lion in the pride of his youthful prime. The wild mountain passes of Judah were the lairs of savage beasts; and most or all the "lions" of Scripture occur in that wild country. His rending and killing the shaggy monster, without any weapon in his hand, were accomplished by that superhuman courage and strength which the occasional influences of the Spirit enabled him to put forth, and by the exertion of which, in such private incidental circumstances, he was gradually trained to confide in them for the more public work to which he was destined.
- **7.** *he went down, and talked with the woman* The social intercourse between the youth of different sexes is extremely rare and limited in the East, and generally so after they are betrothed.
- **8.** after a time he returned to take her probably after the lapse of a year, the usual interval between the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage. It was spent by the bride elect with her parents in preparation for the nuptials; and at the proper time the bridegroom returned to take her home.

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 — In such a climate, the myriads of insects and the ravages of birds of prey, together with the influences of the solar rays, would, in a few months, put the carcass in a state inviting to such cleanly animals as bees.

**♥77410**JUDGES 14:10,11.

#### HIS MARRIAGE FEAST.

**10, 11.** *his father went down* — The father is mentioned as the head and representative of Samson's relatives.

**Samson made there a feast** — The wedding festivity lasted a week. The men and women were probably entertained in separate apartments — the

bride, with her female relatives, at her parents' house; Samson, in some place obtained for the occasion, as he was a stranger. A large number of paranymphs, or "friends of the bridegroom," furnished, no doubt, by the bride's family, attended his party, ostensibly to honor the nuptials, but really as spies on his proceedings.

### 47742JUDGES 14:12-18.

#### HIS RIDDLE.

**12-18.** *I will now put forth a riddle* — Riddles are a favorite Oriental amusement at festive entertainments of this nature, and rewards are offered to those who give the solution. Samson's riddle related to honey in the lion's carcass. The prize he offered was thirty *sindinim*, or shirts, and thirty changes of garments, probably woolen. Three days were passed in vain attempts to unravel the enigma. The festive week was fast drawing to a close when they secretly enlisted the services of the newly married wife, who having got the secret, revealed it to her friends.

**18.** If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle— a metaphor borrowed from agricultural pursuits, in which not only oxen but cows and heifers were, and continue to be, employed in dragging the plough. Divested of metaphor, the meaning is taken by some in a criminal sense, but probably means no more than that they had resorted to the aid of his wife— an unworthy expedient, which might have been deemed by a man of less noble spirit and generosity as releasing him from the obligation to fulfill his bargain.

47749JUDGES 14:19,20.

#### HE SLAYS THIRTY PHILISTINES.

**19, 20.** went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them — This town was about twenty-four miles west by southwest from Timnah; and his selection of this place, which was dictated by the Divine Spirit, was probably owing to its bitter hostility to Israel.

*took their spoil* — The custom of stripping a slain enemy was unknown in Hebrew warfare.

**20.** Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend — that is, "the friend of the bridegroom," who was the medium of communicating during the festivities between him and his bride. The acceptance of her hand, therefore, was an act of base treachery, that could not fail to provoke the just resentment of Samson.

### 

#### SAMSON IS DENIED HIS WIFE.

**1.** *in the time of wheat harvest* — that is, about the end of our April, or the beginning of our May. The shocks of grain were then gathered into heaps, and lying on the field or on the threshing-floors. It was the dry season, dry far beyond our experience, and the grain in a most combustible state.

**Samson visited his wife with a kid** — It is usual for a visitor in the East to carry some present; in this case, it might be not only as a token of civility, but of reconciliation.

**he said** — that is, to himself. It was his secret purpose.

*into the chamber* — the female apartments or harem.

**2.** her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her—
This allegation was a mere sham, a flimsy pretext to excuse his refusal of admittance. The proposal he made of a marriage with her younger sister was but an insult to Samson, and one which it was unlawful for an Israelite to accept (\*\*Leviticus 18:18).

JUDGES 15:3-8.

#### HE BURNS THE PHILISTINES' CORN.

- **3.** Samson said ..., Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines This nefarious conduct provoked the hero's just indignation, and he resolved to take signal vengeance.
- **4, 5.** went and caught three hundred foxes rather, "jackals"; an animal between a wolf and a fox, which, unlike our fox, a solitary creature, prowls

in large packs or herds and abounds in the mountains of Palestine. The collection of so great a number would require both time and assistance.

took firebrands — torches or matches which would burn slowly, retaining the fire, and blaze fiercely when blown by the wind. He put two jackals together, tail by tail, and fastened tightly a fire match between them. At nightfall he lighted the firebrand and sent each pair successively down from the hills, into the "Shefala," or plain of Philistia, lying on the borders of Daniel and Judah, a rich and extensive corn district. The pain caused by the fire would make the animals toss about to a wide extent, kindling one great conflagration. But no one could render assistance to his neighbor: the devastation was so general, the panic would be so great.

- **6.** Who hath done this The author of this outrage, and the cause that provoked such an extraordinary retaliation, soon became known; and the sufferers, enraged by the destruction of their crops, rushing with tumultuous fury to the house of Samson's wife, "burnt her and her father with fire." This was a remarkable retribution. To avoid this menace, she had betrayed her husband; and by that unprincipled conduct, eventually exposed herself to the horrid doom which, at the sacrifice of conjugal fidelity, she had sought to escape [4745] udges 14:15].
- 7. Samson said ..., Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you By that act the husbandmen had been the instruments in avenging his private and personal wrongs. But as a judge, divinely appointed to deliver Israel, his work of retribution was not yet accomplished.
- **8.** *smote them hip and thigh* a proverbial expression for a merciless slaughter.

*he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam* — rather went down and dwelt in the cleft — that is, the cave or cavern of the cliff Etam.

### **JUDGES** 15:9-13.

# HE IS BOUND BY THE MEN OF JUDAH, AND DELIVERED TO THE PHILISTINES.

**9-17.** Then the Philistines went up — to the high land of Judah.

and spread themselves in Lehi — now El-Lekieh, abounding with limestone cliffs; the sides of which are perforated with caves. The object of the Philistines in this expedition was to apprehend Samson, in revenge for the great slaughter he had committed on their people. With a view of freeing his own countrymen from all danger from the infuriated Philistines, he allowed himself to be bound and surrendered a fettered prisoner into their power. Exulting with joy at the near prospect of riddance from so formidable an enemy, they went to meet him. But he exerted his superhuman strength, and finding a new jawbone of an ass, he laid hold of it, and with no other weapon, slew a thousand men at a place which he called Ramath-lehi — that is, "the hill of the jawbone."

- **16.** With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men The inadequacy of the weapon plainly shows this to have been a miraculous feat, "a case of supernatural strength," just as the gift of prophecy is a case of supernatural knowledge [CHALMERS].
- **19.** *a hollow place* ... *in the jaw* "in Lehi" taking the word as a proper noun, marking the place.

there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again
— His strength, exhausted by the violent and long-continued exertion, was recruited by the refreshing draft from the spring; and it was called

**En-hakkore** — the "supplication well," a name which records the piety of this heroic champion.

### 

#### SAMSON CARRIES AWAY THE GATES OF GAZA.

- **1, 2.** *Gaza* now Guzzah, the capital of the largest of the five Philistine principal cities, about fifteen miles southwest of Ashkelon. The object of this visit to this city is not recorded, and unless he had gone in disguise, it was a perilous exposure of his life in one of the enemy's strongholds. It soon became known that he was there; and it was immediately resolved to secure him. But deeming themselves certain of their prey, the Gazites deferred the execution of their measure till the morning.
- 3. Samson ... arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city

   A ruinous pile of masonry is still pointed out as the site of the gate. It
  was probably a part of the town wall, and as this ruin is "toward Hebron,"
  there is no improbability in the tradition.

carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron — That hill is El-Montar; but by Hebron in this passage is meant "the mountains of Hebron"; for otherwise Samson, had he run night and day from the time of his flight from Gaza, could only have come on the evening of the following day within sight of the city of Hebron. The city of Gaza was, in those days, probably not less than three-quarters of an hour distant from El-Montar. To have climbed to the top of this hill with the ponderous doors and their bolts on his shoulders, through a road of thick sand, was a feat which none but a Samson could have accomplished [VAN DE VELDE].

### **JUDGES** 16:4-14.

#### DELILAH CORRUPTED BY THE PHILISTINES.

- **4.** *he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek* The location of this place is not known, nor can the character of Delilah be clearly ascertained. Her abode, her mercenary character, and her heartless blandishments afford too much reason to believe she was a profligate woman.
- **5.** *the lords of the Philistines* The five rulers deemed no means beneath their dignity to overcome this national enemy.

Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth — They probably imagined that he carried some amulet about his person, or was in the possession of some important secret by which he had acquired such herculean strength; and they bribed Delilah, doubtless by a large reward, to discover it for them. She undertook the service and made several attempts, plying all her arts of persuasion or blandishment in his soft and communicative moods, to extract his secret.

- **7.** Samson said ..., If they bind me with seven green withs Vine tendrils, pliant twigs, or twists made of crude vegetable stalks are used in many Eastern countries for ropes at the present day.
- **8.** *she bound him with them* probably in a sportive manner, to try whether he was jesting or in earnest.
- **9.** there were men lying in wait, abiding ... in the chamber The *Hebrew*, literally rendered, is, "in the inner," or "most secret part of the house"
- **10.** *And Delilah said* To avoid exciting suspicion, she must have allowed some time to elapse before making this renewed attempt.
- **12.** *new ropes* It is not said of what material they were formed; but from their being dried, it is probable they were of twigs, like the former. The *Hebrew* intimates that they were twisted, and of a thick, strong description.

- **13.** If thou weavest the seven locks of my head braids or tresses, into which, like many in the East, he chose to plait his hair. Working at the loom was a female employment; and Delilah's appears to have been close at hand. It was of a very simple construction; the woof was driven into the warp, not by a reed, but by a wooden spatula. The extremity of the web was fastened to a pin or stake fixed in the wall or ground; and while Delilah sat squatting at her loom, Samson lay stretched on the floor, with his head reclining on her lap a position very common in the East.
- **14.** went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web that is, the whole weaving apparatus.

### JUDGES 16:15-20.

#### HE IS OVERCOME.

- **16.** *she pressed him daily with her words* Though disappointed and mortified, this vile woman resolved to persevere; and conscious how completely he was enslaved by his passion for her, she assailed him with a succession of blandishing arts, till she at length discovered the coveted secret.
- 17. if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me His herculean powers did not arise from his hair, but from his peculiar relation to God as a Nazarite. His unshorn locks were a sign of his Nazaritism, and a pledge on the part of God that his supernatural strength would be continued.
- 19. she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head It is uncertain, however, whether the ancient Hebrews cut off the hair to the same extent as Orientals now. The word employed is sometimes the same as that for shearing sheep, and therefore the instrument might be only scissors.
- **20.** *he wist not that the Lord was departed from him* What a humiliating and painful spectacle! Deprived of the divine influences, degraded in his character, and yet, through the infatuation of a guilty passion, scarcely awake to the wretchedness of his fallen condition!

### 

#### THE PHILISTINES TOOK HIM AND PUT OUT HIS EYES.

**21.** the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes — To this cruel privation prisoners of rank and consequence have commonly been subjected in the East. The punishment is inflicted in various ways, by scooping out the eyeballs, by piercing the eye, or destroying the sight by holding a red-hot iron before the eyes. His security was made doubly sure by his being bound with fetters of brass (copper), not of leather, like other captives.

*he did grind in the prison-house* — This grinding with hand-millstones being the employment of menials, he was set to it as the deepest degradation.

**22.** Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again — It is probable that he had now reflected on his folly; and becoming a sincere penitent, renewed his Nazarite vow. "His hair grew together with his repentance, and his strength with his hairs" [BISHOP HALL].

\*\*JUDGES 16:23-25.

#### THEIR FEAST TO DAGON.

**23.** the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon — It was a common practice in heathen nations, on the return of their solemn religious festivals, to bring forth their war prisoners from their places of confinement or slavery; and, in heaping on them every species of indignity, they would offer their grateful tribute to the gods by whose aid they had triumphed over their enemies. Dagon, was a sea idol, usually represented as having the head and upper parts human, while the rest of the body resembled a fish.

### • JUDGES 16:26-31.

#### HIS DEATH.

- 27. there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport This building seems to have been similar to the spacious and open amphitheaters well known among the Romans and still found in many countries of the East. They are built wholly of wood. The standing place for the spectators is a wooden floor resting upon two pillars and rising on an inclined plane, so as to enable all to have a view of the area in the center. In the middle there are two large beams, on which the whole weight of the structure lies, and these beams are supported by two pillars placed almost close to each other, so that when these are unsettled or displaced, the whole pile must tumble to the ground.
- **28.** Samson called unto the Lord His penitent and prayerful spirit seems clearly to indicate that this meditated act was not that of a vindictive suicide, and that he regarded himself as putting forth his strength in his capacity of a public magistrate. He must be considered, in fact, as dying for his country's cause. His death was not designed or sought, except as it might be the inevitable consequence of his great effort. His prayer must have been a silent ejaculation, and, from its being revealed to the historian, approved and accepted of God.
- **31.** Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him This awful catastrophe seems to have so completely paralyzed the Philistines, that they neither attempted to prevent the removal of Samson's corpse, nor to molest the Israelites for a long time after. Thus the Israelitish hero rendered by his strength and courage signal services to his country, and was always regarded as the greatest of its champions. But his slavish subjection to the domination of his passions was unworthy of so great a man and lessens our respect for his character. Yet he is ranked among the ancient worthies who maintained a firm faith in God (SITE Hebrews 11:32).

### **♥#705JUDGES** 17:1-4.

# MICAH RESTORING THE STOLEN MONEY TO HIS MOTHER, SHE MAKES IMAGES.

- **1.** a man of mount Ephraim that is, the mountainous parts of Ephraim. This and the other narratives that follow form a miscellaneous collection, or appendix to the Book of Judges. It belongs to a period when the Hebrew nation was in a greatly disordered and corrupt state. This episode of Micah is connected with Judges 1:34. It relates to his foundation of a small sanctuary of his own a miniature representation of the Shiloh tabernacle which he stocked with images modelled probably in imitation of the ark and cherubim. Micah and his mother were sincere in their intention to honor God. But their faith was blended with a sad amount of ignorance and delusion. The divisive course they pursued, as well as the will-worship they practiced, subjected the perpetrators to the penalty of death.
- **3.** a graven image and a molten image The one carved from a block of wood or stone, to be plated over with silver; the other, a figure formed of the solid metal cast into a mould. It is observable, however, that only two hundred shekels were given to the founder. Probably the expense of making two such figures of silver, with their appurtenances (pedestals, bases, etc.), might easily cost, in those days, two hundred shekels, which would be a sum not adequate to the formation of large statues [Taylor, Fragments].
- **5.** the man Micah had an house of gods Hebrew, "a house of God" a domestic chapel, a private religious establishment of his own.

an ephod — (see on Exodus 28:6).

**teraphim** — tutelary gods of the household (see Genesis 31:19 and see on Genesis 31:26).

- consecrated one of his sons who became his priest The assumption of the priestly office by any one out of the family of Aaron was a direct violation of the divine law (\*\*\*\*Numbers 3:10 16:17\*\*\*Deuteronomy 21:5\*\*\*\*Hebrews 5:4).
- **6.** every man did that which was right in his own eyes From want of a settled government, there was no one to call him to account. No punishment followed any crime.
- 7. **Beth-lehem-judah** so called in contradistinction to a town of the same name in Zebulun ( Joshua 19:15).
- of the family that is, tribe.
- of Judah Men of the tribe of Levi might connect themselves, as Aaron did (\*\*\*Exodus 6:23), by marriage with another tribe; and this young Levite belonged to the tribe of Judah, by his mother's side, which accounts for his being in Beth-lehem, not one of the Levitical cities.
- **8.** the man departed ... to sojourn where he could find a place A competent provision being secured for every member of the Levitical order, his wandering about showed him to have been a person of a roving disposition or unsettled habits. In the course of his journeying he came to the house of Micah, who, on learning what he was, engaged his permanent services.
- **10.** *Micah said unto him*, *Dwell with me*, *and be unto me a father* a spiritual father, to conduct the religious services of my establishment. He was to receive, in addition to his board, a salary of ten shekels of silver.
- *a suit of apparel* not only dress for ordinary use, but vestments suitable for the discharge of his priestly functions.
- **12.** *Micah consecrated the Levite Hebrew*, "filled his hand." This act of consecration was not less unlawful for Micah to perform than for this Levite to receive (see on Judges 18:30).
- **13.** Now know I that the Lord will do me good The removal of his son, followed by the installation of this Levite into the priestly office, seems to have satisfied his conscience, that by what he deemed the orderly

ministrations of religion he would prosper. This expression of his hope evinces the united influence of ignorance and superstition.

JUDGES 18:1-26.

#### THE DANITES SEEK OUT AN INHERITANCE.

1-6. In those days ... the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in — The Danites had a territory assigned them as well as the other tribes. But either through indolence, or a lack of energy, they did not acquire the full possession of their allotment, but suffered a considerable portion of it to be wrested out of their hands by the encroachments of their powerful neighbors, the Philistines. In consequence, being straitened for room, a considerable number resolved on trying to effect a new and additional settlement in a remote part of the land. A small deputation, being despatched to reconnoitre the country, arrived on their progress northward at the residence of Micah. Recognizing his priest as one of their former acquaintances, or perhaps by his provincial dialect, they eagerly enlisted his services in ascertaining the result of their present expedition. His answer, though apparently promising, was delusive, and really as ambiguous as those of the heathen oracles. This application brings out still more clearly and fully than the schism of Micah the woeful degeneracy of the times. The Danites expressed no emotions either of surprise or of indignation at a Levite daring to assume the priestly functions, and at the existence of a rival establishment to that of Shiloh. They were ready to seek, through means of the teraphim, the information that could only be lawfully applied for through the high priest's Urim. Being thus equally erroneous in their views and habits as Micah, they show the low state of religion, and how much superstition prevailed in all parts of the land.

**7-10.** *the five men departed, and came to Laish* — or, "Leshem" (\*\*GET\*Joshua 19:47), supposed to have been peopled by a colony of Zidonians. The place was very secluded — the soil rich in the abundance and variety of its produce, and the inhabitants, following the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, lived in their fertile and sequestered valley, according to the Zidonian style of ease and security, happy among

themselves, and maintaining little or no communication with the rest of the world. The discovery of this northern paradise seemed, to the delight of the Danite spies, an accomplishment of the priest's prediction. They hastened back to inform their brethren in the south both of the value of their prize, and how easily it could be made their prey.

11-21. there went from thence of the family of the Danites ... six hundred *men* — This was the collective number of the men who were equipped with arms to carry out this expeditionary enterprise, without including the families and furniture of the emigrants ( Judges 18:21). Their journey led them through the territory of Judah, and their first halting place was "behind," that is, on the west of Kirjath-jearim, on a spot called afterwards "the camp of Dan." Prosecuting the northern route, they skirted the base of the Ephraimite hills. On approaching the neighborhood of Micah's residence, the spies having given information that a private sanctuary was kept there, the priest of which had rendered them important service when on their exploring expedition, it was unanimously agreed that both he and the furniture of the establishment would be a valuable acquisition to their proposed settlement. A plan of spoliation was immediately formed. While the armed men stood sentinels at the gates, the five spies broke into the chapel, pillaged the images and vestments, and succeeded in bribing the priest also by a tempting offer to transfer his services to their new colony. Taking charge of the ephod, the teraphim, and the graven image, he "went in the midst of the people" — a central position assigned him in the march, perhaps for his personal security; but more probably in imitation of the place appointed for the priests and the ark, in the middle of the congregated tribes, on the marches through the wilderness. This theft presents a curious medley of low morality and strong religious feeling. The Danites exemplified a deep-seated principle of our nature — that men have religious affections, which must have an object on which these may be exercised, while they are often not very discriminating in the choice of the objects. In proportion to the slender influence religion wields over the heart, the greater is the importance attached to external rites; and in the exact observance of these, the conscience is fully satisfied, and seldom or never molested by reflections on the breach of minor morals.

22-26. the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together — The robbers of the chapel being soon detected, a hot

pursuit was forthwith commenced by Micah, at the head of a considerable body of followers. The readiness with which they joined in the attempt to recover the stolen articles affords a presumption that the advantages of the chapel had been open to all in the neighborhood; and the importance which Micah, like Laban, attached to his teraphim, is seen by the urgency with which he pursued the thieves, and the risk of his life in attempting to procure their restoration. Finding his party, however, not a match for the Danites, he thought it prudent to desist, well knowing the rule which was then prevalent in the land, that

"They should take who had the power, And they should keep who could."

JUDGES 18:27-29.

#### THEY WIN LAISH.

**27.** they ... came unto Laish ... smote them — the inhabitants.

and burnt the city — "We are revolted by this inroad and massacre of a quiet and secure people. Nevertheless, if the original grant of Canaan to the Israelites gave them the warrant of a divine commission and command for this enterprise, that sanctifies all and legalizes all" [Chalmers]. This place seems to have been a dependency of Zidon, the distance of which, however, rendered it impossible to obtain aid thence in the sudden emergency.

**28, 29.** *they built a city, and ... call the name of that city Daniel* — It was in the northern extremity of the land, and hence the origin of the phrase, "from Daniel to Beer-sheba."

JUDGES 18:30,31.

#### THEY SET UP IDOLATRY.

**30, 31.** *the children of Daniel set up the graven image* — Their distance secluded them from the rest of the Israelites, and doubtless this, which

was their apology for not going to Shiloh, was the cause of perpetuating idolatry among them for many generations.

### **™**JUDGES 19:1-15.

#### A LEVITE GOING TO BETHLEHEM TO FETCH HIS WIFE.

**1.** *it came to pass in those days* — The painfully interesting episode that follows, together with the intestine commotion the report of it produced throughout the country, belongs to the same early period of anarchy and prevailing disorder.

a certain Levite ... took to him a concubine — The priests under the Mosaic law enjoyed the privilege of marrying as well as other classes of the people. It was no disreputable connection this Levite had formed; for a nuptial engagement with a concubine wife (though, as wanting in some outward ceremonies, it was reckoned a secondary or inferior relationship) possessed the true essence of marriage; it was not only lawful, but sanctioned by the example of many good men.

- **2.** his concubine ... went away from him unto her father's house The cause of the separation assigned in our version rendered it unlawful for her husband to take her back (Deuteronomy 24:4); and according to the uniform style of sentiment and practice in the East, she would have been put to death, had she gone to her father's family. Other versions concur with Josephus, in representing the reason for the flight from her husband's house to be, that she was disgusted with him, through frequent brawls.
- **3, 4.** And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her Hebrew, "speak to her heart," in a kindly and affectionate manner, so as to rekindle her affection. Accompanied by a servant, he arrived at the house of his father-in-law, who rejoiced to meet him, in the hope that a complete reconciliation would be brought about between his daughter and her husband. The Levite, yielding to the hospitable importunities of his father-in-law, prolonged his stay for days.

**8.** *tarried* — with reluctance.

until afternoon — literally, "the decline of the day." People in the East, who take little or nothing to eat in the morning, do not breakfast till from ten to twelve A.M., and this meal the hospitable relative had purposely protracted to so late a period as to afford an argument for urging a further stay.

- **9.** the day draweth toward evening Hebrew, "the pitching time of day." Travellers who set out at daybreak usually halt about the middle of the afternoon the first day, to enjoy rest and refreshment. It was, then, too late a time to commence a journey. But duty, perhaps, obliged the Levite to indulge no further delay.
- **10-12.** the man ... departed, and came over against Jebus The note, "which is Jerusalem," must have been inserted by Ezra or some later hand. Jebus being still, though not entirely ("Judges 1:8) in the possession of the old inhabitants, the Levite resisted the advice of his attendant to enter it and determined rather to press forward to pass the night in Gibeah, which he knew was occupied by Israelites. The distance from Beth-lehem to Jerusalem is about six miles. The event showed that it would have been better to have followed the advice of his attendant to have trusted themselves among aliens than among their own countrymen.
- **13.** *in Gibeah*, *or in Ramah* The first of these places was five miles northeast, the other from four to five north of Jerusalem.
- 15. when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city The towns of Palestine at this remote period could not, it seems, furnish any establishment in the shape of an inn or public lodging-house. Hence we conclude that the custom, which is still frequently witnessed in the cities of the East, was then not uncommon, for travelers who were late in arriving and who had no introduction to a private family, to spread their bedding in the streets, or wrapping themselves up in their cloaks, pass the night in the open air. In the Arab towns and villages, however, the sheik, or some other person, usually comes out and urgently invites the strangers to his house. This was done also in ancient Palestine (Genesis 18:4

### 4796JUDGES 19:16-21.

#### AN OLD MAN ENTERTAINS HIM AT GIBEAH.

**16.** there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim — Perhaps his hospitality was quickened by learning the stranger's occupation, and that he was on his return to his duties at Shiloh.

19, 20. there is no want of any thing — In answering the kindly inquiries of the old man, the Levite deemed it right to state that he was under no necessity of being burdensome on anyone, for he possessed all that was required to relieve his wants. Oriental travelers always carry a stock of provisions with them; and knowing that even the khans or lodging-houses they may find on their way afford nothing beyond rest and shelter, they are careful to lay in a supply of food both for themselves and their beasts. Instead of hay, which is seldom met with, they used chopped straw, which, with a mixture of barley, beans, or the like, forms the provender for cattle. The old man, however, in the warmth of a generous heart, refused to listen to any explanation, and bidding the Levite keep his stocks for any emergency that might occur in the remainder of his journey, invited them to accept of the hospitalities of his house for the night.

**20.** *only lodge not in the street* — As this is no rare or singular circumstance in the East, the probability is that the old man's earnest dissuasive from such a procedure arose from his acquaintance with the infamous practices of the place.

4792JUDGES 19:22-28.

#### THE GIBEAHITES ABUSE HIS CONCUBINE TO DEATH.

**22-24.** *certain sons of Belial beset the house* — The narrative of the horrid outrage that was committed; of the proposal of the old man; the unfeeling, careless, and in many respects, inexplicable conduct of the Levite towards his wife, disclose a state of morality that would have appeared incredible, did it not rest on the testimony of the sacred

historian. Both men ought to have protected the women in the house, even though at the expense of their lives, or thrown themselves on God's providence. It should be noted, however, that the guilt of such a foul outrage is not fastened on the general population of Gibeah.

**29.** *divided her* ... *into twelve pieces* — The want of a regular government warranted an extraordinary step; and certainly no method could have been imagined more certain of rousing universal horror and indignation than this terrible summons of the Levite.

## JUDGES 20:1-7.

# THE LEVITE, IN A GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DECLARES HIS WRONG.

**1, 2.** *all* ... *the congregation was gathered as one man* — In consequence of the immense sensation the horrid tragedy of Gibeah had produced, a national assembly was convened, at which "the chief of all the people" from all parts of the land, including the eastern tribes, appeared as delegates.

**Mizpeh** — the place of convention (for there were other Mizpehs), was in a town situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin (\*\*\*Joshua 15:38 18:26). Assemblies were frequently held there afterwards (\*\*\*\*In Samuel 7:11 10:17); and it was but a short distance from Shiloh. The phrase, "unto the Lord," may be taken in its usual sense, as denoting consultation of the oracle. This circumstance, together with the convention being called "the assembly of the people of God," seems to indicate, that amid the excited passions of the nation, those present felt the profound gravity of the occasion and adopted the best means of maintaining a becoming deportment.

- 3. Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh Some suppose that Benjamin had been passed over, the crime having been perpetrated within the territory of that tribe [\*\*Tudges 19:16]; and that, as the concubine's corpse had been divided into twelve pieces [\*\*Tudges 19:29] two had been sent to Manasseh, one respectively to the western and eastern divisions. It is more probable that Benjamin had received a formal summons like the other tribes, but chose to treat it with indifference, or haughty disdain.
- **4-7.** *the Levite*, *the husband of the woman that was slain*, *answered and said* The injured husband gave a brief and unvarnished recital of the tragic outrage, from which it appears that force was used, which he could

not resist. His testimony was doubtless corroborated by those of his servant and the old Ephraimite. There was no need of strong or highly colored description to work upon the feelings of the audience. The facts spoke for themselves and produced one common sentiment of detestation and vengeance.

## **JUDGES** 20:8-17.

#### THEIR DECREE.

- **8-13.** *all the people arose as one man* The extraordinary unanimity that prevailed shows, that notwithstanding great disorders had broken out in many parts, the people were sound at the core; and remembering their national covenant with God, they now felt the necessity of wiping out so foul a stain on their character as a people. It was resolved that the inhabitants of Gibeah should be subjected to condign punishment. But the resolutions were conditional. For as the common law of nature and nations requires that an inquiry should be made and satisfaction demanded, before committing an act of hostility or vengeance, messengers were despatched through the whole territory of Benjamin, demanding the immediate surrender or execution of the delinquents. The request was just and reasonable; and by refusing it the Benjamites visrtually made themselves a party in the quarrel. It must not be supposed that the people of this tribe were insensible or indifferent to the atrocious character of the crime that had been committed on their soil. But their patriotism or their pride was offended by the hostile demonstration of the other tribes. The passions were inflamed on both sides; but certainly the Benjamites incurred an awful responsibility by the attitude of resistance they assumed.
- **14-17.** the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah Allowing their valor to be ever so great, nothing but blind passion and unbending obstinacy could have impelled them to take the field against their brethren with such a disparity of numbers.
- **16.** *left-handed*; *every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth*, *and not miss* The sling was one of the earliest weapons used in war. The Hebrew sling was probably similar to that of the Egyptian, consisting of a

leather thong, broad in the middle, with a loop at one end, by which it was firmly held with the hand; the other end terminated in a lash, which was let slip when the stone was thrown. Those skilled in the use of it, as the Benjamites were, could hit the mark with unerring certainty. A good sling could carry its full force to the distance of two hundred yards.

# JUDGES 20:18-28.

#### THE ISRAELITES LOSE FORTY THOUSAND.

18-28. the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God — This consultation at Shiloh was right. But they ought to have done it at the commencement of their proceedings. Instead of this, all their plans were formed, and never doubting, it would seem, that the war was just and inevitable, the only subject of their inquiry related to the precedency of the tribes — a point which it is likely was discussed in the assembly. Had they asked counsel of God sooner, their expedition would have been conducted on a different principle — most probably by reducing the number of fighting men, as in the case of Gideon's army. As it was, the vast number of volunteers formed an excessive and unwieldy force, unfit for strenuous and united action against a small, compact, and well-directed army. A panic ensued, and the confederate tribes, in two successive engagements, sustained great losses. These repeated disasters (notwithstanding their attack on Benjamin had been divinely authorized) overwhelmed them with shame and sorrow. Led to reflection, they became sensible of their guilt in not repressing their national idolatries, as well as in too proudly relying on their superior numbers and the precipitate rashness of this expedition. Having humbled themselves by prayer and fasting, as well as observed the appointed method of expiating their sins, they were assured of acceptance as well as of victory. The presence and services of Phinehas on this occasion help us to ascertain the chronology thus far, that the date of the occurrence must be fixed shortly after the death of Joshua.

# JUDGES 20:29-48.

# THEY DESTROY ALL THE BENJAMITES, EXCEPT SIX HUNDRED.

- **29-48.** And Israel set liers-in-wait round about Gibeah A plan was formed of taking that city by stratagem, similar to that employed in the capture of Ai (\*\*Toshua 8:9).
- **33.** *Baal-tamar* a palm-grove, where Baal was worshipped. The main army of the confederate tribes was drawn up there.

out of the meadows of Gibeah — Hebrew, "the caves of Gibeah."

- **34.** there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men This was a third division, different both from the ambuscade and the army, who were fighting at Baal-tamar. The general account stated in \*\*Judges 20:35 is followed by a detailed narrative of the battle, which is continued to the end of the chapter.
- **45.** they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon Many of the fugitives found refuge in the caves of this rocky mountain, which is situated to the northeast of Beth-el. Such places are still sought as secure retreats in times of danger; and until the method of blowing up rocks by gunpowder became known, a few men could in such caves sustain a siege for months.
- **46.** all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men On comparing this with Judges 20:35, it will be seen that the loss is stated here in round numbers and is confined only to that of the third day. We must conclude that a thousand had fallen during the two previous engagements, in order to make the aggregate amount given (Judges 20:15).
- **48.** the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword This frightful vengeance, extending from Gibeah to the whole territory of Benjamin, was executed under the impetuous impulse of highly excited passions. But doubtless the Israelites were only the agents of inflicting the righteous retributions of

God; and the memory of this terrible crisis, which led almost to the extermination of a whole tribe, was conducive to the future good of the whole nation.

## **♥720**JUDGES 21:1-15.

#### THE PEOPLE BEWAIL THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL.

- 2-5. the people came to the house of God, ... and lifted up their voices, and wept sore — The characteristic fickleness of the Israelites was not long in being displayed; for scarcely had they cooled from the fierceness of their sanguinary vengeance, than they began to relent and rushed to the opposite extreme of self-accusation and grief at the desolation which their impetuous zeal had produced. Their victory saddened and humbled them. Their feelings on the occasion were expressed by a public and solemn service of expiation at the house of God. And yet — this extraordinary observance, though it enabled them to find vent for their painful emotions, did not afford them full relief, for they were lettered by the obligation of a religious vow, heightened by the addition of a solemn anathema on every violator of the oath. There is no previous record of this oath; but the purport of it was, that they would treat the perpetrators of this Gibeah atrocity in the same way as the Canaanites, who were doomed to destruction; and the entering into this solemn league was of a piece with the rest of their inconsiderate conduct in this whole affair.
- **6.** There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day that is, in danger of becoming extinct; for, as it appears from Judges 21:7, they had massacred all the women and children of Benjamin, and six hundred men alone survived of the whole tribe. The prospect of such a blank in the catalogue of the twelve tribes, such a gap in the national arrangements, was too painful to contemplate, and immediate measures must be taken to prevent this great catastrophe.
- **8.** there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly This city lay within the territory of eastern Manasseh, about fifteen miles east of the Jordan, and was, according to JOSEPHUS, the capital of Gilead. The ban which the assembled tribes had pronounced at Mizpeh

seemed to impose on them the necessity of punishing its inhabitants for not joining the crusade against Benjamin; and thus, with a view of repairing the consequences of one rash proceeding, they hurriedly rushed to the perpetration of another, though a smaller tragedy. But it appears (Judges 21:11) that, besides acting in fulfillment of their oath, the Israelites had the additional object by this raid of supplying wives to the Benjamite remnant. This shows the intemperate fury of the Israelites in the indiscriminate slaughter of the women and children.

### **™**JUDGES 21:16-21.

# THE ELDERS CONSULT HOW TO FIND WIVES FOR THOSE THAT WERE LEFT.

**16.** the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain — Though the young women of Jabesh-gilead had been carefully spared, the supply was found inadequate, and some other expedient must be resorted to.

# 17. There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin

- As they were the only rightful owners of the territory, provision must be made for transmitting it to their legitimate heirs, and a new act of violence was meditated (\*\*\*Judges 21:19); the opportunity for which was afforded by the approaching festival a feast generally supposed to be the feast of tabernacles. This, like the other annual feasts, was held in Shiloh, and its celebration was attended with more social hilarity and holiday rejoicings than the other feasts.
- 19. on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem The exact site of the place was described evidently for the direction of the Benjamites.
- **21, 22.** daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances The dance was anciently a part of the religious observance. It was done on festive occasions, as it is still in the East, not in town, but in the open air, in some adjoining field, the women being by themselves. The young women being alone indulging their light and buoyant spirits, arid apprehensive of no

danger, facilitated the execution of the scheme of seizing them, which closely resembles the Sabine rape in Roman history. The elders undertook to reconcile the families to the forced abduction of their daughters. And thus the expression of their public sanction to this deed of violence afforded a new evidence of the evils and difficulties into which the unhappy precipitancy of the Israelites in this crisis had involved them.

### THE BOOK OF

# RUTH

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

#### ELIMELECH, DRIVEN BY FAMINE INTO MOAB, DIES THERE.

- **1.** *in the days when the judges ruled* The beautiful and interesting story which this book relates belongs to the early times of the judges. The precise date cannot be ascertained.
- **2.** *Elimelech* signifies "My God is king."

**Naomi** — "fair or pleasant"; and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, are supposed to be the same as Joash and Saraph (\*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 4:22).

**Ephrathites** — The ancient name of Beth-lehem was Ephrath (\*\*\*Genesis 35:19 48:7), which was continued after the occupation of the land by the Hebrews, even down to the time of the prophet Micah (\*\*\*\*Micah 5:2).

**Beth-lehem-judah** — so called to distinguish it from a town of the same name in Zebulun. The family, compelled to emigrate to Moab through pressure of a famine, settled for several years in that country. After the death of their father, the two sons married Moabite women. This was a violation of the Mosaic law (\*\*Deuteronomy 7:3 \*\*\*Ezra 9:2\*\*\*Nehemiah 13:23); and Jewish writers say that the early deaths of both the young men were divine judgments inflicted on them for those unlawful connections.

# 

### NAOMI RETURNING HOME, RUTH ACCOMPANIES HER.

- **6,7.** Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab The aged widow, longing to enjoy the privileges of Israel, resolved to return to her native land as soon as she was assured that the famine had ceased, and made the necessary arrangements with her daughters-in-law.
- **8.** Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house In Eastern countries women occupy apartments separate from those of men, and daughters are most frequently in those of their mother.

*the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead* — that is, with my sons, your husbands, while they lived.

**9.** The Lord grant you that ye may find rest — enjoy a life of tranquillity, undisturbed by the cares, incumbrances, and vexatious troubles to which a state of widowhood is peculiarly exposed.

**Then she kissed them** — the Oriental manner when friends are parting.

- **11.** are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? This alludes to the ancient custom (Genesis 38:26) afterwards expressly sanctioned by the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 25:5), which required a younger son to marry the widow of his deceased brother.
- 12, 13. Turn again, my daughters, go your way That Naomi should dissuade her daughters-in-law so strongly from accompanying her to the land of Israel may appear strange. But it was the wisest and most prudent course for her to adopt: first, because they might be influenced by hopes which could not be realized; second, because they might be led, under temporary excitement, to take a step they might afterwards regret; and, third, because the sincerity and strength of their conversion to the true religion, which she had taught them, would be thoroughly tested.

**13.** the hand of the Lord is gone out against me — that is, I am not only not in a condition to provide you with other husbands, but so reduced in circumstances that I cannot think of your being subjected to privations with me. The arguments of Naomi prevailed with Orpah, who returned to her people and her gods. But Ruth clave unto her; and even in the pages of Sterne, that great master of pathos, there is nothing which so calls forth the sensibilities of the reader as the simple effusion he has borrowed from Scripture — of Ruth to her mother-in-law [CHALMERS].

**™RUTH 1:19-22.** 

#### THEY COME TO BETH-LEHEM.

- **19-22.** *all the city was moved about them* The present condition of Naomi, a forlorn and desolate widow, presented so painful a contrast to the flourishing state of prosperity and domestic bliss in which she had been at her departure.
- **22.** *in the beginning of barley harvest* corresponding to the end of our March.

#### \*\*RUTH 2:1-3.

#### RUTH GLEANS IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.

- 2. Ruth ... said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean The right of gleaning was conferred by a positive law on the widow, the poor, and the stranger (see on Leviticus 19:9 and Deuteronomy 24:19). But liberty to glean behind the reapers [\*\*Ruth 2:3] was not a right that could be claimed; it was a privilege granted or refused according to the good will or favor of the owner.
- **3.** her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz Fields in Palestine being unenclosed, the phrase signifies that portion of the open ground which lay within the landmarks of Boaz.

# \*\*RUTH 2:4-23.

### HE TAKES KNOWLEDGE OF HER, AND SHOWS HER FAVOR.

- **4.** Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you This pious salutation between the master and his laborers strongly indicates the state of religious feeling among the rural population of Israel at that time, as well as the artless, happy, and unsuspecting simplicity which characterized the manners of the people. The same patriarchal style of speaking is still preserved in the East.
- **5.** his servant that was set over the reapers an overseer whose special duty was to superintend the operations in the field, to supply provision to the reapers, and pay them for their labor in the evening.
- 7. she said ... Let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves

   Various modes of reaping are practiced in the East. Where the crop is
  thin and short, it is plucked up by the roots. Sometimes it is cut with the

sickle. Whether reaped in the one way or the other, the grain is cast into sheaves loosely thrown together, to be subjected to the process of threshing, which takes place, for the most part, immediately after the reaping. Field labors were begun early in the morning — before the day became oppressively hot.

*she tarried a little in the house* — that is, the field tent, erected for the occasional rest and refreshment of the laborers.

- **8, 9.** said Boaz unto Ruth, ... bide here fast by my maidens The reaping was performed by women while the assortment of sheaves was the duty of men-servants. The same division of harvest labor obtains in Syria still. Boaz not only granted to Ruth the full privilege of gleaning after his reapers, but provided for her personal comfort.
- **9.** go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn Gleaners were sometimes allowed, by kind and charitable masters, to partake of the refreshments provided for the reapers. The vessels alluded to were skin bottles, filled with water and the bread was soaked in vinegar (\*\*Ruth 2:14); a kind of poor, weak wine, sometimes mingled with a little olive oil very cooling, as would be required in harvest-time. This grateful refection is still used in the harvest-field.
- **14.** he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left some of the new grain, roasted on the spot, and fit for use after being rubbed in the hands a favorite viand in the East. He gave her so much, that after satisfying her own wants, she had some (\*\*Ruth 2:18) in reserve for her mother-in-law.
- **16.** *let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her* The gleaners in the East glean with much success; for a great quantity of corn is scattered in the reaping, as well as in their manner of carrying it. One may judge, then, of the large quantity which Ruth would gather in consequence of the liberal orders given to the servants. These extraordinary marks of favor were not only given from a kindly disposition, but from regard to her good character and devoted attachment to her venerable relative.
- **17.** and beat out that she had gleaned When the quantity of grain was small, it was beat out by means of a stick.

an ephah — supposed to contain about a bushel.

- **20.** the man is ... one of our next kinsmen Hebrew, "one of our redeemers," on whom it devolves to protect us, to purchase our lands, and marry you, the widow of his next kinsman. She said, "one of them," not that there were many in the same close relationship, but that he was a very near kinsman, one other individual only having the precedence.
- **21.** *all my harvest* both barley and wheat harvests. The latter was at the end of May or the beginning of June.
- **22.** Naomi said unto Ruth ... It is good ... that thou go out with his maidens a prudent recommendation to Ruth to accept the generous invitation of Boaz, lest, if she were seen straying into other fields, she might not only run the risk of rude treatment, but displease him by seeming indifferent to his kind liberality. Moreover, the observant mind of the old matron had already discerned, in all Boaz' attentions to Ruth, the germs of a stronger affection, which she wished to increase.

### \*\*\*RUTH 3:1-13.

# BY NAOMI'S INSTRUCTIONS, RUTH LIES AT BOAZ'S FEET, WHO ACKNOWLEDGES THE DUTY OF A KINSMAN.

- 2. he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor The winnowing process is performed by throwing up the grain, after being trodden down, against the wind with a shovel. The threshing-floor, which was commonly on the harvest-field, was carefully leveled with a large cylindric roller and consolidated with chalk, that weeds might not spring up, and that it might not chop with drought. The farmer usually remained all night in harvest-time on the threshing-floor, not only for the protection of his valuable grain, but for the winnowing. That operation was performed in the evening to catch the breezes which blow after the close of a hot day, and which continue for the most part of the night. This duty at so important a season the master undertakes himself; and, accordingly, in the simplicity of ancient manners, Boaz, a person of considerable wealth and high rank, laid himself down to sleep on the barn floor, at the end of the heap of barley he had been winnowing.
- **4.** go in, and uncover his feet and lay thee down Singular as these directions may appear to us, there was no impropriety in them, according to the simplicity of rural manners in Beth-lehem. In ordinary circumstances these would have seemed indecorous to the world; but in the case of Ruth, it was a method, doubtless conformable to prevailing usage, of reminding Boaz of the duty which devolved on him as the kinsman of her deceased husband. Boaz probably slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet a position in which Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master's bed. Resting, as the Orientals do at night, in the same clothes they wear during the day, there was no indelicacy in a stranger, or even a woman, putting the extremity of this cover over her.

- **9.** I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman She had already drawn part of the mantle over her; and she asked him now to do it, that the act might become his own. To spread a skirt over one is, in the East, a symbolical action denoting protection. To this day in many parts of the East, to say of anyone that he put his skirt over a woman, is synonymous with saying that he married her; and at all the marriages of the modern Jews and Hindus, one part of the ceremony is for the bridegroom to put a silken or cotton cloak around his bride.
- **15.** Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it Eastern veils are large sheets those of ladies being of red silk; but the poorer or common class of women wear them of blue, or blue and white striped linen or cotton. They are wrapped round the head, so as to conceal the whole face except one eye.
- **17.** six measures of barley Hebrew, "six seahs," a seah contained about two gallons and a half, six of which must have been rather a heavy load for a woman.

### \*\*\*RUTH 4:1-5.

#### BOAZ CALLS INTO JUDGMENT THE NEXT KINSMAN.

- **1.** Then went Boaz up to the gate of the city a roofed building, unenclosed by walls; the place where, in ancient times, and in many Eastern towns still, all business transactions are made, and where, therefore, the kinsman was most likely to be found. No preliminaries were necessary in summoning one before the public assemblage; no writings and no delay were required. In a short conversation the matter was stated and arranged probably in the morning as people went out, or at noon when they returned from the field.
- **2.** he took ten men of the elders of the city as witnesses. In ordinary circumstances, two or three were sufficient to attest a bargain; but in cases of importance, such as matrimony, divorce, conveyancing of property, it was the Jewish practice to have ten (\*DIR\*1 Kings 21:8).
- 3. Naomi ... selleth a parcel of land that is, entertains the idea of selling. In her circumstances she was at liberty to part with it (\*\*\*Leviticus 25:25). Both Naomi and Ruth had an interest in the land during their lives; but Naomi alone was mentioned, not only because she directed all the negotiations, but because the introduction of Ruth's name would awaken a suspicion of the necessity of marrying her, before the first proposition was answered.
- **4.** there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee (See on Deuteronomy 25:5). The redemption of the land of course involved a marriage with Ruth, the widow of the former owner.

## \*\*\*RUTH 4:6-8.

#### HE REFUSES THE REDEMPTION.

- **6.** The kinsman said, I cannot redeem it ..., lest I mar mine own inheritance This consequence would follow, either, first, from his having a son by Ruth, who, though heir to the property, would not bear his name; his name would be extinguished in that of her former husband; or, secondly, from its having to be subdivided among his other children, which he had probably by a previous marriage. This right, therefore, was renounced and assigned in favor of Boaz, in the way of whose marriage with Ruth the only existing obstacle was now removed.
- **7, 8.** *a man plucked off his shoe* Where the kinsman refused to perform his duty to the family of his deceased relation, the widow was directed to pull off the shoe with some attendant circumstances of contemptuous disdain. But, as in this case, there was no refusal, the usual ignominy was spared; and the plucking off the shoe, the only ceremony observed, was a pledge of the transaction being completed.

\*\*\*RUTH 4:9-12.

#### HE MARRIES RUTH.

- **9.** Boaz said unto the elders Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was ... Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi Although the widow of Chilion was still living, no regard was paid to her in the disposal of her husband's property. From her remaining in Moab, she was considered to have either been married again, or to have renounced all right to an inheritance with the family of Elimelech.
- **10.** Ruth the Moabitess ... have I purchased to be my wife This connection Boaz not only might form, since Ruth had embraced the true religion, but he was under a legal necessity of forming it.
- **11.** all the people and the elders, said, We are witnesses A multitude, doubtless from curiosity or interest, were present on the occasion. There

was no signing of deeds; yet was the transfer made, and complete security given, by the public manner in which the whole matter was carried on and concluded.

the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah — This was the usual bridal benediction.

**12.** *let thy house be like the house of Pharez* — that is, as honorable and numerous as his. He was the ancestor of the Beth-lehem people, and his family one of the five from which the tribe of Judah sprang.

« RUTH 4:13-18.

#### SHE BEARS OBED.

**17.** *Obed* — means "servant."

**18-22.** *these are the generations of Pharez* — that is, his descendants. This appendix shows that the special object contemplated by the inspired author of this little book was to preserve the memory of an interesting domestic episode, and to trace the genealogy of David. There was an interval of three hundred eighty years between Salmon and David. It is evident that whole generations are omitted; the leading personages only are named, and grandfathers are said, in Scripture language, to beget their grandchildren, without specifying the intermediate links.

### THE FIRST BOOK OF

# **SAMUEL**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

•••••1 SAMUEL 1:1-8.

#### OF ELKANAH AND HIS TWO WIVES.

- 1, 2. a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim The first word being in the dual number, signifies the double city — the old and new town of Ramah Samuel 1:19). There were five cities of this name, all on high ground. This city had the addition of Zophim attached to it, because it was founded by Zuph, "an Ephrathite," that is a native of Ephratha. Bethlehem, and the expression "of Ramathaim-zophim" must, therefore, be understood as Ramah in the land of Zuph in the hill country of Ephratha. Others, considering "mount Ephraim" as pointing to the locality in Joseph's territory, regard "Zophim" not as a proper but a common noun, signifying watchtowers, or watchmen, with reference either to the height of its situation, or its being the residence of prophets who were watchmen Ezekiel 3:17). Though a native of Ephratha or Beth-lehem-judah, Elkanah was a Levite ( Chronicles 6:33,34). Though of this order, and a good man, he practiced polygamy. This was contrary to the original law, but it seems to have been prevalent among the Hebrews in those days, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what seemed right in his own eyes [ Judges 21:25].
- **3.** this man went up out of his city yearly to worship in Shiloh In that place was the "earth's one sanctuary," and thither he repaired at the three

solemn feasts, accompanied by his family at one of them — probably the passover. Although a Levite, he could not personally offer a sacrifice — that was exclusively the office of the priests; and his piety in maintaining a regular attendance on the divine ordinances is the more worthy of notice because the character of the two priests who administered them was notoriously bad. But doubtless he believed, and acted on the belief, that the ordinances were "effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in those who administered them, but from the grace of God being communicated through them."

4. when ... Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah ... portions — The offerer received back the greater part of the peace offerings, which he and his family or friends were accustomed to eat at a social feast before the Lord. (See on Leviticus 3:3 and Deuteronomy 12:12). It was out of these consecrated viands Elkanah gave portions to all the members of his family; but "unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion"; that is, a larger choice, according to the Eastern fashion of showing regard to beloved or distinguished guests. (See on Samuel 9:24; also see on Genesis 43:34).

**6.** her adversary also provoked her sore — The conduct of Peninnah was most unbecoming. But domestic broils in the houses of polygamists are of frequent occurrence, and the most fruitful cause of them has always been jealousy of the husband's superior affection, as in this case of Hannah.

•••• SAMUEL 1:9-18.

#### HANNAH'S PRAYER.

11. she prayed ... she vowed a vow — Here is a specimen of the intense desire that reigned in the bosoms of the Hebrew women for children. This was the burden of Hannah's prayer; and the strong preference she expressed for a male child originated in her purpose of dedicating him to the tabernacle service. The circumstance of his birth bound him to this; but his residence within the precincts of the sanctuary would have to commence at an earlier age than usual, in consequence of the Nazarite vow.

**12-18.** *Eli marked her mouth* — The suspicion of the aged priest seems to indicate that the vice of intemperance was neither uncommon nor confined to one sex in those times of disorder. This mistaken impression was immediately removed, and, in the words, "God grant," or rather, "will grant," was followed by an invocation which, as Hannah regarded it in the light of a prophecy pointing to the accomplishment of her earnest desire, dispelled her sadness, and filled her with confident hope (\*\*\* Samuel 1:18). The character and services of the expected child were sufficiently important to make his birth a fit subject for prophecy.

## ••••• SAMUEL 1:20.

#### SAMUEL BORN.

- **20.** called his name Samuel doubtless with her husband's consent. The names of children were given sometimes by the fathers, and sometimes by the mothers (see \*\*\*Genesis 4:1,26 \*\*\*\*5:29 \*\*\*\*19:37 \*\*\*21:3); and among the early Hebrews, they were commonly compound names, one part including the name of God.
- **21.** *the man Elkanah ... went up to offer ... his vow* The solemn expression of his concurrence in Hannah's vow was necessary to make it obligatory. (See on Numbers 30:3).
- **22.** But Hannah went not up Men only were obliged to attend the solemn feasts (\*\*Exodus 23:17). But Hannah, like other pious women, was in the habit of going, only she deemed it more prudent and becoming to defer her next journey till her son's age would enable her to fulfill her yow.
- **24.** *three bullocks* The *Septuagint* renders it "a bullock of three years old"; which is probably the true rendering.

### •••• SAMUEL 2:1-11.

#### HANNAH'S SONG IN THANKFULNESS TO GOD.

mine horn is exalted in the Lord — Allusion is here made to a peculiarity in the dress of Eastern women about Lebanon, which seems to have obtained anciently among the Israelite women, that of wearing a tin or silver horn on the forehead, on which their veil is suspended. Wives, who have no children, wear it projecting in an oblique direction, while those who become mothers forthwith raise it a few inches higher, inclining towards the perpendicular, and by this slight but observable change in their headdress, make known, wherever they go, the maternal character which they now bear.

**5.** they that were hungry ceased — that is, to hunger.

the barren hath born seven — that is, many children.

- **6.** he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up that is, He reduces to the lowest state of degradation and misery, and restores to prosperity and happiness.
- **8.** He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill The dunghill, a pile of horse, cow, or camel offal, heaped up to dry in the sun, and used as fuel, was, and is, one of the common haunts of the poorest mendicants; and the change that had been made in the social position of Hannah, appeared to her grateful heart as auspicious and as great as the elevation of a poor despised beggar to the highest and most dignified rank.

inherit the throne of glory — that is, possesses seats of honor.

- **10.** the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth ... exalt the horn of his anointed This is the first place in Scripture where the word "anointed," or Messiah, occurs; and as there was no king in Israel at the time, it seems the best interpretation to refer it to Christ. There is, indeed, a remarkable resemblance between the song of Hannah and that of Mary (\*\*Luke 1:46).
- **11.** *the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest* He must have been engaged in some occupation suited to his tender age, as in playing upon the cymbals, or other instruments of music; in lighting the lamps, or similar easy and interesting services.

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#### THE SIN OF ELL'S SONS.

- **12.** Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial not only careless and irreligious, but men loose in their actions, and vicious and scandalous in their habits. Though professionally engaged in sacred duties, they were not only strangers to the power of religion in the heart, but they had thrown off its restraints, and even ran, as is sometimes done in similar cases by the sons of eminent ministers, to the opposite extreme of reckless and open profligacy.
- 13-17. the priests' custom with the people When persons wished to present a sacrifice of peace offering on the altar, the offering was brought in the first instance to the priest, and as the Lord's part was burnt, the parts appropriated respectively to the priests and offerers were to be sodden. But Eli's sons, unsatisfied with the breast and shoulder, which were the perquisites appointed to them by the divine law (\*\*Exodus 29:27\*\*Leviticus 7:31,32), not only claimed part of the offerer's share, but rapaciously seized them previous to the sacred ceremony of heaving or waving (see on \*\*Leviticus 7:29); and moreover they committed the additional injustice of taking up with their fork those portions which they preferred, while still raw. Pious people revolted at such rapacious and profane encroachments on the dues of the altar, as well as what should

have gone to constitute the family and social feast of the offerer. The truth is, the priests having become haughty and unwilling in many instances to accept invitations to those feasts, presents of meat were sent to them; and this, though done in courtesy at first, being, in course of time, established into a right, gave rise to all the rapacious keenness of Eli's sons.

# 9928 SAMUEL 2:18-26.

#### SAMUEL'S MINISTRY.

**18.** But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child — This notice of his early services in the outer courts of the tabernacle was made to pave the way for the remarkable prophecy regarding the high priest's family.

girded with a linen ephod — A small shoulder-garment or apron, used in the sacred service by the inferior priests and Levites; sometimes also by judges or eminent persons, and hence allowed to Samuel, who, though not a Levite, was devoted to God from his birth.

- 19. his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year Aware that he could not yet render any useful service to the tabernacle, she undertook the expense of supplying him with wearing apparel. All weaving stuffs, manufacture of cloth, and making of suits were anciently the employment of women.
- **20.** *Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife* This blessing, like that which he had formerly pronounced, had a prophetic virtue; which, before long, appeared in the increase of Hannah's family (\*\*\*) Samuel 2:21), and the growing qualifications of Samuel for the service of the sanctuary.
- **22-24.** *the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle* This was an institution of holy women of a strictly ascetic order, who had relinquished worldly cares and devoted themselves to the Lord; an institution which continued down to the time of Christ (\*\*\*Luke 2:37). Eli was, on the whole, a good man, but lacking in the moral and religious training of his family. He erred on the side of parental indulgence; and though he reprimanded them (see on \*\*Deuteronomy 21:18), yet, from fear or indolence, he shrank from laying on them the restraints, or

subjecting them to the discipline, their gross delinquencies called for. In his judicial capacity, he winked at their flagrant acts of maladministration and suffered them to make reckless encroachments on the constitution, by which the most serious injuries were inflicted both on the rights of the people and the laws of God.

**25.** they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because — it should be therefore.

*the Lord would slay them* — It was not God's preordination, but their own wilful and impenitent disobedience which was the cause of their destruction.

# \*\*\*\* SAMUEL 2:27-35.

#### A PROPHECY AGAINST ELI'S HOUSE.

- **31.** I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house By the withdrawal of the high priesthood from Eleazar, the elder of Aaron's two sons (after Nadab and Abihu were destroyed, [\*\*Numbers 3:4]), that dignity had been conferred on the family of Ithamar, to which Eli belonged, and now that his descendants had forfeited the honor, it was to be taken from them and restored to the elder branch.

## • SAMUEL 3:1-10.

#### THE LORD APPEARS TO SAMUEL IN A VISION.

**1.** the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli — His ministry consisted, of course, of such duties in or about the sanctuary as were suited to his age, which is supposed now to have been about twelve years. Whether the office had been specially assigned him, or it arose from the interest inspired by the story of his birth, Eli kept him as his immediate attendant; and he resided not in the sanctuary, but in one of the tents or apartments around it, assigned for the accommodation of the priests and Levites, his being near to that of the high priest.

the word of the Lord was precious in those days — It was very rarely known to the Israelites; and in point of fact only two prophets are mentioned as having appeared during the whole administration of the judges (4000 Judges 4:4 4000 St.8).

there was no open vision — no publicly recognized prophet whom the people could consult, and from whom they might learn the will of God. There must have been certain indubitable evidences by which a communication from heaven could be distinguished. Eli knew them, for he may have received them, though not so frequently as is implied in the idea of an "open vision."

- **3.** ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord The "temple" seems to have become the established designation of the tabernacle, and the time indicated was towards the morning twilight, as the lamps were extinguished at sunrise (see "Leviticus 6:12,13).
- **5-18.** he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me It is evident that his sleeping chamber was close to that of the aged high priest and that he was accustomed to be called during the night. The three successive calls addressed to the boy convinced Eli of the divine character

of the speaker, and he therefore exhorted the child to give a reverential attention to the message. The burden of [the Lord's message] was an extraordinary premonition of the judgments that impended over Eli's house; and the aged priest, having drawn the painful secret from the child, exclaimed, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." Such is the spirit of meek and unmurmuring submission in which we ought to receive the dispensations of God, however severe and afflictive. But, in order to form a right estimate of Eli's language and conduct on this occasion, we must consider the overwhelming accumulation of judgments denounced against his person, his sons, his descendants — his altar, and nation. With such a threatening prospect before him, his piety and meekness were wonderful. In his personal character he seems to have been a good man, but his sons' conduct was flagrantly bad; and though his misfortunes claim our sympathy, it is impossible to approve or defend the weak and unfaithful course which, in the retributive justice of God, brought these adversities upon him.

# ••••1 SAMUEL 4:1-11.

#### ISRAEL OVERCOME BY THE PHILISTINES.

1. the word of Samuel came to all Israel — The character of Samuel as a prophet was now fully established. The want of an "open vision" was supplied by him, for "none of his words were let fall to the ground" (\*\*\*) Samuel 3:19); and to his residence in Shiloh all the people of Israel repaired to consult him as an oracle, who, as the medium of receiving the divine command, or by his gift of a prophet, could inform them what was the mind of God. It is not improbable that the rising influence of the young prophet had alarmed the jealous fears of the Philistines. They had kept the Israelites in some degree of subjection ever since the death of Samson and were determined, by further crushing, to prevent the possibility of their being trained by the counsels, and under the leadership, of Samuel, to reassert their national independence. At all events, the Philistines were the aggressors (4002) Samuel 4:2). But, on the other hand, the Israelites were rash and inconsiderate in rushing to the field without obtaining the sanction of Samuel as to the war, or having consulted him as to the subsequent measures they took.

*Israel went out against the Philistines to battle* — that is, to resist this new incursion.

**Eben-ezer ... Aphek** — Aphek, which means "strength," is a name applied to any fort or fastness. There were several Apheks in Palestine; but the mention of Eben-ezer determines this "Aphek" to be in the south, among the mountains of Judah, near the western entrance of the pass of Bethhoron, and consequently on the borders of the Philistine territory. The first encounter at Aphek being unsuccessful, the Israelites determined to renew the engagement in better circumstances.

**3-9.** Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us — Strange that they were so blind to the real cause of the disaster and

that they did not discern, in the great and general corruption of religion and morals (\*\*\*\* Samuel 2:22-25 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 78:58), the reason why the presence and aid of God were not extended to them. Their first measure for restoring the national spirit and energy ought to have been a complete reformation — a universal return to purity of worship and morals. But, instead of cherishing a spirit of deep humiliation and sincere repentance, instead of resolving on the abolition of existing abuses, and the reestablishing of the pure faith, they adopted what appeared an easier and speedier course — they put their trust in ceremonial observances, and doubted not but that the introduction of the ark into the battlefield would ensure their victory. In recommending this extraordinary step, the elders might recollect the confidence it imparted to their ancestors ( Numbers 10:35 out 14:44), as well as what had been done at Jericho. But it is more probable that they were influenced by the heathenish ideas of their idolatrous neighbors, who carried their idol Dagon, or his sacred symbols, to their wars, believing that the power of their divinities was inseparably associated with, or residing in, their images. In short, the shout raised in the Hebrew camp, on the arrival of the ark, indicated very plainly the prevalence among the Israelites at this time of a belief in national deities whose influence was local, and whose interest was especially exerted in behalf of the people who adored them. The joy of the Israelites was an emotion springing out of the same superstitious sentiments as the corresponding dismay of their enemies; and to afford them a convincing, though painful proof of their error, was the ulterior object of the discipline to which they were now subjected — a discipline by which God, while punishing them for their apostasy by allowing the capture of the ark, had another end in view — that of signally vindicating His supremacy over all the gods of the nations.

#### ELI HEARING THE TIDINGS.

**13-18.** *Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside* — The aged priest, as a public magistrate, used, in dispensing justice, to seat himself daily in a spacious recess at the entrance gate of the city. In his intense anxiety to learn the

issue of the battle, he took up his usual place as the most convenient for meeting with passers-by. His seat was an official chair, similar to those of the ancient Egyptian judges, richly carved, superbly ornamented, high, and without a back. The calamities announced to Samuel as about to fall upon the family of Eli [4925] Samuel 2:34] were now inflicted in the death of his two sons, and after his death, by that of his daughter-in-law, whose infant son received a name that perpetuated the fallen glory of the church and nation [4005] Samuel 4:19-22]. The public disaster was completed by the capture of the ark. Poor Eli! He was a good man, in spite of his unhappy weaknesses. So strongly were his sensibilities enlisted on the side of religion, that the news of the capture of the ark proved to him a knell of death; and yet his overindulgence, or sad neglect of his family — the main cause of all the evils that led to its fall — has been recorded, as a beacon to warn all heads of Christian families against making shipwreck on the same rock.

# • SAMUEL 5:1,2.

# THE PHILISTINES BRING THE ARK INTO THE HOUSE OF DAGON.

- **1.** *Ashdod* or Azotus, one of the five Philistine satrapies, and a place of great strength. It was an inland town, thirty-four miles north of Gaza, now called Esdud.
- **2.** *the house of Dagon* Stately temples were erected in honor of this idol, which was the principal deity of the Philistines, but whose worship extended over all Syria, as well as Mesopotamia and Chaldea; its name being found among the Assyrian gods on the cuneiform inscriptions [RAWLINSON]. It was represented under a monstrous combination of a human head, breast, and arms, joined to the belly and tail of a fish. The captured ark was placed in the temple of Dagon, right before this image of the idol.

## • SAMUEL 5:3-5.

#### DAGON FALLS DOWN.

**3, 4.** *they of Ashdod arose early* — They were filled with consternation when they found the object of their stupid veneration prostrate before the symbol of the divine presence. Though set up, it fell again, and lay in a state of complete mutilation; its head and arms, severed from the trunk, were lying in distant and separate places, as if violently cast off, and only the fishy part remained. The degradation of their idol, though concealed by the priests on the former occasion, was now more manifest and infamous. It lay in the attitude of a vanquished enemy and a suppliant, and this picture of humiliation significantly declared the superiority of the God of Israel.

**5.** Therefore neither the priests ... nor any ... tread on the threshold of **Dagon** — A superstitious ceremony crept in, and in the providence of God was continued, by which the Philistines contributed to publish this proof of the helplessness of their god.

*unto this day* — The usage continued in practice at the time when this history was written — probably in the later years of Samuel's life.

## 

#### THE PHILISTINES ARE SMITTEN WITH EMERODS.

**6.** the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod — The presumption of the Ashdodites was punished by a severe judgment that overtook them in the form of a pestilence.

smote them with emerods — bleeding piles, hemorrhoids (\*\*Psalm 78:66), in a very aggravated form. As the heathens generally regarded diseases affecting the secret parts of the body as punishments from the gods for trespasses committed against themselves, the Ashdodites would be the more ready to look upon the prevailing epidemic as demonstrating the anger of God, already shown against their idol.

- **7.** the ark of God shall not abide with us It was removed successively to several of the large towns of the country, but the same pestilence broke out in every place and raged so fiercely and fatally that the authorities were forced to send the ark back into the land of Israel [4938] Samuel 5:8-10].
- **11.** *they sent* that is, the magistrates of Ekron.
- **12.** *the cry of the city went up to heaven* The disease is attended with acute pain, and it is far from being a rare phenomenon in the Philistian plain [VAN DE VELDE].

### • SAMUEL 6:1-9.

#### THE PHILISTINES COUNSEL HOW TO SEND BACK THE ARK.

- **1.** the ark ... was in the country of the Philistines seven months Notwithstanding the calamities which its presence had brought on the country and the people, the Philistine lords were unwilling to relinquish such a prize, and tried every means to retain it with peace and safety, but in vain
- **2, 3.** *the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners* The designed restoration of the ark was not, it seems, universally approved of, and many doubts were expressed whether the prevailing pestilence was really a judgment of Heaven. The priests and diviners united all parties by recommending a course which would enable them easily to discriminate the true character of the calamities, and at the same time to propitiate the incensed Deity for any acts of disrespect which might have been shown to His ark.
- **4.** *Five golden emerods* Votive or thank offerings were commonly made by the heathen in prayer for, or gratitude after, deliverance from lingering or dangerous disorders, in the form of metallic (generally silver) models or images of the diseased parts of the body. This is common still in Roman Catholic countries, as well as in the temples of the Hindus and other modern heathen.

*five golden mice* — This animal is supposed by some to be the jerboa or jumping mouse of Syria and Egypt [BOCHART]; by others, to be the short-tailed field mouse, which often swarms in prodigious numbers and commits great ravages in the cultivated fields of Palestine.

**5.** *give glory unto the God of Israel* — By these propitiatory presents, the Philistines would acknowledge His power and make reparation for the injury done to His ark.

lighten his hand ... from off your gods — Elohim for god.

- **6.** Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? The memory of the appalling judgments that had been inflicted on Egypt was not yet obliterated. Whether preserved in written records, or in floating tradition, they were still fresh in the minds of men, and being extensively spread, were doubtless the means of diffusing the knowledge and fear of the true God.
- **7.** *make a new cart* Their object in making a new one for the purpose seems to have been not only for cleanliness and neatness, but from an impression that there would have been an impropriety in using one that had been applied to meaner or more common services. It appears to have been a covered wagon (see on Samuel 6:3).

*two milch kine* — Such untrained heifers, wanton and vagrant, would pursue no certain and regular path, like those accustomed to the yoke, and therefore were most unlikely of their own spontaneous motion to prosecute the direct road to the land of Israel.

**bring their calves home from them** — The strong natural affection of the dams might be supposed to stimulate their return homewards, rather than direct their steps in a foreign country.

**8.** take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart — This mode of carrying the sacred symbol was forbidden; but the ignorance of the Philistines made the indignity excusable (see on 4000) Samuel 6:6).

put the jewels ... in a coffer by the side thereof — The way of securing treasure in the East is still in a chest, chained to the house wall or some solid part of the furniture.

**9-12.** *Beth-shemesh* — that is, "house of the sun," now Ain Shems [ROBINSON], a city of priests in Judah, in the southeast border of Dan, lying in a beautiful and extensive valley. Josephus says they were set agoing near a place where the road divided into two — the one leading back to Ekron, where were their calves, and the other to Beth-shemesh. Their frequent lowings attested their ardent longing for their young, and at the same time the supernatural influence that controlled their movements in a contrary direction.

- **12.** *the lords of the Philistines went after them* to give their tribute of homage, to prevent imposture, and to obtain the most reliable evidence of the truth. The result of this journey tended to their own deeper humiliation, and the greater illustration of God's glory.
- **14.** *and they clave* that is, the Beth-shemites, in an irrepressible outburst of joy.
- offered the kine Though contrary to the requirements of the law (\*\*DLeviticus 1:3 22:19), these animals might properly be offered, as consecrated by God Himself; and though not beside the tabernacle, there were many instances of sacrifices offered by prophets and holy men on extraordinary occasions in other places.
- **17, 18.** And these are the golden emerods ... and the mice There were five representative images of the emerods, corresponding to the five principal cities of the Philistines. But the number of the golden mice must have been greater, for they were sent from the walled towns as well as the country villages.
- **18.** *unto the great stone of Abel Abel*, or *Aben*, means "stone," so that without resorting to *italics*, the reading should be, "the great stone."
- 19. he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark In the ecstasy of delight at seeing the return of the ark, the Beth-shemesh reapers pried into it beneath the wagon cover; and instead of covering it up again, as a sacred utensil, they let it remain exposed to common inspection, wishing it to be seen, in order that all might enjoy the triumph of seeing the votive offerings presented to it, and gratify curiosity with the sight of the sacred shrine. This was the offense of those Israelites (Levites, as well as common people), who had treated the ark with less reverence than the Philistines themselves.
- he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men—
  Beth-shemesh being only a village, this translation must be erroneous, and should be, "he smote fifty out of a thousand," being only fourteen hundred in all who indulged this curiosity. God, instead of decimating, according to an ancient usage, slew only a twentieth part; that is, according to JOSEPHUS, seventy out of fourteen hundred (see "Numbers 4:18-22).

**21.** *Kirjath-jearim* — "the city of woods," also called Kirjath-baal (\*\*\*15:60 \*\*\*18:14 \*\*\*16\*\*1 Chronicles 13:6,7). This was the nearest town to Beth-shemesh; and being a place of strength, it was a more fitting place for the residence of the ark. Beth-shemesh being in a low plain, and Kirjath-jearim on a hill, explains the message, "Come ye down, and fetch it up to you."

## ••••1 SAMUEL 7:1,2.

#### THE ARK AT KIRJATH-JEARIM.

brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill — Why it was not transported at once to Shiloh where the tabernacle and sacred vessels were remaining, is difficult to conjecture.

**sanctified** ... **his son** — He was not a Levite, and was therefore only set apart or appointed to be keeper of the place.

**2.** the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim ... twenty years — It appears, in the subsequent history, that a much longer period elapsed before its final removal from Kirjath-jearim (\*\*\* Samuel 6:1-19 \*\*\* Chronicles 13:1-14). But that length of time had passed when the Israelites began to revive from their sad state of religious decline. The capture of the ark had produced a general indifference either as to its loss or its recovery.

all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord — They were then brought, doubtless by the influence of Samuel's exhortations, to renounce idolatry, and to return to the national worship of the true God.

# •••• SAMUEL 7:3-6.

# THE ISRAELITES, THROUGH SAMUEL'S INFLUENCE, SOLEMNLY REPENT AT MIZPEH.

- **3-6.** Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel A great national reformation was effected through the influence of Samuel. Disgusted with their foreign servitude, and panting for the restoration of liberty and independence, they were open to salutary impressions; and convinced of their errors, they renounced idolatry. The re-establishment of the faith of their fathers was inaugurated at a great public meeting, held at Mizpeh in Judah, and hallowed by the observance of impressive religious solemnities. The drawing water, and pouring it out before the Lord, seems to have been a symbolical act by which, in the people's name, Samuel testified their sense of national corruption, their need of that moral purification of which water is the emblem, and their sincere desire to pour out their hearts in repentance before God.
- **6.** Samuel judged ... Israel in Mizpeh At the time of Eli's death he could not have much exceeded twenty years of age; and although his character and position must have given him great influence, it does not appear that hitherto he had done more than prophets were wont to do. Now he entered on the duties of a civil magistrate.

••••• SAMUEL 7:7-14.

## WHILE SAMUEL PRAYS, THE PHILISTINES ARE DISCOMFITED.

**7-11.** when the Philistines heard, etc. — The character and importance of the national convention at Mizpeh were fully appreciated by the Philistines. They discerned in it the rising spirit of religious patriotism among the Israelites that was prepared to throw off the yoke of their domination. Anxious to crush it at the first, they made a sudden incursion while the Israelites were in the midst of their solemn celebration. Unprepared for resistance, they besought Samuel to supplicate the divine interposition to save them from their enemies. The prophet's prayers and

sacrifice were answered by such a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning that the assailants, panic-struck, were disordered and fled. The Israelites, recognizing the hand of God, rushed courageously on the foe they had so much dreaded and committed such immense havoc, that the Philistines did not for long recover from this disastrous blow. This brilliant victory secured peace and independence to Israel for twenty years, as well as the restitution of the usurped territory.

**12.** Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen — on an open spot between the town and "the crag" (some well-known rock in the neighborhood). A huge stone pillar was erected as a monument of their victory (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 26:1). The name — Eben-ezer — is thought to have been written on the face of it.

## • SAMUEL 8:1-18.

# OCCASIONED BY THE ILL-GOVERNMENT OF SAMUEL'S SONS, THE ISRAELITES ASK A KING.

**1-5.** when Samuel was old — He was now about fifty-four years of age, having discharged the office of sole judge for twelve years. Unable, from growing infirmities, to prosecute his circuit journeys through the country, he at length confined his magisterial duties to Ramah and its neighborhood ( Samuel 7:15), delegating to his sons as his deputies the administration of justice in the southern districts of Palestine, their provincial court being held at Beer-sheba. The young men, however, did not inherit the high qualities of their father. Having corrupted the fountains of justice for their own private aggrandizement, a deputation of the leading men in the country lodged a complaint against them in headquarters, accompanied with a formal demand for a change in the government. The limited and occasional authority of the judges, the disunion and jealousy of the tribes under the administration of those rulers, had been creating a desire for a united and permanent form of government; while the advanced age of Samuel, together with the risk of his death happening in the then unsettled state of the people, was the occasion of calling forth an expression of this desire now.

**6-10.** the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us — Personal and family feelings might affect his views of this public movement. But his dissatisfaction arose principally from the proposed change being revolutionary in its character. Though it would not entirely subvert their theocratic government, the appointment of a visible monarch would necessarily tend to throw out of view their unseen King and Head. God intimated, through Samuel, that their request would, in anger, be granted, while at the same time he apprised them of some of the evils that would result from their choice.

**11.** This will be the manner of the king — The following is a very just and graphic picture of the despotic governments which anciently and still are found in the East, and into conformity with which the Hebrew monarchy, notwithstanding the restrictions prescribed by the law, gradually slid.

*He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself* — Oriental sovereigns claim a right to the services of any of their subjects at pleasure.

*some shall run before his chariots* — The royal equipages were, generally throughout the East (as in Persia they still are), preceded and accompanied by a number of attendants who ran on foot.

- **12.** *he will appoint him captains* In the East, a person must accept any office to which he may be nominated by the king, however irksome it may be to his taste or ruinous to his interests.
- **13.** he will take your daughters to be confectionaries Cookery, baking, and the kindred works are, in Eastern countries, female employment, and thousands of young women are occupied with these offices in the palaces even of petty princes.
- **14-18.** *he will take your fields*, etc. The circumstances mentioned here might be illustrated by exact analogies in the conduct of many Oriental monarchs in the present day.
- 19-22. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel They sneered at Samuel's description as a bugbear to frighten them. Determined, at all hazards, to gain their object, they insisted on being made like all the other nations, though it was their glory and happiness to be unlike other nations in having the Lord for their King and Lawgiver (\*\* Numbers 23:9 \*\* Deuteronomy 33:28). Their demand was conceded, for the government of a king had been provided for in the law; and they were dismissed to wait the appointment, which God had reserved to Himself (\*\*\* Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

### •••• SAMUEL 9:1-14.

# SAUL, DESPAIRING TO FIND HIS FATHER'S ASSES, COMES TO SAMUEL.

- **1.** a mighty man of power that is, of great wealth and substance. The family was of high consideration in the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore Saul's words must be set down among the common forms of affected humility, which Oriental people are wont to use.
- **2.** Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly He had a fine appearance; for it is evident that he must have been only a little under seven feet tall. A gigantic stature and an athletic frame must have been a popular recommendation at that time in that country.
- 3. the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul ... arise, go seek the asses The probability is that the family of Kish, according to the immemorial usage of Oriental shepherds in the purely pastoral regions, had let the animals roam at large during the grazing season, at the close of which messengers were despatched in search of them. Such travelling searches are common; and, as each owner has his own stamp marked on his cattle, the mention of it to the shepherds he meets gradually leads to the discovery of the strayed animals. This ramble of Saul's had nothing extraordinary in it, except its *superior* directions and issue, which turned its uncertainty into certainty.
- **4, 5.** *he passed through mount Ephraim* This being situated on the north of Benjamin, indicates the direction of Saul's journey. The district explored means the whole of the mountainous region, with its valleys and defiles, which belonged to Ephraim. Turning apparently southwards probably through the verdant hills between Shiloh and the vales of Jordan (Shalisha and Shalim) he approached again the borders of Benjamin, scoured the land of Zuph, and was proposing to return, when his servant

recollected that they were in the immediate neighborhood of the man of God, who would give them counsel.

**6.** there is in this city a man of God — Ramah was the usual residence of Samuel, but several circumstances, especially the mention of Rachel's sepulcher, which lay in Saul's way homeward [\*\*\* Samuel 10:2], lead to the conclusion that "this city" was not the Ramah where Samuel dwelt.

peradventure he can show us our way that we should go — It seems strange that a dignified prophet should be consulted in such an affair. But it is probable that at the introduction of the prophetic office, the seers had discovered things lost or stolen, and thus their power for higher revelations was gradually established.

7. Saul said to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? — According to Eastern notions, it would be considered a want of respect for any person to go into the presence of a superior man of rank or of official station without a present of some kind in his hand, however trifling in value.

the bread is spent in our vessels — Shepherds, going in quest of their cattle, put up in a bag as much flour for making bread as will last sometimes for thirty days. It appears that Saul thought of giving the man of God a cake from his travelling bag, and this would have been sufficient to render the indispensable act of civility — the customary tribute to official dignity.

- **8.** *the fourth part of a shekel of silver* rather more than quarter. Contrary to our Western notions, money is in the East the most acceptable form in which a present can be made to a man of rank.
- **9.** *seer* ... *Prophet* The recognized distinction in latter times was, that a seer was one who was favored with visions of God a view of things invisible to mortal sight; and a prophet foretold future events.
- 11-13. as they went up the hill The modern village, Er-Rameh, lies on an eminence; and on their way they met a band of young maidens going out to the well, which, like all similar places in Palestine, was beyond the precincts of the town. From these damsels they learned that the day was devoted to a festival occasion, in honor of which Samuel had arrived in the

city; that a sacrifice had been offered, which was done by prophets in extraordinary circumstances at a distance from the tabernacle, and that a feast was to follow — implying that it had been a peace offering; and that, according to the venerable practice of the Israelites, the man of God was expected to ask a special blessing on the food in a manner becoming the high occasion.

**14.** Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place — Such were the simple manners of the times that this prophet, the chief man in Israel, was seen going to preside at a high festival undistinguished either by his dress or equipage from any ordinary citizen.

### •••• SAMUEL 9:15-27.

# GOD REVEALS TO SAMUEL SAUL'S COMING, AND HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE KINGDOM.

- **15, 16.** *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before* The description of Saul, the time of his arrival, and the high office to which he was destined, had been secretly intimated to Samuel from heaven. The future king of Israel was to fight the battles of the Lord and protect His people. It would appear that they were at this time suffering great molestation from the Philistines, and that this was an additional reason of their urgent demands for the appointment of a king (see 4015) Samuel 10:5 13:3).
- **18-20.** *Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is* Satisfying the stranger's inquiry, Samuel invited him to the feast, as well as to sojourn till the morrow; and, in order to reconcile him to the delay, he assured him that the strayed asses had been recovered.
- **20, 21.** on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? This was a covert and indirect premonition of the royal dignity that awaited him; and, though Saul's answer shows that he fully understood it, he affected to doubt that the prophet was in earnest.
- **21.** And Saul answered and said, Amos not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, etc. By selecting a king from this least and nearly

extinct tribe (<sup>4726</sup>Judges 20:46-48), divine wisdom designed to remove all grounds of jealousy among the other tribes.

- **22.** Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour— The toil-worn but noble-looking traveler found himself suddenly seated among the principal men of the place and treated as the most distinguished guest.
- **24.** the cook took up the shoulder ... and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left; set it before thee, and eat that is, reserved (See on Genesis 18:7 and Genesis 43:34). This was, most probably, the right shoulder; which, as the perquisite of the sacrifice, belonged to Samuel, and which he had set aside for his expected guest. In the sculptures of the Egyptian shambles, also, the first joint taken off was always the right shoulder for the priest. The meaning of those distinguished attentions must have been understood by the other guests.
- 25-27. Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house Saul was taken to lodge with the prophet for that night. Before retiring to rest, they communed on the flat roof of the house, the couch being laid there (\*\*Toshua 2:6\*), when, doubtless, Samuel revealed the secret and described the peculiar duties of a monarch in a nation so related to the Divine King as Israel. Next morning early, Samuel roused his guest, and conveying him on his way towards the skirts of the city, sought, before parting, a *private* interview the object of which is narrated in the next chapter.

## •••• SAMUEL 10:1-27.

# SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL, AND CONFIRMS HIM BY THE PREDICTION OF THREE SIGNS.

**1.** Then Samuel took a vial of oil — This was the ancient (\*\*Tudges 9:8) ceremony of investiture with the royal office among the Hebrews and other Eastern nations. But there were two unctions to the kingly office; the one in private, by a prophet (\*\*Tudges\*\*) Samuel 16:13), which was meant to be only a prophetic intimation of the person attaining that high dignity — the more public and formal inauguration (\*\*Tudges\*\*) Samuel 2:4 \*\*Tudges\*\*) was performed by the high priest, and perhaps with the holy oil, but that is not certain. The first of a dynasty was thus anointed, but not his heirs, unless the succession was disputed (\*\*Tudges\*\*) Kings 1:39 \*\*Tudges\*\* Kings 11:12 \*\*Tudges\*\* Chronicles 23:11).

**kissed him** — This salutation, as explained by the words that accompanied it, was an act of respectful homage, a token of congratulation to the new king (\*\*Psalm 2:12).

**2.** When thou art departed from me to-day — The design of these specific predictions of what should be met with on the way, and the number and minuteness of which would arrest attention, was to confirm Saul's reliance on the prophetic character of Samuel, and lead him to give full credence to what had been revealed to him as the word of God.

**Rachel's sepulcher** — near Beth-lehem (see on Genesis 35:16).

**Zelzah** — or Zelah, now *Bet-jalah*, in the neighborhood of that town.

**3.** *the plain* — or, "the oak of Tabor," not the celebrated mount, for that was far distant.

*three men going up to God to Beth-el* — apparently to offer sacrifices there at a time when the ark and the tabernacle were not in a settled abode,

and God had not yet declared the permanent place which He should choose. The kids were for sacrifice, the loaves for the offering, and the wine for the libations.

- **5.** *the hill of God* probably Geba (\*\*\* Samuel 13:3), so called from a school of the prophets being established there. The company of prophets were, doubtless, the pupils at this seminary, which had probably been instituted by Samuel, and in which the chief branches of education taught were a knowledge of the law, and of psalmody with instrumental music, which is called "prophesying" (here and in \*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 25:1,7).
- **6.** the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee literally, "rush upon thee," suddenly endowing thee with a capacity and act in a manner far superior to thy previous character and habits; and instead of the simplicity, ignorance, and sheepishness of a peasant, thou wilt display an energy, wisdom, and magnanimity worthy of a prince.
- **8.** thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal This, according to JOSEPHUS, was to be a standing rule for the observance of Saul while the prophet and he lived; that in every great crisis, such as a hostile incursion on the country, he should repair to Gilgal, where he was to remain seven days, to afford time for the tribes on both sides Jordan to assemble, and Samuel to reach it.
- 9-11. when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart Influenced by the words of Samuel, as well as by the accomplishment of these signs, Saul's reluctance to undertake the onerous office was overcome. The fulfillment of the two first signs [4000] Samuel 10:7,8] is passed over, but the third is specially described. The spectacle of a man, though more fit to look after his father's cattle than to take part in the sacred exercises of the young prophets a man without any previous instruction, or any known taste, entering with ardor into the spirit, and skilfully accompanying the melodies of the sacred band, was so extraordinary a phenomenon, that it gave rise to the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (see 4000) Samuel 19:24). The prophetic spirit had come upon him; and to Saul it was as personal and experimental an evidence of the truth of God's word that had been spoken to him, as converts to Christianity have in themselves from the sanctifying power of the Gospel.

**12.** But who is their father? — The Septuagint reads, "Who is his father?" referring to Saul the son of Kish.

**17-25.** Samuel called the people together ... at Mizpeh — a shaft-like hill near Hebron, five hundred feet in height. The national assemblies of the Israelites were held there. A day having been appointed for the election of a king, Samuel, after having charged the people with a rejection of God's institution and a superseding of it by one of their own, proceeded to the nomination of the new monarch. As it was of the utmost importance that the appointment should be under the divine direction and control, the determination was made by the miraculous lot, tribes, families, and individuals being successively passed until Saul was found. His concealment of himself must have been the result either of innate modesty, or a sudden nervous excitement under the circumstances. When dragged into view, he was seen to possess all those corporeal advantages which a rude people desiderate in their sovereigns; and the exhibition of which gained for the prince the favorable opinion of Samuel also. In the midst of the national enthusiasm, however, the prophet's deep piety and genuine patriotism took care to explain "the manner of the kingdom," that is, the royal rights and privileges, together with the limitations to which they were to be subjected; and in order that the constitution might be ratified with all due solemnity, the charter of this constitutional monarchy was recorded and laid up "before the Lord," that is, deposited in the custody of the priests, along with the most sacred archives of the nation.

**26.** And Saul also went home to Gibeah — near Geba. This was his place of residence (see Judges 20:20), about five miles north of Jerusalem.

there went ... a band of men, whose hearts God had touched — who feared God and regarded allegiance to their king as a conscientious duty. They are opposed to "the children of Belial."

27. the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents — In Eastern countries, the honor of the sovereign and the splendor of the royal household are upheld, not by a fixed rate of taxation, but by presents brought at certain seasons by officials, and men of wealth, from all parts of the kingdom, according to the means of the individual, and of a customary registered value. Such was the tribute which Saul's opponents withheld, and for want of which he

was unable to set up a kingly establishment for a while. But "biding his time," he bore the insult with a prudence and magnanimity which were of great use in the beginning of his government.

## ••••• SAMUEL 11:1-4.

# NAHASH OFFERS THEM OF JABESH-GILEAD A REPROACHFUL CONDITION.

**1.** Then Nahash the Ammonite came up — Nahash ("serpent"); (see Judges 8:3). The Ammonites had long claimed the right of original possession in Gilead. Though repressed by Jephthah (Judges 11:33), they now, after ninety years, renew their pretensions; and it was the report of their threatened invasion that hastened the appointment of a king (Judges 12:12).

Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee — They saw no prospect of aid from the western Israelites, who were not only remote, but scarcely able to repel the incursions of the Philistines from themselves.

- **2.** thrust out all your right eyes literally, "scoop" or "hollow out" the ball. This barbarous mutilation is the usual punishment of usurpers in the East, inflicted on chiefs; sometimes, also, even in modern history, on the whole male population of a town. Nahash meant to keep the Jabeshites useful as tributaries, whence he did not wish to render them wholly blind, but only to deprive them of their right eye, which would disqualify them for war. Besides, his object was, through the people of Jabesh-gilead, to insult the Israelitish nation.
- **3, 4.** send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel a curious proof of the general dissatisfaction that prevailed as to the appointment of Saul. Those Gileadites deemed him capable neither of advising nor succoring them; and even in his own town the appeal was made to the people not to the prince.

## 

### THEY SEND TO SAUL, AND ARE DELIVERED.

- 7. he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces (see Judges 19:29). This particular form of war summons was suited to the character and habits of an agricultural and pastoral people. Solemn in itself, the denunciation that accompanied it carried a terrible threat to those that neglected to obey it. Saul conjoins the name of Samuel with his own, to lend the greater influence to the measure, and to strike greater terror unto all contemners of the order. The small contingent furnished by Judah suggests that the disaffection to Saul was strongest in that tribe.
- **8.** *Bezek* This place of general muster was not far from Shechem, on the road to Beth-shan, and nearly opposite the ford for crossing to Jabeshgilead. The great number on the muster-roll showed the effect of Saul's wisdom and promptitude.
- 11. on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies Crossing the Jordan in the evening, Saul marched his army all night, and came at daybreak on the camp of the Ammonites, who were surprised in three different parts, and totally routed. This happened before the seven days' truce expired.

#### SAUL CONFIRMED KING.

# 12-15. the people said ..., Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us?

— The enthusiastic admiration of the people, under the impulse of grateful and generous feelings, would have dealt summary vengeance on the minority who opposed Saul, had not he, either from principle or policy, shown himself as great in clemency as in valor. The call and sagacious counsel of Samuel directed the popular feelings into a right channel, by appointing a general assembly of the militia, the really effective force of the nation, at Gilgal, where, amid great pomp and religious solemnities, the victorious leader was confirmed in his kingdom (1915).

### ••••• SAMUEL 12:1-5.

#### SAMUEL TESTIFIES HIS INTEGRITY.

- **1-4.** Samuel said unto all Israel This public address was made after the solemn re-instalment of Saul, and before the convention at Gilgal separated. Samuel, having challenged a review of his public life, received a unanimous testimony to the unsullied honor of his personal character, as well as the justice and integrity of his public administration.
- **5.** the Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness that, by their own acknowledgment, he had given them no cause to weary of the divine government by judges, and that, therefore, the blame of desiring a change of government rested with themselves. This was only insinuated, and they did not fully perceive his drift.

#### HE REPROVES THE PEOPLE FOR INGRATITUDE.

7-16. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you — The burden of this faithful and uncompromising address was to show them, that though they had obtained the change of government they had so importunely desired, their conduct was highly displeasing to their heavenly King; nevertheless, if they remained faithful to Him and to the principles of the theocracy, they might be delivered from many of the evils to which the new state of things would expose them. And in confirmation of those statements, no less than in evidence of the divine displeasure, a remarkable phenomenon, on the invocation of the prophet, and of which he gave due premonition, took place.

**11.** *Bedan* — The *Septuagint* reads "Barak"; and for "Samuel" some versions read "Samson," which seems more natural than that the prophet should mention himself to the total omission of the greatest of the judges. (Compare "Hebrews 11:32).

## \*\*\* SAMUEL 12:17-25.

#### HE TERRIFIES THEM WITH THUNDER IN HARVEST-TIME.

17-25. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? — That season in Palestine occurs at the end of June or beginning of July, when it seldom or never rains, and the sky is serene and cloudless. There could not, therefore, have been a stronger or more appropriate proof of a divine mission than the phenomenon of rain and thunder happening, without any prognostics of its approach, upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a prophet of the Lord, and giving it as an attestation of his words being true. The people regarded it as a miraculous display of divine power, and, panic-struck, implored the prophet to pray for them. Promising to do so, he dispelled their fears. The conduct of Samuel, in this whole affair of the king's appointment, shows him to have been a great and good man who sank all private and personal considerations in disinterested zeal for his country's good and whose last words in public were to warn the people, and their king, of the danger of apostasy and disobedience to God.

# 

#### SAUL'S SELECTED BAND.

- **1.** Saul reigned one year (see Margin). The transactions recorded in the eleventh and twelfth chapters were the principal incidents comprising the first year of Saul's reign; and the events about to be described in this happened in the second year.
- **2.** Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel This band of picked men was a bodyguard, who were kept constantly on duty, while the rest of the people were dismissed till their services might be needed. It seems to have been his tactics to attack the Philistine garrisons in the country by different detachments, rather than by risking a general engagement; and his first operations were directed to rid his native territory of Benjamin of these enemies.

## ••••• SAMUEL 13:3.4.

# HE CALLS THE HEBREWS TO GILGAL AGAINST THE PHILISTINES.

3, 4. And Jonathan — that is, "God-given."

smote the garrison of the Philistines ... in Geba — Geba and Gibeah were towns in Benjamin, very close to each other (\*\*\*Joshua 18:24,28). The word rendered "garrison" is different from that of \*\*\*Joshua 13:23\*\*\*14:1, and signifies, literally, something erected; probably a pillar or flagstaff, indicative of Philistine ascendency. That the secret demolition of this standard, so obnoxious to a young and noble-hearted patriot, was the feat of Jonathan referred to, is evident from the words, "the Philistines

heard of it," which is not the way we should expect an attack on a fortress to be noticed.

Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land — This, a well-known sound, was the usual Hebrew war summons; the first blast was answered by the beacon fire in the neighboring places. A second blast was blown — then answered by a fire in a more distant locality, whence the proclamation was speedily diffused over the whole country. As the Philistines resented what Jonathan had done as an overt attempt to throw off their yoke, a levy, en masse, of the people was immediately ordered, the rendezvous to be the old camping ground at Gilgal.

### • SAMUEL 13:5.

#### THE PHILISTINES' GREAT HOST.

**5.** The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen— Either this number must include chariots of every kind — or the word "chariots" must mean the men fighting in them (\*\*\* Samuel 10:18 \*\*\* Kings 20:21 \*\*\* ("thirty"), has crept into the text, instead of Shelosh ("three"). The gathering of the chariots and horsemen must be understood to be on the Philistine plain, before they ascended the western passes and pitched in the heart of the Benjamite hills, in "Michmash," (now Mukmas), a "steep precipitous valley" [ROBINSON], eastward from Beth-aven (Beth-el).

• SAMUEL 13:6-8.

#### THE ISRAELITES' DISTRESS.

**6.** When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait — Though Saul's gallantry was unabated, his subjects displayed no degree of zeal and energy. Instead of venturing an encounter, they fled in all directions. Some, in their panic, left the country (\*\*\* Samuel 13:7), but most took refuge in the hiding-places which the broken ridges of the neighborhood abundantly

afford. The rocks are perforated in every direction with "caves," and "holes," and "pits" — crevices and fissures sunk deep in the rocky soil, subterranean granaries or dry wells in the adjoining fields. The name of Michmash ("hidden treasure") seems to be derived from this natural peculiarity [Stanley].

**8.** *he* — that is, Saul.

*tarried seven days* — He was still in the eastern borders of his kingdom, in the valley of Jordan. Some bolder spirits had ventured to join the camp at Gilgal; but even the courage of those stout-hearted men gave way in prospect of this terrible visitation; and as many of them were stealing away, he thought some immediate and decided step must be taken.

## • SAMUEL 13:9-16.

### SAUL, WEARY OF WAITING FOR SAMUEL, SACRIFICES.

9-14. Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings — Saul, though patriotic enough in his own way, was more ambitious of gaining the glory of a triumph to himself than ascribing it to God. He did not understand his proper position as king of Israel; and although aware of the restrictions under which he held the sovereignty, he wished to rule as an autocrat, who possessed absolute power both in civil and sacred things. This occasion was his first trial. Samuel waited till the last day of the seven, in order to put the constitutional character of the king to the test; and, as Saul, in his impatient and passionate haste knowingly transgressed (1932) Samuel 13:12) by invading the priest's office and thus showing his unfitness for his high office (as he showed nothing of the faith of Gideon and other Hebrew generals), he incurred a threat of the rejection which his subsequent waywardness confirmed.

15, 16. Samuel ... gat him ... unto Gibeah ... and Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah — Saul removed his camp thither, either in the hope that, it being his native town, he would gain an increase of followers or that he might enjoy the counsels and influence of the prophet.

- 17, 18. the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies ravaging through the three valleys which radiate from the uplands of Michmash to Ophrah on the north, through the pass of Bethhoron on the west, and down the ravines of Zeboim ("the hyænas"), towards the Ghor or Jordan valley on the east.
- **19, 20.** Now there was no smith found throughout ... Israel The country was in the lowest state of depression and degradation. The Philistines, after the great victory over the sons of Eli, had become the virtual masters of the land. Their policy in disarming the natives has been often followed in the East. For repairing any serious damage to their agricultural implements, they had to apply to the neighboring forts.
- **21.** *Yet they had a file* as a kind of privilege, for the purpose of sharpening sundry smaller utensils of husbandry.

## SAMUEL 14:1-14.

# JONATHAN MIRACULOUSLY SMITES THE PHILISTINES' GARRISON.

- **1.** *the Philistines' garrison* "the standing camp" (\*\*OTE\*\*1 Samuel 13:23, *Margin*) "in the passage of Michmash" (\*\*OTE\*\*1 Samuel 13:16), now Wady Es-Suweinit. "It begins in the neighborhood of Betin (Beth-el) and El-Bireh (Beetroth), and as it breaks through the ridge below these places, its sides form precipitous walls. On the right, about a quarter of an acre below, it again breaks off, and passes between high perpendicular precipices" [ROBINSON].
- **2.** Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah Hebrew, "Geba"; entrenched, along with Samuel and Ahiah the high priest, on the top of one of the conical or spherical hills which abound in the Benjamite territory, and favorable for an encampment, called Migron ("a precipice").
- **4.** between the passages that is, the deep and great ravine of Suweinit.

**Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison** — a distance of about three miles running between two jagged points; *Hebrew*, "teeth of the cliff."

there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side ... Bozez — ("shining") from the aspect of the chalky rock.

Sench — ("the thorn") probably from a solitary acacia on its top. They are the only rocks of the kind in this vicinity; and the top of the crag towards Michmash was occupied as the post of the Philistines. The two camps were in sight of each other; and it was up the steep rocky sides of this isolated eminence that Jonathan and his armorbearer (\*\*\*OHIT\*\*) Samuel 14:6) made their adventurous approach. This enterprise is one of the most gallant that history or romance records. The action, viewed in itself, was

rash and contrary to all established rules of military discipline, which do not permit soldiers to fight or to undertake any enterprise that may involve important consequences without the order of the generals.

- **6.** it may be that the Lord will work for us This expression did not imply a doubt; it signified simply that the object he aimed at was not in his own power but it depended upon God and that he expected success neither from his own strength nor his own merit.
- **9, 10.** if they say, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand When Jonathan appears here to prescribe a sign or token of God's will, we may infer that the same spirit which inspired this enterprise suggested the means of its execution, and put into his heart what to ask of God. (See on Genesis 24:12).
- **11.** Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes As it could not occur to the sentries that two men had come with hostile designs, it was a natural conclusion that they were Israelite deserters. And hence no attempt was made to hinder their ascent, or stone them.
- 14, 15. that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow This was a very ancient mode of measurement, and it still subsists in the East. The men who saw them scrambling up the rock had been surprised and killed, and the spectacle of twenty corpses would suggest to others that they were attacked by a numerous force. The success of the adventure was aided by a panic that struck the enemy, produced both by the sudden surprise and the shock of an earthquake. The feat was begun and achieved by the faith of Jonathan, and the issue was of God.
- **16.** *the watchmen of Saul ... looked* The wild disorder in the enemies' camp was described and the noise of dismay heard on the heights of Gibeah.
- 17-19. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us The idea occurred to him that it might be some daring adventurer belonging to his own little troop, and it would be easy to discover him.

- **18.** Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God There is no evidence that the ark had been brought from Kirjath-jearim. The Septuagint version is preferable; which, by a slight variation of the text, reads, "the ephod"; that is, the priestly cape, which the high priest put on when consulting the oracle. That this should be at hand is natural, from the presence of Ahiah himself, as well as the nearness of Nob, where the tabernacle was then situated.
- **19.** Withdraw thine hand The priest, invested with the ephod, prayed with raised and extended hands. Saul perceiving that the opportunity was inviting, and that God appeared to have sufficiently declared in favor of His people, requested the priest to cease, that they might immediately join in the contest. The season for consultation was past the time for prompt action was come.
- **20-22.** *Saul and all the people* All the warriors in the garrison at Gibeah, the Israelite deserters in the camp of the Philistines, and the fugitives among the mountains of Ephraim, now all rushed to the pursuit, which was hot and sanguinary.
- **23.** So the Lord saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto **Beth-aven** that is, "Beth-el." It passed over the forest, now destroyed, on the central ridge of Palestine, then over to the other side from the eastern pass of Michmash (\*\* Samuel 14:31), to the western pass of Aijalon, through which they escaped into their own plains.
- **24.** Saul had adjured the people Afraid lest so precious an opportunity of effectually humbling the Philistine power might be lost, the impetuous king laid an anathema on any one who should taste food until the evening. This rash and foolish denunciation distressed the people, by preventing them taking such refreshments as they might get on the march, and materially hindered the successful attainment of his own patriotic object.
- **25.** all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey The honey is described as "upon the ground," "dropping" from the trees, and in honeycombs indicating it to be bees' honey. "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 on the trees as you pass along, full of honey" [ROBERTS].

- at evening, when the time fixed by Saul had expired. Faint and famishing, the pursuers fell voraciously upon the cattle they had taken, and threw them on the ground to cut off their flesh and eat them raw, so that the army, by Saul's rashness, were defiled by eating blood, or living animals; probably, as the Abyssinians do, who cut a part of the animal's rump, but close the hide upon it, and nothing mortal follows from that wound. They were painfully conscientious in keeping the king's order for fear of the curse, but had no scruple in transgressing God's command. To prevent this violation of the law, Saul ordered a large stone to be rolled, and those that slaughtered the oxen to cut their throats on that stone. By laying the animal's head on the high stone, the blood oozed out on the ground, and sufficient evidence was afforded that the ox or sheep was dead before it was attempted to eat it.
- **47, 48.** So Saul ... fought against all his enemies on every side This signal triumph over the Philistines was followed, not only by their expulsion from the land of Israel, but by successful incursions against various hostile neighbors, whom he harassed though he did not subdue them.

## OSSI SAMUEL 15:1-6.

#### SAUL SENT TO DESTROY AMALEK.

- **1.** Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee ...: now therefore hearken thou unto ... the Lord Several years had been passed in successful military operations against troublesome neighbors. During these Saul had been left to act in a great measure at his own discretion as an independent prince. Now a second test is proposed of his possessing the character of a theocratic monarch in Israel; and in announcing the duty required of him, Samuel brought before him his official station as the Lord's vicegerent, and the peculiar obligation under which he was laid to act in that capacity. He had formerly done wrong, for which a severe rebuke and threatening were administered to him (\*\*OFTS\*\*1 Samuel 13:13,14\*). Now an opportunity was afforded him of retrieving that error by an exact obedience to the divine command.
- 2, 3. Amalek the powerful tribe which inhabited the country immediately to the eastward of the northern Cushites. Their territory extended over the whole of the eastern portion of the desert of Sinai to Rephidim the earliest opponent (\*\*Deuteronomy 25:18 \*\*Exodus 17:8-16) the hereditary and restless enemy of Israel (\*\*Uniber 14:45) Tudges 3:13 \*\*\*Oc:3), and who had not repented (\*\*Uniber 14:48) of their bitter and sleepless hatred during the five hundred years that had elapsed since their doom was pronounced. Being a people of nomadic habits, they were as plundering and dangerous as the Bedouin Arabs, particularly to the southern tribes. The national interest required, and God, as KING OF ISRAEL, decreed that this public enemy should be removed. Their destruction was to be without reservation or exception.

*I remember* — I am reminded of what Amalek did — perhaps by the still remaining trophy or memorial erected by Moses (\*\*Exodus 17:15,16).

**4.** Saul gathered the people together — The alacrity with which he entered on the necessary preparations for the expedition gave a fair, but delusive promise of faithfulness in its execution.

**Telaim** — or Telem, among the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah towards the coast of Edom (\*\*Toshua 15:21,24).

**5.** Saul came to a city of Amalek — probably their capital.

*laid wait in the valley* — following the strategic policy of Joshua at Ai (\*\*\*Joshua 8:4).

**6. Kenites** — (See on Guides 1:16). In consequence, probably, of the unsettled state of Judah, they seem to have returned to their old desert tracts. Though now intermingled with the Amalekites, they were not implicated in the offenses of that wicked race; but for the sake of their ancestors, between whom and those of Israel there had been a league of amity, a timely warning was afforded them to remove from the scene of danger.

# 

#### HE SPARES AGAG AND THE BEST OF THE SPOIL.

- **7-9.** *Saul smote the Amalekites* His own view of the proper and expedient course to follow was his rule, not the command of God.
- **8, 9.** *he took Agag ... alive* This was the common title of the Amalekite kings. He had no scruple about the apparent cruelty of it, for he made fierce and indiscriminate havoc of the people. But he spared Agag, probably to enjoy the glory of displaying so distinguished a captive, and, in like manner, the most valuable portions of the booty, as the cattle. By this wilful and partial obedience to a positive command (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 15:3), complying with it in some parts and violating it in others, as suited his own taste and humor, Saul showed his selfish, arbitrary temper, and his love of despotic power, and his utter unfitness to perform the duties of a delegated king in Israel.

# 9501 SAMUEL 15:10,11.

#### GOD REJECTS HIS FOR DISOBEDIENCE.

10, 11. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul — Repentance is attributed in Scripture to Him when bad men give Him cause to alter His course and method of procedure, and to treat them as if He did "repent" of kindness shown. To the heart of a man like Samuel, who was above all envious considerations, and really attached to the king, so painful an announcement moved all his pity and led him to pass a sleepless night of earnest intercession.

**12.** Saul came to Carmel — in the south of Judah ( Georgia Joshua 15:55 ( Samuel 25:2).

he set him up a place — that is, a pillar (\*\*\*2 Samuel 18:18); literally, a hand, indicating that whatever was the form of the monument, it was surmounted, according to the ancient fashion, by the figure of a hand, the symbol of power and energy. The erection of this vainglorious trophy was an additional act of disobedience. His pride had overborne his sense of duty in first raising this monument to his own honor, and then going to Gilgal to offer sacrifice to God.

13-23. Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord — Saul was either blinded by a partial and delusive self-love, or he was, in his declaration to Samuel, acting the part of a bold and artful hypocrite. He professed to have fulfilled the divine command, and that the blame of any defects in the execution lay with the people. Samuel saw the real state of the case, and in discharge of the commission he had received before setting out, proceeded to denounce his conduct as characterized by pride, rebellion, and obstinate disobedience. When Saul persisted in declaring that he had obeyed, alleging that the animals, whose bleating was heard, had been reserved for a liberal sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, his shuffling, prevaricating answer called forth a stern rebuke from the prophet. It well deserved it — for the destination of the spoil to the altar was a flimsy pretext — a gross deception, an attempt to conceal the selfishness of the original motive under the cloak of religious zeal and gratitude.

# 24-26. I have sinned ... turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord

— The erring, but proud and obstinate monarch was now humbled. He was conscience-smitten for the moment, but his confession proceeded not from sincere repentance, but from a sense of danger and desire of averting the sentence denounced against him. For the sake of public appearance, he besought Samuel not to allow their serious differences to transpire, but to join with him in a public act of worship. Under the influence of his painfully agitated feelings, he designed to offer sacrifice, partly to express his gratitude for the recent victory, and partly to implore mercy and a reversal of his doom. It was, from another angle, a politic scheme, that Samuel might be betrayed into a countenancing of his design in reserving the cattle for sacrificing. Samuel declined to accompany him.

*I feared the people*, *and obeyed their voice* — This was a different reason from the former he had assigned. It was the language of a man driven to extremities, and even had it been true, the principles expounded by Samuel showed that it could have been no extenuation of the offense. The prophet then pronounced the irreversible sentence of the rejection of Saul and his family. He was judicially cut off for his disobedience.

- 27, 28. he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle the moil, upper tunic, official robe. In an agony of mental excitement, he took hold of the prophet's dress to detain him; the rending of the mantle (\*\*\*\* Samuel 15:27) was adroitly pointed to as a significant and mystical representation of his severance from the throne.
- **29.** *the Strength of Israel Hebrew*, "He that gives a victory to Israel," a further rebuke of his pride in rearing the Carmel trophy, and an intimation that no loss would be sustained in Israel by his rejection.
- **31.** Samuel turned again after Saul not to worship along with him; but first, that the people might have no ground, on pretense of Saul's rejection, to withdraw their allegiance from him; and secondly, to compensate for Saul's error, by executing God's judgment upon Agag.
- **32.** Agag came unto him delicately or cheerfully, since he had gained the favor and protection of the king.

**33.** Samuel hewed Agag — This cruel tyrant met the retribution of a righteous Providence. Never has it been unusual for great or official personages in the East to perform executions with their own hands. Samuel did it "before the Lord" in Gilgal, appointing that same mode of punishment (hitherto unknown in Israel) to be used towards him, which he had formerly used towards others.

# SAMUEL 16:1-10.

#### SAMUEL SENT BY GOD TO BETHLEHEM.

1. the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul — Samuel's grief on account of Saul's rejection, accompanied, doubtless, by earnest prayers for his restitution, showed the amiable feelings of the man; but they were at variance with his public duty as a prophet. The declared purpose of God to transfer the kingdom of Israel into other hands than Saul's was not an angry menace, but a fixed and immutable decree; so that Samuel ought to have sooner submitted to the peremptory manifestation of the divine will. But to leave him no longer room to doubt of its being unalterable, he was sent on a private mission to anoint a successor to Saul (see on Samuel 10:1). The immediate designation of a king was of the greatest importance for the interests of the nation in the event of Saul's death, which, to this time, was dreaded; it would establish David's title and comfort the minds of Samuel and other good men with a right settlement, whatever contingency might happen.

I have provided me a king — The language is remarkable, and intimates a difference between this and the former king. Saul was the people's choice, the fruit of their wayward and sinful desires for their own honor and aggrandizement. The next was to be a king who would consult the divine glory, and selected from that tribe to which the pre-eminence had been early promised (\*\*Genesis 49:10).

**2.** *How can I go*? — This is another instance of human infirmity in Samuel. Since God had sent him on this mission, He would protect him in the execution.

*I am come to sacrifice* — It seems to have been customary with Samuel to do this in the different circuits to which he went, that he might encourage the worship of God.

- **3.** *call Jesse to the sacrifice* that is, the social feast that followed the peace offering. Samuel, being the offerer, had a right to invite any guest he pleased.
- **4.** the elders of the town trembled at his coming Beth-lehem was an obscure town, and not within the usual circuit of the judge. The elders were naturally apprehensive, therefore, that his arrival was occasioned by some extraordinary reason, and that it might entail evil upon their town, in consequence of the estrangement between Samuel and the king.
- **5.** sanctify yourselves by the preparations described (\*\*Exodus 19:14,15). The elders were to sanctify themselves. Samuel himself took the greatest care in the sanctification of Jesse's family. Some, however, think that the former were invited only to join in the sacrifice, while the family of Jesse were invited by themselves to the subsequent feast.
- **6-10.** Samuel said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him Here Samuel, in consequence of taking his impressions from the external appearance, falls into the same error as formerly (\*\*\* Samuel 10:24).

• SAMUEL 16:11-14.

#### HE ANOINTS DAVID.

- 11. There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep
   Jesse having evidently no idea of David's wisdom and bravery, spoke
  of him as the most unfit. God, in His providence, so ordered it, that the
  appointment of David might the more clearly appear to be a divine
  purpose, and not the design either of Samuel or Jesse. David having not
  been sanctified with the rest of his family, it is probable that he returned
  to his pastoral duties the moment the special business on which he had
  been summoned was done.
- **12.** *he was ruddy*, etc. Josephus says that David was ten, while most modern commentators are of the opinion that he must have been fifteen years of age.

- **13.** *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him* This transaction must have been strictly private.
- **14-18.** The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him His own gloomy reflections, the consciousness that he had not acted up to the character of an Israelitish king, the loss of his throne, and the extinction of his royal house, made him jealous, irritable, vindictive, and subject to fits of morbid melancholy.
- **19.** Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David In the East the command of a king is imperative; and Jesse, however reluctant and alarmed, had no alternative but to comply.
- 20. Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them ... unto Saul as a token of homage and respect.
- **21.** *David came to Saul* Providence thus prepared David for his destiny, by placing him in a way to become acquainted with the manners of the court, the business of government, and the general state of the kingdom.

*became his armor-bearer* — This choice, as being an expression of the king's partiality, shows how honorable the office was held to be.

23. David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well — The ancients believed that music had a mysterious influence in healing mental disorders.

### **OTTO 1** SAMUEL 17:1-3.

# THE ISRAELITES AND PHILISTINES BEING READY TO BATTLE.

**1.** *the Philistines gathered together their armies* — twenty-seven years after their overthrow at Michmash. Having now recovered their spirits and strength, they sought an opportunity of wiping out the infamy of that national disaster, as well as to regain their lost ascendency over Israel.

**Shocoh** — now Shuweikeh, a town in the western plains of Judah (\*\*\*Joshua 15:35), nine Roman miles from Eleutheropolis, toward Jerusalem [ROBINSON].

**Azekah** — a small place in the neighborhood.

**Ephes-dammim** — or, "Pas-dammim" (\*\*\* Chronicles 11:13), "the portion" or "effusion of blood," situated between the other two.

**2.** *valley of Elah* — that is, "the Terebinth," now Wady Er-Sumt [ROBINSON]. Another valley somewhat to the north, now called Wady Beit Hanina, has been fixed on by the tradition of ages.

### ● SAMUEL 17:4-11.

#### GOLIATH CHALLENGES A COMBAT.

- **4-11.** *a champion Hebrew*, a "man between two"; that is, a person who, on the part of his own people, undertook to determine the national quarrel by engaging in single combat with a chosen warrior in the hostile army.
- **5.** *helmet of brass* The Philistine helmet had the appearance of a row of feathers set in a tiara, or metal band, to which were attached scales of the

same material, for the defense of the neck and the sides of the face [OSBORN].

*a coat of mail* — a kind of corslet, quilted with leather or plates of metal, reaching only to the chest, and supported by shoulder straps, leaving the shoulders and arms at full liberty.

**6.** *greaves of brass* — boots, terminating at the ankle, made in one plate of metal, but round to the shape of the leg, and often lined with felt or sponge. They were useful in guarding the legs, not only against the spikes of the enemy, but in making way among thorns and briers.

*a target of brass* — a circular frame, carried at the back, suspended by a long belt which crossed the breast from the shoulders to the loins.

one bearing a shield — In consequence of their great size and weight, the Oriental warrior had a trusty and skillful friend, whose office it was to bear the large shield behind which he avoided the missile weapons of the enemy. He was covered, cap-a-pie, with defensive armor, while he had only two offensive weapons — a sword by his side and a spear in his hand.

**8-11.** I defy the armies of Israel ...; give me a man, that we may fight together — In cases of single combat, a warrior used to go out in front of his party, and advancing towards the opposite ranks, challenge someone to fight with him. If his formidable appearance, or great reputation for physical strength and heroism, deterred any from accepting the challenge, he used to parade himself within hearing of the enemy's lines, specify in a loud, boastful, bravado style, defying them, and pouring out torrents of abuse and insolence to provoke their resentment.

# ••• SAMUEL 17:12-58.

### DAVID ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE, AND SLAYS HIM.

- **17.** Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves In those times campaigns seldom lasted above a few days at a time. The soldiers were volunteers or militia, who were supplied with provisions from time to time by their friends at home.
- **18.** carry these ten cheeses to the captain to enlist his kind attention. Oriental cheeses are very small; and although they are frequently made of so soft a consistence as to resemble curds, those which David carried seem to have been fully formed, pressed, and sufficiently dried to admit of their being carried.
- *take their pledge* Tokens of the soldiers' health and safety were sent home in the convenient form of a lock of their hair, or piece of their nail, or such like.
- **20.** *David left the sheep with a keeper* This is the only instance in which the hired shepherd is distinguished from the master or one of his family.
- **trench** some feeble attempt at a rampart. It appears (see *Margin*) to have been formed by a line of carts or chariots, which, from the earliest times, was the practice of nomad people.
- **22.** *left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage* to make his way to the standard of Judah.
- **25.** *make his father's house free in Israel* His family should be exempted from the impositions and services to which the general body of the Israelites were subjected.
- **34-36.** *a lion*, *and a bear* There were two different rencontres, for those animals prowl alone. The bear must have been a Syrian bear, which is believed to be a distinct species, or perhaps a variety, of the brown bear. The beard applies to the lion alone. Those feats seem to have been performed with no weapons more effective than the rude staves and stones of the field, or his shepherd's crook.

**37.** The Lord that delivered me — It would have been natural for a youth, and especially an Oriental youth, to make a parade of his gallantry. But David's piety sank all consideration of his own prowess and ascribed the success of those achievements to the divine aid, which he felt assured would not be withheld from him in a cause which so intimately concerned the safety and honor of His people.

Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee — The pious language of the modest but valiant youth impressed the monarch's heart. He felt that it indicated the true military confidence for Israel, and, therefore, made up his mind, without any demur, to sanction a combat on which the fate of his kingdom depended, and with a champion supporting his interests apparently so unequal to the task.

**38, 39.** *Saul armed David with his armor* — The ancient Hebrews were particularly attentive to the personal safety of their warriors, and hence Saul equipped the youthful champion with his own defensive accoutrements, which would be of the best style. It is probable that Saul's coat of mail, or corslet, was a loose shirt, otherwise it could not have fitted both a stripling and a man of the colossal stature of the king.

**40.** *brook* — wady.

**bag** — or scrip for containing his daily food.

**sling** — The sling consisted of a double rope with a thong, probably of leather, to receive the stone. The slinger held a second stone in his left hand. David chose five stones, as a reserve, in case the first should fail. Shepherds in the East carry a sling and stones still, for the purpose of driving away, or killing, the enemies that prowl about the flock.

**42-47.** *the Philistine said* ... *said David to the Philistine* — When the two champions met, they generally made each of them a speech, and sometimes recited some verses, filled with allusions and epithets of the most opprobrious kind, hurling contempt and defiance at one another. This kind of abusive dialogue is common among the Arab combatants still. David's speech, however, presents a striking contrast to the usual strain of these invectives. It was full of pious trust, and to God he ascribed all the glory of the triumph he anticipated.

- **49.** *smote the Philistine in his forehead* At the opening for the eyes that was the only exposed part of his body.
- **51.** *cut off his head* not as an evidence of the giant's death, for his slaughter had been effected in presence of the whole army, but as a trophy to be borne to Saul. The heads of slain enemies are always regarded in the East as the most welcome tokens of victory.
- **52.** *Shaaraim* (See \*\*\*Joshua 15:36).
- **54.** *tent* the sacred tabernacle. David dedicated the sword of Goliath as a votive offering to the Lord.
- 55-58. Saul ... said unto Abner ... whose son is this youth? A young man is more spoken of in many Eastern countries by his father's name than his own. The growth of the beard, and other changes on a now full-grown youth, prevented the king from recognizing his former favorite minstrel [ Samuel 16:23].

# ON SAMUEL 18:1-4.

#### JONATHAN LOVES DAVID.

- **1.** the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David They were nearly of an age. The prince had taken little interest in David as a minstrel; but his heroism and modest, manly bearing, his piety and high endowments, kindled the flame not of admiration only, but of affection, in the congenial mind of Jonathan.
- **2.** *Saul would let him go no more home* He was established as a permanent resident at court.
- **3.** Then Jonathan and David made a covenant Such covenants of brotherhood are frequent in the East. They are ratified by certain ceremonies, and in presence of witnesses, that the persons covenanting will be sworn brothers for life.
- **4.** Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David To receive any part of the dress which had been worn by a sovereign, or his eldest son and heir, is deemed, in the East, the highest honor which can be conferred on a subject (see on Esther 6:8). The girdle, being connected with the sword and the bow, may be considered as being part of the military dress, and great value is attached to it in the East.

#### SAUL ENVIES HIS PRAISE.

**6.** *the women came out of all cities of Israel* — in the homeward march from the pursuit of the Philistines. This is a characteristic trait of Oriental manners. On the return of friends long absent, and particularly on the return of a victorious army, bands of women and children issue from the

towns and villages, to form a triumphal procession, to celebrate the victory, and, as they go along, to gratify the soldiers with dancing, instrumental music, and extempore songs, in honor of the generals who have earned the highest distinction by feats of gallantry. The Hebrew women, therefore, were merely paying the customary gratulations to David as the deliverer of their country, but they committed a great indiscretion by praising a subject at the expense of their sovereign.

**9.** *Saul eyed David* — that is, invidiously, with secret and malignant hatred.

• SAMUEL 18:10-12.

#### SEEKS TO KILL HIM.

**10.** *on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul* — This rankling thought brought on a sudden paroxysm of his mental malady.

he prophesied — The term denotes one under the influence either of a good or a bad spirit. In the present it is used to express that Saul was in a frenzy. David, perceiving the symptoms, hastened, by the soothing strains of his harp, to allay the stormy agitation of the royal mind. But before its mollifying influence could be felt, Saul hurled a javelin at the head of the young musician.

*there was a javelin in Saul's hand* — Had it been followed by a fatal result, the deed would have been considered the act of an irresponsible maniac. It was repeated more than once ineffectually, and Saul became impressed with a dread of David as under the special protection of Providence.

# \*\*\*\* SAMUEL 18:13-16.

#### FEARS HIM FOR HIS GOOD SUCCESS.

**13.** Therefore Saul removed him from him — sent him away from the court, where the principal persons, including his own son, were spellbound with admiration of the young and pious warrior.

*made him captain over a thousand* — gave him a military commission, which was intended to be an honorable exile. But this post of duty served only to draw out before the public the extraordinary and varied qualities of his character, and to give him a stronger hold of the people's affections.

#### HE OFFERS HIM HIS DAUGHTER FOR A SNARE.

17. Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife — Though bound to this already [-10725] Samuel 17:25], he had found it convenient to forget his former promise. He now holds it out as a new offer, which would tempt David to give additional proofs of his valor. But the fickle and perfidious monarch broke his pledge at the time when the marriage was on the eve of being celebrated, and bestowed Merab on another man (see on 2 Samuel 21:8); an indignity as well as a wrong, which was calculated deeply to wound the feelings and provoke the resentment of David. Perhaps it was intended to do so, that advantage might be taken of his indiscretion. But David was preserved from this snare.

**20.** *Michal Saul's daughter loved David* — This must have happened some time after.

*they told Saul, and the thing pleased him* — Not from any favor to David, but he saw that it would be turned to the advancement of his malicious purposes, and the more so when, by the artful intrigues and flattery of his spies, the loyal sentiments of David were discovered.

- **25.** The king desireth not any dowry In Eastern countries the husband purchases his wife either by gifts or services. As neither David nor his family were in circumstances to give a suitable dowry for a princess, the king intimated that he would be graciously pleased to accept some gallant deed in the public service.
- a hundred foreskins of the Philistines Such mutilations on the bodies of their slain enemies were commonly practiced in ancient war, and the number told indicated the glory of the victory. Saul's willingness to accept a public service had an air of liberality, while his choice of so difficult and hazardous a service seemed only putting a proper value on gaining the hand of a king's daughter. But he covered unprincipled malice against David under this proposal, which exhibited a zeal for God and the covenant of circumcision.
- **26.** *the days were not expired* The period within which this exploit was to be achieved was not exhausted.
- **27.** *David* ... *slew of the Philistines two hundred men* The number was doubled, partly to show his respect and attachment to the princess, and partly to oblige Saul to the fulfillment of his pledge.
- **29.** Saul was yet the more afraid of David because Providence had visibly favored him, by not only defeating the conspiracy against his life, but through his royal alliance paving his way to the throne.

# JONATHAN DISCLOSES HIS FATHER'S PURPOSE TO KILL DAVID.

- 1. Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David The murderous design he had secretly cherished he now reveals to a few of his intimate friends. Jonathan was among the number. He prudently said nothing at the time, but secretly apprised David of his danger; and waiting till the morning, when his father's excited temper would be cooled, he stationed his friend in a place of concealment, where, overhearing the conversation, he might learn how matters really stood and take immediate flight, if necessary.
- **4-7.** *Jonathan spake good of David* He told his father he was committing a great sin to plot against the life of a man who had rendered the most invaluable services to his country and whose loyalty had been uniformly steady and devoted. The strong remonstrances of Jonathan produced an effect on the impulsive mind of his father. As he was still susceptible of good and honest impressions, he bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose; and thus, through the intervention of the noble-minded prince, a temporary reconciliation was effected, in consequence of which David was again employed in the public service.

\*\*\* SAMUEL 19:8-17.

#### SAUL'S MALICIOUS RAGE BREAKS OUT AGAINST DAVID.

**8-10.** David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter — A brilliant victory was gained over the public enemy. But these fresh laurels of David reawakened in the moody breast of Saul the former spirit of envy and melancholy. On David's return to

court, the temper of Saul became more fiendish than ever; the melodious strains of the harp had lost all their power to charm; and in a paroxysm of uncontrollable frenzy he aimed a javelin at the person of David — the missile having been thrown with such force that it pierced the chamber wall. David providentially escaped; but the king, having now thrown off the mask and being bent on aggressive measures, made his son-in-law's situation everywhere perilous.

- 11, 12. Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him The fear of causing a commotion in the town, or favoring his escape in the darkness, seemed to have influenced the king in ordering them to patrol till the morning. This infatuation was overruled by Providence to favor David's escape; for his wife, secretly apprised by Jonathan, who was aware of the design, or by spying persons in court livery watching the gate, let him down through a window (see on other Joshua 2:15).
- 13, 14. And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed "an image," literally, "the teraphim," and laid, not in the bed, but literally on the "divan"; and "the pillows," that is, the cushion, which usually lay at the back of the divan and was stuffed with "goat's hair," she took from its bolster or heading at the upper part of the divan. This she placed lower down, and covered with a mantle, as if to foster a proper warmth in a patient; at the same time spreading the goat's hair skin, so as to resemble human hair in a dishevelled state. The pretext was that David lay there sick. The first messengers of Saul, keeping at a respectable distance, were deceived; but the imposition was detected on a closer inspection.
- **15.** *Bring him to me in the bed* a portable couch or mattress.

\*\*\* SAMUEL 19:18-23.

#### DAVID FLEES TO SAMUEL.

**18-23.** *David fled*, ... *and came to Samuel to Ramah* — Samuel was living in great retirement, superintending the school of the prophets, established in the little hamlet of Naioth, in the neighborhood of Ramah. It was a

retreat congenial to the mind of David; but Saul, having found out his asylum, sent three successive bodies of men to apprehend him. The character of the place and the influence of the sacred exercises produced such an effect on them that they were incapable of discharging their commission, and were led, by a resistless impulse, to join in singing the praises of God. Saul, in a fit of rage and disappointment, determined to go himself. But, before reaching the spot, his mental susceptibilities were roused even more than his messengers, and he was found, before long, swelling the ranks of the young prophets. This singular change can be ascribed only to the power of Him who can turn the hearts of men even as the rivers of water.

# \*\*\* SAMUEL 19:24.

#### SAUL PROPHESIES.

**24.** *lay down naked* — that is, divested of his armor and outer robes — in a state of trance. Thus God, in making the wrath of man to praise Him, preserved the lives of all the prophets, frustrated all the purposes of Saul, and preserved the life of His servant.

# SAMUEL 20:1-10.

#### DAVID CONSULTS WITH JONATHAN FOR HIS SAFETY.

1-3. David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before **Jonathan** — He could not remain in Naioth, for he had strong reason to fear that when the religious fit, if we may so call it, was over, Saul would relapse into his usual fell and sanguinary temper. It may be thought that David acted imprudently in directing his flight to Gibeah. But he was evidently prompted to go thither by the most generous feelings — to inform his friend of what had recently occurred, and to obtain that friend's sanction to the course he was compelled to adopt. Jonathan could not be persuaded there was any real danger after the oath his father had taken; at all events, he felt assured his father would do nothing without telling him. Filial attachment naturally blinded the prince to defects in the parental character and made him reluctant to believe his father capable of such atrocity. David repeated his unshaken convictions of Saul's murderous purpose, but in terms delicately chosen (\*\* 1 Samuel 20:3), not to wound the filial feelings of his friend; while Jonathan, clinging, it would seem, to a hope that the extraordinary scene enacted at Naioth might have wrought a sanctified improvement on Saul's temper and feelings, undertook to inform David of the result of his observations at home.

**5.** David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat— The beginning of a new month or moon was always celebrated by special sacrifices, followed by feasting, at which the head of a family expected all its members to be present. David, both as the king's son-in-law and a distinguished courtier, dined on such occasions at the royal table, and from its being generally known that David had returned to Gibeah, his presence in the palace would be naturally expected. This occasion was chosen by the two friends for testing the king's state of feeling. As a suitable pretext for David's absence, it was arranged that he should visit his family at Beth-lehem, and

thus create an opportunity of ascertaining how his non-appearance would be viewed. The time and place were fixed for Jonathan reporting to David; but as circumstances might render another interview unsafe, it was deemed expedient to communicate by a concerted signal.

# ● SAMUEL 20:11-23.

#### THEIR COVENANT RENEWED BY OATH.

11. Jonathan said to David, Come, let us go into the field — The private dialogue, which is here detailed at full length, presents a most beautiful exhibition of these two amiable and noble-minded friends. Jonathan was led, in the circumstances, to be the chief speaker. The strength of his attachment, his pure disinterestedness, his warm piety, his invocation to God (consisting of a prayer and a solemn oath combined), the calm and full expression he gave of his conviction that his own family were, by the divine will, to be disinherited, and David elevated to the possession of the throne, the covenant entered into with David on behalf of his descendants, and the imprecation (\*\*\* Samuel 20:16) denounced on any of them who should violate his part of the conditions, the reiteration of this covenant on both sides ( Samuel 20:17) to make it indissoluble — all this indicates such a power of mutual affection, such magnetic attractiveness in the character of David, such susceptibility and elevation of feeling in the heart of Jonathan, that this interview for dramatic interest and moral beauty stands unrivalled in the records of human friendship.

**19.** *when thou hast stayed three days* — either with your family at Bethlehem, or wherever you find it convenient.

come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand — Hebrew, "in the day," or "time of the business," when the same matter was under inquiry formerly (\*\*\*\* Samuel 19:22).

**remain by the stone Ezel** — Hebrew, "the stone of the way"; a sort of milestone which directed travelers. He was to conceal himself in some cave or hiding-place near that spot.

**23.** as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of — The plan being concerted, the friends separated for a time, and the amiable character of Jonathan again peers out in his parting allusion to their covenant of friendship.

# SAMUEL 20:24-40.

### SAUL, MISSING DAVID, SEEKS TO KILL JONAHAN.

**25.** the king sat upon his seat, as at other times ... by the wall — The left-hand corner at the upper end of a room was and still is in the East, the most honorable place. The person seated there has his left arm confined by the wall, but his right hand is at full liberty. From Abner's position next the king, and David's seat being left empty, it would seem that a state etiquette was observed at the royal table, each of the courtiers and ministers having places assigned them according to their respective gradations of rank.

**Jonathan arose** — either as a mark of respect on the entrance of the king, or in conformity with the usual Oriental custom for a son to stand in presence of his father.

- **26.** *he is not clean* No notice was taken of David's absence, as he might be laboring under some ceremonial defilement.
- **27.** *on the morrow, which was the second day of the month* The time of the moon's appearance being uncertain whether at midday, in the evening, or at midnight, the festival was extended over two days. Custom, not the law, had introduced this.

Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse— The question was asked, as it were, casually, and with as great an air of indifference as he could assume. And Jonathan having replied that David had asked and obtained his permission to attend a family anniversary at Beth-lehem [408]Acts 20:28,29], the pent-up passions of the king burst out in a most violent storm of rage and invective against his son.

- **30.** Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman This is a striking Oriental form of abuse. Saul was not angry with his wife; it was the son alone, upon whom he meant, by this style of address, to discharge his resentment. The principle on which it is founded seems to be, that to a genuine filial instinct it is a more inexpiable offense to hear the name or character of a parent traduced, than any personal reproach. This was, undoubtedly, one cause of "the fierce anger" in which the high-minded prince left the table without tasting a morsel.
- **33.** *Saul cast a javelin at him* This is a sad proof of the maniacal frenzy into which the unhappy monarch was transported.
- **35.** *Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed* or, "at the place appointed."
- **36.** he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot—
  The direction given aloud to the attendant was the signal preconcerted with David. It implied danger.
- **40.** Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad—that is, his missive weapons. The French word artillerie, signifies "archery." The term is still used in England, in the designation of the "artillery company of London," the association of archers, though they have long disused bows and arrows. Jonathan's boy being despatched out of the way, the friends enjoyed the satisfaction of a final meeting.

# SAMUEL 20:41,42.

#### JONATHAN AND DAVID LOVINGLY PART.

- **41, 42.** *David* ... *fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times* a token of homage to the prince's rank; but on a close approach, every other consideration was sunk in the full flow of the purest brotherly affection.
- **42.** *Jonathan said to David*, *Go in peace* The interview being a stolen one, and every moment precious, it was kindness in Jonathan to hasten his friend's departure.

### • SAMUEL 21:1-7.

# DAVID, AT NOB, OBTAINS OF AHIMELECH HALLOWED BREAD.

**1.** Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech — Nob, a city of the priests (\*\*D25\*1 Samuel 22:19), was in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives — a little north of the top, and on the northeast of the city. It is computed to have been about five miles distant from Gibeah. Ahimelech, the same as Ahiah, or perhaps his brother, both being sons of Ahitub (compare \*\*\*D4\*1 Samuel 14:3, with \*\*\*\*D5\*1 Samuel 22:4-11,20). His object in fleeing to this place was partly for the supply of his necessities, and partly for comfort and counsel, in the prospect of leaving the kingdom.

**Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David** — suspecting some extraordinary occurrence by his appearing so suddenly, and in such a style, for his attendants were left at a little distance.

- **2.** The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know This was a direct falsehood, extorted through fear. David probably supposed, like many other persons, that a lie is quite excusable which is told for the sole purpose of saving the speaker's life. But what is essentially sinful, can never, from circumstances, change its immoral character; and David had to repent of this vice of lying (\*\*\*Psalm 119:29).
- **4.** *there is hallowed bread* There would be plenty of bread in his house; but there was no time to wait for it. "The hallowed bread" was the old shew-bread, which had been removed the previous day, and which was reserved for the use of the priests alone (\*\*Leviticus 24:9). Before entertaining the idea that this bread could be lawfully given to David and his men, the high priest seems to have consulted the oracle (\*\*\*I Samuel 22:10) as to the course to be followed in this emergency. A dispensation to use the hallowed bread was specially granted by God Himself.

**5.** these three days — as required by law (\*\*Exodus 19:15). David and his attendants seem to have been lurking in some of the adjoining caves, to elude pursuit, and to have been, consequently, reduced to great extremities of hunger.

**the bread is in a manner common** — that is, now that it is no longer standing on the Lord's table. It is eaten by the priests, and may also, in our circumstances, be eaten by us.

yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel — that is, though the hallowed bread had been but newly placed on the vessel, the ritual ordinance would have to yield to the great law of necessity and mercy (see on Matthew 12:3; also see Mark 2:25 Mark 2:25

- **6.** *there was no bread there* in the tabernacle. The removal of the old and the substitution of the new bread was done on the Sabbath (\*\*Leviticus 24:8), the loaves being kept warm in an oven heated the previous day.
- **7.** *Doeg*, *an Edomite* who had embraced the Hebrew religion.

**detained before the Lord** — at the tabernacle, perhaps, in the performance of a vow, or from its being the Sabbath, which rendered it unlawful for him to prosecute his journey.

*the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul* — Eastern monarchs anciently had large possessions in flocks and herds; and the office of the chief shepherd was an important one.

### • SAMUEL 21:9.

#### HE TAKES GOLIATH'S SWORD.

9. sword of Goliath — (See on Samuel 17:54).

**behind the ephod** — in the place allowed for keeping the sacred vestments, of which the ephod is mentioned as the chief. The giant's sword was deposited in that safe custody as a memorial of the divine goodness in delivering Israel.

**There is none like that** — not only for its size and superior temper, but for its being a pledge of the divine favor to him, and a constant stimulus to his faith.

# 

#### AT GATH HE FEIGNS HIMSELF MAD.

- **10.** *David* ... *fled* ... *to Achish the king of Gath* which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines. In this place his person must have been known, and to venture into that country, he their greatest enemy, and with the sword of Goliath in his hand, would seem to have been a perilous experiment; but, doubtless, the protection he received implies that he had been directed by the divine oracle. Achish was generous (402061) Samuel 27:6). He might wish to weaken the resources of Saul, and it was common in ancient times for great men to be harbored by neighboring princes.
- **13.** *feigned himself mad* It is supposed to have been an attack of epilepsy, real or perhaps only pretended. This disease is relieved by foaming at the mouth.

*let his spittle fall down upon his beard* — No wonder that Achish supposed him insane, as such an indignity, whether done by another, or one's self, to the beard, is considered in the East an intolerable insult.

### • SAMUEL 22:1-8.

# DAVID'S KINDRED AND OTHERS RESORT TO HIM AT ADULLAM.

**1.** David ... escaped to the cave Adullam — supposed to be that now called Deir-Dubban, a number of pits or underground vaults, some nearly square, and all about fifteen or twenty feet deep, with perpendicular sides, in the soft limestone or chalky rocks. They are on the borders of the Philistine plain at the base of the Judea mountains, six miles southwest from Beth-lehem, and well adapted for concealing a number of refugees.

*his brethren and all his father's house ... went down* — to escape the effects of Saul's rage, which seems to have extended to all David's family. From Beth-lehem to Deir-Dubban it is, indeed, a descent all the way.

- **2.** every one that was in distress (See on Tudges 11:3).
- **3.** David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab "Mizpeh" signifies a watchtower, and it is evident that it must be taken in this sense here, for it is called "the hold" or fort (\*\*\* Samuel 22:4). The king of Moab was an enemy of Saul (\*\*\* Samuel 14:47), and the great-grandson of Ruth, of course, was related to the family of Jesse. David, therefore, had less anxiety in seeking an asylum within the dominions of this prince than those of Achish, because the Moabites had no grounds for entertaining vindictive feelings against him, and their enmity, to Saul rendered them the more willing to receive so illustrious a refugee from his court.
- **5.** the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold This sound advice, no doubt, came from a higher source than Gad's own sagacity. It was right to appear publicly among the people of his own tribe, as one conscious of innocence and trusting in God; and it was expedient that, on the death of Saul, his friends might be encouraged to support his interest.

*forest of Hareth* — southwest of Jerusalem.

- **6.** Saul abode ... under a tree in Ramah literally, "under a grove on a hill." Oriental princes frequently sit with their court under some shady canopy in the open air. A spear was the early scepter.
- **7, 8.** *Hear now*, *ye Benjamites* This was an appeal to stimulate the patriotism or jealousy of his own tribe, from which he insinuated it was the design of David to transfer the kingdom to another. This address seems to have been made on hearing of David's return with his four hundred men to Judah. A dark suspicion had risen in the jealous mind of the king that Jonathan was aware of this movement, which he dreaded as a conspiracy against the crown.

• SAMUEL 22:9-16.

#### DOEG ACCUSES AHIMELECH.

- **9. Doeg ...** set over the servants Septuagint, "the mules of Saul."
- **10.** *he inquired of the Lord for him* Some suppose that this was a malicious fiction of Doeg to curry favor with the king, but Ahimelech seems to acknowledge the fact. The poor simple-minded high priest knew nothing of the existing family feud between Saul and David. The informer, if he knew it, said nothing of the cunning artifice by which David obtained the aid of Ahimelech. The *facts looked* against him, and the whole priesthood along with him were declared abettors of conspiracy [4926] Samuel 22:16,17].

\*\*\*\* SAMUEL 22:17-19.

#### SAUL COMMANDS TO KILL THE PRIESTS.

17, 18. the footmen that stood about him — his bodyguard, or his runners (\*\*\*\*1 Samuel 8:11 \*\*\*\*12 Samuel 15:1 \*\*\*\*1 Kings 1:5 \*\*\*\*1 Kings 14:28), who held an important place at court (\*\*\*\*12"2 Chronicles 12:10). But they chose rather to disobey the king than to offend God by imbruing their hands in

the blood of his ministering servants. A foreigner alone (\*\*Psalm 52:1-3) could be found willing to be the executioner of this bloody and sacrilegious sentence. Thus was the doom of the house of Eli fulfilled [\*\*\*] Samuel 2:30-36].

**19.** *Nob*, *the city of the priests*, *smote he with the edge of the sword* — The barbarous atrocities perpetrated against this city seem to have been designed to terrify all the subjects of Saul from affording either aid or an asylum to David. But they proved ruinous to Saul's own interest, as they alienated the priesthood and disgusted all good men in the kingdom.

• SAMUEL 22:20-23.

#### ABIATHAR ESCAPES AND FLEES AFTER DAVID.

**20-23.** *one of the sons of Ahimelech ... escaped* — This was Abiathar, who repaired to David in the forest of Hareth, rescuing, with his own life, the high priest's vestments (49216) Samuel 23:6,9). On hearing his sad tale, David declared that he had dreaded such a fatal result from the malice and intriguing ambition of Doeg; and, accusing himself as having been the occasion of all the disaster to Abiathar's family, David invited him to remain, because, firmly trusting himself in the accomplishment of the divine promise, David could guarantee protection to him.

### • SAMUEL 23:1-6.

#### DAVID RESCUES KEILAH.

**1.** Then they told David — rather, "now they had told"; for this information had reached him previous to his hearing (\*\*\* Samuel 23:6) of the Nob tragedy.

**Keilah** — a city in the west of Judah ( <sup>4754</sup> Joshua 15:44), not far from the forest of Hareth.

**6.** an ephod — in which was the Urim and Thummim (\*\*Exodus 28:30). It had, probably, been committed to his care, while Ahimelech and the other priests repaired to Gibeah, in obedience to the summons of Saul.

# SAMUEL 23:7-13.

### SAUL'S COMING, AND TREACHERY OF THE KEILITES.

- 7. it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah Saul imagined himself now certain of his victim, who would be hemmed within a fortified town. The wish was father to the thought. How wonderfully slow and unwilling to be convinced by all his experience, that the special protection of Providence shielded David from all his snares!
- **8.** Saul called all the people together to war not the united tribes of Israel, but the inhabitants of the adjoining districts. This force was raised, probably, on the ostensible pretext of opposing the Philistines, while, in reality, it was secretly to arouse mischief against David.
- **9.** he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod The consultation was made, and the prayer uttered, by means of the priest. The alternative conditions here described have often been referred to as illustrating the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and preordination of events.

# 1 SAMUEL 23:14-18.

#### DAVID ESCAPES TO ZIPH.

- 14, 15. David abode in the wilderness ... of Ziph A mountainous and sequestered region was generally called a wilderness, and took its name from some large town in the district. Two miles southeast of Hebron, and in the midst of a level plain, is Tell-ziph, an isolated and conical hillock, about a hundred feet high, probably the acropolis [VAN DE VELDE], or the ruins [ROBINSON] of the ancient city of Ziph, from which the surrounding wilderness was called. It seems, anciently, to have been covered by an extensive woods. The country has for centuries lost its woods and forests, owing to the devastations caused by man.
- **16, 17.** Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God by the recollection of their mutual covenant. What a

victory over natural feelings and lower considerations must the faith of Jonathan have won, before he could seek such an interview and give utterance to such sentiments! To talk with calm and assured confidence of himself and family being superseded by the man who was his friend by the bonds of a holy and solemn covenant, could only have been done by one who, superior to all views of worldly policy, looked at the course of things in the spirit and through the principles of that theocracy which acknowledged God as the only and supreme Sovereign of Israel. Neither history nor fiction depicts the movements of a friendship purer, nobler, and more self-denying than Jonathan's!

1 SAMUEL 23:19-29.

#### SAUL PURSUES HIM.

- 19-23. Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us? From the tell of Ziph a panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen. No wonder, then, that the Ziphites saw David and his men passing to and fro in the mountains of the wilderness. Spying him at a distance when he ventured to show himself on the hill of Hachilah, "on the right hand of the wilderness," that is, the south side of Ziph, they sent in haste to Saul, to tell him of the lurking place of his enemy [VAN DE VELDE].
- **25.** David ... came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon Tell Main, the hillock on which was situated the ancient Maon (\*\*Joshua 15:55), and from which the adjoining wilderness took its name, is one mile north, ten east from Camel. The mountain plateau seems here to end. It is true the summit ridge of the southern hills runs out a long way further towards the southwest; but towards the southeast the ground sinks more and more down to a tableland of a lower level, which is called "the plain to the right hand [that is, to the south] of the wilderness" [VAN DE VELDE].
- **29.** David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi—that is, "the spring of the wild goats or gazelles" a name given to it from the vast number of ibexes or Syrian chamois which inhabit these cliffs on

the western shore of the Dead Sea (\*\*\*Joshua 15:62). It is now called Ain Jiddy. 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 [ROBINSON].

### • SAMUEL 24:1-7.

# DAVID IN A CAVE AT ENGEDI CUTS OFF SAUL'S SKIRT, BUT SPARES HIS LIFE.

- **2.** Saul ... went ... to seek David ... upon the rocks of the wild goats Nothing but the blind infatuation of fiendish rage could have led the king to pursue his outlawed son-in-law among those craggy and perpendicular precipices, where were inaccessible hiding places. The large force he took with him seemed to give him every prospect of success. But the overruling providence of God frustrated all his vigilance.
- 3. he came to the sheepcotes most probably in the upper ridge of Wady Chareitun. There a large cave I am quite disposed to say the cave lies hardly five minutes to the east of the village ruin, on the south side of the wady. It is high upon the side of the calcareous rock, and it has undergone no change since David's time. The same narrow natural vaulting at the entrance; the same huge natural chamber in the rock, probably the place where Saul lay down to rest in the heat of the day; the same side vaults, too, where David and his men were concealed. There, accustomed to the obscurity of the cavern, they saw Saul enter, while, blinded by the glare of the light outside, he saw nothing of him whom he so bitterly persecuted.
- **4-7.** the men of David said ... Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand God had never made any promise of delivering Saul into David's hand; but, from the general and repeated promises of the kingdom to him, they concluded that the king's death was to be effected by taking advantage of some such opportunity as the present. David steadily opposed the urgent instigations of his followers to put an end to his and their troubles by the death of their persecutor (a revengeful heart would have followed their advice, but David rather wished to overcome evil with good, and heap coals of fire upon his head); he, however, cut off a fragment from the skirt

of the royal robe. It is easy to imagine how this dialogue could be carried on and David's approach to the king's person could have been effected without arousing suspicion. The bustle and noise of Saul's military men and their beasts, the number of cells or divisions in these immense caverns (and some of them far interior) being enveloped in darkness, while every movement could be seen at the cave's mouth — the probability that the garment David cut from might have been a loose or upper cloak lying on the ground, and that Saul might have been asleep — these facts and presumptions will be sufficient to account for the incidents detailed.

# \*\*\* SAMUEL 24:8-15.

#### HE URGES THEREBY HIS INNOCENCY.

## 8-15. David also arose ... and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul

— The closeness of the precipitous cliffs, though divided by deep wadies, and the transparent purity of the air enable a person standing on one rock to hear distinctly the words uttered by a speaker standing on another Judges 9:7). The expostulation of David, followed by the visible tokens he furnished of his cherishing no evil design against either the person or the government of the king, even when he had the monarch in his power, smote the heart of Saul in a moment and disarmed him of his fell purpose of revenge. He owned the justice of what David said, acknowledged his own guilt, and begged kindness to his house. He seems to have been naturally susceptible of strong, and, as in this instance, of good and grateful impressions. The improvement of his temper, indeed, was but transient — his language that of a man overwhelmed by the force of impetuous emotions and constrained to admire the conduct, and esteem the character, of one whom he hated and dreaded. But God overruled it for ensuring the present escape of David. Consider his language and behavior. This language — "a dead dog," "a flea," terms by which, like Eastern people, he strongly expressed a sense of his lowliness and the entire committal of his cause to Him who alone is the judge of human actions, and to whom vengeance belongs, his steady repulse of the vindictive counsels of his followers; the relentings of heart which he felt even for the apparent indignity he had done to the person of the Lord's anointed; and

the respectful homage he paid the jealous tyrant who had set a price on his head — evince the magnanimity of a great and good man, and strikingly illustrate the spirit and energy of his prayer "when he was in the cave" (\*\*PP) Psalm 142:1, title).

## • SAMUEL 25:1-9.

#### SAMUEL DIES.

**1.** Samuel died — After a long life of piety and public usefulness, he left behind him a reputation which ranks him among the greatest of Scripture worthies.

buried him in his house at Ramah — that is, his own mausoleum. The Hebrews took as great care to provide sepulchers anciently as people do in the East still, where every respectable family has its own house of the dead. Often this is in a little detached garden, containing a small stone building (where there is no rock), resembling a house, which is called the sepulcher of the family — it has neither door nor window.

**David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran** — This removal had probably no connection with the prophet's death; but was probably occasioned by the necessity of seeking provision for his numerous followers.

the wilderness of Paran — stretching from Sinai to the borders of Palestine in the southern territories of Judea. Like other wildernesses, it presented large tracts of natural pasture, to which the people sent their cattle at the grazing season, but where they were liable to constant and heavy depredations by prowling Arabs. David and his men earned their subsistence by making reprisals on the cattle of these freebooting Ishmaelites; and, frequently for their useful services, they obtained voluntary tokens of acknowledgment from the peaceful inhabitants.

**2.** *in Carmel* — now Kurmul. The district takes its name from this town, now a mass of ruins; and about a mile from it is Tell Main, the hillock on which stood ancient Maon.

*the man was very great* — His property consisted in cattle, and he was considered wealthy, according to the ideas of that age.

- **3.** he was of the house of Caleb of course, of the same tribe with David himself; but many versions consider Caleb ("dog") not as a proper, but a common noun, and render it, "he was snappish as a dog."
- **4-9.** Nabal did shear his sheep, and David sent out ten young men, etc.
- David and his men lurked in these deserts, associating with the herdsmen and shepherds of Nabal and others and doing them good offices, probably in return for information and supplies obtained through them. Hence when Nabal held his annual sheep-shearing in Carmel, David felt himself entitled to share in the festival and sent a message, recounting his own services and asking for a present. "In all these particulars we were deeply struck with the truth and strength of the biblical description of manners and customs almost identically the same as they exist at the present day. On such a festive occasion, near a town or village, even in our own time, an Arab sheik of the neighboring 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 a transcript of that of David" [ROBINSON].

#### THE CHURLISH ANSWER PROVOKES HIM.

10-12. Nabal answered David's servants, ... Who is David? etc. —
Nabal's answer seems to indicate that the country was at the time in a loose and disorderly state. David's own good conduct, however, as well as the important services rendered by him and his men, were readily attested by Nabal's servants. The preparations of David to chastise his insolent language and ungrateful requital are exactly what would be done in the present day by Arab chiefs, who protect the cattle of the large and wealthy sheep masters from the attacks of the marauding border tribes or wild beasts. Their protection creates a claim for some kind of tribute, in the shape of supplies of food and necessaries, which is usually given with great good will and gratitude; but when withheld, is enforced as a right.

Nabal's refusal, therefore, was a violation of the established usages of the place.

**13.** *two hundred abode by the stuff* — This addition to his followers was made after his return into Judah (see 4921) Samuel 22:2).

\*\*\* SAMUEL 25:14-35.

#### ABIGAIL PACIFIES HIM.

**14-18.** *Then Abigail made haste* — The prudence and address of Nabal's wife were the means of saving him and family from utter destruction. She acknowledged the demand of her formidable neighbors; but justly considering, that to atone for the insolence of her husband, a greater degree of liberality had become necessary, she collected a large amount of food, accompanying it with the most valued products of the country.

**bottles** — goatskins, capable of holding a great quantity.

*parched corn* — It was customary to eat parched corn when it was fully grown, but not ripe.

- 19. she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you
- People in the East always try to produce an effect by their presents, loading on several beasts what might be easily carried by one, and bringing them forward, article by article, in succession. Abigail not only sent her servants in this way, but resolved to go in person, following her present, as is commonly done, to watch the impression which her munificence would produce.
- 23. she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face
- Dismounting in presence of a superior is the highest token of respect that can be given; and it is still an essential act of homage to the great. Accompanying this act of courtesy with the lowest form of prostration, she not only by her attitude, but her language, made the fullest amends for the disrespect shown by her husband, as well as paid the fullest tribute of respect to the character and claims of David.
- **25.** *Nabal* signifying *fool*, gave pertinence to his wife's remark.

- **26.** *let thine enemies* ... *be as Nabal* be as foolish and contemptible as he.
- **29.** the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God An Orientalism, expressing the perfect security of David's life from all the assaults of his enemies, under the protecting shield of Providence, who had destined him for high things.
- **32-35.** *David said to Abigail*, *Blessed be the Lord* Transported by passion and blinded by revenge, he was on the eve of perpetrating a great injury. Doubtless, the timely appearance and prudent address of Abigail were greatly instrumental in changing his purpose. At all events, it was the means of opening his eyes to the moral character of the course on which he had been impetuously rushing; and in accepting her present, he speaks with lively satisfaction as well as gratitude to Abigail, for having relieved him from bloodshed.

## 1 SAMUEL 25:36-44.

#### NABAL'S DEATH.

- **36.** he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king The sheep-shearing season was always a very joyous occasion. Masters usually entertained their shepherds; and even Nabal, though of a most niggardly disposition, prepared festivities on a scale of sumptuous liberality. The modern Arabs celebrate the season with similar hilarity.
- 37, 38. in the morning ... his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him He probably fainted from horror at the perilous situation in which he had unconsciously placed himself; and such a shock had been given him by the fright to his whole system, that he rapidly pined and died.
- **39-42.** *the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head* If this was an expression of pleasure, and David's vindictive feelings were gratified by the intelligence of Nabal's death, it was an instance of human infirmity which we may lament; but perhaps he referred

to the unmerited reproach (<sup>4920</sup>1 Samuel 25:10,11), and the contempt of God implied in it.

David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to wife — This unceremonious proceeding was quite in the style of Eastern monarchs, who no sooner take a fancy for a lady than they despatch a messenger to intimate their royal wishes that she should henceforth reside in the palace; and her duty is implicitly to obey. David's conduct shows that the manners of the Eastern nations were already imitated by the great men in Israel; and that the morality of the times which God permitted, gave its sanction to the practice of polygamy. His marriage with Abigail brought him a rich estate.

**44.** *Michal* — By the unchallengeable will of her father, she who was David's wife was given to another. But she returned and sustained the character of his wife when he ascended the throne.

## • SAMUEL 26:1-4.

#### SAUL COMES TO THE HILL OF HACHILAH AGAINST DAVID.

- 1, 2. the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah This people seem to have thought it impossible for David to escape, and therefore recommended themselves to Saul, by giving him secret information (see on 23:19). The knowledge of their treachery makes it appear strange that David should return to his former haunt in their neighborhood; but, perhaps he did it to be near Abigail's possessions, and under the impression that Saul had become mollified. But the king had relapsed into his old enmity. Though Gibeah, as its name imports, stood on an elevated position, and the desert of Ziph, which was in the hilly region of Judea, may have been higher than Gibeah, it was still necessary to descend in leaving the latter place; thence Saul "went down to the wilderness of Ziph."
- **4, 5.** *David* ... *sent out spies* ... *and David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched* Having obtained certain information of the locality, he seems, accompanied by his nephew (\*\*9261 Samuel 26:6), to have hid himself, perhaps disguised, in a neighboring wood, or hill, on the skirts of the royal camp towards night, and waited to approach it under covert of the darkness.

# DAVID STAYS ABISHAI FROM KILLING SAUL, BUT TAKES HIS SPEAR AND CRUSE.

**5.** Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him — Among the nomad people of the East, the encampments are usually made in a circular form. The circumference is lined by the baggage and the men,

while the chief's station is in the center, whether he occupy a tent or not. His spear, stuck in the ground, indicates his position. Similar was the disposition of Saul's camp — in this hasty expedition he seems to have carried no tent, but to have slept on the ground. The whole troop was sunk in sleep around him.

**8-12.** Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand — This midnight stratagem shows the activity and heroic enterprise of David's mind, and it was in unison with the style of warfare in ancient times.

let me smite him ... even to the earth at once — The ferocious vehemence of the speaker is sufficiently apparent from his language, but David's magnanimity soared far above the notions of his followers. Though Saul's cruelty and perfidy and general want of right principle had sunk him to a low pitch of degradation, yet that was no reason for David's imitating him in doing wrong. Besides, he was the sovereign; David was a subject. Though God had rejected him from the kingdom, it was in every way the best and most dutiful course, instead of precipitating his fall by imbruing their hands in his blood and thereby contracting the guilt of a great crime, to wait the awards of that retributive providence which sooner or later would take him off by some sudden and mortal blow. He who, with impetuous haste was going to exterminate Nabal, meekly spared Saul. But Nabal refused to give a tribute to which justice and gratitude, no less than custom, entitled David. Saul was under the judicial infatuation of heaven. Thus David withheld the hand of Abishai; but, at the same time, he directed him to carry off some things which would show where they had been, and what they had done. Thus he obtained the best of victories over him, by heaping coals of fire on his head.

**11.** the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water — The Oriental spear had, and still has, a spike at the lower extremity, intended for the purpose of sticking the spear into the ground when the warrior is at rest. This common custom of Arab sheiks was also the practice of the Hebrew chiefs.

at his bolster — literally, "at his head"; perhaps, Saul as a sovereign had the distinguished luxury of a bolster carried for him. A "cruse of water" is usually, in warm climates, kept near a person's couch, as a drink in the

night time is found very refreshing. Saul's cruse would probably be of superior materials, or more richly ornamented than common ones, and therefore by its size or form be easily distinguished.

- **13-20.** Then David ... stood on the top of an hill afar off ... and cried to the people (See on 'Tudges 9:7). The extraordinary purity and elasticity of the air in Palestine enable words to be distinctly heard that are addressed by a speaker from the top of one hill to people on that of another, from which it is separated by a deep intervening ravine. Hostile parties can thus speak to each other, while completely beyond the reach of each other's attack. It results from the peculiar features of the country in many of the mountain districts.
- **15.** David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man: ... wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? The circumstance of David having penetrated to the center of the encampment, through the circular rows of the sleeping soldiers, constituted the point of this sarcastic taunt. This new evidence of David's moderation and magnanimous forbearance, together with his earnest and kindly expostulation, softened the obduracy of Saul's heart.
- **19.** *If the Lord have stirred thee up against me* By the evil spirit He had sent, or by any spiritual offenses by which we have mutually displeased Him.

*let him accept an offering* — that is, let us conjointly offer a sacrifice for appeasing His wrath against us.

*if they be the children of men* — The prudence, meekness, and address of David in ascribing the king's enmity to the instigations of some malicious traducers, and not to the jealousy of Saul himself, is worthy of notice.

*saying*, *Go*, *serve other gods* — This was the drift of their conduct. By driving him from the land and ordinances of the true worship, into foreign and heathen countries, they were exposing him to all the seductions of idolatry.

**20.** *as when one doth hunt a partridge* — People in the East, in hunting the partridge and other game birds, pursue them, till observing them becoming languid and fatigued after they have been put up two or three

times, they rush upon the birds stealthily and knock them down with bludgeons [Shaw, *Travels*]. It was exactly in this manner that Saul was pursuing David. He drove him from time to time from his hiding-place, hoping to render him weary of his life, or obtain an opportunity of accomplishing his destruction.

**25.** So David went on his way — Notwithstanding this sudden relenting of Saul, David placed no confidence in his professions or promises, but wisely kept at a distance and awaited the course of Providence.

### • SAMUEL 27:1-4.

# SAUL HEARING THAT DAVID WAS FLED TO GATH, SEEKS NO MORE FOR HIM.

- **1.** David said in his heart, ... there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines This resolution of David's was, in every respect, wrong:
  - (1) It was removing him from the place where the divine oracle intimated him to remain (492151 Samuel 22:5);
  - (2) It was rushing into the idolatrous land, for driving him into which he had denounced an imprecation on his enemies (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 26:19);
  - (3) It was a withdrawal of his counsel and aid from God's people. It was a movement, however, overruled by Providence to detach him from his country and to let the disasters impending over Saul and his followers be brought on by the Philistines.
- **2, 3.** Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath The popular description of this king's family creates a presumption that he was a different king from the reigning sovereign on David's first visit to Gath. Whether David had received a special invitation from him or a mere permission to enter his territories, cannot be determined. It is probable that the former was the case. From the universal notoriety given to the feud between Saul and David, which had now become irreconcilable, it might appear to Achish good policy to harbor him as a guest, and so the better pave the way for the hostile measures against Israel which the Philistines were at this time meditating.

## SAMUEL 27:5-12.

#### DAVID BEGS ZIKLAG OF ACHISH.

- **5.** *let them give me a place in some town in the country* It was a prudent arrangement on the part of David; for it would prevent him being an object of jealous suspicion, or of mischievous plots among the Philistines. It would place his followers more beyond the risk of contamination by the idolatries of the court and capital; and it would give him an opportunity of making reprisals on the freebooting tribes that infested the common border of Israel and the Philistines.
- **6. Ziklag** Though originally assigned to Judah ( Joshua 15:31), and subsequently to Simeon ( Joshua 19:5), this town had never been possessed by the Israelites. It belonged to the Philistines, who gave it to David.
- 8. David ... went up, and invaded the Geshurites (See GET Joshua 13:2).

  and the Gizrites or the Gerizi [GESENIUS], (GET Joshua 12:12), some
- and the Amalekites Part of the district occupied by them lay on the south of the land of Israel (\*\*\*USB\*\*Judges 5:14 \*\*\*\*T12:15).

Arab horde which had once encamped there.

**10.** Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to-day? — that is, raid, a hostile excursion for seizing cattle and other booty.

David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites — Jerahmeel was the great-grandson of Judah, and his posterity occupied the southern portion of that tribal domain.

the south of the Kenites — the posterity of Jethro, who occupied the south of Judah ("Judges 1:16" Numbers 24:21). The deceit practiced upon his royal host and the indiscriminate slaughter committed, lest any one should escape to tell the tale, exhibit an unfavorable view of this part of David's history.

### • SAMUEL 28:1-6.

#### ACHISH'S CONFIDENCE IN DAVID.

1. The Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel — The death of Samuel, the general dissatisfaction with Saul, and the absence of David, instigated the cupidity of those restless enemies of Israel.

Achish said to David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle — This was evidently to try him. Achish, however, seems to have thought he had gained the confidence of David and had a claim on his services.

**2.** Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do — This answer, while it seemed to express an apparent cheerfulness in agreeing to the proposal, contained a studied ambiguity — a wary and politic generality.

Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever — or, "my life"; that is, "captain of my bodyguard," an office of great trust and high honor.

- 3. Now Samuel is dead, etc. This event is here alluded to as affording an explanation of the secret and improper methods by which Saul sought information and direction in the present crisis of his affairs. Overwhelmed in perplexity and fear, he yet found the common and legitimate channels of communication with Heaven shut against him. And so, under the impulse of that dark, distempered, superstitious spirit which had overmastered him, he resolved, in desperation, to seek the aid of one of those fortune telling impostors whom, in accordance with the divine command (\*\*\*Leviticus 19:31\*\*\*\*20:6,27\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 18:11), he had set himself formerly to exterminate from his kingdom.
- **4.** *the Philistines* ... *pitched in Shunem* Having collected their forces for a last grand effort, they marched up from the seacoast and encamped in

the "valley of Jezreel." The spot on which their encampment was fixed was Shunem ("Joshua 19:18), now Sulem, a village which still exists on the slope of a range called "Little Hermon." On the opposite side, on the rise of Mount Gilboa, hard by "the spring of Jezreel," was Saul's army — the Israelites, according to their wont, keeping to the heights, while their enemies clung to the plain.

## SAMUEL 28:7-25.

# SAUL SEEKS A WITCH, WHO, BEING ENCOURAGED BY HIM, RAISES UP SAMUEL.

7, 8. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit — From the energetic measures which he himself had taken for extirpating the dealers in magical arts (the profession having been declared a capital offense), his most attached courtiers might have had reason to doubt the possibility of gratifying their master's wish. Anxious inquiries, however, led to the discovery of a woman living very secluded in the neighborhood, who had the credit of possessing the forbidden powers. To her house he repaired by night in disguise, accompanied by two faithful servants.

**En-dor**— "the fountain of the circle" (that figure being constantly affected by magicians) was situated directly on the other side of the Gilboa range, opposite Tabor; so that, in this midnight adventure, Saul had to pass over the shoulder of the ridge on which the Philistines were encamped.

8-14. bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee — This pythoness united to the arts of divination a claim to be a necromancer (\*\*Deuteronomy 18:11); and it was her supposed power in calling back the dead of which Saul was desirous to avail himself. Though she at first refused to listen to his request, she accepted his pledge that no risk would be incurred by her compliance. It is probable that his extraordinary stature, the deference paid him by his attendants, the easy distance of his camp from En-dor, and the proposal to call up the great prophet and first magistrate in Israel (a proposal which no private individual would venture

to make), had awakened her suspicions as to the true character and rank of her visitor. The story has led to much discussion whether there was a real appearance of Samuel or not. On the one hand, the woman's profession, which was forbidden by the divine law, the refusal of God to answer Saul by any divinely constituted means, the well-known age, figure, and dress of Samuel, which she could easily represent herself, or by an accomplice — his apparition being evidently at some distance, being muffled, and not actually seen by Saul, whose attitude of prostrate homage, moreover, must have prevented him distinguishing the person though he had been near, and the voice seemingly issuing out of the ground, and coming along to Saul and the vagueness of the information, imparted much which might have been reached by natural conjecture as to the probable result of the approaching conflict — the woman's representation — all of this has led many to think that this was a mere deception. On the other hand, many eminent writers (considering that the apparition came before her arts were put in practice; that she herself was surprised and alarmed; that the prediction of Saul's own death and the defeat of his forces was confidently made), are of opinion that Samuel really appeared.

- **24.** the woman had a fat calf ... and she hasted, and killed it, etc. (See on Genesis 18:1-8).
- **25.** Then they rose up, and went away that night Exhausted by long abstinence, overwhelmed with mental distress, and now driven to despair, the cold sweat broke on his anxious brow, and he sank helpless on the ground. But the kind attentions of the woman and his servants having revived him, he returned to the camp to await his doom.

## •••• SAMUEL 29:1-5.

# DAVID MARCHING WITH THE PHILISTINES TO FIGHT WITH ISRAEL.

- **1.** Aphek ( Good Joshua 12:8), in the tribe of Issachar, and in the plain of Esdraelon. A person who compares the Bible account of Saul's last battle with the Philistines, with the region around Gilboa, has the same sort of evidence that the account relates what is true, that a person would have that such a battle as Waterloo really took place. Gilboa, Jezreel, Shunem, En-dor, are all found, still bearing the same names. They lie within sight of each other. Aphek is the only one of the cluster not yet identified. Jezreel on the northern slope of Gilboa, and at the distance of twenty minutes to the east, is a large fountain, and a smaller one still nearer; just the position which a chieftain would select, both on account of its elevation and the supply of water needed for his troops [HACKETT, Scripture Illustrated].
- **2.** David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish as the commander of the lifeguards of Achish, who was general of this invading army of the Philistines.
- 3. these days, or these years He had now been with the Philistines a full year and four months ( Samuel 27:7), and also some years before. It has been thought that David kept up a private correspondence with this Philistine prince, either on account of his native generosity, or in the anticipation that an asylum in his territories would sooner or later be needed.
- **4.** the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him It must be considered a happy circumstance in the overruling providence of God to rescue David out of the dangerous dilemma in which he was now placed. But David is not free from censure in his professions to Achish ( Samuel 29:8), to do what he probably had not the smallest purpose of doing of fighting with Achish against his enemies. It is just an instance

of the unhappy consequences into which a false step — a departure from the straight course of duty — will betray everyone who commits it.

**9.** *notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said* — The Philistine government had constitutional checks — or at least the king was not an absolute sovereign; but his authority was limited — his proceedings liable to be controlled by "the powerful barons of that rude and early period — much as the kings of Europe in the Middle Ages were by the proud and lawless aristocracy which surrounded them" [Chalmers].

• SAMUEL 30:1-5.

#### THE AMALEKITES SPOIL ZIKLAG.

- **1.** Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag While the strength of the Philistine forces was poured out of their country into the plain of Esdraelon, the Amalekite marauders seized the opportunity of the defenseless state of Philistia to invade the southern territory. Of course, David's town suffered from the ravages of these nomad plunderers, in revenge for his recent raid upon their territory.
- 2. they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away Their conduct seems to stand in favorable contrast to that of David (49271) Samuel 27:11). But their apparent clemency did not arise from humane considerations. It is traceable to the ancient war usages of the East, where the men of war, on the capture of a city, were unsparingly put to death, but there were no warriors in Ziklag at the time. The women and boys were reserved for slaves, and the old people were spared out of respect to age.
- 3. David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire The language implies that the smoke of the conflagration was still visible, and the sacking very recent.

• SAMUEL 30:6-15.

## BUT DAVID, ENCOURAGED BY GOD, PURSUES THEM.

**6.** *David was greatly distressed* — He had reason, not only on his own personal account ( <sup>ORIG</sup>1 Samuel 30:5), but on account of the vehement outcry and insurrectionary threats against him for having left the place so defenseless that the families of his men fell an unresisting prey to the

enemy. Under the pressure of so unexpected and widespread a calamity, of which he was upbraided as the indirect occasion, the spirit of any other leader guided by ordinary motives would have sunk;

but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God — His faith supplied him with inward resources of comfort and energy, and through the seasonable inquiries he made by Urim, he inspired confidence by ordering an immediate pursuit of the plunderers.

- **9.** came to the brook Besor now Wady Gaza, a winter torrent, a little to the south of Gaza. The bank of a stream naturally offered a convenient rest to the soldiers, who, through fatigue, were unable to continue the pursuit.
- 11-15. they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David Old and homeborn slaves are usually treated with great kindness. But a purchased or captured slave must look to himself; for, if feeble or sick, his master will leave him to perish rather than encumber himself with any additional burden. This Egyptian seems to have recently fallen into the hands of an Amalekite, and his master having belonged to the marauding party that had made the attack on Ziklag, he could give useful information as to the course taken by them on their return.
- **14.** *the Cherethites* that is, the Philistines (\*\*Ezekiel 25:16 \*Ezekiel 25:16).
- **15.** *Swear unto me by God* Whether there was still among these idolatrous tribes a lingering belief in one God, or this Egyptian wished to bind David by the God whom the Hebrews worshipped, the solemn sanction of an oath was mutually recognized.

\*\*\* SAMUEL 30:16-31.

#### AND RECOVERS HIS TWO WIVES AND ALL THE SPOIL.

**16.** *they were spread abroad upon all the earth* — Believing that David and all his men of war were far away, engaged with the Philistine expedition, they deemed themselves perfectly secure and abandoned

themselves to all manner of barbaric revelry. The promise made in answer to the devout inquiries of David (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 30:8) was fulfilled. The marauders were surprised and panic-stricken. A great slaughter ensued — the people as well as the booty taken from Ziklag was recovered, besides a great amount of spoil which they had collected in a wide, freebooting excursion.

**21.** David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow — This unexpected accession of spoil was nearly proving an occasion of quarrel through the selfish cupidity of some of his followers, and serious consequences might have ensued had they not been prevented by the prudence of the leader, who enacted it as a standing ordinance — the equitable rule — that all the soldiers should share alike (see ORIII) Numbers 31:11; see on ORIII) Numbers 31:25).

**26.** when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah — This was intended as an acknowledgment to the leading men in those towns and villages of Judah which had ministered to his necessities in the course of his various wanderings. It was the dictate of an amiable and grateful heart; and the effect of this well timed liberality was to bring a large accession of numbers to his camp (4922) Chronicles 12:22). The enumeration of these places shows what a numerous and influential party of adherents to his cause he could count within his own tribe [4922] Samuel 30:27-31].

### **SAMUEL** 31:1-7.

## SAUL HAVING LOST HIS ARMY AT GILBOA, AND HIS SONS BEING SLAIN, HE AND HIS ARMOR-BEARER KILL THEMSELVES.

- 1. Now the Philistines fought against Israel In a regular engagement, in which the two armies met (\*\*\text{1881} Samuel 28:1-4), the Israelites were forced to give way, being annoyed by the arrows of the enemy, which, destroying them at a distance before they came to close combat, threw them into panic and disorder. Taking advantage of the heights of Mount Gilboa, [the Israelites] attempted to rally, but in vain. Saul and his sons fought like heroes; but the onset of the Philistines being at length mainly directed against the quarter where they were, Jonathan and two brothers, Abinadab or Ishui (\*\text{0344} Samuel 14:49) and Melchishua, overpowered by numbers, were killed on the spot.
- **6.** So Saul died (see on Chronicles 10:13 and Hosea 13:11).
- and his three sons The influence of a directing Providence is evidently to be traced in permitting the death of Saul's three eldest and most energetic sons, particularly that of Jonathan, for whom, had he survived

his father, a strong party would undoubtedly have risen and thus obstructed the path of David to the throne.

**7.** the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley — probably the valley of Jezreel — the largest and southernmost of the valleys that run between Little Hermon and the ridges of the Gilboa range direct into the Jordan valley. It was very natural for the people in the towns and villages there to take fright and flee, for had they waited the arrival of the victors, they must, according to the war usages of the time, have been deprived either of their liberty or their lives.

#### THE PHILISTINES TRIUMPH OVER THEIR DEAD BODIES.

**8, 9.** on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen — On discovering the corpses of the slaughtered princes on the battlefield, the enemy reserved them for special indignities. They consecrated the armor of the king and his sons to the temple of Ashtaroth fastened their bodies on the temple of Shen, while they fixed the royal heads ignominiously in the temple of Dagon (strong Chronicles 10:10); thus dividing the glory among their several deities.

**10.** to the wall — (\*\*\* Samuel 21:12) — "the street" of Beth-shan. The street was called from the temple which stood in it. And they had to go along it to the wall of the city (see \*\*\* Joshua 17:11).

OBID SAMUEL 31:11-13.

# THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD RECOVER THE BODIES AND BURY THEM AT JABESH.

11-13. the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the **Philistines had done** — Mindful of the important and timely services

Saul had rendered them, they gratefully and heroically resolved not to suffer such indignities to be inflicted on the remains of the royal family.

12. valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons — Considering that Beth-shan is an hour and a half's distance, and by a narrow upland passage, to the west of the Jordan (the whole being a journey from Jabesh-gilead of about ten miles), they must have made all haste to travel thither to carry off the headless bodies and return to their own side of the Jordan in the course of a single night.

**burnt them** — This was not a Hebrew custom. It was probably resorted to on this occasion to prevent all risk of the Beth-shanites coming to disinter the royal remains for further insult.

## THE SECOND BOOK OF

# **SAMUEL**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# **CHAPTER 1**

2 SAMUEL 1:1-16.

#### AN AMALEKITE BRINGS TIDINGS OF SAUL'S DEATH.

- **1.** David had abode two days in Ziklag Though greatly reduced by the Amalekite incendiaries, that town was not so completely sacked and destroyed, but David and his six hundred followers, with their families, could still find some accommodation.
- **2-12.** *a man came out of the camp from Saul* As the narrative of Saul's death, given in the last chapter, is inspired, it must be considered the true account, and the Amalekite's story a fiction of his own, invented to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne. David's question, "How went the matter?" evinces the deep interest he took in the war, an interest that sprang from feelings of high and generous patriotism, not from views of ambition. The Amalekite, however, judging him to be actuated by a selfish principle, fabricated a story improbable and inconsistent, which he thought would procure him a reward. Having probably witnessed the suicidal act of Saul, he thought of turning it to his own account, and suffered the penalty of his grievously mistaken calculation (compare \*\*\* Samuel 1:9 with \*\*\* Samuel 31:4,5).
- **10.** *the crown* a small metallic cap or wreath, which encircled the temples, serving the purpose of a helmet, with a very small horn projecting in front, as the emblem of power.

*the bracelet that was on his arm* — the armlet worn above the elbow; an ancient mark of royal dignity. It is still worn by kings in some Eastern countries.

13-15. David said unto the young man ... Whence art thou? — The man had at the outset stated who he was. But the question was now formally and judicially put. The punishment inflicted on the Amalekite may seem too severe, but the respect paid to kings in the West must not be regarded as the standard for that which the East may think due to royal station. David's reverence for Saul, as the Lord's anointed, was in his mind a principle on which he had faithfully acted on several occasions of great temptation. In present circumstances it was especially important that his principle should be publicly known; and to free himself from the imputation of being in any way accessory to the execrable crime of regicide was the part of a righteous judge, no less than of a good politician.

## **™2 SAMUEL 1:17-27.**

#### DAVID LAMENTS SAUL AND JONATHAN.

- 17, 18. David lamented with this lamentation It has always been customary for Eastern people, on the death of great kings and warriors, to celebrate their qualities and deeds in funeral songs. This inimitable pathetic elegy is supposed by many writers to have become a national war song, and to have been taught to the young Israelites under the name of "The Bow," in conformity with the practice of Hebrew and many classical writers in giving titles to their songs from the principal theme (\*\*\*Psalm 22:1\*\*\*56:1\*\*\*60:1\*\*\*80:1\*\*\*\*100:1). Although the words "the use of" are a supplement by our translators, they may be rightly introduced, for the natural sense of this parenthetical verse is, that David took immediate measures for instructing the people in the knowledge and practice of archery, their great inferiority to the enemy in this military arm having been the main cause of the late national disaster.
- **19.** *The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places* literally, "the gazelle" or "antelope of Israel." In Eastern countries, that animal is the chosen type of beauty and symmetrical elegance of form.

how are the mighty fallen! — This forms the chorus.

**21.** *let there be no dew, neither let there be rain* — To be deprived of the genial atmospheric influences which, in those anciently cultivated hills, seem to have reared plenty of first-fruits in the corn harvests, was specified as the greatest calamity the lacerated feelings of the poet could imagine. The curse seems still to lie upon them; for the mountains of Gilboa are naked and sterile.

the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away — To cast away the shield was counted a national disgrace. Yet, on that fatal battle of Gilboa, many of the Jewish soldiers, who had displayed unflinching valor in former battles, forgetful of their own reputation and their country's honor, threw away their shields and fled from the field. This dishonorable and cowardly conduct is alluded to with exquisitely touching pathos.

**24-27.** Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, etc. — The fondness for dress, which anciently distinguished Oriental women, is their characteristic still. It appears in their love of bright, gay, and divers colors, in profuse display of ornaments, and in various other forms. The inmost depths of the poet's feeling are stirred, and his amiable disposition appears in the strong desire to celebrate the good qualities of Saul, as well as Jonathan. But the praises of the latter form the burden of the poem, which begins and ends with that excellent prince.

### **™2 SAMUEL 2:1-7.**

# DAVID, BY GOD'S DIRECTION, GOES UP TO HEBRON, AND IS MADE KING OVER JUDAH.

**1-4.** David inquired of the Lord — By Urim ( Samuel 23:6,9 30:7,8). He knew his destination, but he knew also that the providence of God would pave the way. Therefore he would take no step in such a crisis of his own and the nation's history, without asking and obtaining the divine direction. He was told to go into Judah, and fix his headquarters in Hebron, whither he accordingly repaired with his now considerable force. There his interests were very powerful; for he was not only within his own tribe, and near chiefs with whom he had been long in friendly relations (see on Samuel 30:26), but Hebron was the capital and center of Judah, and one of the Levitical cities; the inhabitants of which were strongly attached to him, both from sympathy with his cause ever since the massacre at Nob, and from the prospect of realizing in his person their promised pre-eminence among the tribes. The princes of Judah, therefore, offered him the crown over their tribe, and it was accepted. More could not, with prudence, be done in the circumstances of the country ( Chronicles 11:3).

**5-7.** David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead — There can be no doubt that this message of thanks for their bold and dangerous enterprise in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons was an expression of David's personal and genuine feeling of satisfaction. At the same time, it was a stroke of sound and timely policy. In this view the announcement of his royal power in Judah, accompanied by the pledge of his protection of the men of Jabesh-gilead, should they be exposed to danger for their adventure at Beth-shan, would bear an important significance in all parts of the country and hold out an assurance that he would render them the same timely and energetic succor that Saul had done at the beginning of his reign.

## **3000** SAMUEL 2:8-17.

#### ABNER MAKES ISH-BOSHETH KING OVER ISRAEL.

**8-17.** Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host took Ish-bosheth — Here was the establishment of a rival kingdom, which, however, would probably have had no existence but for Abner.

**Ish-bosheth** — or "Esh-baal" (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39). The Hebrews usually changed names ending with Baal into Bosheth ("shame") (compare Judges 9:53 with \*\*\*12 Samuel 11:21). This prince was so called from his imbecility.

**Abner** — was first cousin of Saul, commander of the forces, and held in high respect throughout the country. Loyalty to the house of his late master was mixed up with opposition to David and views of personal ambition in his originating this factious movement. He, too, was alive to the importance of securing the eastern tribes; so, taking Ish-bosheth across the Jordan, he proclaimed him king at Mahanaim, a town on the north bank of the Jabbok, hallowed in patriarchal times by the divine presence (\*\*Genesis 32:2). There he rallied the tribes around the standard of the unfortunate son of Saul.

**9, 10.** over Gilead — used in a loose sense for the land beyond Jordan.

**Ashurites** — the tribe of Asher in the extreme north.

**Jezreel** — the extensive valley bordering on the central tribes.

*over all Israel* ... *But Judah* — David neither could nor would force matters. He was content to wait God's time and studiously avoided any collision with the rival king, till, at the lapse of two years, hostilities were threatened from that quarter.

12. Abner ... and the servants of Ish-bosheth ... went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon — This town was near the confines of Judah, and as the force with which Abner encamped there seemed to have some aggressive design, David sent an army of observation, under the command of Joab, to watch his movements.

## 14. Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us

— Some think that the proposal was only for an exhibition of a little tilting match for diversion. Others suppose that, both parties being reluctant to commence a civil war, Abner proposed to leave the contest to the decision of twelve picked men on either side. This fight by championship instead of terminating the matter, inflamed the fiercest passions of the two rival parties; a general engagement ensued, in which Abner and his forces were defeated and put to flight.

## \*\*\*2 SAMUEL 2:19-32.

#### ASAHEL SLAIN.

**19-32.** Asahel pursued after Abner — To gain the general's armor was deemed the grandest trophy. Asahel, ambitious of securing Abner's, had outstripped all other pursuers, and was fast gaining on the retreating commander. Abner, conscious of possessing more physical power, and unwilling that there should be "blood" between himself and Joab, Asahel's brother, twice urged him to desist. The impetuous young soldier being deaf to the generous remonstrance, the veteran raised the pointed butt of his lance, as the modern Arabs do when pursued, and, with a sudden back thrust, transfixed him on the spot, so that he fell, and lay weltering in his blood. But Joab and Abishai continued the pursuit by another route till sunset. On reaching a rising ground, and receiving a fresh reinforcement of some Benjamites, Abner rallied his scattered troops and earnestly appealed to Joab's better feelings to stop the further effusion of blood, which, if continued, would lead to more serious consequences — a destructive civil war. Joab, while upbraiding his opponent as the sole cause of the fray, felt the force of the appeal and led off his men; while Abner probably dreading a renewal of the attack when Joab should learn his brother's fate, and vow fierce revenge, endeavored, by a forced march, to cross the Jordan that night. On David's side the loss was only nineteen men, besides Asahel. But of Ish-bosheth's party there fell three hundred and sixty. This skirmish is exactly similar to the battles of the Homeric warriors, among whom, in the flight of one, the pursuit by another, and the

dialogue held between them, there is vividly represented the style of ancient warfare.

## **№2 SAMUEL 3:1-5.**

#### SIX SONS BORN TO DAVID.

- 1. there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David
   The rival parties had varying success, but David's interest steadily increased; less, however, by the fortunes of war, than a growing adherence to him as the divinely designated king.
- **2.** *unto David were sons born in Hebron* The six sons mentioned had all different mothers.
- **3.** *Chileab* ("his father's picture") called also Daniel (\*\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 3:1).

*Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur* — a region in Syria, north of Israel. This marriage seems to have been a political match, made by David, with a view to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth's party, by the aid of a powerful friend and ally in the north. Piety was made to yield to policy, and the bitter fruits of this alliance with a heathen prince he reaped in the life of the turbulent Absalom.

**5.** *Eglah David's wife* — This addition has led many to think that Eglah was another name for Michal, the *first* and *proper* wife, who, though she had no family after her insolent ridicule of David (\*\*2 Samuel 6:23), might have had a child before

**2 SAMUEL 3:6-12.** € 1000 € 2

#### ABNER REVOLTS TO DAVID.

**6-11.** Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul — In the East, the wives and concubines of a king are the property of his successor to this

extent, that for a private person to aspire to marry one of them would be considered a virtual advance of pretensions to the crown (see 1271 Kings 2:17). It is not clear whether the accusation against Abner was well or ill founded. But he resented the charge as an indignity, and, impelled by revenge, determined to transfer all the weight of his influence to the opposite party. He evidently set a full value on his services, and seems to have lorded it over his weak nephew in a haughty, overbearing manner.

12, 13. Abner sent messengers to David — Though his language implied a secret conviction, that in supporting Ish-bosheth he had been laboring to frustrate the divine purpose of conferring the sovereignty of the kingdom on David, this acknowledgment was no justification either of the measure he was now adopting, or of the motives that prompted it. Nor does it seem possible to uphold the full integrity and honor of David's conduct in entertaining his secret overtures for undermining Ish-bosheth, except we take into account the divine promise of the kingdom, and his belief that the secession of Abner was a means designed by Providence for accomplishing it. The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair; but David's insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded not so much from a lingering attachment as from an expectation that his possession of her would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favorable to his cause.

17-21. Abner had communication with the elders of Israel — He spoke the truth in impressing their minds with the well-known fact of David's divine designation to the kingdom. But he acted a base and hypocritical part in pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious motives, when it sprang entirely from malice and revenge against Ish-bosheth. The particular appeal of the Benjamites was a necessary policy; their tribe enjoyed the honor of giving birth to the royal dynasty of Saul; they would naturally be disinclined to lose that prestige. They were, besides, a determined people, whose contiguity to Judah might render them troublesome and dangerous. The enlistment of their interest, therefore, in the scheme, would smooth the way for the adhesion of the other tribes; and Abner enjoyed the most convenient opportunity of using his great influence in gaining over that tribe while escorting Michal to David with a suitable equipage. The mission enabled him to cover his

treacherous designs against his master — to draw the attention of the elders and people to David as uniting in himself the double recommendation of being the nominee of Jehovah, no less than a connection of the royal house of Saul, and, without suspicion of any dishonorable motives, to advocate policy of terminating the civil discord, by bestowing the sovereignty on the husband of Michal. In the same character of public ambassador, he was received and feted by David; and while, ostensibly, the restoration of Michal was the sole object of his visit, he busily employed himself in making private overtures to David for bringing over to his cause those tribes which he had artfully seduced. Abner pursued a course unworthy of an honorable man and though his offer was accepted by David, the guilt and infamy of the transaction were exclusively his.

### **⁴022** SAMUEL 3:22-30.

#### JOAB KILLS ABNER.

**24-27.** Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? — Joab's knowledge of Abner's wily character might have led him to doubt the sincerity of that person's proposals and to disapprove the policy of relying on his fidelity. But undoubtedly there were other reasons of a private and personal nature which made Joab displeased and alarmed by the reception given to Abner. The military talents of that general, his popularity with the army, his influence throughout the nation, rendered him a formidable rival. In the event of his overtures being carried out, the important service of bringing over all the other tribes to the king of Judah would establish so strong a claim on the gratitude of David, that his accession would inevitably raise a serious obstacle to the ambition of Joab. To these considerations was added the remembrance of the blood feud that existed between them since the death of his brother Asahel (\*\*\*22 Samuel 2:23). Determined, therefore, to get Abner out of the way, Joab feigned some reason, probably in the king's name, for recalling him, and, going out to meet him, stabbed him unawares; not within Hebron, for it was a city of refuge, but at a noted well in the neighborhood.

**31.** David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth — David's sorrow was sincere and profound, and he took occasion to give it public expression by the funeral honors he appointed for Abner.

*King David himself followed the bier* — a sort of wooden frame, partly resembling a coffin, and partly a hand-barrow.

33, 34. the king lamented over Abner — This brief elegy is an effusion of indignation as much as of sorrow. As Abner had stabbed Asahel in open war [1222] Samuel 2:23], Joab had not the right of the Goel. Besides, he had adopted a lawless and execrable method of obtaining satisfaction (see on 1251] Kings 2:5). The deed was an insult to the authority, as well as most damaging to the prospects of the king. But David's feelings and conduct on hearing of the death, together with the whole character and accompaniments of the funeral solemnity, tended not only to remove all suspicion of guilt from him, but even to turn the tide of popular opinion in his favor, and to pave the way for his reigning over all the tribes more honorably than by the treacherous negotiations of Abner.

## <sup>4000</sup>2 SAMUEL 4:1,2.

# BAANAH AND RECHAB SLAY ISH-BOSHETH, AND BRING HIS HEAD TO HEBRON.

- **4.** Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet This is mentioned as a reason why, according to Oriental notions, he was considered unfit for exercising the duties of sovereignty.
- **5, 6.** Rechab and Baanah went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, etc. It is still a custom in the East to allow their soldiers a certain quantity of corn, together with some pay; and these two captains very naturally went to the palace the day before to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers, that it might be sent to the mill at the accustomed hour in the morning.
- 7. when they came into the house, he lay on his bed Rechab and Baanah came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ish-bosheth, their master, would be resting on his divan; and as it was necessary, for the reason just given, to have the corn the day before it was needed, their coming at that time, though it might be a little earlier than usual, created no suspicion, and attracted no notice [HARMER].

gat them away through the plain — that is, the valley of the Jordan, through which their way lay from Mahanaim to Hebron.

**8.** They brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David ... and said, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth — Such bloody trophies of rebels and conspirators have always been acceptable to princes in the East, and the carriers have been liberally rewarded. Ish-bosheth being a usurper, the two assassins thought they were doing a meritorious service to David by removing the only existing obstacle to the union of the two kingdoms.

## **SAMUEL 4:10-12. □**

#### DAVID CAUSES THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH.

**12.** *slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet* — as the instruments in perpetrating their crime. The exposure of the mutilated remains was intended as not only a punishment of their crime, but also the attestation of David's abhorrence.

## **№2 SAMUEL 5:1-5.**

#### THE TRIBES ANOINT DAVID KING OVER ISRAEL.

- **1, 2.** Then came all the tribes of Israel a combined deputation of the leading authorities in every tribe. [See on Chronicles 11:1.] David possessed the first and indispensable qualification for the throne; namely, that of being an Israelite (Chronicles 17:15). Of his military talent he had furnished ample proof. And the people's desire for his assumption of the government of Israel was further increased by their knowledge of the will and purpose of God, as declared by Samuel (Chronicles 11:1.]
- 3. King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord—
  (see on ONT) Samuel 10:17). This formal declaration of the constitution was chiefly made at the commencement of a new dynasty, or at the restoration of the royal family after a usurpation (ONT) Kings 11:17), though circumstances sometimes led to its being renewed on the accession of any new sovereign (ONT) Kings 12:4). It seems to have been accompanied by religious solemnities.

**№2 SAMUEL 5:6-12.** 

#### HE TAKES ZION FROM THE JEBUSITES.

**6.** the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites — The first expedition of David, as king of the whole country, was directed against this place, which had hitherto remained in the hands of the natives. It was strongly fortified and deemed so impregnable that the blind and lame were sent to man the battlements, in derisive mockery of the Hebrew king's attack, and to shout, "David cannot come in hither." To understand the full meaning and force of this insulting taunt, it is necessary to bear in

mind the depth and steepness of the valley of Gihon, and the lofty walls of the ancient Canaanitish fortress.

- 7. the stronghold of Zion Whether Zion be the southwestern hill commonly so-called, or the peak now level on the north of the temple mount, it is the towering height which catches the eye from every quarter "the hill fort," "the rocky hold" of Jerusalem.
- **8.** Whosoever getteth up to the gutter This is thought by some to mean a subterranean passage; by others a spout through which water was poured upon the fire which the besiegers often applied to the woodwork at the gateways, and by the projections of which a skillful climber might make his ascent good; a third class render the words, "whosoever dasheth them against the precipice" (\*\*\*IDIF\*\*) Chronicles 11:6).
- **9.** David dwelt in the fort, etc. Having taken it by storm, he changed its name to "the city of David," to signify the importance of the conquest, and to perpetuate the memory of the event.

**David built round about from Millo and inward** — probably a row of stone bastions placed on the northern side of Mount Zion, and built by David to secure himself on that side from the Jebusites, who still lived in the lower part of the city. The house of Millo was perhaps the principal corner tower of that fortified wall.

**11, 12.** *Hiram* ... *sent carpenters, and masons* — The influx of Tyrian architects and mechanics affords a clear evidence of the low state to which, through the disorders of long-continued war, the better class of artisans had declined in Israel.

**2 SAMUEL 5:13-16.** 

#### ELEVEN SONS BORN TO HIM.

**13.** *David took him more concubines and wives* — In this conduct David transgressed an express law, which forbade the king of Israel to multiply wives unto himself (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 17:17).

## **№ 2 SAMUEL 5:17-25.**

#### HE SMITES THE PHILISTINES.

- 17. when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel During the civil war between the house of Saul and David, those restless neighbors had remained quiet spectators of the contest. But now, jealous of David, they resolved to attack him before his government was fully established.
- **18.** *valley of Rephaim* that is, "of giants," a broad and fertile plain, which descends gradually from the central mountains towards the northwest. It was the route by which they marched against Jerusalem. The "hold" to which David went down "was some fortified place where he might oppose the progress of the invaders," and where he signally defeated them.
- **21.** *there they left their images* probably their "lares" or household deities, which they had brought into the field to fight for them. They were burnt as ordained by law (\*\*Deuteronomy 7:5).
- **22.** *the Philistines came up yet again* The next year they renewed their hostile attempt with a larger force, but God manifestly interposed in David's favor.
- **24.** the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees now generally thought not to be mulberry trees, but some other tree, most probably the poplar, which delights in moist situations, and the leaves of which are rustled by the slightest movement of the air [ROYLE].

## **3000**2 SAMUEL 6:1-5.

# DAVID FETCHES THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM ON A NEW CART.

- **1.** Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel (See Samuel 5:1). The object of this second assembly was to commence a national movement for establishing the ark in Jerusalem, after it had continued nearly fifty years in the house of Abinadab (see on Chronicles 13:1).
- **2.** from Baale of Judah A very large force of picked men were selected for this important work lest the undertaking might be opposed or obstructed by the Philistines. Besides, a great concourse of people accompanied them out of veneration for the sacred article. The journey to Baale, which is related (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 13:6), is here presupposed, and the historian describes the course of the procession from that place to the capital.
- **3.** they set the ark of God upon a new cart or a covered wagon (see on Samuel 6:7). This was a hasty and inconsiderate procedure, in violation of an express statute (see on Numbers 4:15 and see Numbers 7:9 ONES 18:3).

**2 SAMUEL** 6:6-11.

#### UZZAH SMITTEN.

**6-8.** *they came to Nachon's threshing-floor* — or Chidon's (<sup>4380)</sup>1 Chronicles 13:9). The Chaldee version renders the words, "came to the place prepared for the reception of the ark," that is, near the city of David (<sup>4003)</sup>2 Samuel 6:13).

the oxen shook it — or, "stumbled" ( Chronicles 13:9). Fearing that the ark was in danger of being overturned, Uzzah, under the impulse of momentary feeling, laid hold of it to keep it steady. Whether it fell and crushed him, or some sudden disease attacked him, he fell dead upon the spot. This melancholy occurrence not only threw a cloud over the joyous scene, but entirely stopped the procession; for the ark was left where it then was, in the near neighborhood of the capital. It is of importance to observe the proportionate severity of the punishments attending the profanation of the ark. The Philistines suffered by diseases, from which they were relieved by their oblations, because the law had not been given to them (\*\*\* Samuel 5:8-12); the Bethshemites also suffered, but not fatally (\*\*\*\* Samuel 6:19); their error proceeded from ignorance or inadvertency. But Uzzah, who was a Levite, and well instructed, suffered death for his breach of the law. The severity of Uzzah's fate may seem to us too great for the nature and degree of the offense. But it does not become us to sit in judgment on the dispensations of God; and, besides, it is apparent that the divine purpose was to inspire awe of His majesty, a submission to His law, and a profound veneration for the symbols and ordinances of His worship.

- **9, 10.** David was afraid of the Lord that day, etc. His feelings on this alarming judgment were greatly excited on various accounts, dreading that the displeasure of God had been provoked by the removal of the ark, that the punishment would be extended to himself and people, and that they might fall into some error or neglect during the further conveyance of the ark. He resolved, therefore, to wait for more light and direction as to the path of duty. An earlier consultation by Urim would have led him right at the first, whereas in this perplexity and distress, he was reaping the fruits of inconsideration and neglect.

## **3062**2 SAMUEL 6:12-19.

### DAVID AFTERWARDS BRINGS THE ARK TO ZION.

- 12. it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God
- The lapse of three months not only restored the agitated mind of the monarch to a tranquil and settled tone, but led him to a discovery of his former error. Having learned that the ark was kept in its temporary resting-place not only without inconvenience or danger, but with great advantage, he resolved forthwith to remove it to the capital, with the observance of all due form and solemnity (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 15:1-13). It was transported now on the shoulders of the priests, who had been carefully prepared for the work, and the procession was distinguished by extraordinary solemnities and demonstrations of joy.
- **13.** when they that bare the ark ... had gone six paces Some think that four altars were hastily raised for the offering of sacrifices at the distance of every six paces (but see on Chronicles 15:26).
- **14.** *David danced before the Lord* The Hebrews, like other ancient people, had their sacred dances, which were performed on their solemn anniversaries and other great occasions of commemorating some special token of the divine goodness and favor.
- with all his might intimating violent efforts of leaping, and divested of his royal mantle (in a state of undress), conduct apparently unsuitable to the gravity of age or the dignity of a king. But it was unquestionably done as an act of religious homage, his attitudes and dress being symbolic, as they have always been in Oriental countries, of penitence, joy, thankfulness, and devotion. [See on 4357] Chronicles 15:27.]
- 17. they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it The old tabernacle remained at Gibeon (\*\* 1 Chronicles 16:39 \*\* 21:29 \*\* 2 Chronicles 1:3). Probably it was not removed because it was too large for the temporary place the king had appropriated, and because he contemplated the building of a temple.

- **18.** *he blessed the people* in the double character of prophet and king (see 40051 Kings 8:55,56). [See on 43001 Chronicles 16:2.]
- **19.** *cake of bread* unleavened and slender.

a good piece of flesh — roast beef.

**3000** SAMUEL 6:20-23.

#### MICHAL'S BARRENNESS.

**20-22.** *Michal* ... *came out to meet David*, etc. — Proud of her royal extraction, she upbraided her husband for lowering the dignity of the crown and acting more like a buffoon than a king. But her taunting sarcasm was repelled in a manner that could not be agreeable to her feelings while it indicated the warm piety and gratitude of David.

# **3000**2 SAMUEL 7:1-3.

# NATHAN APPROVES THE PURPOSE OF DAVID TO BUILD GOD A HOUSE.

- 2. the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar The palace which Hiram had sent men and materials to build in Jerusalem had been finished. It was magnificent for that age, though made wholly of wood: houses in warm countries not being required to possess the solidity and thickness of walls which are requisite for dwellings in regions exposed to rain and cold. Cedar was the rarest and most valuable timber. The elegance and splendor of his own royal mansion, contrasted with the mean and temporary tabernacle in which the ark of God was placed, distressed the pious mind of David.
- 3. Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart The piety of the design commended it to the prophet's mind, and he gave his hasty approval and encouragement to the royal plans. The prophets, when following the impulse of their own feelings, or forming conjectural opinions, fell into frequent mistakes. (See on Office Samuel 16:6 and Kings 4:27).

#### GOD APPOINTS HIS SUCCESSOR TO BUILD IT.

**4-17.** *it came to pass that night*, *that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan* — The command was given to the prophet on the night immediately following; that is, before David could either take any measures or incur any expenses.

- **11.** Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house As a reward for his pious purpose, God would increase and maintain the family of David and secure the succession of the throne to his dynasty. [See on Chronicles 17:10].
- **12.** *I* will set up thy seed after thee, etc. It is customary for the oldest son born after the father's succession to the throne to succeed him in his dignity as king. David had several sons by Bath-sheba born after his removal to Jerusalem (\*\*\*12\*\* Samuel 5:14-16; compare \*\*\*11\*\* Chronicles 3:5). But by a special ordinance and promise of God, his successor was to be a son born after this time; and the departure from the established usage of the East in fixing the succession, can be accounted for on no other known ground, except the fulfillment of the divine promise.
- **13.** He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever This declaration referred, in its primary application, to Solomon, and to the temporal kingdom of David's family. But in a larger and sublimer sense, it was meant of David's Son of another nature (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 1:8). [See on \*\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 17:14.]

# <sup>4078</sup>2 SAMUEL 7:18-29.

#### DAVID'S PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING.

- **18.** Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord Sitting was anciently an attitude for worship (\*\*DE\*\*Exodus 17:12 \*\*OBB\*\*1 Samuel 4:13 \*\*IBB\*\*1 Kings 19:4). As to the particular attitude David sat, most probably, upon his heels. It was the posture of the ancient Egyptians before the shrines; it is the posture of deepest respect before a superior in the East. Persons of highest dignity sit thus when they do sit in the presence of kings and it is the only sitting attitude assumed by the modern Mohammedans in their places and rites of devotion.
- **19.** is this the manner of man, O Lord God? that is, is it customary for men to show such condescension to persons so humble as I am? [See Chronicles 17:17.]

**20.** what can David say more unto thee? — that is, my obligations are greater than I can express.

**SAMUEL 8:1,2.** 

# DAVID SUBDUES THE PHILISTINES, AND MAKES THE MOABITES TRIBUTARY.

- **1.** David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines that is, Gath and her suburban towns ( Chronicles 18:1). That town had been "a bridle" by which the Philistines kept the people of Judah in check. David used it now as a barrier to repress that restless enemy.
- **2.** he smote Moab, and measured them with a line This refers to a well-known practice of Eastern kings, to command their prisoners of war, particularly those who, notorious for the atrocity of their crimes or distinguished by the indomitable spirit of their resistance, had greatly incensed the victors, to lie down on the ground. Then a certain portion of them, which was determined by lot, but most commonly by a measuring-line, were put to death. Our version makes him put two-thirds to death, and spare one-third. The Septuagint and Vulgate make one-half. This war usage was not, perhaps, usually practiced by the people of God; but Jewish writers assert that the cause of this particular severity against this people was their having massacred David's parents and family, whom he had, during his exile, committed to the king of Moab.

**SAMUEL 8:3-14. 3.3-14.** 

#### HE SMITES HADADEZER AND THE SYRIANS.

**3. Zobah** — ( Chronicles 18:3). This kingdom was bounded on the east by the Euphrates, and it extended westward from that river, perhaps as far north as Aleppo. It was long the chief among the petty kingdoms of Syria, and its king bore the hereditary title of "Hadadezer" or "Hadarezer" ("Hadad," that is, "helped").

as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates — in accordance with the promises God made to Israel that He would give them all the country as far as the Euphrates (\*\*Genesis 15:18\*\* Numbers 24:17). In the first campaign David signally defeated Hadadezer. Besides a great number of foot prisoners, he took from him an immense amount of booty in chariots and horses. Reserving only a small number of the latter, he hamstrung the rest. The horses were thus mutilated because they were forbidden to the Hebrews, both in war and agriculture. So it was of no use to keep them. Besides, their neighbors placed much dependence on cavalry, but having, for want of a native breed, to procure them by purchase, the greatest damage that could be done to such enemies was to render their horses unserviceable in war. (See also \*\*Genesis 46:6\*\* Genesis 46:6\*\* Doshua 11:6,9). A king of Damascene-Syria came to Hadadezer's succor; but David routed those auxiliary forces also, took possession of their country, put garrisons into their fortified towns, and made them tributary.

- **9.** *Toi king of Hamath* Coele-Syria; northwards, it extended to the city Hamath on the Orontes, which was the capital of the country. The Syrian prince, being delivered from the dread of a dangerous neighbor, sent his son with valuable presents to David to congratulate him on his victories, and solicit his alliance and protection.
- **10.** *Joram* or Hadoram ( Chronicles 18:10).
- **11.** Which also king David did dedicate unto the Lord Eastern princes have always been accustomed to hoard up vast quantities of gold. This is the first instance of a practice uniformly followed by David of reserving, after defraying expenses and bestowing suitable rewards upon his soldiers, the remainder of the spoil taken in war, to accumulate for the grand project of his life the erection of a national temple at Jerusalem.
- **13.** David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians Instead of Syrians, the Septuagint version reads "Edomites," which is the true reading, as is evident from Samuel 8:14. This conquest, made by the army of David, was due to the skillful generalship and gallantry of Abishai and Joab. (Strain Chronicles 18:12; compare Strain 60:1, title.) The valley was the ravine of salt (the Ghor), adjoining the Salt Mountain, at the southwestern extremity of the Dead Sea, separating the ancient territories of Judah and Edom [ROBINSON].

# **2 SAMUEL 8:15-18. 3 SA**

#### HIS REIGN.

- **15.** David executed judgment and justice unto all his people Though involved in foreign wars, he maintained an excellent system of government at home, the most eminent men of the age composing his cabinet of ministers.
- **16. Joab ... was over the host** by virtue of a special promise (\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 5:8).
- *recorder* historiographer or daily annalist, an office of great trust and importance in Eastern countries.
- 17. Zadok ... and Ahimelech ... were the priests On the massacre of the priests at Nob, [4929] Samuel 22:19], Saul conferred the priesthood on Zadok, of the family of Eleazar (4061] Chronicles 6:50), while David acknowledged Ahimelech, of Ithamar's family, who fled to him. The two high priests exercised their office under the respective princes to whom they were attached. But, on David's obtaining the kingdom over all Israel, they both retained their dignity; Ahimelech officiating at Jerusalem, and Zadok at Gibeon (4069] Chronicles 16:39).
- **18.** *Cherethites* that is, Philistines ( Zephaniah 2:5).

**Pelethites** — from Pelet (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 12:3). They were the valiant men who, having accompanied David during his exile among the Philistines, were made his bodyguard.

# **№2 SAMUEL 9:1-12.**

#### DAVID SENDS FOR MEPHIBOSHETH.

- 1-7. David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul On inquiry, Saul's land steward was found, who gave information that there still survived Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan who was five years old at his father's death, and whom David, then wandering in exile, had never seen. His lameness (\*\*\*\* Samuel 4:4) had prevented him from taking any part in the public contests of the time. Besides, according to Oriental notions, the younger son of a crowned monarch has a preferable claim to the succession over the son of a mere heir-apparent; and hence his name was never heard of as the rival of his uncle Ish-bosheth. His insignificance had led to his being lost sight of, and it was only through Ziba that David learned of his existence, and the retired life he passed with one of the great families in trans-jordanic Canaan who remained attached to the fallen dynasty. Mephibosheth was invited to court, and a place at the royal table on public days was assigned him, as is still the custom with Eastern monarchs. Saul's family estate, which had fallen to David in right of his wife (\*\*Numbers 27:8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ish-bosheth's rebellion ( Samuel 12:8), was provided ( Samuel 9:11; also Samuel 9:11; also Samuel 19:28), for enabling Mephibosheth to maintain an establishment suitable to his rank, and Ziba appointed steward to manage it, on the condition of receiving one-half of the produce in remuneration for his labor and expense, while the other moiety was to be paid as rent to the owner of the land ( Samuel 19:29).
- **10.** Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants The mention of his sons and the slaves in his house was to show that Mephibosheth would be honored with an equipage "as one of the king's sons."
- **12.** *Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micah* Whether born before or after his residence in Jerusalem, cannot be ascertained. But

through him the name and memory of the excellent Jonathan was preserved (see \*\*\* Chronicles 8:34,35 \*\*\* 9:40,41).

# **3000**2 SAMUEL 10:1-5.

# DAVID'S MESSENGERS, SENT TO COMFORT HANUN, ARE DISGRACEFULLY TREATED.

- 2. Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me It is probable that this was the Nahash against whom Saul waged war at Jabesh-gilead (\*\*\*III\*\*11). David, on leaving Gath, where his life was exposed to danger, found an asylum with the king of Moab; and as Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was his nearest neighbor, it may be that during the feud between Saul and David, he, through enmity to the former, was kind and hospitable to David.
- **3.** the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun Their suspicion was not warranted either by any overt act or by any cherished design of David: it must have originated in their knowledge of the denunciations of God's law against them (\*\*Deuteronomy 23:3-6), and of David's policy in steadfastly adhering to it.
- **4.** Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards From the long flowing dress of the Hebrews and other Orientals, the curtailment of their garments must have given them an aspect of gross indelicacy and ludicrousness. Besides, a knowledge of the extraordinary respect and value which has always been attached, and the gross insult that is implied in any indignity offered, to the beard in the East, will account for the shame which the deputies felt, and the determined spirit of revenge which burst out in all Israel on learning the outrage. Two instances are related in the modern history of Persia, of similar insults by kings of haughty and imperious temper, involving the nation in war; and we need not, therefore, be surprised that David vowed revenge for this wanton and public outrage.

**5.** *Tarry at Jericho* — or in the neighborhood, after crossing the fords of the Jordan.

### 2 SAMUEL 10:6-14.

#### THE AMMONITES OVERCOME.

**6-14.** when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David — To chastise those insolent and inhospitable Ammonites, who had violated the common law of nations, David sent a large army under the command of Joab, while they, informed of the impending attack, made energetic preparations to repel it by engaging the services of an immense number of Syrian mercenaries.

**Beth-rehob** — the capital of the low-lying region between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon.

**Zoba** — (see on Samuel 8:3).

of king Maacah — His territories lay on the other side of Jordan, near Gilead (GISS) Deuteronomy 3:14).

**Ish-tob** — that is, "the men of Tob" — the place of Jephthah's marauding adventures (see also Chronicles 19:6 Psalm 60:1, title). As the Israelite soldiers poured into the Ammonite territory, that people met them at the frontier town of Medeba ( Chronicles 19:7-9), the native troops covering the city, while the Syrian mercenaries lay at some distance encamped in the fields. In making the attack, Joab divided his forces into two separate detachments — the one of which, under the command of his brother, Abishai, was to concentrate its attack upon the city, while he himself marched against the overwhelming host of mercenary auxiliaries. It was a just and necessary war that had been forced on Israel, and they could hope for the blessing of God upon their arms. With great judgment the battle opened against the mercenaries, who could not stand against the furious onset of Joab, and not feeling the cause their own, consulted their safety by flight. The Ammonites, who had placed their chief dependence upon a foreign aid, then retreated to entrench themselves within the walls of the town.

**14.** *So Joab returned and came to Jerusalem* — Probably the season was too far advanced for entering on a siege.

## **3015**2 SAMUEL 10:15-19.

#### THE SYRIANS DEFEATED.

16. Hadarezer sent and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river

— This prince had enjoyed a breathing time after his defeat (\*\*\*2 Samuel 8:3). But alarmed at the increasing power and greatness of David, as well as being an ally of the Ammonites, he levied a vast army not only in Syria, but in Mesopotamia, to invade the Hebrew kingdom. Shobach, his general, in pursuance of this design, had marched his troops as far as Kelam, a border town of eastern Manasseh, when David, crossing the Jordan by forced marches, suddenly surprised, defeated, and dispersed them. As a result of this great and decisive victory, all the petty kingdoms of Syria submitted and became his tributaries (see on \*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 19:1).

## **3010** SAMUEL 11:1.

#### JOAB BESIEGES RABBAH.

**1.** at the time when kings go forth to battle — The return of spring was the usual time of commencing military operations. This expedition took place the year following the war against the Syrians; and it was entered upon because the disaster of the former campaign having fallen chiefly upon the Syrian mercenaries, the Ammonites had not been punished for their insult to the ambassadors.

David sent Joab and his servants ... they destroyed the children of Ammon — The powerful army that Joab commanded ravaged the Ammonite country and committed great havoc both on the people and their property, until having reached the capital, they besieged Rabbah —

**Rabbah** denotes a great city. This metropolis of the Ammonites was situated in the mountainous tract of Gilead, not far from the source of the Arnon. Extensive ruins are still found on its site.

# **™2 SAMUEL 11:2-12.**

### DAVID COMMITS ADULTERY WITH BATH-SHEBA.

- **2.** it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed—
  The Hebrews, like other Orientals, rose at daybreak, and always took a nap during the heat of the day. Afterwards they lounged in the cool of the evening on their flat-roofed terraces. It is probable that David had ascended to enjoy the open-air refreshment earlier than usual.
- **3.** *one said* literally, "he said to himself,"

*Is not this Bath-sheba*? etc. — She seems to have been a celebrated beauty, whose renown had already reached the ears of David, as happens in the East, from reports carried by the women from harem to harem.

**Bath-sheba**, the daughter of Eliam — or Ammiel (ARE) Chronicles 3:5), one of David's worthies (ARE) Samuel 23:34), and son of Ahithophel.

- **4.** David sent messengers, and took her The despotic kings of the East, when they take a fancy for a woman, send an officer to the house were she lives, who announces it to be the royal pleasure she should remove to the palace. An apartment is there assigned to her; and if she is made queen, the monarch orders the announcement to be made that he has made choice of her to be gueen. Many instances in modern Oriental history show the ease and despatch with which such secondary marriages are contracted, and a new beauty added to the royal seraglio. But David had to make a promise, or rather an express stipulation, to Bath-sheba, before she complied with the royal will ( Kings 1:13,15,17,28); for in addition to her transcendent beauty, she appears to have been a woman of superior talents and address in obtaining the object of her ambition; in her securing that her son should succeed on the throne; in her promptitude to give notice of her pregnancy; in her activity in defeating Adonijah's natural expectation of succeeding to the crown; in her dignity as the king's mother — in all this we see very strong indications of the ascendency she gained and maintained over David, who, perhaps, had ample leisure and opportunity to discover the punishment of this unhappy connection in more ways than one [TAYLOR, Calmet].
- **5.** the woman conceived, and sent and told David Some immediate measures of concealing their sin were necessary, as well for the king's honor as for her safety, for death was the punishment of an adulteress (\*\*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 20:10).
- **8.** David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house This sudden recall, the manner of the king, his frivolous questions ( Samuel 11:7), and his urgency for Uriah to sleep in his own house, probably awakened suspicions of the cause of this procedure.

there followed him a mess of meat from the king — A portion of meat from the royal table, sent to one's own house or lodgings, is one of the greatest compliments which an Eastern prince can pay.

9. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house — It is customary for servants to sleep in the porch or long gallery; and the guards of the Hebrew king did the same. Whatever his secret suspicions might have been, Uriah's refusal to indulge in the enjoyment of domestic pleasure, and his determination to sleep "at the door of the king's house," arose from a high and honorable sense of military duty and propriety (\*\*\* Samuel 11:11). But, doubtless, the resolution of Uriah was overruled by that Providence which brings good out of evil, and which has recorded this sad episode for the warning of the church.

## **™2 SAMUEL 11:14-27.**

### URIAH SLAIN.

14, 15. David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah ...

Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle — The various arts and stratagems by which the king tried to cajole Uriah, till at last he resorted to the horrid crime of murder — the cold-blooded cruelty of despatching the letter by the hands of the gallant but much-wronged soldier himself, the enlistment of Joab to be a partaker of his sin, the heartless affectation of mourning, and the indecent haste of his marriage with Bath-sheba — have left an indelible stain upon the character of David, and exhibit a painfully humiliating proof of the awful lengths to which the best of men may go when they forfeit the restraining grace of God.

## **302** SAMUEL 12:1-6.

#### NATHAN'S PARABLE.

- **1.** the Lord sent Nathan unto David The use of parables is a favorite style of speaking among Oriental people, especially in the conveyance of unwelcome truth. This exquisitely pathetic parable was founded on a common custom of pastoral people who have pet lambs, which they bring up with their children, and which they address in terms of endearment. The atrocity of the real, however, far exceeded that of the fictitious offense.
- **5.** the man that hath done this thing shall surely die This punishment was more severe than the case deserved, or than was warranted by the divine statute (\*Exodus 22:1). The sympathies of the king had been deeply enlisted, his indignation aroused, but his conscience was still asleep; and at the time when he was most fatally indulgent to his own sins, he was most ready to condemn the delinquencies and errors of others.

\*\*\*2 SAMUEL 12:7-23.

# HE APPLIES IT TO DAVID, WHO CONFESSES HIS SIN, AND IS PARDONED.

7. Nathan said to David, Thou art the man — These awful words pierced his heart, aroused his conscience, and brought him to his knees. The sincerity and depth of his penitent sorrow are evinced by the Psalms he composed (\*\*Psalm 32:1-11 \*\*\*\*\*51:1-19 \*\*\*\*\*103:1-22). He was pardoned, so far as related to the restoration of the divine favor. But as from his high character for piety, and his eminent rank in society, his deplorable fall was calculated to do great injury to the cause of religion, it was necessary that God should testify His abhorrence of sin by leaving even His own servant

to reap the bitter temporal fruits. David was not himself doomed, according to his own view of what justice demanded (\*\*2 Samuel 12:5); but he had to suffer a quadruple expiation in the successive deaths of four sons, besides a lengthened train of other evils.

- **8.** I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives The phraseology means nothing more than that God in His providence had given David, as king of Israel, everything that was Saul's. The history furnishes conclusive evidence that he never actually married any of the wives of Saul. But the harem of the preceding king belongs, according to Oriental notions, as a part of the regalia to his successor.
- **11.** I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, etc. The prophet speaks of God threatening to do what He only permitted to be done. The fact is, that David's loss of character by the discovery of his crimes, tended, in the natural course of things, to diminish the respect of his family, to weaken the authority of his government, and to encourage the prevalence of many disorders throughout his kingdom.
- 15-23. the Lord struck the child ... and it was very sick The first visible chastisement inflicted on David appeared on the person of that child which was the evidence and monument of his guilt. His domestics were surprised at his conduct, and in explanation of its singularity, it is necessary to remark that the custom in the East is to leave the nearest relative of a deceased person to the full and undisturbed indulgence of his grief, till on the third or fourth day at farthest (\*\*John 11:17). Then the other relatives and friends visit him, invite him to eat, lead him to a bath, and bring him a change of dress, which is necessary from his having sat or lain on the ground. The surprise of David's servants, then, who had seen his bitter anguish while the child was sick, arose apparently from this, that when he found it was dead, he who had so deeply lamented arose of himself from the earth, without waiting for their coming to him, immediately bathed and anointed himself, instead of appearing as a mourner, and after worshiping God with solemnity, returned to his wonted repast, without any interposition of others.

# \*\*\*2 SAMUEL 12:24,25.

#### SOLOMON IS BORN.

**24, 25.** *Bath-sheba* ... *bare a son, and he called his name Solomon* — that is, "peaceable." But Nathan gave him the name of Jedediah, by command of God, or perhaps only as an expression of God's love. This love and the noble gifts with which he was endowed, considering the criminality of the marriage from which he sprang, is a remarkable instance of divine goodness and grace.

## \*\*\*2 SAMUEL 12:26-31.

#### RABBAH IS TAKEN.

- **26.** *Joab fought against Rabbah* The time during which this siege lasted, since the intercourse with Bath-sheba, and the birth of at least one child, if not two, occurred during the progress of it, probably extended over two years.
- **27.** *the city of waters* Rabbah, like Aroer, was divided into two parts one the lower town, insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok, which flowed almost round it, and the upper and stronger town, called the royal city. "The first was taken by Joab, but the honor of capturing so strongly a fortified place as the other was an honor reserved for the king himself."
- **28.** *encamp against the city, and take it* It has always been characteristic of Oriental despots to monopolize military honors; and as the ancient world knew nothing of the modern refinement of kings gaining victories by their generals, so Joab sent for David to command the final assault in person. A large force was levied for the purpose. David without much difficulty captured the royal city and obtained possession of its immense wealth.

*lest I take the city, and it be called after my name* — The circumstance of a city receiving a new name after some great person, as Alexandria,

Constantinople, Hyderabad, is of frequent occurrence in the ancient and modern history of the East.

**30.** he took their king's crown from off his head — While the treasures of the city were given as plunder to his soldiers, David reserved to himself the crown, which was of rarest value. Its great weight makes it probable that it was like many ancient crowns, not worn, but suspended over the head, or fixed on a canopy on the top of the throne.

*the precious stones* — *Hebrew*, "stone"; was a round ball composed of pearls and other jewels, which was in the crown, and probably taken out of it to be inserted in David's own crown.

**31.** he brought forth the people ... and put them under saws, etc. — This excessive severity and employment of tortures, which the Hebrews on no other occasion are recorded to have practiced, was an act of retributive justice on a people who were infamous for their cruelties (\*\*\* Samuel 11:2\*\* Amos 1:13).

## **3000**2 SAMUEL 13:1-5.

#### AMNON LOVES TAMAR.

- **1.** *Tamar* daughter of David by Maachah ( Samuel 3:3).
- **2.** *for she was a virgin* Unmarried daughters were kept in close seclusion from the company of men; no strangers, nor even their relatives of the other sex, being permitted to see them without the presence of witnesses. Of course, Amnon must have seen Tamar, for he had conceived a violent passion for her, which, though forbidden by the law (\*\*\*Leviticus 18:11), yet with the sanction of Abraham's example (\*\*\*Genesis 20:12), and the common practice in neighboring countries for princes to marry their half sisters, he seems not to have considered an improper connection. But he had no means of making it known to her, and the pain of that disappointment preying upon his mind produced a visible change in his appearance and health.
- **3.** *Jonadab*, *the son of Shimeah* or Shammah (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 16:9). By the counsel and contrivance of this scheming cousin a plan was devised for obtaining an unrestricted interview with the object of his attachment.
- **4.** *my brother Absalom's sister* In Eastern countries, where polygamy prevails, the girls are considered to be under the special care and protection of their uterine brother, who is the guardian of their interests and their honor, even more than their father himself (see on Genesis 34:6-25).

<sup>2</sup> SAMUEL 13:6-27.

#### HE DEFILES HER.

**6-8.** *Amnon lay down, and made himself sick* — The Orientals are great adepts in feigning sickness, whenever they have any object to accomplish.

**let Tamar my sister come and make me a couple of cakes** — To the king Amnon spoke of Tamar as "his sister," a term artfully designed to hoodwink his father; and the request appeared so natural, the delicate appetite of a sick man requiring to be humored, that the king promised to send her. The cakes seem to have been a kind of fancy bread, in the preparation of which Oriental ladies take great delight. Tamar, flattered by the invitation, lost no time in rendering the required service in the house of her sick brother.

- **12-14.** *do not force me* The remonstrances and arguments of Tamar were so affecting and so strong, that had not Amnon been violently goaded on by the lustful passion of which he had become the slave, they must have prevailed with him to desist from his infamous purpose. In bidding him, however, "speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee," it is probable that she urged this as her last resource, saying anything she thought would please him, in order to escape for the present out of his hands.
- **15.** Then Amnon hated her exceedingly It is not unusual for persons instigated by violent and irregular passions to go from one extreme to another. In Amnon's case the sudden revulsion is easily accounted for; the atrocity of his conduct, with all the feelings of shame, remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment, now burst upon his mind, rendering the presence of Tamar intolerably painful to him.
- **17.** bolt the door after her The street door of houses in the East is always kept barred the bolts being of wood. In the great mansions, where a porter stands at the outside, this precaution is dispensed with; and the circumstance, therefore, of a prince giving an order so unusual shows the vehement perturbation of Ammon's mind.
- **18.** garment of divers colors As embroidery in ancient times was the occupation or pastime of ladies of the highest rank, the possession of these parti-colored garments was a mark of distinction; they were worn exclusively by young women of royal condition. Since the art of manufacturing cloth stuffs has made so great progress, dresses of this variegated description are now more common in the East.

- 19, 20. Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors ... laid her hand on her head, and went on crying that is, sobbing. Oriental manners would probably see nothing beyond a strong sense of the injury she had sustained, if Tamar actually rent her garments. But, as her veil is not mentioned, it is probable that Amnon had turned her out of doors without it, and she raised her hand with the design to conceal her face. By these signs, especially the rending of her distinguishing robe, Absalom at once conjectured what had taken place. Recommending her to be silent about it and not publish her own and her family's dishonor, he gave no inkling of his angry feelings to Amnon. But all the while he was in secret "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," and only "biding his time" to avenge his sister's wrongs, and by the removal of the heir-apparent perhaps further also his ambitious designs.
- **20.** So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house He was her natural protector, and the children of polygamists lived by themselves, as if they constituted different families.
- **23-27.** Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim A sheep-shearing feast is a grand occasion in the East. Absalom proposed to give such an entertainment at his estate in Baal-hazor, about eight miles northeast of Jerusalem near a town called Ephraim (\*\*ID\*\*Joshua 11:10). He first invited the king and his court; but the king declining, on account of the heavy expense to which the reception of royalty would subject him (\*\*ID\*\*Z\*\* Samuel 13:25), Absalom then limited the invitation to the king's sons (\*\*ID\*\*Z\*\* Samuel 13:26), which David the more readily agreed to, in the hope that it might tend to the promotion of brotherly harmony and union.

**303** SAMUEL 13:28-36.

#### AMNON IS SLAIN.

**28.** Absalom had commanded his servants, saying ... when Amnon's heart is merry with wine ... kill him, fear not — On a preconcerted signal from their master, the servants, rushing upon Amnon, slew him at the

table, while the rest of the brothers, horror-struck, and apprehending a general massacre, fled in affrighted haste to Jerusalem.

- **29.** *every man gat him up upon his mule* This had become the favorite equipage of the great. King David himself had a state mule (\*\*\*18.18.33\*\*). The Syrian mules are, in activity, strength, and capabilities, still far superior to ours.
- **30, 31.** *tidings came to David*, *saying*, *Absalom hath slain all the king's sons* It was natural that in the consternation and tumult caused by so atrocious a deed, an exaggerated report should reach the court, which was at once plunged into the depths of grief and despair. But the information of Jonadab, who seems to have been aware of the plan, and the arrival of the other princes, made known the real extent of the catastrophe.

\*\*\*2 SAMUEL 13:37-39.

#### ABSALOM FLEES TO TALMAI.

**37.** Absalom fled, and went to Talmai — The law as to premeditated murder (\*\*Numbers 35:21) gave him no hope of remaining with impunity in his own country. The cities of refuge could afford him no sanctuary, and he was compelled to leave the kingdom, taking refuge at the court of Geshur, with his maternal grandfather, who would, doubtless, approve of his conduct.

# **3040** SAMUEL 14:1-21.

#### JOAB INSTRUCTS A WOMAN OF TEKOAH.

**2-21.** And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman — The king was strongly attached to Absalom; and having now got over his sorrow for the violent death of Amnon, he was desirous of again enjoying the society of his favorite son, who had now been three long years absent. But a dread of public opinion and a regard to the public interests made him hesitate about recalling or pardoning his guilty son; and Joab, whose discerning mind perceived this struggle between parental affection and royal duty, devised a plan for relieving the scruples, and, at the same time, gratifying the wishes, of his master. Having procured a countrywoman of superior intelligence and address, he directed her to seek an audience of the king, and by soliciting his royal interposition in the settlement of a domestic grievance, convinced him that the life of a murderer might in some cases be saved. Tekoah was about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and six south of Beth-lehem; and the design of bringing a woman from such a distance was to prevent either the petitioner being known, or the truth of her story easily investigated. Her speech was in the form of a parable the circumstances — the language — the manner — well suited to the occasion, represented a case as like David's as it was policy to make it, so as not to be prematurely discovered. Having got the king pledged, she avowed it to be her design to satisfy the royal conscience, that in pardoning Absalom he was doing nothing more than he would have done in the case of a stranger, where there could be no imputation of partiality. The device succeeded; David traced its origin to Joab; and, secretly pleased at obtaining the judgment of that rough, but generally sound-thinking soldier, he commissioned him to repair to Geshur and bring home his exiled son.

7. they shall quench my coal which is left — The life of man is compared in Scripture to a light. To quench the light of Israel (\*\*DIT\*2 Samuel 21:17) is

to destroy the king's life; to ordain a lamp for any one (\*Psalm 132:17) is to grant him posterity; to quench a coal signifies here the extinction of this woman's only remaining hope that the name and family of her husband would be preserved. The figure is a beautiful one; a coal live, but lying under a heap of embers — all that she had to rekindle her fire — to light her lamp in Israel.

9. the woman said ... O king, the iniquity be on me — that is, the iniquity of arresting the course of justice and pardoning a homicide, whom the Goel was bound to slay wherever he might find him, unless in a city of refuge. This was exceeding the royal prerogative, and acting in the character of an absolute monarch. The woman's language refers to a common precaution taken by the Hebrew judges and magistrates, solemnly to transfer from themselves the responsibility of the blood they doomed to be shed, either to the accusers or the criminals (\*\*\*\* Samuel 1:16\*\*\* Samuel 1:16\*\*\* Authors and sometimes the accusers took it upon themselves (\*\*\*\* Matthew 27:25).

13-17. Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God, etc. — Her argument may be made clear in the following paraphrase: — You have granted me the pardon of a son who had slain his brother, and yet you will not grant to your subjects the restoration of Absalom, whose criminality is not greater than my son's, since he killed his brother in similar circumstances of provocation. Absalom has reason to complain that he is treated by his own father more sternly and severely than the meanest subject in the realm; and the whole nation will have cause for saying that the king shows more attention to the petition of a humble woman than to the wishes and desires of a whole kingdom. The death of my son is a private loss to my family, while the preservation of Absalom is the common interest of all Israel, who now look to him as your successor on the throne.

# 2 SAMUEL 14:22-33.

#### JOAB BRINGS ABSALOM TO JERUSALEM.

- 22. To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight Joab betrayed not a little selfishness amid his professions of joy at this act of grace to Absalom, and flattered himself that he now brought both father and son under lasting obligations. In considering this act of David, many extenuating circumstances may be urged in favor of it; the provocation given to Absalom; his being now in a country where justice could not overtake him; the risk of his imbibing a love for heathen principles and worship; the safety and interests of the Hebrew kingdom; together with the strong predilection of the Hebrew people for Absalom, as represented by the stratagem of Joab — these considerations form a plausible apology for David's grant of pardon to his bloodstained son. But, in granting this pardon, he was acting in the character of an Oriental despot rather than a constitutional king of Israel. The feelings of the father triumphed over the duty of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate, was bound to execute impartial justice on every murderer, by the express law of God (Genesis 9:6 Numbers 35:30,31), which he had no power to dispense with
- 25, 26. But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty This extraordinary popularity arose not only from his high spirit and courtly manners, but from his uncommonly handsome appearance. One distinguishing feature, seemingly an object of great admiration, was a profusion of beautiful hair. Its extraordinary luxuriance compelled him to cut it when it was found to weigh two hundred shekels equal to one hundred twelve ounces troy; but as "the weight was after the king's shekel," which was less than the common shekel, the rate has been reduced as low as three pounds, two ounces [BOCHART], and even less by others.
- **28.** So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face Whatever error David committed in authorizing the recall of Absalom, he displayed great prudence and command over his feelings afterwards for his son was not admitted into his father's presence but

was confined to his own house and the society of his own family. This slight severity was designed to bring him to sincere repentance, on perceiving that his father had not fully pardoned him, as well as to convince the people of David 's abhorrence of his crime. Not being allowed to appear at court, or to adopt any state, the courtiers kept aloof; even his cousin did not deem it prudent to go into his society. For two full years his liberty was more restricted, and his life more apart from his countrymen while living in Jerusalem, than in Geshur; and he might have continued in this disgrace longer, had he not, by a violent expedient, determined (14:30) to force his case on the attention of Joab, through whose kind and powerful influence a full reconciliation was effected between him and his father.

# **№ 2 SAMUEL 15:1-9.**

#### ABSALOM STEALS THE HEARTS OF ISRAEL.

**1.** Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him — This was assuming the state and equipage of a prince. The royal guards, called runners, avant couriers, amounted to fifty (4005) Kings 1:5). The chariot, as the Hebrew indicates, was of a magnificent style; and the horses, a novelty among the Hebrew people, only introduced in that age as an appendage of royalty (4000) Psalm 32:9 4000 66:12), formed a splendid retinue, which would make him "the observed of all observers."

**2-6.** Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate — Public business in the East is always transacted early in the morning — the kings sitting an hour or more to hear causes or receive petitions, in a court held anciently, and in many places still, in the open air at the city gateway; so that, as those whose circumstances led them to wait on King David required to be in attendance on his morning levees, Absalom had to rise up early and stand beside the way of the gate. Through the growing infirmities of age, or the occupation of his government with foreign wars, many private causes had long lain undecided, and a deep feeling of discontent prevailed among the people. This dissatisfaction was artfully fomented by Absalom, who addressed himself to the various suitors; and after briefly hearing their tale, he gratified everyone with a favorable opinion of his case. Studiously concealing his ambitious designs, he expressed a wish to be invested with official power, only that he might accelerate the course of justice and advance the public interests. His professions had an air of extraordinary generosity and disinterestedness, which, together with his fawning arts in lavishing civilities on all, made him a popular favorite. Thus, by forcing a contrast between his own display of public spirit and the dilatory proceedings of the court, he created a growing disgust with his father's government, as weak, careless, or corrupt, and seduced the affections of the multitude, who neither penetrated the motive nor foresaw

the tendency of his conduct.

**7-9.** *after forty years* — It is generally admitted that an error has here crept into the text, and that instead of "forty," we should read with the Syriac and Arabic versions, and Josephus, "four years" — that is, after Absalom's return to Jerusalem, and his beginning to practice the base arts of gaining popularity.

my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord — during his exile in Geshur. The purport of it was, that whenever God's providence should pave the way for his re-establishment in Jerusalem, he would offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Hebron was the spot selected for the performance of this vow, ostensibly as being his native place (4000) Samuel 3:3), and a famous high place, where sacrifices were frequently offered before the temple was built; but really as being in many respects the most suitable for the commencement of his rebellious enterprise. David, who always encouraged piety and desired to see religious engagements punctually performed, gave his consent and his blessing.

## 

#### HE FORMS A CONSPIRACY.

- **10.** Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel These emissaries were to sound the inclination of the people, to further interests of Absalom, and exhort all the adherents of his party to be in readiness to join his standard as soon as they should hear that he had been proclaimed king. As the summons was to be made by the sound of trumpets, it is probable that care had been taken to have trumpeters stationed on the heights, and at convenient stations a mode of announcement that would soon spread the news over all the country of his inauguration to the throne.
- **11.** with Absalom went two hundred men ... that were called From their quality, reputation, and high standing, such as would create the impression that the king patronized the movement and, being aged and infirm, was willing to adopt his oldest and noblest son to divide with him the cares and honors of government.

**12.** Absalom sent for Ahithophel — who he knew was ready to join the revolt, through disgust and revenge, as Jewish writers assert, at David's conduct towards Bath-sheba, who was his granddaughter.

**Giloh** — near Hebron.

the conspiracy was strong — The rapid accession of one place after another in all parts of the kingdom to the party of the insurgents, shows that deep and general dissatisfaction existed at this time against the person and government of David. The remnant of Saul's partisans, the unhappy affair of Bath-sheba, the overbearing insolence and crimes of Joab, negligence and obstruction in the administration of justice — these were some of the principal causes that contributed to the success of this widespread insurrection.

## **30513**2 SAMUEL 15:13-37.

#### DAVID FLEES FROM JERUSALEM.

- **14.** *David said ... Arise, and let us flee* David, anxious for the preservation of the city which he had beautified, and hopeful of a greater support throughout the country, wisely resolved on leaving Jerusalem.
- **18-20.** *all the Gittites*, *six hundred men* These were a body of foreign guards, natives of Gath, whom David, when in the country of the Philistines, had enlisted in his service, and kept around his person. Addressing their commander, Ittai, he made a searching trial of their fidelity in bidding them (1882) Samuel 15:19) abide with the new king.
- **23.** *the brook Kidron* a winter torrent that flows through the valley between the city and the eastern side of the Mount of Olives.
- **24, 25.** Zadok also, and all the Levites ..., bearing the ark Knowing the strong religious feelings of the aged king, they brought it to accompany him in his distress. But as he could not doubt that both the ark and their sacred office would exempt them from the attacks of the rebels, he sent them back with it not only that they might not be exposed to the perils of uncertain wandering, for he seems to place more confidence in the

symbol of the divine presence than in God Himself — but that, by remaining in Jerusalem, they might render him greater service by watching the enemy's movements.

**30.** *David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet* — The same pathway over that mount has been followed ever since that memorable day.

had his head covered — with a mourning wrapper. The humility and resignation of David marked strongly his sanctified spirit, induced by contrition for his transgressions. He had fallen, but it was the fall of the upright; and he rose again, submitting himself meekly in the meantime to the will of God [CHALMERS].

- **31.** *David said*, *Turn*, *O Lord*, ... *the counsel of Ahithophel* this senator being the mainstay of the conspiracy.
- **32.** *when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped* looking towards Jerusalem, where were the ark and tabernacle.

Hushai the Archite — A native of Archi, on the frontiers of Benjamin and Ephraim (\*\*\*Toshua 16:2). Comparing the prayer against Ahithophel with the counsel to Hushai, we see how strongly a spirit of fervent piety was combined in his character with the devices of an active and far-seeing policy.

# **\*\*\*\* SAMUEL 16:1-4.**

# ZIBA, BY FALSE SUGGESTIONS, CLAIMS HIS MASTER'S INHERITANCE.

- **1.** Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him This crafty man, anticipating the certain failure of Absalom's conspiracy, took steps to prepare for his future advancement on the restoration of the king.
- *a bottle of wine* a large goatskin vessel. Its size made the supply of wine proportioned to the rest of his present.
- **2.** The asses be for the king's household to ride on The royal fugitives were moving on foot, not from inability to procure conveyances, but as being suitable to their present state of humiliation and penitence.
- 3. To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father
- Such a hope might not unnaturally arise at this period of civil distraction, that the family of David would destroy themselves by their mutual broils, and the people reinstate the old dynasty. There was an air of plausibility in Ziba's story. Many, on whom the king had conferred favors, were now deserting him. No wonder, therefore, that in the excitement of momentary feeling, believing, on the report of a slanderer, Mephibosheth to be among the number, he pronounced a rash and unrighteous judgment by which a great injury was inflicted on the character and interests of a devoted friend.

# **3065**2 SAMUEL 16:5-19.

#### SHIMEI CURSES DAVID.

**5-12.** when king David came to Bahurim — a city of Benjamin (\*\*\*2 Samuel 3:16 19:16). It is, however, only the confines of the district that are here meant.

**Shimei, the son of Gera** — The misfortune of his family, and the occupation by David of what they considered their rightful possessions, afforded a natural, if not a justifiable cause for this ebullition of rude insults and violence. He upbraided David as an ambitious usurper, and charged him, as one whose misdeeds had recoiled upon his own head, to surrender a throne to which he was not entitled. His language was that of a man incensed by the wrongs that he conceived had been done to his house. David was guiltless of the crime of which Shimei accused him; but his conscience reminded him of other flagrant iniquities; and he, therefore, regarded the cursing of this man as a chastisement from heaven. His answer to Abishai's proposal evinced the spirit of deep and humble resignation — the spirit of a man who watched the course of Providence, and acknowledged Shimei as the instrument of God's chastening hand. One thing is remarkable, that he acted more independently of the sons of Zeruiah in this season of great distress than he could often muster courage to do in the days of his prosperity and power.

**13.** went along on the hill's side over against him — as he descended the rough road on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, "went along on the hill's side" — literally, "the rib of the hill."

threw stones at him — as a mark of contempt and insult.

*cast dust* — As if to add insult to injury, clouds of dust were thrown by this disloyal subject in the path of his unfortunate sovereign.

- **14.** refreshed themselves there that is, in the city of Bahurim.
- **15-19.** *Hushai said unto Absalom*, *God save the king* Hushai's devotion to David was so well-known, that his presence in the camp of the conspirators excited great surprise. Professing, however, with great

address, to consider it his duty to support the cause which the course of Providence and the national will had seemingly decreed should triumph, and urging his friendship for the father as a ground of confidence in his fidelity to the son, he persuaded Absalom of his sincerity, and was admitted among the councillors of the new king.

## <sup>2</sup> SAMUEL 16:20-23.

#### AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL.

- **20.** *Give counsel among you what we shall do* This is the first cabinet council on record, although the deference paid to Ahithophel gave him the entire direction of the proceedings.
- **21.** Ahithophel said unto Absalom This councillor saw that now the die was cast; half measures would be inexpedient. To cut off all possibility of reconciliation between the king and his rebellious son, he gave this atrocious advice regarding the treatment of the royal women who had been left in charge of the palace. Women, being held sacred, are generally left inviolate in the casualties of war. The history of the East affords only one parallel to this infamous outrage of Absalom.

## **3070**2 SAMUEL 17:1-14.

#### AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL OVERTHROWN BY HUSHAI.

- **1-11.** *Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom* The recommendation to take prompt and decisive measures before the royalist forces could be collected and arranged, evinced the deep political sagacity of this councillor. The adoption of his advice would have extinguished the cause of David; and it affords a dreadful proof of the extremities to which the heartless prince was, to secure his ambitious objects, prepared to go, that the parricidal counsel "pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel." It was happily overruled, however, by the address of Hushai, who saw the imminent danger to which it would expose the king and the royal cause. He dwelt upon the warlike character and military experience of the old king represented him and his adherents as mighty men, who would fight with desperation; and who, most probably, secure in some stronghold, would be beyond reach, while the smallest loss of Absalom's men at the outset might be fatal to the success of the conspiracy. But his dexterity was chiefly displayed in that part of his counsel which recommended a general levy throughout the country; and that Absalom should take command of it in person — thereby flattering at once the pride and ambition of the usurper. The bait was caught by the vainglorious and wicked prince.
- **12.** we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground No image could have symbolized the sudden onset of an enemy so graphically to an Oriental mind as the silent, irresistible, and rapid descent of this natural moisture on every field and blade of grass.
- **13.** *all Israel shall bring ropes to that city* In besieging a town, hooks or cranes were often thrown upon the walls or turrets, by which, with ropes attached to them, the besiegers, uniting all their force, pulled down the fortifications in a mass of ruins.

14. The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel — The reasons specified being extremely plausible, and expressed in the strong hyperbolical language suited to dazzle an Oriental imagination, the council declared in favor of Hushai's advice; and their resolution was the immediate cause of the discomfiture of the rebellion, although the council itself was only a link in the chain of causation held by the controlling hand of the Lord.

# **2 SAMUEL 17:15-22. 3 SAMUE**

#### SECRET INTELLIGENCE SENT TO DAVID.

**16.** *send quickly*, *and tell David* — Apparently doubting that his advice would be followed, Hushai ordered secret intelligence to be conveyed to David of all that transpired, with an urgent recommendation to cross the Jordan without a moment's delay, lest Ahithophel's address and influence might produce a change on the prince's mind, and an immediate pursuit be determined on.

**17.** *by En-rogel* — the fuller's well in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, below the junction of the valley of Hinnom with that of Jehoshaphat.

**18.** and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court — The court was that of the house, and the well an empty cistern. All the houses of the better class are furnished with such reservoirs. Nothing could more easily happen than that one of these wells, in consequence of a deficiency of water, should become dry and it would then answer as a place of retreat, such as David's friends found in the man's house at Bahurim. The spreading of a covering over the well's mouth for the drying of corn is a common practice.

# **□1722** SAMUEL 17:23-29.

#### AHITHOPHEL HANGS HIMSELF.

- 23. when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed His vanity was wounded, his pride mortified on finding that his ascendency was gone; but that chagrin was aggravated by other feelings a painful conviction that through the delay which had been resolved on, the cause of Absalom was lost. Hastening home, therefore, he arranged his private affairs, and knowing that the storm of retributive vengeance would fall chiefly upon him as the instigator and prop of the rebellion, he hanged himself. It may be remarked that the Israelites did not, at that time, refuse the rites of sepulture even to those who died by their own hands. He had an imitator in Judas, who resembled him in his treason, as well as in his infamous end.
- **24.** *Then David came to Mahanaim* in the high eastern country of Gilead, the seat of Ish-bosheth's government.
- **Absalom passed over Jordan** It is not said how long an interval elapsed, but there must have been sufficient time to make the intended levy throughout the kingdom.
- **25.** *Amasa* By the genealogy it appears that this captain stood in the same relation to David as Joab, both being his nephews. Of course, Amasa was Absalom's cousin, and though himself an Israelite, his father was an Ishmaelite (\*\*\*T) Chronicles 2:17).
- **Nahash** is thought by some to be another name of Jesse, or according to others, the name of Jesse's wife.
- **27-29.** when David was come to Mahanaim The necessities of the king and his followers were hospitably ministered to by three chiefs, whose generous loyalty is recorded with honor in the sacred narrative.
- **Shobi** must have been a brother of Hanun. Disapproving, probably, of that young king's outrage upon the Israelite ambassadors, he had been made governor of Ammon by David on the conquest of that country.

*Machir* — (See <a>3000</a>2 Samuel 9:4). Supposed by some to have been a brother of Bath-sheba, and

**Barzillai** — a wealthy old grandee, whose great age and infirmities made his loyal devotion to the distressed monarch peculiarly affecting. The supplies they brought, which (besides beds for the weary) consisted of the staple produce of their rich lands and pastures, may be classified a follows: eatables — wheat, barley, flour, beans, lentils, sheep, and cheese; drinkables — "honey and butter" or cream, which, being mixed together, form a thin, diluted beverage, light, cool, and refreshing. Being considered a luxurious refreshment (So 4:11), the supply of it shows the high respect that was paid to David by his loyal and faithful subjects at Mahanaim.

**29.** *in the wilderness* — spread out beyond the cultivated tablelands into the steppes of Hauran.

## 

#### DAVID REVIEWING THE ARMIES.

**1, 2.** David numbered the people that were with him — The hardy mountaineers of Gilead came in great numbers at the call of their chieftains, so that, although without money to pay any troops, David soon found himself at the head of a considerable army. A pitched battle was now inevitable. But so much depending on the life of the king, he was not allowed to take the field in person; and he therefore divided his forces into three detachments under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, the commander of the foreign guards.

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#### GIVES THEM CHARGE OF ABSALOM.

- **5.** Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom This affecting charge, which the king gave to his generals, proceeded not only from his overwhelming affection for his children, but from his consciousness that this rebellion was the chastisement of his own crimes, Absalom being merely an instrument in the hand of retributive Providence; and also from his piety, lest the unhappy prince should die with his sins unrepented of.
- **6.** wood of Ephraim This wood, of course, was on the east of Jordan. Its name was derived, according to some, from the slaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah according to others, from the connection of blood with the trans-jordanic Manasseh.

- **7.** *the people of Israel were slain* This designation, together with the immense slaughter mentioned later, shows the large extent to which the people were enlisted in this unhappy civil contest.
- **8.** the wood devoured more people than the sword The thick forest of oaks and terebinths, by obstructing the flight, greatly aided the victors in the pursuit.
- **9.** Absalom met the servants of David or was overtaken. "It is necessary to be continually on one's guard against the branches of trees; and when the hair is worn in large locks floating down the back, as was the case with a young man of the party to which I belonged, any thick boughs interposing in the path might easily dislodge a rider from his seat, and catch hold of his flowing hair" [HARTLEY]. Some, however, think that the sacred historian points not so much to the hair, as to the head of Absalom, which, being caught while running between two branches, was enclosed so firmly that he could not disengage himself from the hold, nor make use of his hands.

the mule that was under him went away — The Orientals, not having saddles as we do, do not sit so firmly on the beasts they ride. Absalom quitting his hold of the bridle, apparently to release himself when caught in the oak, the mule escaped.

11, 12. Joab said unto the man that told him, ... I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle — that is, would have raised him from the ranks to the status of a commissioned officer. Besides a sum of money, a girdle, curiously and richly wrought, was among the ancient Hebrews a mark of honor, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of military merit. This soldier, however, who may be taken as a fair sample of David's faithful subjects, had so great a respect for the king's wishes, that no prospect of reward would have tempted him to lay violent hands on Absalom. But Joab's stern sense of public duty, which satisfied him that there could be neither safety to the king, nor peace to the kingdom, nor security to him and other loyal subjects, so long as that turbulent prince lived, overcame his sensibilities, and looking upon the charge given to the generals as more befitting a parent than a prince, he ventured to disobey it.

## <sup>4084</sup>2 SAMUEL 18:14-32.

#### HE IS SLAIN BY JOAB.

#### 14. he took three darts ... and thrust them through the heart of Absalom

- The deed, partially done by Joab, was completed by his bodyguard. Being a violation of the expressed wish, as well as of all the fond paternal feelings of David, it must have been deeply offensive to the king, nor was it ever forgotten (\*\*ITB\*1 Kings 2:5); and yet there is the strongest reason for believing that Joab, in doing it, was actuated by a sincere regard to the interests of David, both as a man and a monarch.
- **16.** Joab blew the trumpet, ... and held back the people Knowing that by the death of the usurper there was no occasion for further bloodshed, he put an end to the pursuit and thereby evinced the temperate policy of his conduct. However harsh and unfeeling to the king Joab may appear, there can be no doubt that he acted the part of a wise statesman in regarding the peace and welfare of the kingdom more than his master's private inclinations, which were opposed to strict justice as well as his own interests. Absalom deserved to die by the divine law (TELE Deuteronomy 21:18,21), as well as being an enemy to his king and country; and no time was more fitting than when he met that death in open battle.
- 17. they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit ... and laid a very great heap of stones upon him The people of the East indicate their detestation of the memory of an infamous person by throwing stones at the place where he is buried. The heap is increased by the gradual accumulation of stones which passers-by add to it.
- **18.** Absalom in his lifetime had reared up for himself a pillar literally, "hand." In the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, is a tomb or cenotaph, said to be this "pillar" or monument: it is twenty-four feet square, dome-topped, and reaches forty feet in height. This may occupy the spot, but cannot itself be the work of Absalom, as it evidently bears the style of a later architecture.

- **19.** Then said Ahimaaz ... Let me ... run and bear the king tidings The reasons why Joab declined to accept Ahimaaz' offer to bear intelligence of the victory to David, and afterwards let him go along with another, are variously stated by commentators but they are of no importance. Yet the alacrity of the messengers, as well as the eager excitement of the expectants, is graphically described.
- **23.** by the way of the plain or ciccar, "circle." This word is only used elsewhere in connection with the valley of the Jordan. It is possible that there may have been a place or region so called on the tablelands of Gilead, as the Septuagint seems to indicate. Or Mahanaim may have been so situated, with the regard to the battlefield, as to be more easily accessible by a descent to the plain of the Jordan, than over the hills themselves. Or the word may signify (as EWALD explains) a manner of quick running [STANLEY].
- **24-32.** *David sat between the two gates* that is, in the tower-house on the wall that overhung the gate of Mahanaim. Near it was a watchtower, on which a sentinel was posted, as in times of war, to notify every occurrence. The delicacy of Ahimaaz' communication was made up by the unmistakable plainness of Cushi's. The death of Absalom was a heavy trial, and it is impossible not to sympathize with the outburst of feeling by which David showed that all thoughts of the victory he had won as a king were completely sunk in the painful loss he had sustained as a father. The extraordinary ardor and strength of his affection for this worthless son break out in the redundancy and vehemence of his mournful ejaculations.

### **№2 SAMUEL 19:1-8.**

#### JOAB CAUSES THE KING TO CEASE MOURNING.

- **3.** the people gat them by stealth ... to the city The rumor of the king's disconsolate condition spread a universal and unseasonable gloom. His troops, instead of being welcomed back (as a victorious army always was) with music and other demonstrations of public joy, slunk secretly and silently into the city, as if ashamed after the commission of some crime.
- **4.** *the king covered his face* one of the usual signs of mourning (see on Samuel 15:30).
- **5.** Thou hast shamed ... the faces of all thy servants by withdrawing thyself to indulge in grief, as if their services were disagreeable and their devotion irksome to thee. Instead of hailing their return with joy and gratitude, thou hast refused them the small gratification of seeing thee. Joab's remonstrance was right and necessary, but it was made with harshness. He was one of those persons who spoil their important services by the insolence of their manners, and who always awaken a feeling of obligation in those to whom they render any services. He spoke to David in a tone of hauteur that ill became a subject to show towards his king.
- **7.** Now ... arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants The king felt the truth of Joab's reprimand; but the threat by which it was enforced, grounded as it was on the general's unbounded popularity with the army, showed him to be a dangerous person; and that circumstance, together with the violation of an express order to deal gently for his sake with Absalom, produced in David's mind a settled hatred, which was strongly manifested in his last directions to Solomon.
- **8.** *the king arose, and sat in the gate* He appeared daily in the usual place for the hearing of causes.

*all the people came before the king* — that is, the loyal natives who had been faithful to his government, and fought in his cause.

*Israel had fled* — that is, the adherents of Absalom, who, on his defeat, had dispersed and saved themselves by flight.

## 2 SAMUEL 19:9-43.

#### THE ISRAELITES BRING THE KING BACK.

9-11. all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel— The kingdom was completely disorganized. The sentiments of three different parties are represented in Samuel 19:9,10: the royalists, the adherents of Absalom who had been very numerous, and those who were indifferent to the Davidic dynasty. In these circumstances the king was right in not hastening back, as a conqueror, to reascend his throne. A reelection was, in some measure, necessary. He remained for some time on the other side of Jordan, in expectation of being invited back. That invitation was given without, however, the concurrence of Judah. David, disappointed and vexed by his own tribe's apparent lukewarmness, despatched the two high priests to rouse the Judahites to take a prominent interest in his cause. It was the act of a skillful politician. Hebron having been the seat of the rebellion, it was graceful on his part to encourage their return to allegiance and duty; it was an appeal to their honor not to be the last of the tribes. But this separate message, and the preference given to them, occasioned an outburst of jealousy among the other tribes that was nearly followed by fatal consequences [see Samuel 19:40-43].

13. And say ye to Amasa, etc. — This also was a dextrous stroke of policy. David was fully alive to the importance, for extinguishing the rebellion, of withdrawing from that cause the only leader who could keep it alive; and he, therefore, secretly intimated his intention to raise Amasa to the command of the army in the place of Joab, whose overbearing haughtiness had become intolerable. The king justly reckoned, that from natural temper as well as gratitude for the royal pardon, he would prove a more tractable servant; and David, doubtless, intended in all sincerity to

- fulfill this promise. But Joab managed to retain his high position (see on Samuel 20:4-10).
- **14.** he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah that is, Amasa, who had been won over, used his great influence in re-attaching the whole tribe of Judah to the interest of David.
- **15.** *Judah came to Gilgal* the most convenient place where preparations could be made for bringing the king and court over the Jordan.
- **16-23.** Shemei ... a thousand men of Benjamin with him This display of [Shemei's] followers was to show what force he could raise against or in support of the king. Expressing the deepest regret for his former outrageous conduct, he was pardoned on the spot; and although the son of Zeruiah urged the expediency of making this chief a public example, his officiousness was repulsed by David with magnanimity, and with the greater confidence that he felt himself now re-established in the kingdom (see on TKings 2:8).
- 17. Ziba, the servant of the house of Saul He had deceived his master; and when ordered to make ready the ass for the lame prince to go and meet the king, he slipped away by himself to pay court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, had to remain in Jerusalem till the king's arrival.
- **18.** *ferry boat* probably rafts, which are still used on that part of the river.
- **24-30.** *Mephibosheth* ... *came down to meet the king* The reception given to Mephibosheth was less creditable to David. The sincerity of that prince's grief for the misfortunes of the king cannot be doubted.

He had neither dressed his feet — not taken the bath,

nor trimmed his beard — The Hebrews cut off the hair on the upper lip (see on \*\*DE\*Leviticus 13:45), and cheeks, but carefully cherished it on the chin from ear to ear. Besides dyeing it black or red colors, which, however, is the exception, and not the rule in the East, there are various modes of

trimming it: they train it into a massy bushy form, swelling and round; or they terminate it like a pyramid, in a sharp point. Whatever the mode, it is always trimmed with the greatest care; and they usually carry a small comb for the purpose. The neglect of this attention to his beard was an undoubted proof of the depth of Mephibosheth's grief. The king seems to have received him upbraidingly, and not to have been altogether sure either of his guilt or innocence. It is impossible to commend the cavalier treatment, any more than to approve the partial award, of David in this case. If he were too hurried and distracted by the pressure of circumstances to inquire fully into the matter, he should have postponed his decision; for if by "dividing the land" (\*\*2 Samuel 19:29) he meant that the former arrangement should be continued by which Mephibosheth was acknowledged the proprietor, and Ziba the farmer, it was a hardship inflicted on the owner to fix him with a tenant who had so grossly slandered him. But if by "dividing the land," they were now to share alike, the injustice of the decision was greatly increased. In any view, the generous, disinterested spirit displayed by Mephibosheth was worthy a son of the noble-hearted Jonathan.

- **31-40.** *Barzillai the Gileadite* The rank, great age, and chivalrous devotion of this Gileadite chief wins our respect. His declining to go to court, his recommendation of his son, his convoy across the Jordan, and his parting scene with the king, are interesting incidents. What mark of royal favor was bestowed on Chimham has not been recorded; but it is probable that David gave a great part of his personal patrimony in Bethlehem to Chimham and his heirs in perpetuity (AMIT Jeremiah 41:17).
- **35.** *the voice of singing men and singing women* Bands of professional musicians form a prominent appendage to the courts of Oriental princes.
- **37.** buried by the grave of my father and of my mother This is an instance of the strong affection of people in the East towards the places of sepulture appropriated to their families.
- **40-43.** the king went on to Gilgal, ... and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel Whether from impatience to move on or from some other cause, David did not wait till all the tribes had arrived to conduct him on his return to the capital. The

procession began as soon as Amasa had brought the Judahite escort, and the preference given to this tribe produced a bitter jealousy, which was nearly kindling a civil war fiercer than that which had just ended. A war of words ensued between the tribes — Israel resting their argument on their superior numbers; "they had ten parts in the king," whereas Judah had no more than one. Judah grounded their right to take the lead, on the ground of their nearer relationship to the king. This was a claim dangerous to the house of David; and it shows the seeds were already sown for that tribal dissension which, before long, led to the dismemberment of the kingdom.

## **3000**2 SAMUEL 20:1-9.

#### SHEBA MAKES A PARTY IN ISRAEL.

**1.** Sheba ... a Benjamite — Though nothing is known of this man, he must have been a person of considerable power and influence, before he could have raised so sudden and extensive a sedition. He belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, where the adherents of Saul's dynasty were still numerous; and perceiving the strong disgust of the other tribes with the part assumed by Judah in the restoration, his ill-designing heart resolved to turn it to the overthrow of David's authority in Israel.

every man to his tents — This proverbial expression may have had its foundation in the fact, that many of the Israelite peasantry adhered to the custom of the patriarchs who tilled land, and yet lived in tents, as Syrian peasants often do still. This was the usual watchword of national insurrection, and from the actual temper of the people, it was followed by effects beyond what he probably anticipated.

- **2.** *from Jordan even to Jerusalem* The quarrel had broken out shortly after the crossing of the Jordan, between Judah and the other tribes, who withdrew; so that Judah was left nearly alone to conduct the king to the metropolis.
- **3.** the king took the ten women his concubines Jewish writers say that the widowed queens of Hebrew monarchs were not allowed to marry again but were obliged to pass the rest of their lives in strict seclusion. David treated his concubines in the same manner after the outrage committed on them by Absalom. They were not divorced, for they were guiltless; but they were no longer publicly recognized as his wives; nor was their confinement to a sequestered life a very heavy doom, in a region where women have never been accustomed to go much abroad.

- 4. Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days Amasa is now installed in the command which David had promised him. The revolt of the ten tribes, probably, hastened the public declaration of this appointment, which he hoped would be popular with them, and Amasa was ordered within three days to levy a force from Judah sufficient to put down the insurrection. The appointment was a blunder, and the king soon perceived his error. The specified time passed, but Amasa could not muster the men. Dreading the loss of time, the king gave the commission to Abishai, and not to Joab a new affront, which, no doubt, wounded the pride of the stem and haughty old general. But he hastened with his attached soldiers to go as second to his brother, determined to take the first opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on his successful rival.
- **8.** Amasa went before them Having collected some forces, he by a rapid march overtook the expedition at Gibeon, and assumed the place of commander; in which capacity, he was saluted, among others, by Joab.

**Joab's garment, that he had put on was girded unto him** — in the fashion of travelers and soldiers.

a sword ... and as he went forth it fell out — that is, out of the scabbard. According to Josephus, he let it drop on purpose as he was accosting Amasa, that stooping, as it were accidentally, to pick it up, he might salute the new general with the naked sword in his hand, without exciting any suspicion of his design.

*He went forth* — in a ceremonious manner to meet Amasa, now commander-in-chief, in order to seem to render to that officer, whom he considered as usurping his post, a conspicuous honor and homage.

**9.** took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him — This act, common with two friends on meeting when one of them returns from a journey, indicates respect as well as kindliness, and the performance of it evinced the deep hypocrisy of Joab, who thereby put Amasa off his guard. No wonder, then, that while this act of friendly gratulation after long absence occupied Amasa's attention, he did not perceive the sword that was in Joab's *left* hand. The action of Joab was indeed a high compliment, but neither suspicious nor unusual and to this compliment,

Amasa paying attention and no doubt returning it with suitable politeness, he could little expect the fatal event that Joab's perfidy produced.

## **№**2 SAMUEL 20:10-13.

#### AMASA IS SLAIN.

**10.** *smote him* ... *in the fifth rib* — the seat of the liver and bowels, where wounds are mortal.

struck him not again — that is, despatched him at the first blow.

11-13. He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab — It is a striking proof of Joab's unrivalled influence over the army, that with this villainous murder perpetrated before their eyes they unanimously followed him as their leader in pursuit of Sheba. A soldier conjoined his name with David's, and such a magic spell was in the word "Joab," that all the people "went on" — Amasa's men as well as the rest. The conjunction of these two names is very significant. It shows that the one could not afford to do without the other — neither Joab to rebel against David, nor David to get rid of Joab, though hating him.

<sup>4004</sup>2 SAMUEL 20:14,15.

#### JOAB PURSUES SHEBA UNTO ABEL.

- **14.** *he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel* beating up for recruits. But there the prompt marches of Joab overtook and hemmed him in by a close siege of the place.
- **15.** *Abel of Beth-maachah* a verdant place the addition of "Maachah" betokening that it belonged to the district Maachah, which lay far up the Jordan at the foot of Lebanon.

## <sup>4006</sup>2 SAMUEL 20:16-22.

#### A WISE WOMAN SAVES THE CITY BY SHEBA'S HEAD.

**16.** *Then cried a wise woman* — The appeal of this woman, who, like Deborah, was probably a judge or governess of the place, was a strong one.

**18-20.** They were wont to speak in old time — The translation of the *Margin* gives a better meaning, which is to this effect: When the people saw thee lay siege to Abel, they said, Surely he will ask if we will have peace, for the law (Deuteronomy 20:10) prescribes that he should offer peace to strangers, much more then to Israelitish cities; and if he do this, we shall soon bring things to an amicable agreement, for we are a peaceable people. The answer of Joab brings out the character of that ruthless veteran as a patriot at heart, who, on securing the author of this insurrection, was ready to put a stop to further bloodshed and release the peaceable inhabitants from all molestation.

<sup>4002</sup>2 SAMUEL 20:23-26.

#### DAVID'S GREAT OFFICERS.

**23.** Now Joab was over all the host of Israel — David, whatever his private wishes, found that he possessed not the power of removing Joab; so winking at the murder of Amasa, he re-established that officer in his former post of commander-in-chief. The enumeration of David's cabinet is here given to show that the government was re-established in its wonted course.

## **№ 2 SAMUEL 21:1-9.**

# THE THREE YEARS' FAMINE FOR THE GIBEONITES CEASE BY HANGING SEVEN OF SAUL'S SONS.

- **1.** the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites The sacred history has not recorded either the time or the reason of this massacre. Some think that they were sufferers in the atrocity perpetrated by Saul at Nob ( Samuel 22:19), where many of them may have resided as attendants of the priests; while others suppose it more probable that the attempt was made afterwards, with a view to regain the popularity he had lost throughout the nation by that execrable outrage.
- 2. in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah Under pretense of a rigorous and faithful execution of the divine law regarding the extermination of the Canaanites, he set himself to expel or destroy those whom Joshua had been deceived into sparing. His real object seems to have been, that the possessions of the Gibeonites, being forfeited to the crown, might be divided among his own people (compare only 1 Samuel 22:7). At all events, his proceeding against this people was in violation of a solemn oath, and involving national guilt. The famine was, in the wise and just retribution of Providence, made a national punishment, since the Hebrews either assisted in the massacre, or did not interpose to prevent it; since they neither endeavored to repair the wrong, nor expressed any horror of it; and since a general protracted chastisement might have been indispensable to inspire a proper respect and protection to the Gibeonite remnant that survived.
- **6.** Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul The practice of the Hebrews, as of most Oriental nations, was to slay first, and afterwards to suspend on a gibbet, the body not being left hanging after sunset. The king could not

refuse this demand of the Gibeonites, who, in making it, were only exercising their right as blood-avengers; and, although through fear and a sense of weakness they had not hitherto claimed satisfaction, yet now that David had been apprised by the oracle of the cause of the long-prevailing calamity, he felt it his duty to give the Gibeonites full satisfaction — hence their specifying the number seven, which was reckoned full and complete. And if it should seem unjust to make the descendants suffer for a crime which, in all probability, originated with Saul himself, yet his sons and grandsons might be the instruments of his cruelty, the willing and zealous executors of this bloody *raid*.

the king said, I will give them — David cannot be charged with doing this as an indirect way or ridding himself of rival competitors for the throne, for those delivered up were only collateral branches of Saul's family, and never set up any claim to the sovereignty. Moreover, David was only granting the request of the Gibeonites as God had bidden him do.

- 8. the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel Merab, Michal's sister, was the wife of Adriel; but Michal adopted and brought up the boys under her care.
- 9. they hanged them in the hill before the Lord Deeming themselves not bound by the criminal law of Israel (Deuteronomy 21:22,23), their intention was to let the bodies hang until God, propitiated by this offering, should send rain upon the land, for the want of it had occasioned the famine. It was a heathen practice to gibbet men with a view of appeasing the anger of the gods in seasons of famine, and the Gibeonites, who were a remnant of the Amorites (Deep 2) Samuel 21:2), though brought to the knowledge of the true God, were not, it seems, free from this superstition. God, in His providence, suffered the Gibeonites to ask and inflict so barbarous a retaliation, in order that the oppressed Gibeonites might obtain justice and some reparation of their wrongs, especially that the scandal brought on the name of the true religion by the violation of a solemn national compact might be wiped away from Israel, and that a memorable lesson should be given to respect treaties and oaths.

# **\*\*ODIG2 SAMUEL 21:10,11.**

#### RIZPAH'S KINDNESS UNTO THE DEAD.

**10.** Rizpah ... took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock — She erected a tent near the spot, in which she and her servants kept watch, as the relatives of executed persons were wont to do, day and night, to scare the birds and beasts of prey away from the remains exposed on the low-standing gibbets.

**→10112** SAMUEL 21:12-22.

# DAVID BURIES THE BONES OF SAUL AND JONATHAN IN THEIR FATHER'S SEPULCHER.

**12.** David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son, etc. — Before long, the descent of copious showers, or perhaps an order of the king, gave Rizpah the satisfaction of releasing the corpses from their ignominious exposure; and, incited by her pious example, David ordered the remains of Saul and his sons to be transferred from their obscure grave in Jabesh-gilead to an honorable interment in the family vault at Zelah or Zelzah (\*\*\*\* Samuel 10:2), now Beit-jala.

## 15-22. Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel —

Although the Philistines had completely succumbed to the army of David, yet the appearance of any gigantic champions among them revived their courage and stirred them up to renewed inroads on the Hebrew territory. Four successive contests they provoked during the latter period of David's reign, in the first of which the king ran so imminent a risk of his life that he was no longer allowed to encounter the perils of the battlefield.

# <sup>2</sup> SAMUEL 22:1-51.

# DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S POWERFUL DELIVERANCE AND MANIFOLD BLESSINGS.

The song contained in this chapter is the same as the eighteenth Psalm, where the full commentary will be given [see on Psalm 18:1, etc.]. It may be sufficient simply to remark that Jewish writers have noticed a great number of very minute variations in the language of the song as recorded here, from that embodied in the Book of Psalms — which may be accounted for by the fact that this, the first copy of the poem, was carefully revised and altered by David afterwards, when it was set to the music of the tabernacle. This inspired ode was manifestly the effusion of a mind glowing with the highest fervor of piety and gratitude, and it is full of the noblest imagery that is to be found within the range even of sacred poetry. It is David's grand tribute of thanksgiving for deliverance from his numerous and powerful enemies, and establishing him in the power and glory of the kingdom.

### **□ 2 SAMUEL 23:1-7.**

#### DAVID PROFESSES HIS FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES.

1. Now these be the last words of David — Various opinions are entertained as to the precise meaning of this statement, which, it is obvious, proceeded from the compiler or collector of the sacred canon. Some think that, as there is no division of chapters in the Hebrew Scriptures, this introduction was intended to show that what follows is no part of the king's poetical compositions; while still others consider it the last of his utterances as an inspired writer.

**raised up on high** — from an obscure family and condition to a throne.

*the anointed of the God of Jacob* — chosen to be king by the special appointment of that God, to whom, by virtue of an ancient covenant, the people or Israel owed all their peculiar destiny and distinguished privileges.

the sweet psalmist of Israel — that is, delightful, highly esteemed.

- **2.** The Spirit of the Lord spake by me Nothing can more clearly show that all that is excellent in spirit, beautiful in language, or grand in prophetic imagery, which the Psalms of David contain, were owing, not to his superiority in natural talents or acquired knowledge, but to the suggestion and dictates of God's Spirit.
- **3.** *the Rock of Israel* This metaphor, which is commonly applied by the sacred writers to the Almighty, was very expressive to the minds of the Hebrew people. Their national fortresses, in which they sought security in war, were built on high and inaccessible rocks.

**spake to me** — either preceptively, giving the following counsels respecting the character of an upright ruler in Israel, or prophetically, concerning David and his royal dynasty, and the great Messiah, of whom

many think this is a prophecy, rendering the words, "he that ruleth" — "there shall be a ruler over men."

- **4.** as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain Little patches of grass are seen rapidly springing up in Palestine after rain; and even where the ground has been long parched and bare, within a few days or hours after the enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth is so renewed that it is covered over with a pure fresh mantle of green.
- 5. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure — "the light of the morning," that is, the beginning of David's kingdom, was unlike the clear brilliant dawn of an Eastern day but was overcast by many black and threatening clouds; neither he nor his family had been like the tender grass springing up from the ground and flourishing by the united influences of the sun and rain; but rather like the grass that withereth and is prematurely cut down. The meaning is: although David's house had not flourished in an uninterrupted course of worldly prosperity and greatness, according to his hopes; although great crimes and calamities had beclouded his family history; some of the most promising branches of the royal tree had been cut down in his lifetime and many of his successors should suffer in like manner for their personal sins; although many reverses and revolutions may overtake his race and his kingdom, yet it was to him a subject of the highest joy and thankfulness that God will inviolably maintain His covenant with his family, until the advent of his greatest Son, the Messiah, who was the special object of his desire, and the author of his salvation.
- **6.** But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns that is, the wicked enemies and persecutors of this kingdom of righteousness. They resemble those prickly, thorny plants which are twisted together, whose spires point in every direction, and which are so sharp and strong that they cannot be touched or approached without danger; but hard instruments and violent means must be taken to destroy or uproot them. So God will remove or destroy all who are opposed to this kingdom.

## **\*\*\*\*2 SAMUEL 23:8-39.**

#### A CATALOGUE OF HIS MIGHTY MEN.

8. These be the names of the mighty men whom David had — This verse should be translated thus: He who sits in the seat of the Tachmonite (that is, of Jashobeam the Hachmonite), who was chief among the captains, the same is Adino the Eznite; he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. The text is corrupt in this passage; the number eight hundred should be three hundred [DAVIDSON, Hermeneutics]. Under Joab he was chief or president of the council of war. The first or highest order was composed of him and his two colleagues, Eleazar and Shammah. Eleazar seems to have been left to fight the Philistines alone; and on his achieving the victory, they returned to the spoil. In like manner Shammah was left to stand alone in his glory, when the Lord, by him, wrought a great victory. It is not very easy to determine whether the exploits that are afterwards described were performed by the first or the second three.

15, 16. the well of Beth-lehem — An ancient cistern, with four or five holes in the solid rock, at about ten minutes distance to the north of the eastern corner of the hill of Beth-lehem, is pointed out by the natives as Bir-Daoud; that is, David's well. Dr. ROBINSON doubts the identity of the well; but others think that there are no good grounds for doing so. Certainly, considering this to be the ancient well, Beth-lehem must have once extended ten minutes further to the north, and must have lain in times of old, not as now, on the summit, but on the northern rise of the hill: for the well is by or ( Chronicles 11:7) at the gate. I find in the description of travelers, that the common opinion is, that David's captains had come from the southeast, in order to obtain, at the risk of their lives, the somuch-longed-for water; while it is supposed that David himself was then in the great cave that is not far to the southeast of Beth-lehem; which cave is generally held to have been that of Adullam. But (\*\*\*Joshua 15:35) Adullam lay "in the valley"; that is, in the undulating plain at the western base of the mountains of Judea and consequently to the southwest of Beth-lehem. Be this as it may, David's men had in any case to break through the host of the Philistines, in order to reach the well; and the position of Bir-Daoud agrees well with this [VAN DE VELDE].

19-39. the first three — The mighty men or champions in David's military staff were divided into three classes — the highest, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah; the second class, Abishai, Benaiah, and Asahel; and the third class, the thirty, of which Asahel was the chief. There are thirty-one mentioned in the list, including Asahel; and these added to the two superior orders make thirty-seven. Two of them, we know, were already dead; namely, Asahel [ Samuel 3:30] and Uriah [ Samuel 11:17]; and if the dead, at the drawing up of the list, amounted to seven, then we might suppose a legion of honor, consisting of the definite number thirty, where the vacancies, when they occurred, were replaced by fresh appointments.

### **™2 SAMUEL 24:1-9.**

#### DAVID NUMBERS THE PEOPLE.

1-4. again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah — "Again" carries us back to the former tokens of His wrath in the three years' famine [ Samuel 21:1]. God, though He cannot tempt any man ( James 1:13), is frequently described in Scripture as doing what He merely permits to be done; and so, in this case, He permitted Satan to tempt David. Satan was the active mover, while God only withdrew His supporting grace, and the great tempter prevailed against the king. (See Isaiah 7:17, etc.). The order was given to Joab, who, though not generally restrained by religious scruples, did not fail to present, in strong terms (see on Chronicles 21:3), the sin and danger of this measure. He used every argument to dissuade the king from his purpose. The sacred history has not mentioned the objections which he and other distinguished officers urged against it in the council of David. But it expressly states that they were all overruled by the inflexible resolution of the king.

**5.** *they passed over Jordan* — This census was taken first in the eastern parts of the Hebrew kingdom; and it would seem that Joab was accompanied by a military force, either to aid in this troublesome work, or to overawe the people who might display reluctance or opposition.

the river of Gad — "Wady" would be a better term. It extends over a course estimated at about sixty miles, which, though in summer almost constantly dry, exhibits very evident traces of being swept over by an impetuous torrent in winter (see \*\*Deuteronomy 2:36).

**6.** *the land of Tahtim-hodshi* — that is, the land lately acquired; namely, that of the Hagarites conquered by Saul (\*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 5:10). The progress was northward. Thence they crossed the country, and,

proceeding along the western coast to the southern extremities of the country, they at length arrived in Jerusalem, having completed the enumeration of the whole kingdom in the space of nine months and twenty days.

9. Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king — The amount here stated, compared with Thronicles 21:5, gives a difference of three hundred thousand. The discrepancy is only apparent, and admits of an easy reconciliation; thus (see Chronicles 27:1-15), there were twelve divisions of generals, who commanded monthly, and whose duty was to keep guard on the royal person, each having a body of troops consisting of twenty-four thousand men, which, together, formed an army of two hundred eighty-eight thousand; and as a separate detachment of twelve thousand was attendant on the twelve princes of the twelve tribes mentioned in the same chapter, so both are equal to three hundred thousand. These were not reckoned in this book, because they were in the actual service of the king as a regular militia. But 43151 Chronicles 21:5 joins them to the rest, saying, "all those of Israel were one million, one hundred thousand"; whereas the author of Samuel, who reckons only the eight hundred thousand, does not say, "all those of Israel," but barely "and Israel were," etc. It must also be observed that, exclusive of the troops before mentioned, there was an army of observation on the frontiers of the Philistines' country, composed of thirty thousand men, as appears from Samuel 6:1; which, it seems, were included in the number of five hundred thousand of the people of Judah by the author of Samuel. But the author of Chronicles, who mentions only four hundred seventy thousand, gives the number of that tribe exclusive of those thirty thousand men, because they were not all of the tribe of Judah, and therefore he does not say, "all those of Judah," as he had said, "all those of Israel," but only, "and those of Judah." Thus both accounts may be reconciled [DAVIDSON].

# 2 SAMUEL 24:10-14.

# HE, HAVING THREE PLAGUES PROPOUNDED BY GAD, REPENTS, AND CHOOSES THREE DAYS' PESTILENCE.

**10-13.** David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned — The act of numbering the people was not in itself sinful; for Moses did it by the express authority of God. But David acted not only independently of such order of sanction, but from motives unworthy of the delegated king of Israel; from pride and vainglory; from self-confidence and distrust of God; and, above all, from ambitious designs of conquest, in furtherance of which he was determined to force the people into military service, and to ascertain whether he could muster an army sufficient for the magnitude of the enterprises he contemplated. It was a breach of the constitution, an infringement of the liberties of the people, and opposed to that divine policy which required that Israel should continue a separate people. His eyes were not opened to the heinousness of his sin till God had spoken unto him by His commissioned prophet.

- **13.** Shall seven years of famine come unto thee that is, in addition to the three that had been already, with the current year included (see on Chronicles 21:11).
- **14.** *David said*, ... *Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord* His overwhelming sense of his sin led him to acquiesce in the punishment denounced, notwithstanding its apparent excess of severity. He proceeded on a good principle in choosing the pestilence. In pestilence he was equally exposed, as it was just and right he should be, to danger as his people, whereas, in war and famine, he possessed means of protection superior to them. Besides, he thereby showed his trust, founded on long experience, in the divine goodness.

## <sup>1015</sup>2 SAMUEL 24:15-25.

#### HIS INTERCESSION TO GOD; THE PLAGUE CEASES.

**15.** *from the morning* — rather *that* morning when Gad came [ 24:18], till the end of the three days.

*there died of the people ... seventy thousand men* — Thus was the pride of the vainglorious monarch, confiding in the number of his population, deeply humbled.

**16.** *the Lord repented him of the evil* — God is often described in Scripture as repenting when He ceased to pursue a course He had begun.

17. David ... said — or, "had said,"

*I have sinned* ... but these sheep, what have they done? — The guilt of numbering the people lay exclusively with David. But in the body politic as well as natural, when the head suffers, all the members suffer along with it; and, besides, although David's sin was the immediate cause, the great increase of national offenses at this time had (\*\*POL\*\*2 Samuel 24:1) kindled the anger of the Lord.

- **18.** Araunah or Ornan ( Chronicles 21:18), the Jebusite, one of the ancient inhabitants, who, having become a convert to the true religion, retained his house and possessions. He resided on Mount Moriah, the spot on which the temple was afterwards built ( Chronicles 3:1); but that mount was not then enclosed in the town.

- **23.** All these things did Araunah, as a king, give Indicating, as the sense is, that this man had been anciently a heathen king or chief, but was now a proselyte who still retained great property and influence in Jerusalem, and whose piety was evinced by the liberality of his offers. The words, "as a king," are taken by some to signify simply, "he gave with royal munificence."
- **24.** Nay; ... I will ... buy it of thee at a price The sum mentioned here, about fifty dollars, was paid for the floor, oxen and wood instruments only, whereas the large sum ( Chronicles 21:25) was paid afterwards for the whole hill, on which David made preparations for building the temple.
- **25.** *David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings* There seem to have been two sacrifices; the first expiatory, the second a thanksgiving for the cessation of the pestilence (see on Thronicles 21:26).

### THE FIRST BOOK OF

# THE KINGS

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

40001 KINGS 1:1-4.

#### ABISHAG CHERISHES DAVID IN HIS EXTREME AGE.

**1, 2.** Now king David was old — He was in the seventieth year of his age Samuel 5:4,5). But the wear and tear of a military life, bodily fatigue, and mental care, had prematurely, if we may say it, exhausted the energies of David's strong constitution ( Samuel 16:12). In modern Palestine and Egypt the people, owing to the heat of the climate, sleep each in a "separate" bed. They only depart from this practice for medical reasons Ecclesiastes 4:11). The expedient recommended by David's physicians is the regimen still prescribed in similar cases in the East, particularly among the Arab population, not simply to give heat, but "to cherish," as they are aware that the inhalation of young breath will give new life and vigor to the worn-out frame. The fact of the health of the young and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly is well established among the medical faculty. And hence the prescription for the aged king was made in a hygienic point of view for the prolongation of his valuable life, and not merely for the comfort to be derived from the natural warmth imparted to his withered frame [PORTER, *Tent and Khan*]. The polygamy of the age and country may account for the introduction of this practice; and it is evident that Abishag was made a concubine or secondary wife to David (see on Kings 2:22).

**3.** a Shunammite — Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar (\*\*\*Joshua 19:18), lay on an eminence in the plain of Esdraelon, five miles south of Tabor. It is now called Sulam.

# 40061 KINGS 1:5-31.

#### ADONIJAH USURPS THE KINGDOM.

- 5, 6. Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself Nothing is said as to the origin or rank of Haggith, so that it is probable she was not distinguished by family descent. Adonijah, though David's fourth son ( Samuel 3:4 Samuel 3:4) Chronicles 3:2), was now the oldest alive; and his personal attractions and manners ( Samuel 9:2) not only recommended him to the leading men about court, but made him the favorite of his father, who, though seeing him assume an equipage becoming only the heir-presumptive to the throne ( Samuel 15:1), said nothing; and his silence was considered by many, as well as by Adonijah, to be equivalent to an expression of consent. The sinking health of the king prompted him to take a decisive step in furtherance of his ambitious designs.
- **7.** *he conferred with Joab* The anxiety of Adonijah to secure the influence of a leader so bold, enterprising, and popular with the army was natural, and the accession of the hoary commander is easily accounted for from his recent grudge at the king (see on <sup>1832</sup> Samuel 19:13).
- and with Abiathar the priest His influence was as great over the priests and Levites a powerful body in the kingdom as that of Joab over the troops. It might be that both of them thought the crown belonged to Adonijah by right of primogeniture, from his mature age and the general expectations of the people (410251 Kings 2:15).
- 8. But Zadok the priest He had been high priest in the tabernacle at Gibeon under Saul (1869). David, on his accession, had conjoined him and Abiathar equal in the exercise of their high functions (1872) Samuel 8:17 15:24,29,35). But it is extremely probable that some cause of jealousy or discord between them had arisen, and hence each lent his countenance and support to opposite parties.

**Benaiah** — Distinguished for his bravery (\*\*\*\*21 Samuel 23:20), he had been appointed captain of the king's bodyguard (\*\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 8:18 \*\*\*\*20:23 \*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 18:17), and was regarded by Joab as a rival.

**Nathan the prophet** — He was held in high estimation by David, and stood on the most intimate relations with the royal family (\*\*22 Samuel 12:25).

**Shimei** — probably the person of this name who was afterwards enrolled among Solomon's great officers (\*\*\* Kings 4:18).

**Rei** — supposed to be the same as Ira ( Samuel 20:26).

and the mighty men — the select band of worthies.

- 9, 10. *En-rogel* situated ( dest Joshua 15:7-10) east of Jerusalem, in a level place, just below the junction of the valley of Hinnom with that of Jehoshaphat. It is a very deep well, measuring one hundred twenty-five feet in depth; the water is sweet, but not very cold, and it is at times quite full to overflowing. The Orientals are fond of enjoying festive repasts in the open air at places which command the advantage of shade, water, and verdure; and those fetes champetres are not cold collations, but magnificent entertainments, the animals being killed and dressed on the spot. Adonijah's feast at En-rogel was one of this Oriental description, and it was on a large scale ( Samuel 3:4,5 Sin 5:14-16 Chronicles 14:1-7). At the accession of a new king there were sacrifices offered (\*\*\* Samuel 11:15). But on such an occasion it was no less customary to entertain the grandees of the kingdom and even the populace in a public manner ( and ) Chronicles 12:23-40). There is the strongest probability that Adonijah's feast was purely political, to court popularity and secure a party to support his claim to the crown.
- 11-27. Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba ... let me ... give thee counsel The revolt was defeated by this prophet, who, knowing the Lord's will (1972) Samuel 7:12 12 12 12:11 Chronicles 22:9), felt himself bound, in accordance with his character and office, to take the lead in seeing it executed. Hitherto the succession of the Hebrew monarchy had not been settled. The Lord had reserved to Himself the right of nomination (1975) Deuteronomy 17:15), which was acted upon in the appointments both of Saul and David; and in

the case of the latter the rule was so far modified that his posterity were guaranteed the perpetual possession of the sovereignty (Samuel 7:12). This divine purpose was known throughout the kingdom; but no intimation had been made as to whether the right of inheritance was to belong to the oldest son. Adonijah, in common with the people generally, expected that this natural arrangement should be followed in the Hebrew kingdom as in all others. Nathan, who was aware of the old king's solemn promise to Solomon, and, moreover, that this promise was sanctioned by the divine will, saw that no time was to be lost. Fearing the effects of too sudden excitement in the king's feeble state, he arranged that Bath-sheba should go first to inform him of what was being transacted without the walls, and that he himself should follow to confirm her statement. The narrative here not only exhibits the vivid picture of a scene within the interior of a palace, but gives the impression that a great deal of Oriental state ceremonial had been established in the Hebrew court.

- **20.** the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne When the kings died without declaring their will, then their oldest son succeeded. But frequently they designated long before their death which of their sons should inherit the throne. The kings of Persia, as well as of other Eastern countries, have exercised the same right in modern and even recent times.
- **21.** *I and my son ... shall be counted offenders* that is, slain, according to the barbarous usage of the East towards all who are rivals to the throne.
- **28-31.** Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba He renews to her the solemn pledge he had given, in terms of solemnity and impressiveness which show that the aged monarch had roused himself to the duty the emergency called for.

4002 1 KINGS 1:32-49.

#### SOLOMON, BY DAVID'S APPOINTMENT, IS ANOINTED KING.

**33.** cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule — Directions were forthwith given for the immediate coronation of Solomon. A

procession was to be formed by the "servants of their lord" — that is, the king's bodyguard. Mules were then used by all the princes (\*\*2 Samuel 13:29); but there was a state mule of which all subjects were forbidden, under pain of death, to make use, without special permission; so that its being granted to Solomon was a public declaration in his favor as the future king (see on \*\*Esther 6:8,9).

bring him down to Gihon — a pool or fountain on the west of Jerusalem (see on 482)2 Chronicles 32:30), chosen as equally public for the counter proclamation.

- **34.** *anoint him* done only in the case of a new dynasty or disputed succession (see on Samuel 16:13 and Samuel 2:1).
- 35. Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne The public recognition of the successor to the throne, during the old king's lifetime, is accordant with the customs of the East.
- **39.** *an horn of oil out of the tabernacle* It was the sacred oil (\*\*Exodus 30:25) with which the kings were anointed.
- **40.** *all the people came up after him* that is, from the valley to the citadel of Zion.
- **41-49.** Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating The loud shouts raised by the populace at the joyous proclamation at Gihon, and echoed by assembled thousands, from Zion to En-rogel, were easily heard at that distance by Adonijah and his confederates. The arrival of a trusty messenger, who gave a full detail of the coronation ceremony (4048) Kings 1:43-48), spread dismay in their camp. The wicked and ambitious plot they had assembled to execute was dissipated, and every one of the conspirators consulted his safety by flight.

## 40501 KINGS 1:50-53.

# ADONIJAH, FLEEING TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR, IS DISMISSED BY SOLOMON.

most probably the altar of burnt offering which had been erected on Mount Zion, where Abiathar, one of his partisans, presided as high priest. The horns or projections at the four corners of the altar, to which the sacrifices were bound, and which were tipped with the blood of the victim, were symbols of grace and salvation to the sinner. Hence the altar was regarded as a sanctuary (\*Exodus 21:14), but not to murderers, rebels, or deliberate perpetrators. Adonijah, having acted in opposition to the will of the reigning king, was guilty of rebellion, and stood self-condemned. Solomon spared his life on the express condition of his good behavior — living in strict privacy, leading a quiet, peaceable life, and meddling with the affairs of neither the court nor the kingdom.

**53.** *they brought him down from the altar* — from the ledge around the altar on which he was standing.

*he bowed himself* — that is, did homage to Solomon as king.

## **□IDIS** 1 KINGS 2:1-11.

#### DAVID DIES.

- **1.** *David* ... *charged Solomon his son* The charge recorded here was given to Solomon just before his death and is different from the farewell address delivered in public some time before (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 28:29). It is introduced with great solemnity.
- **2.** *I go the way of all the earth* a beautiful and impressive periphrasis for death.
- be thou strong, ... show thyself a man This counsel is similar to the apostolic direction (\*\*12 Corinthians 16:13) and refers to the fortitude or strength of mind that was required to discharge the onerous functions of king.
- **3.** *keep the charge of the Lord thy God* that is, the divine law in all its ceremonial as well as moral requirements. But particular reference was intended to its political institutions, as it was only by strictly maintaining the conduct that became the Hebrew monarch (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 17:10-20), that he would secure the blessing of peace and prosperity to his reign (see on \*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:5; \*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 29:10).
- **4.** there shall not fail thee ... a man on the throne of Israel a reference to the promise made to David of the sovereignty being vested perpetually in his lineage (\*\*\* Samuel 7:11-16), which was confirmed to Solomon afterwards (see \*\*\* Kings 9:5), and repeated with reference to its spiritual meaning long after (\*\*\* Jeremiah 33:17).
- **5, 6.** *thou knowest also what Joab ... did* The insolent and imperious conduct of that general had not only been deeply offensive to the feelings (\*\*\*2 Samuel 18:5-15 \*\*\*\*19:5-7), but calculated to bring reproach on the character, to injure the prospects, and endanger the throne of David.

Passing over the injuries committed directly against himself, David dwelt with strong feelings on the base assassination of Abner and Amasa.

- shed the blood of war in peace, etc. The obvious meaning is, that in peace he acted towards them as if they had been in a state of warfare; but perhaps these graphic expressions might be designed to impress Solomon's mind more strongly with a sense of the malice, treachery, and cruelty by which those murders were characterized.
- **6.** *Do* ... *according to thy wisdom* Joab's immense popularity with the army required that any proceedings instituted against him should be taken with great prudence and deliberation.
- **9.** *for thou art a wise man* Solomon had given early indications of wisdom before his miraculous endowment with the heavenly gift (see Kings 3:11), and his own sagacity would dictate the course that should be followed in any new offense that Shimei might commit.
- **10.** So David slept with his fathers about six months after the coronation of Solomon (compare Samuel 5:5, with String 1 Chronicles 29:27). The interval was spent in developing his ideas and plans for the future glory of the kingdom and providing for the permanent worship of God (see on Chronicles 22:1, and following). Sepulchres were not allowed within the precincts of cities. Jerusalem, however, formed an exception; and yet, even there, the privilege was reserved chiefly for the royal family (Acts 2:29). Tradition says that the bones of David repose

on Mount Zion, and the minaret of a small mosque points out the spot which tradition has fixed. His was a noble, a wondrous, and a humbling history. He was a good man, yet his life was deformed by various crimes of a very gross character. But there were many bright and noble traits in his character; he was an earnest lover of the divine law; his reign was signalized by many important services that contributed to the glory of God and the exaltation of His kingdom; and his name, as the sweet Psalmist of Israel, will be held in honor to the latest age of the Church.

## 410221 KINGS 2:12-24.

#### SOLOMON SUCCEEDS HIM.

- **12.** Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father His ascension to the royal dignity was made under the happiest auspices. Having been born after his father became monarch of the *whole* kingdom, his claim, according to the notions of Oriental people, was preferable to that of all, *even* his elder brothers. The Hebrew kingdom enjoyed internal prosperity; it was respected and renowned abroad, and Solomon well knew how to improve these advantages.
- **13-18.** *Adonijah* ... *came to Bath-sheba* Her question to him betrays an apprehension which his recent conduct might well warrant; but his pious acknowledgment of the divine will seemed apparently to indicate so entire an acquiescence in the settlement of the succession (\*\*IDDE\*\*1 Kings 2:15), that, in her womanly simplicity, she perceived not the deep cunning and evil design that was concealed under his request and readily undertook to promote his wishes.
- **19, 20.** *Bath-sheba* ... *went unto King Solomon* The filial reverence and the particular act of respect, which Solomon rendered, were quite in accordance with the sentiments and customs of the East. The right hand is the place of honor; and as it expressly said to have been assigned to "the king's mother," it is necessary to remark that, when a husband dies, his widow acquires a higher dignity and power, as a mother over her son, than she ever possessed before. Besides, the dignity of "king's mother" is a state office, to which certain revenues are attached. The holder has a

separate palace or court, as well as possesses great influence in public affairs; and as the dignity is held for life, it sometimes happens, in consequence of deaths, that the person enjoying it may not be related to the reigning sovereign by natural maternity. Bath-sheba had evidently been invested with this honorable office.

- 22. why dost thou ask Abishag ... ask for him the kingdom also (See on Samuel 16:5; also see on Samuel 12:8). Solomon's indignation was roused; he in a moment penetrated the artful scheme, and from his associating the names of Abiathar and Joab, he seems to have suspected or known that those deep schemers had been the prompters of Adonijah.
- **23-25.** *God do so to me*, *and more also* the common form of introducing a solemn oath.
- if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life Whether there was a treasonable design to conceal under this request or not, the act, according to Eastern notions, was criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state. There is no ground of censure upon Solomon for cruelty or precipitation in this instance. He had pardoned Adonijah's former conspiracy; but this new attempt was rebellion against the viceroy appointed by the divine King and called for condign punishment. The office of executioner was among the Hebrews, as in other ancient countries of the East, performed unceremoniously and privately often without any previous warning by the captain of the guard, or one of his officers (\*\*Matthew 14:10).
- **26, 27.** *unto Abiathar the priest said the king* This functionary, as the counsellor or accomplice of Adonijah, had deserved to share his fate. But partly from regard to his priestly dignity, and partly from his long associations with the late king, Solomon pronounced on him the mitigated sentence of banishment to his country estate at Anathoth, and thereby, as God's vicegerent, deprived him of his office and its emoluments. The sacred writer notices the remarkable fulfillment. Abiathar's degradation from the high priesthood (see on Total Kings 4:4), of the doom denounced against the house of Eli (Total Samuel 2:30).

## 410281 KINGS 2:28-45.

### JOAB SLAIN.

- **28.** Then tidings came to Joab The execution of these sentences respectively on Adonijah and Abiathar prepared Joab for his fate. Death, due to his great crimes ("Numbers 35:33), would long ago have been inflicted, had not his power and popularity with the army been too formidable for the old king. He now fled to the altar, which, though a recognized asylum, afforded no sanctuary to the rebel and murderer ("Exodus 21:14). And, as he refused to leave it, he seems to have cherished some faint hope that a religious scruple would have been felt at the thought of violating the sanctity of the place by bloodshed. Benaiah, not liking to assume any responsibility, referred the matter to Solomon, who determined that the law should take its course ("Deuteronomy 19:13).
- **33.** Their blood shall ... return upon the head of Joab, etc. A reference is here made to the curse publicly and solemnly pronounced by King David ( Samuel 3:28,29).

**△1028**1 KINGS 2:34-46.

### SHIMEI PUT TO DEATH.

**34.** Benaiah ... went up, and fell upon him — According to the terms of the statute (\*\*Exodus 21:14), and the practice in similar cases (\*\*Exodus 21:15), the criminal was to be dragged from the altar and slain elsewhere. But the truth is, that the sanctity of the altar was violated as much by the violence used in forcing the criminal from the place as in shedding his blood there; the express command of God authorized the former and therefore by implication permitted the latter.

was buried in his own house — or family vault, at his property in the wilderness of Judah. His interment was included in the king's order, as enjoined in the divine law (\*\*Deuteronomy 21:23).

**36.** *the king sent and called for Shimei* — He was probably residing at Bahurim, his native place. But, as he was a suspicious character, Solomon condemned him henceforth to live in Jerusalem, on the penalty of death, for going without the gates. He submitted to this confinement for three years, when, violating his oath, he was arrested and put to death by Solomon for perjury, aggravated by his former crime of high treason against David [1002] Kings 2:42-44].

**46.** *the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon* — Now, by the death of Shimei, *all* the leaders of the rival factions had been cut off.

## 40001 KINGS 3:1.

### SOLOMON MARRIES PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.

**1.** Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh — This was a royal title, equivalent to "sultan," and the personal name of this monarch is said to have been Vaphres. The formation, on equal terms, of this matrimonial alliance with the royal family of Egypt, shows the high consideration to which the Hebrew kingdom had now arisen. Rosellini has given, from the Egyptian monuments, what is supposed to be a portrait of this princess. She was received in the land of her adoption with great eclat; for the Song of Solomon and the forty-fifth Psalm are supposed to have been composed in honor of this occasion, although they may both have a higher typical reference to the introduction of the Gentiles into the church.

and brought her into the city of David — that is, Jerusalem. She was not admissible into the stronghold of Zion, the building where the ark was (\*\*Deuteronomy 23:7,8). She seems to have been lodged at first in his mother's apartments (So \*\*\*3:4 \*\*\*8:2), as a suitable residence was not yet provided for her in the new palace (\*\*\*\*1 Kings 7:8 \*\*\*\*9:24 \*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 8:11).

building ... the wall of Jerusalem round about — Although David had begun (\*\* Psalm 51:18), it was, according to Josephus, reserved for Solomon to extend and complete the fortifications of the city. It has been questioned whether this marriage was in conformity with the law (see Exodus 34:16 \*\* Deuteronomy 7:3 \*\* Ezra 10:1-10 \*\* Nehemiah 13:26). But it is nowhere censured in Scripture, as are the connections Solomon formed with other foreigners (\*\* Kings 11:1-3); whence it may be inferred that he had stipulated for her abandonment of idolatry, and conforming to the Jewish religion (\*\* Psalm 45:10,11).

## 418021 KINGS 3:2-5.

### HIGH PLACES BEING IN USE HIS SACRIFICES AT GIBEON.

**3.** And Solomon loved the Lord — This declaration, illustrated by what follows, affords undoubted evidence of the young king's piety; nor is the word "only," which prefaces the statement, to be understood as introducing a qualifying circumstance that reflected any degree of censure upon him. The intention of the sacred historian is to describe the generally prevailing mode of worship before the temple was built. The

high places were altars erected on natural or artificial eminences, probably from the idea that men were brought nearer to the Deity. They had been used by the patriarchs, and had become so universal among the heathen that they were almost identified with idolatry. They were prohibited in the law (\*\*\*Deviticus 17:3,4\*\*Deuteronomy 12:13,14\*\*Jeremiah 7:31\*\*Ezekiel 6:3,4\*\*\*Hosea 10:8). But, so long as the tabernacle was migratory and the means for the national worship were merely provisional, the worship on those high places was tolerated. Hence, as accounting for their continuance, it is expressly stated (\*\*\*\*\*IRBS 3:2) that God had not yet chosen a permanent and exclusive place for his worship.

- **5.** In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream It was probably at the close of this season, when his mind had been elevated into a high state of religious fervor by the protracted services. Solomon felt an intense desire, and he had offered an earnest petition, for the gift of wisdom. In sleep his thoughts ran upon the subject of his prayer, and he dreamed that God appeared to him and gave him the option of every thing in the world that he asked wisdom, and that God granted his request

( Kings 3:9-12). His dream was but an imaginary repetition of his former desire, but God's grant of it was real.

## 41861 KINGS 3:6-15.

#### HE CHOOSES WISDOM.

- **6.** Solomon said that is, had dreamed that he said.
- **7.** *I am but a little child* not in age, for he had reached manhood ( Kings 2:9) and must have been at least twenty years old; but he was raw and inexperienced in matters of government.
- **10.** *the speech pleased the Lord* It was Solomon's waking prayers that God heard and requited, but the acceptance was signified in this vision.
- **15.** *behold*, *it was a dream* The vivid impression, the indelible recollection he had of this dream, together with the new and increased energy communicated to his mind, and the flow of worldly prosperity that rushed upon him, gave him assurance that it came by divine inspiration and originated in the grace of God. The wisdom, however, that was asked and obtained was not so much of the heart as of the head it was wisdom not for himself personally, but for his office, such as would qualify him for the administration of justice, the government of a kingdom, and for the attainment of general scientific knowledge.

40861 KINGS 3:16-28.

#### HIS JUDGMENT BETWEEN TWO HARLOTS.

**16.** Then came there two women — Eastern monarchs, who generally administer justice in person, at least in all cases of difficulty, often appeal to the principles of human nature when they are at a loss otherwise to find a clue to the truth or see clearly their way through a mass of conflicting testimony. The modern history of the East abounds with anecdotes of judicial cases, in which the decision given was the result of an experiment

similar to this of Solomon upon the natural feelings of the contending parties.

## **□□□** KINGS 4:1-6.

### SOLOMON'S PRINCES.

- **1.** So King Solomon was king over all Israel This chapter contains a general description of the state and glory of the Hebrew kingdom during the more flourishing or later years of his reign.
- **2.** *these were the princes* or chief officers, as is evident from two of them marrying Solomon's daughters.

Azariah the son of Zadok the priest — rather, "the prince," as the Hebrew word frequently signifies (\*\*Genesis 41:45 \*Exodus 2:16 \*\*2 Samuel 8:18); so that from the precedency given to his person in the list, he seems to have been prime minister, the highest in office next the king.

3. scribes — that is, secretaries of state. Under David, there had been only one [ Samuel 8:17 Samuel 8:17 20:25]. The employment of three functionaries in this department indicates either improved regulations by the division of labor, or a great increase of business, occasioned by the growing prosperity of the kingdom, or a more extensive correspondence with foreign countries.

**recorder** — that is, historiographer, or annalist — an office of great importance in Oriental courts, and the duties of which consisted in chronicling the occurrences of every day.

**4. Benaiah** ... was over the host — formerly captain of the guard. He had succeeded Joab as commander of the forces.

**Zadok and Abiathar were the priests** — Only the first discharged the sacred functions; the latter had been banished to his country seat and retained nothing more than the name of high priest.

**5.** over the officers — that is, the provincial governors enumerated in Kings 4:17-19.

*principal officer, and the king's friend* — perhaps president of the privy council, and Solomon's confidential friend or favorite. This high functionary had probably been reared along with Solomon. That he should heap those honors on the sons of Nathan was most natural, considering the close intimacy of the father with the late king, and the deep obligations under which Solomon personally lay to the prophet.

**6.** Ahishar was over the household — steward or chamberlain of the palace.

**Adoniram** — or Adoram (\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 20:24 \*\*\*1 Kings 12:18), or Hadoram (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 10:18),

was over the tribute — not the collection of money or goods, but the levy of compulsory laborers (compare 41581 Kings 5:13,14).

**□□□□**1 KINGS 4:7-21.

### HIS TWELVE OFFICERS.

- **8.** The son of Hur or, as the Margin has it, Benhur, Bendekar. In the rural parts of Syria, and among the Arabs, it is still common to designate persons not by their own names, but as the sons of their fathers.

- **21.** Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river All the petty kingdoms between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean were tributary to him. Similar is the statement in I Kings 4:24.
- **22, 23.** *Solomon's provision for one day* not for the king's table only, but for all connected with the court, including, besides the royal establishment, those of his royal consorts, his principal officers, his bodyguards, his foreign visitors, etc. The quantity of fine floor used is estimated at two hundred forty bushels; that of meal or common flour at four hundred eighty. The number of cattle required for consumption, besides poultry and several kinds of game (which were abundant on the mountains) did not exceed in proportion what is needed in other courts of the East.
- **24.** *from Tiphsah* that is, Thapsacus, a large and flourishing town on the west bank of the Euphrates, the name of which was derived from a celebrated ford near it, the lowest on that river.

even to Azzah — that is, Gaza, on the southwestern extremity, not far from the Mediterranean.

- **25.** every man under his vine and ... fig tree This is a common and beautiful metaphor for peace and security ( Micah 4:4 Zechariah 3:10), founded on the practice, still common in modern Syria, of training these fruit trees up the walls and stairs of houses, so as to make a shady arbor, beneath which the people sit and relax.
- **26.** *forty thousand stalls* for the royal mews (see on <sup>44)22</sup>2 Chronicles 9:25).
- **28.** *Barley* ... *and straw* Straw is not used for litter, but barley mixed with chopped straw is the usual fodder of horses.

dromedaries — one-humped camels, distinguished for their great fleetness.

## 410€91 KINGS 4:29-34.

#### HIS WISDOM.

- **29.** God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart that is, high powers of mind, great capacity for receiving, as well as aptitude for communicating, knowledge.
- **30.** Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country that is, the Arabians, Chaldeans, and Persians (Genesis 25:6).
- *all the wisdom of Egypt* Egypt was renowned as the seat of learning and sciences, and the existing monuments, which so clearly describe the ancient state of society and the arts, show the high culture of the Egyptian people.
- **31.** *wiser than all men* that is, all his contemporaries, either at home or abroad.
- *than Ethan* or Jeduthun, of the family of Merari ( Chronicles 6:44).
- **Heman** (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 15:17-19) the chief of the temple musicians and the king's seers (\*\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 25:5); the other two are not known.
- **the sons of Mahol** either another name for Zerah (\*\*\*The Chronicles 2:6); or taking it as a common noun, signifying a dance, a chorus, "the sons of Mahol" signify persons eminently skilled in poetry and music.
- **32.** *he spake three thousand proverbs* embodying his moral sentiments and sage observations on human life and character.
- **songs ... a thousand and five** Psalm 72, 127, 132, and the Song of Songs are his.
- **33.** he spake of trees, from the cedar ... to the hyssop all plants, from the greatest to the least. The Spirit of God has seen fit to preserve comparatively few memorials of the fruits of his gigantic mind. The greater part of those here ascribed to him have long since fallen a prey to the ravages of time, or perished in the Babylonish captivity, probably because they were not inspired.

## **□100** KINGS 5:1-6.

### HIRAM SENDS TO CONGRATULATE SOLOMON.

1. Hiram ... sent his servants unto Solomon — the grandson of David's contemporary [KITTO]; or the same Hiram [WINER and others]. The friendly relations which the king of Tyre had cultivated with David are here seen renewed with his son and successor, by a message of condolence as well as of congratulation on his accession to the throne of Israel. The alliance between the two nations had been mutually beneficial by the encouragement of useful traffic. Israel, being agricultural, furnished corn and oil, while the Tyrians, who were a commercial people, gave in exchange their Phoenician manufactures, as well as the produce of foreign lands. A special treaty was now entered into in furtherance of that undertaking which was the great work of Solomon's splendid and peaceful reign.

## 6. command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon —

Nowhere else could Solomon have procured materials for the woodwork of his contemplated building. The forests of Lebanon, adjoining the seas in Solomon's time, belonged to the Phoenicians, and the timber being a lucrative branch of their exports, immense numbers of workmen were constantly employed in the felling of trees as well as the transportation and preparation of the wood. Hiram stipulated to furnish Solomon with as large a quantity of cedars and cypresses as he might require and it was a great additional obligation that he engaged to render the important service of having it brought down, probably by the Dog river, to the seaside, and conveyed along the coast in floats; that is, the logs being bound together, to the harbor of Joppa (\*\*PPC\*2 Chronicles 2:16), whence they could easily find the means of transport to Jerusalem.

my servants shall be with thy servants — The operations were to be on so extensive a scale that the Tyrians alone would be insufficient. A division

of labor was necessary, and while the former would do the work that required skillful artisans, Solomon engaged to supply the laborers.

## **STANT STANT STAN**

#### FURNISHES TIMBER TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.

- 7. **Blessed be the Lord** This language is no decisive evidence that Hiram was a worshipper of the true God, as he might use it only on the polytheistic principle of acknowledging Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews (see on 400) 2 Chronicles 2:11).
- 8. Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things ... and I will do The contract was drawn out formally in a written document (\*\*\*DE\*\*2 Chronicles 2:11), which, according to JOSEPHUS, was preserved both in the Jewish and Tyrian records.
- **10.** *fir trees* rather, the cypress.
- **11.** *food to his household* This was an annual supply for the palace, different from that mentioned in Chronicles 2:10, which was for the workmen in the forests.

## **SECTION SECTION SECT**

### SOLOMON'S WORKMEN AND LABORERS.

**13.** Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel — The renewed notice of Solomon's divine gift of wisdom ( Tkings 5:12) is evidently introduced to prepare for this record of the strong but prudent measures he took towards the accomplishment of his work. So great a stretch of arbitrary power as is implied in this compulsory levy would have raised great discontent, if not opposition, had not his wise arrangement of letting the laborers remain at home two months out of three, added to the sacredness of the work, reconciled the people to this forced labor. The carrying of burdens and the irksome work of excavating the quarries was assigned to the remnant of the Canaanites (TREE) Kings 9:20 Thronicles 8:7-9) and

war prisoners made by David — amounting to 153,600. The employment of persons of that condition in Eastern countries for carrying on any public work, would make this part of the arrangements the less thought of.

**17.** *brought great stones* — The stone of Lebanon is "hard, calcareous, whitish and sonorous, like free stone" [SHAW]. The same white and beautiful stone can be obtained in every part of Syria and Palestine.

**hewed stones** — or neatly polished, as the *Hebrew* word signifies (\*\*Exodus 20:25). Both Jewish and Tyrian builders were employed in hewing these great stones.

**18.** and the stone squarers — The Margin, which renders it "the Giblites" ( To Shua 13:5), has long been considered a preferable translation. This marginal translation also must yield to another which has lately been proposed, by a slight change in the Hebrew text, and which would be rendered thus: "Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders, did hew them and bevel them" [Thenius]. These great bevelled or grooved stones, measuring some twenty, others thirty feet in length, and from five to six feet in breadth, are still seen in the substructures about the ancient site of the temple; and, in the judgment of the most competent observers, were those originally employed "to lay the foundation of the house."

## **□100** KINGS 6:1-4.

### THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

- **2.** *the house which king Solomon built for the Lord* The dimensions are given in cubits, which are to be reckoned according to the early standard (4000) Chronicles 3:3), or holy cubit (3000) Ezekiel 40:5 43:13), a handbreadth longer than the common or later one. It is probable that the internal elevation only is here stated.
- **3.** *the porch* or portico, extended across the whole front (see on Chronicles 3:4).
- **4.** windows of narrow lights that is, windows with lattices, capable of being shut and opened at pleasure, partly to let out the vapor of the lamps, the smoke of the frankincense, and partly to give light [Keil].

**△INGS** 6:5-10.

#### THE CHAMBERS THEREOF.

- **5.** against the wall of the house he built chambers On three sides, there were chambers in three stories, each story wider than the one beneath it, as the walls were narrowed or made thinner as they ascended, by a rebate being made, on which the beams of the side floor rested, without penetrating the wall. These chambers were approached from the right-hand side, in the interior of the under story, by a winding staircase of stone, which led to the middle and upper stories.
- 7. there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building A subterranean quarry has been very recently discovered near Jerusalem, where the temple stones are supposed to have been hewn. There is unequivocal evidence in this quarry that the

stones were dressed there; for there are blocks very similar in size, as well as of the same kind of stone, as those found in the ancient remains. Thence, probably, they would be moved on rollers down the Tyropean valley to the very side of the temple [PORTER, *Tent and Kahn*].

- **9, 10.** *built the house* The temple is here distinguished from the wings or chambers attached to it and its roofing was of cedar-wood.
- **10.** *chambers* ... *five cubits high* The height of the whole three stories was therefore about fifteen cubits.

they rested on the house with timber of cedar — that is, because the beams of the side stones rested on the ledges of the temple wall. The wing was attached to the house; it was connected with the temple, without, however, interfering injuriously with the sanctuary [Keil].

**■ KINGS 6:11-14.** 

### GOD'S PROMISES UNTO IT.

11-13. the word of the Lord came to Solomon — probably by a prophet. It was very seasonable, being designed: first, to encourage him to go on with the building, by confirming anew the promise made to his father David (\*\*\* Samuel 7:12-16); and secondly, to warn him against the pride and presumption of supposing that after the erection of so magnificent a temple, he and his people would always be sure of the presence and favor of God. The condition on which that blessing could alone be expected was expressly stated. The dwelling of God among the children of Israel refers to those symbols of His presence in the temple, which were the visible tokens of His spiritual relation to that people.

40051 KINGS 6:15-22.

### THE CEILING AND ADORNING OF IT.

**15-21.** *he built the walls of the house within* — The walls were wainscotted with cedar-wood; the floor, paved with cypress planks; the

interior was divided (by a partition consisting of folding doors, which were opened and shut with golden chains) into two apartments — the back or inner room, that is, the most holy place, was twenty cubits long and broad; the front, or outer room, that is, the holy place, was forty cubits. The cedar-wood was beautifully embellished with figures in relievo, representing clusters of foliage, open flowers, cherubims, and palm trees. The whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood nor stone was seen; nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain or richly chased.

**31-35.** *for the entering of the oracle* — The door of the most holy place was made of solid olive tree and adorned with figures. The door of the holy place was made of cypress wood, the sides being of olive wood.

**36.** *the inner court* — was for the priests. Its wall, which had a coping of cedar, is said to have been so low that the people could see over it.

<sup>4065</sup>1 KINGS 6:37,38.

### THE TIME TAKEN TO BUILD IT

**37.** In the fourth year was the foundation laid — The building was begun in the second month of the fourth year and completed in the eighth month of the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, comprising a period of seven and a half years, which is reckoned here in round numbers. It was not a very large, but a very splendid building, requiring great care, and ingenuity, and division of labor. The immense number of workmen employed, together with the previous preparation of the materials, serves to account for the short time occupied in the process of building.

## 40001 KINGS 7:1.

### BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S HOUSE.

**1.** Solomon was building his own house thirteen years — The time occupied in building his palace was nearly double that spent in the erection of the temple (\*\*108\*1 Kings 6:38), because neither had there been the same previous preparations for it, nor was there the same urgency as in providing a place of worship, on which the national well-being so much depended.

40001 KINGS 7:2-7.

### OF THE HOUSE OF LEBANON.

**2.** He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon — It is scarcely possible to determine whether this was a different edifice from the former, or whether his house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the one for Pharaoh's daughter, were not parts of one grand palace. As difficult is it to decide what was the origin of the name; some supposing it was so called because built on Lebanon; others, that it was in or near Jerusalem, but contained such a profuse supply of cedar columns as to have occasioned this peculiar designation. We have a similar peculiarity of name in the building called the East India house, though situated in London. The description is conformable to the arrangement of Eastern palaces. The building stood in the middle of a great oblong square, which was surrounded by an enclosing wall, against which the houses and offices of those attached to the court were built. The building itself was oblong, consisting of two square courts, flanking a large oblong hall which formed the center, and was one hundred cubits long, by fifty broad. This was properly the house of the forest of Lebanon, being the part where were the cedar pillars of this hall. In front was the porch of judgment, which was appropriated to the transaction of public business. On the one side of this great hall was the king's house; and on the other the harem or royal apartments for Pharaoh's daughter (\*\*Esther 2:3,9). This arrangement of the palace accords with the Oriental style of building, according to which a great mansion always consists of three divisions, or separate houses — all connected by doors and passages — the men dwelling at one extremity, the women of the family at the other, while public rooms occupy the central part of the building.

- **10.** the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones Enormous stones, corresponding exactly with the dimensions given, are found in Jerusalem at this day. Not only the walls from the foundation to the roof beams were built of large hewn stones, but the spacious court around the palace was also paved with great square stones.
- **12.** *for the inner court of the house of the Lord* should be, *as in* the inner court of the house of the Lord; the meaning is, that in this palace, as in the temple, rows of hewed stones and the cedar beams formed the enclosing wall.

## **△1073**1 KINGS 7:13-51.

#### HIRAM'S WORKS.

- **13.** Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre The Tyrians and other inhabitants on the Phoenician coast were the most renowned artists and workers in metal in the ancient world.
- **14.** He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali In depth 2 Chronicles 2:14 his mother is said to have been of the daughters of Dan. The apparent discrepancy may be reconciled thus: Hiram's mother, though belonging to the tribe of Dan, had been married to a Naphtalite, so that when married afterwards to a Tyrian, she might be described as a widow of the tribe of Naphtali. Or, if she was a native of the city Daniel (Laish), she might be said to be of the daughters of Dan, as born in that place; and of the tribe of Naphtali, as really belonging to it.

a worker in brass — This refers particularly to the works described in this chapter. But in <sup>4023</sup>2 Chronicles 2:13 his artistic skill is represented as extending to a great variety of departments. In fact, he was appointed, from his great natural talents and acquired skill, to superintend the execution of all the works of art in the temple.

**15-22.** two pillars of brass of eighteen cubits high — They were made of Chronicles 18:8). In 40852 Chronicles 3:15 they are said to have been thirtyfive cubits high. There, however, their joint lengths are given; whereas here the length of the pillars is given separately. Each pillar was seventeen and a half cubits long, which is stated, in round numbers, as eighteen. Their dimensions in American measure are as follows: The pillars without the capitals measured thirty-two and a half feet long, and seven feet diameter; and if hollow, as Whiston, in his translation of Josephus, thinks Jeremiah 52:21), the metal would be about three and a half inches thick; so that the whole casting of one pillar must have been from sixteen to twenty tons. The height of the capitals was eight and three-fourths feet; and, at the same thickness of metal, would not weigh less than seven or eight tons each. The nature of the workmanship in the finishing of these capitals is described ( Kings 7:17-22). The pillars, when set up, would stand forty feet in height [NAPIER, Metal].

**17, 18.** *nets of checker work* — that is, branch-work, resembling the branches of palm trees, and

wreaths of chain-work — that is, plaited in the form of a chain, composing a sort of crown or garland. Seven of these were wound in festoons on one capital, and over and underneath them were fringes, one hundred in a row. Two rows of pomegranates strung on chains (\*\*\*\*2\*\*\*Chronicles 3:16) ran round the capital (\*\*\*\*1\*\*\*Kings 7:42; compare \*\*\*\*\*2\*\*\*Chronicles 4:12,13 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 52:23), which, itself, was of a bowl-like or globular form (\*\*\*\*\*1\*\*\*\*Kings 7:41). These rows were designed to form a binding to the ornamental work — to keep it from falling asunder; and they were so placed as to be above the chain work, and below the place where the branch-work was.

- **19.** *lily work* beautiful ornaments, resembling the stalks, leaves, and blossoms of lilies of large dimensions, as suited to the height of their position.
- **21.** *Jachin and ... Boaz* These names were symbolical, and indicated the strength and stability not so much of the material temple, for they were destroyed along with it (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 52:17), as of the spiritual kingdom of God, which was embodied in the temple.
- 23-26. he made a molten sea In the tabernacle was no such vessel; the laver served the double purpose of washing the hands and feet of the priests as well as the parts of the sacrifices. But in the temple there were separate vessels provided for these offices. (See on Chronicles 4:6). The molten sea was an immense semicircular vase, measuring seventeen and a half feet in diameter, and being eight and three-fourths feet in depth. This, at three and a half inches in thickness, could not weigh less than from twenty-five to thirty tons in one solid casting — and held from sixteen thousand to twenty thousand gallons of water. [See on 4002 Chronicles 4:3.] The brim was all carved with lily work or flowers; and oxen were carved or cut on the outside all round, to the number of three hundred; and it stood on a pedestal of twelve oxen. These oxen must have been of considerable size, like the Assyrian bulls, so that their corresponding legs would give thickness or strength to support so great a weight for, when the vessel was filled with water, the whole weight would be about one hundred tons [NAPIER]. (See on 40092 Chronicles 4:3).
- **27-39.** *he made ten bases of brass* These were trucks or four-wheeled carriages, for the support and conveyance of the lavers. The description of their structure shows that they were elegantly fitted up and skilfully adapted to their purpose. They stood, not on the axles, but on four rests attached to the axles, so that the figured sides were considerably raised above the wheels. They were all exactly alike in form and size. The lavers which were borne upon them were vessels capable each of holding three hundred gallons of water, upwards of a ton weight. The whole, when full of water, would be no less than two tons [NAPIER].
- **40-45.** *And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins* These verses contain a general enumeration of Hiram's works, as well as those already mentioned as other minor things. The Tyrian artists are

frequently mentioned by ancient authors as skillful artificers in fashioning and embossing metal cups and bowls; and we need not wonder, therefore, to find them employed by Solomon in making the golden and brazen utensils for his temple and palaces.

**46.** *In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them* — Zarthan, or Zaretan ( Toshua 3:16), or Zartanah ( Kings 4:12), or Zeredathah ( 2 Chronicles 4:17), was on the bank of the Jordan in the territories of western Manasseh. Succoth was situated on the eastern side of Jordan, at the ford of the river near the mouth of the Jabbok. One reason assigned by commentators for the castings being made there is, that at such a distance from Jerusalem that city would not be annoyed by the smoke and noxious vapors necessarily occasioned by the process. [Note in *Bagster's Bible*.] But the true reason is to be found in the nature of the soil; Margin, "the thickness of the ground." That part of the Jordan valley abounds with marl. Clay and sand are the moulding material still used for bronze. Such large quantities of metal as one of these castings would contain could not be fused in one furnace, but would require a series of furnaces, especially for such a casting as the brazen sea — the whole series of furnaces being filled with metal, and fused at one time, and all tapped together, and the metal let run into the mould. Thus a national foundry was erected in the plain of Jordan [NAPIER].

**48.** *the altar of gold* — that is, the altar of incense.

**49.** *candlesticks of pure gold* — made, probably, according to the model of that in the tabernacle, which, along with the other articles of furniture, were deposited with due honor, as sacred relics, in the temple. But these seem not to have been used in the temple service; for Solomon made new lavers tables, and candlesticks, ten of each. (See further regarding the dimensions and furniture of the temple, in <sup>4411</sup>2 Chronicles 3:1-5:14).

**□NO** KINGS 8:1-12.

### THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

**2-6.** at the feast in the month Ethanim — The public and formal inauguration of this national place of worship did not take place till eleven months after the completion of the edifice. The delay, most probably, originated in Solomon's wish to choose the most fitting opportunity when there should be a general rendezvous of the people in Jerusalem; and that was not till the next year. That was a jubilee year, and he resolved on commencing the solemn ceremonial a few days before the feast of tabernacles, which was the most appropriate of all seasons. That annual festival had been instituted in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths during their stay in the wilderness, as well as of the tabernacle, which was then erected, in which God promised to meet and dwell with His people, sanctifying it with His glory. As the tabernacle was to be superseded by the temple, there was admirable propriety in choosing the feast of tabernacles as the period for dedicating the new place of worship, and praying that the same distinguished privileges might be continued to it in the manifestation of the divine presence and glory. At the time appointed for the inauguration, the king issued orders for all the heads and representatives of the nation to repair to Jerusalem and take part in the august procession [ Kings 8:1]. The lead was taken by the king and elders of the people, whose march must have been slow, as priests were stationed to offer an immense number of sacrifices at various points in the line of road through which the procession was to go. Then came the priests bearing the ark and the tabernacle — the old Mosaic tabernacle which was brought from Gibeon. Lastly, the Levites followed, carrying the vessels and ornaments belonging to the old, for lodgment in the new, house of the Lord. There was a slight deviation in this procedure from the order of march established in the wilderness (\*\*Numbers 3:31 \*\*4:15); but the spirit of the arrangement was duly observed. The ark was deposited in the

oracle; that is, the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim — not the Mosaic cherubim, which were firmly attached to the ark (Exodus 37:7,8), but those made by Solomon, which were far larger and more expanded.

- **8.** they drew out the staves a little way, so as to project (see on Exodus 25:15 and Numbers 4:6); and they were left in that position. The object was, that these projecting staves might serve as a guide to the high priest, in conducting him to that place where, once a year, he went to officiate before the ark; otherwise he might miss his way in the dark, the ark being wholly overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim.
- **9.** There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone Nothing else was ever in the ark, the articles mentioned (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 9:4) being not in, but by it, being laid in the most holy place before the testimony (\*\*\*\*Exodus 16:33 \*\*\*\*\*Numbers 17:10).
- 10, 11. the cloud filled the house of the Lord The cloud was the visible symbol of the divine presence, and its occupation of the sanctuary was a testimony of God's gracious acceptance of the temple as of the tabernacle (\*\*Exodus 40:34). The dazzling brightness, or rather, perhaps, the dense portentous darkness of the cloud, struck the minds of the priests, as it formerly had done Moses, which such astonishment and terror (\*\*Exodus 16:2-13 \*\*Deuteronomy 4:24 \*\*Exodus 40:35) that they could not remain. Thus the temple became the place where the divine glory was revealed, and the king of Israel established his royal residence.

410021 KINGS 8:12-21.

#### SOLOMON'S BLESSING.

**12.** *Then spake Solomon* — For the reassurance of the priests and people, the king reminded them that the cloud, instead of being a sign ominous of evil, was a token of approval.

**The Lord said** — not in express terms, but by a continuous course of action (\*\*Exodus 13:21 \*\*24:16 \*\*Numbers 9:15).

- **13.** *I have surely built thee an house* This is an apostrophe to God, as perceiving His approach by the cloud, and welcoming Him to enter as guest or inhabitant of the fixed and permanent dwelling-place, which, at His command, had been prepared for His reception.
- **14.** *the king turned his face about* From the temple, where he had been watching the movement of the mystic cloud, and while the people were standing, partly as the attitude of devotion, partly out of respect to royalty, the king gave a fervent expression of praise to God for the fulfillment of His promise (\*\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 7:6-16).

4002 KINGS 8:22-61.

#### HIS PRAYER.

22. Solomon stood before the altar — This position was in the court of the people, on a brazen scaffold erected for the occasion (4002) Chronicles 6:13), fronting the altar of burnt offering, and surrounded by a mighty concourse of people. Assuming the attitude of a suppliant, kneeling ( Kings 8:54; compare Chronicles 6:24) and with uplifted hands, he performed the solemn act of consecration — an act remarkable, among other circumstances, for this, that it was done, not by the high priest or any member of the Aaronic family, but by the king in person, who might minister about, though not in, holy things. This sublime prayer [ Kings 8:22-35], which breathes sentiments of the loftiest piety blended with the deepest humility, naturally bore a reference to the national blessing and curse contained in the law — and the burden of it — after an ascription of praise to the Lord for the bestowment of the former, was an earnest supplication for deliverance from the latter. He specifies seven cases in which the merciful interposition of God would be required; and he earnestly bespeaks it on the condition of people praying towards that holy place. The blessing addressed to the people at the close is substantially a brief recapitulation of the preceding prayer [ Kings 8:56-61].

## 400021 KINGS 8:62-64.

### HIS SACRIFICE OF PEACE OFFERING.

- 62. the king, and all Israel ... offered sacrifice before the Lord This was a burnt offering with its accompaniments, and being the first laid on the altar of the temple, was, as in the analogous case of the tabernacle, consumed by miraculous fire from heaven (see Chronicles 7:1). On remarkable occasions, the heathens sacrificed hecatombs (a hundred animals), and even chiliombs (a thousand animals), but the public sacrifices offered by Solomon on this occasion surpassed all the other oblations on record, without taking into account those presented by private individuals, which, doubtless, amounted to a large additional number. The large proportion of the sacrifices were peace offerings, which afforded the people an opportunity of festive enjoyment.
- **63.** So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord The dedication was not a ceremony ordained by the law, but it was done in accordance with the sentiments of reverence naturally associated with edifices appropriated to divine worship. [See on Chronicles 7:5.]
- **64.** The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that is, the whole extent of the priests' court the altar of burnt offerings, though large (\*\*10.2 Chronicles 4:1), being totally inadequate for the vast number of sacrifices that distinguished this occasion. It was only a temporary erection to meet the demands of an extraordinary season, in aid of the established altar, and removed at the conclusion of the sacred festival. [See on \*\*10.2 Chronicles 7:7.]

**△INS**1 KINGS 8:65.

### THE PEOPLE JOYFUL.

**65.** *from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt* — that is, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The people flocked from all quarters.

seven days and seven days, even fourteen days — The first seven were occupied with the dedication, and the other seven devoted to the feast of tabernacles (\*\*\*\*C2\*\*Chronicles 7:9). The particular form of expression indicates that the fourteen days were not continuous. Some interval occurred in consequence of the great day of atonement falling on the tenth of the seventh month (\*\*\*\*I\*\* Kings 8:2), and the last day of the feast of tabernacles was on the twenty-third (\*\*\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 7:10), when the people returned to their homes with feelings of the greatest joy and gratitude "for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people."

## <sup>41906</sup>1 KINGS 9:1-9.

### GOD'S COVENANT IN A SECOND VISION WITH SOLOMON.

- **1.** And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house This first verse is connected with \*\* 18 Kings 9:11, all that is contained between \*\* 18 Kings 9:2-10 being parenthetical.
- 2. That rather, "For."
- the Lord appeared This appearance was, like the former one at Gibeon, most probably made in a supernatural vision, and on the night immediately following the dedication of the temple (\*\*\*\*\* 2 Chronicles 7:12). The strain of it corresponds to this view, for it consists of direct answers to his solemn inaugural prayer (\*\*\*\*\* 1 Kings 9:3 is in answer to \*\*\*\*\* 1 Kings 8:29 \*\*\*\*\*\* 9:4,5 is in answer to \*\*\*\*\* 1 Kings 8:25,26 \*\*\*\*\*\* 9:6-9 to \*\*\*\*\* 1 Kings 8:33-46; see also \*\*\*\*\*\* Deuteronomy 29:22-24).
- 8, 9. this house, which is high "high," either in point of situation, for it was built on a hill, and therefore conspicuous to every beholder; or "high" in respect to privilege, honor, and renown; or this "house of the Most High," notwithstanding all its beauty and magnificence, shall be destroyed, and remain in such a state of ruin and degradation as to be a striking monument of the just judgment of God. The record of this second vision, in which were rehearsed the conditions of God's covenant with Solomon and the consequences of breaking them, is inserted here as a proper introduction to the narrative about to be given of this king's commercial enterprises and ambitious desire for worldly glory; for this king, by encouraging an influx of foreign people and a taste for foreign luxuries, rapidly corrupted his own mind and that of this subjects, so that they turned from following God, they and their children (\*\*ING\*1 Kings 9:6).

## 419101 KINGS 9:10-23.

### THE MUTUAL PRESENTS OF SOLOMON AND HIRAM.

**10.** at the end of twenty years — Seven and a half years were spent in building the temple, and twelve and a half or thirteen in the erection of his palace (\*\*1001)1 Kings 7:1 \*\*40012 Chronicles 8:1). This verse is only a recapitulation of \*\*40011 Kings 9:1, necessary to recover the thread of connection in the narrative.

11. Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee — According to JOSEPHUS, they were situated on the northwest of it, adjacent to Tyre. Though lying within the boundaries of the promised land ( Genesis 15:18 and were inhabited by Canaanite heathens ( Judges 4:2-13 Kings 15:29). They were probably given to Hiram, whose dominions were small, as a remuneration for his important services in furnishing workmen, materials, and an immense quantity of wrought gold (41044) Kings 9:14) for the temple and other buildings [MICHAELIS]. The gold, however, as others think, may have been the amount of forfeits paid to Solomon by Hiram for not being able to answer the riddles and apothegms, with which, according to JOSEPHUS, in their private correspondence, the two sovereigns amused themselves. Hiram having refused these cities, probably on account of their inland situation making them unsuitable to his maritime and commercial people, Solomon satisfied his ally in some other way; and, taking these cities into his own hands, he first repaired their shattered walls, then filled them with a colony of Hebrews ( Chronicles 8:2).

**15-24.** *this is the reason of the levy* — A levy refers both to men and money, and the necessity for Solomon making it arose from the many gigantic works he undertook to erect.

Millo — part of the fort of Jerusalem on Mount Zion (\*\*\*2 Samuel 5:9 Chronicles 11:8), or a row of stone bastions around Mount Zion, Millo being the great corner tower of that fortified wall (\*\*\*1127\*\*1 Kings 11:27\*\*2 Chronicles 32:5).

*the wall of Jerusalem* — either repairing some breaches in it (\*\*\*1 Kings 11:27), or extending it so as to enclose Mount Zion.

*Hazor* — fortified on account of its importance as a town in the northern boundary of the country.

**Megiddo** — (now Leijun) — Lying in the great caravan road between Egypt and Damascus, it was the key to the north of Palestine by the western lowlands, and therefore fortified.

*Gezer* — on the western confines of Ephraim, and, though a Levitical city, occupied by the Canaanites. Having fallen by right of conquest to the king of Egypt, who for some cause attacked it, it was given by him as a dowry to his daughter, and fortified by Solomon.

**17.** *Beth-horon the nether* — situated on the way from Joppa to Jerusalem and Gibeon; it required, from so public a road, to be strongly garrisoned.

**18.** *Baalath* — Baal-bek.

**Tadmor** — Palmyra, between Damascus and the Euphrates, was rebuilt and fortified as a security against invasion from northern Asia. In accomplishing these and various other works which were carried on throughout the kingdom, especially in the north, where Rezon of Damascus, his enemy, might prove dangerous, he employed vast numbers of the Canaanites as galley slaves (\*\*\*P\$2 Chronicles 2:18), treating them as prisoners of war, who were compelled to do the drudgery and hard labor, while the Israelites were only engaged in honorable employment.

23. These were the chief of the officers — (See on 44802 Chronicles 8:10).

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### SOLOMON'S YEARLY SACRIFICES.

**24, 25.** *three times in a year* — namely, at the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles (4000) Chronicles 8:13 31:3). The circumstances mentioned in these two verses form a proper conclusion to the record of

his buildings and show that his design in erecting those at Jerusalem was to remedy defects existing at the commencement of his reign (see Times 3:1-4).

**26.** *Ezion-geber*, *which is beside Eloth* — These were neighboring ports at the head of the eastern or Elanitic branch of the Red Sea. Tyrian ship carpenters and sailors were sent there for Solomon's vessels (see on Chronicles 8:17,18).

**Ezion-geber** — that is, "the giant's backbone"; so called from a reef of rocks at the entrance of the harbor.

**Eloth** — Elim or Elath; that is, "the trees"; a grove of terebinths still exists at the head of the gulf.

**28.** *Ophir* — a general name, like the East or West Indies with us, for all the southern regions lying on the African, Arabian, or Indian seas, in so far as at that time known [HEEREN].

**gold**, four hundred and twenty talents — (See on 4082 Chronicles 8:18). At one hundred twenty-five pounds Troy, or fifteen hundred ounces to the talent, and about 4 to the ounce, this would make 2,604,000, or about \$12,350,000.

## **□IDE** | KINGS 10:1-13.

# THE QUEEN OF SHEBA ADMIRES THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

**1.** *the queen of Sheba* — Some think her country was the Sabean kingdom of Yemen, of which the capital was Saba, in Arabia-Felix; others, that it was in African Ethiopia, that is, Abyssinia, towards the south of the Red Sea. The opinions preponderate in favor of the former. This view harmonizes with the language of our Lord, as Yemen means "South"; and this country, extending to the shores of the Indian ocean, might in ancient times be considered "the uttermost parts of the earth."

*heard of the fame of Solomon* — doubtless by the Ophir fleet.

*concerning the name of the Lord* — meaning either his great knowledge of God, or the extraordinary things which God had done for him.

*hard questions* — enigmas or riddles. The Orientals delight in this species of intellectual exercise and test wisdom by the power and readiness to solve them.

- **2.** she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels A long train of those beasts of burden forms the common way of travelling in Arabia; and the presents specified consist of the native produce of that country. Of course, a royal equipage would be larger and more imposing than an ordinary caravan.
- **6.** It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom The proofs she obtained of Solomon's wisdom not from his conversation only, but also from his works; the splendor of his palace; the economy of his kitchen and table; the order of his court; the gradations and gorgeous costume of his servants; above all, the arched viaduct that led from his palace to the temple (\*\*DSS\*\*2 Kings 16:18), and the remains of which

have been recently discovered [ROBINSON] — overwhelmed her with astonishment. [See on 4992 Chronicles 9:4.]

- **9.** Blessed be the Lord thy God (See on Strings 5:7). It is quite possible, as Jewish writers say, that this queen was converted, through Solomon's influence, to the worship of the true God. But there is no record of her making any gift or offering in the temple.
- **10.** *she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold* about \$3,500,000.
- **11.** *almug trees* Parenthetically, along with the valuable presents of the queen of Sheba, is mentioned a foreign wood, which was brought in the Ophir ships. It is thought by some to be the sandalwood; by others, to be the deodar a species of fragrant fir, much used in India for sacred and important works. Solomon used it for stairs in his temple and palace (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 9:11), but chiefly for musical instruments.
- **13.** King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that is, Solomon not only gave his illustrious guest all the insight and information she wanted; but, according to the Oriental fashion, he gave her ample remuneration for the presents she had brought.

411041 KINGS 10:14-29.

#### HIS RICHES.

14, 15. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year — six hundred sixty-six talents, equal to about \$20,000,000. The sources whence this was derived are not mentioned; nor was it the full amount of his revenue; for this was "Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country." The great encouragement he gave to commerce was the means of enriching his royal treasury. By the fortifications which he erected in various parts of his kingdom, (particularly at such places as Thapsacus, one of the passages of Euphrates, and at Tadmot, in the Syrian desert), he gave complete security to the caravan trade from the

depredations of the Arab marauders; and it was reasonable that, in return for this protection, he should exact a certain toll or duty for the importation of foreign goods. A considerable revenue, too, would arise from the use of the store cities and khans he built; and it is not improbable that those cities were emporia, where the caravan merchants unloaded their bales of spices and other commodities and sold them to the king's factors, who, according to the modern practice in the East, retailed them in the Western markets at a profit. "The revenue derived from the tributary kings and from the governors of the country" must have consisted in the tribute which all inferior magistrates periodically bring to their sovereigns in the East, in the shape of presents of the produce of their respective provinces.

- **16, 17.** *two hundred targets, six hundred shekels* These defensive arms were anciently made of wood and covered with leather; those were covered with fine gold. \$6,000 worth of gold was used in the gilding of each target \$1800 for each shield. They were intended for the state armory of the palace (see Tkings 14:26).
- **18-26.** *a great throne of ivory* It seems to have been made not of solid ivory, but veneered. It was in the form of an armchair, with a carved back. The ascent to it was by six steps, on each of which stood lions, in place of a railing while a lion, probably of gilt metal, stood at each side, which, we may suppose from the analogy of other Oriental thrones, supported a canopy. A golden footstool is mentioned (400%2 Chronicles 9:18) as attached to this throne, whose magnificence is described as unrivalled.
- **22.** *a navy of Tharshish* Tartessus in Spain. There gold, and especially silver, was obtained, anciently, in so great abundance that it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. But "Tarshish" came to be a general term for the West (\*\*Torshish\*\*).

at sea — on the Mediterranean.

once in three years — that is, every third year. Without the mariner's compass they had to coast along the shore. The ivory, apes, and peacocks might have been purchased, on the outward or homeward voyage, on the north coast of Africa, where the animals were to be found. They were particularized, probably as being the rarest articles on board.

**26-29.** — (See on Chronicles 1:14 [and Chronicles 9:25].)

## **□□□□**1 KINGS 11:1-8.

#### SOLOMON'S WIVES AND CONCUBINES IN HIS OLD AGE.

**1, 2.** But King Solomon loved many strange women — Solomon's extraordinary gift of wisdom was not sufficient to preserve him from falling into grievous and fatal errors. A fairer promise of true greatness, a more beautiful picture of juvenile piety, never was seen than that which he exhibited at the commencement of his reign. No sadder, more humiliating, or awful spectacle can be imagined than the besotted apostasy of his old age; and to him may be applied the words of Paul (\*\*\*Galatians 3:3), of John (Revelation 3:17), and of Isaiah (Seislan 14:21). A love of the world, a ceaseless round of pleasure, had insensibly corrupted his heart, and produced, for a while at least, a state of mental darkness. The grace of God deserted him; and the son of the pious David — the religiously trained child of Bath-sheba ( Proverbs 31:1-3), and pupil of Nathan, instead of showing the stability of sound principle and mature experience became at last an old and foolish king ( Ecclesiastes 4:13). His fall is traced to his "love of many strange women." Polygamy was tolerated among the ancient Hebrews; and, although in most countries of the East, the generality of men, from convenience and economy, confine themselves to one woman, yet a number of wives is reckoned as an indication of wealth and importance, just as a numerous stud of horses and a grand equipage are among us. The sovereign, of course, wishes to have a more numerous harem than any of his subjects; and the female establishments of many Oriental princes have, both in ancient and modern times, equalled or exceeded that of Solomon's. It is probable, therefore, that, in conformity with Oriental notions, he resorted to it as a piece of state magnificence. But in him it was unpardonable, as it was a direct and outrageous violation of the divine law (\*\*Deuteronomy 17:17), and the very result which that statute was ordained to prevent was realized in him. His marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh is not censured either here or elsewhere (see on

Kings 3:1). It was only his love for many strange women; for women, though in the East considered inferiors, exert often a silent but powerful seductive influence over their husbands in the harem, as elsewhere, and so it was exemplified in Solomon.

**3.** he had seven hundred wives, princesses — They were, probably, according to an existing custom, the daughters of tributary chiefs, given as hostages for good conduct of their fathers.

**concubines** — were legitimate, but lower or secondary wives. These the chief or first wife regards without the smallest jealousy or regret, as they look up to her with feelings of respectful submission. Solomon's wives became numerous, not all at once, but gradually. Even at an early period his taste for Oriental show seems to have led to the establishment of a considerable harem (\*2008\*Song of Solomon 6:8).

**4.** when Solomon was old — He could not have been more than fifty.

his wives turned away his heart after other gods — Some, considering the lapse of Solomon into idolatry as a thing incredible, regard him as merely humoring his wives in the practice of their superstition; and, in countenancing their respective rites by his presence, as giving only an outward homage — a sensible worship, in which neither his understanding nor his heart was engaged. The apology only makes matters worse, as it implies an adding of hypocrisy and contempt of God to an open breach of His law. There seems no possibility of explaining the language of the sacred historian, but as intimating that Solomon became an actual and open idolater, worshipping images of wood or stone in sight of the very temple which, in early life, he had erected to the true God. Hence that part of Olivet was called the high place of Tophet (\*\*TOT\*\*Jeremiah 7:30-34\*), and the hill is still known as the Mount of Offense, of the Mount of Corruption (\*\*\*ZET\*\*ZET\*\*Lings\*\* 23:13\*).

**5-7.** *Ashtoreth* — Astarte,

*Milcom* — Molech,

and Chemosh — He built altars for these three; but, although he is described (\*\*\* Kings 11:8) as doing the same for "all his strange wives,"

there is no evidence that they had idols distinct from these; and there is no trace whatever of Egyptian idolatry.

**8.** burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods — The first was considered a higher act of homage, and is often used as synonymous with worship (\*\*\* Kings 22:17 \*\*\* 23:5).

## **□III9-13.**

## GOD THREATENS HIM.

- 9-12. the Lord was angry with Solomon The divine appearance, first at Gibeon [4105] Kings 3:5], and then at Jerusalem [4105] Kings 9:2], after the dedication of the temple, with the warnings given him on both occasions [4105] Kings 3:11-14 4105]9:3-9], had left Solomon inexcusable; and it was proper and necessary that on one who had been so signally favored with the gifts of Heaven, but who had grossly abused them, a terrible judgment should fall. The divine sentence was announced to him probably by Ahijah; but there was mercy mingled with judgment, in the circumstance, that it should not be inflicted on Solomon personally. and that a remnant of the kingdom should be spared "for David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which had been chosen" to put God's name there; not from a partial bias in favor of either, but that the divine promise might stand (4002) Samuel 7:12-16).
- **13.** *I will give one tribe to thy son* There were left to Rehoboam the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi (Garantine Chronicles 11:12,13); and multitudes of Israelites, who, after the schism of the kingdom, established their residence within the territory of Judah to enjoy the privileges of the true religion (Garantine Chronicles 12:17). These are all reckoned as one tribe.

## 411141 KINGS 11:14-40.

### SOLOMON'S ADVERSARIES.

**14-25.** *the Lord stirred up an adversary* — that is, permitted him, through the impulse of his own ambition, or revenge, to attack Israel. During the war of extermination, which Joab carried on in Edom ( Samuel 8:13), this Hadad, of the royal family, a mere boy when rescued from the sword of the ruthless conqueror, was carried into Egypt, hospitably entertained, and became allied with the house of the Egyptian king. In after years, the thought of his native land and his lost kingdom taking possession of his mind, he, on learning the death of David and Joab, renounced the ease, possessions, and glory of his Egyptian residence, to return to Edom and attempt the recovery of his ancestral throne. The movements of this prince seem to have given much annoyance to the Hebrew government; but as he was defeated by the numerous and strong garrisons planted throughout the Edomite territory, Hadad seems to have offered his services to Rezon, another of Solomon's adversaries (411221 Kings 11:23-25). This man, who had been general of Hadadezer and, on the defeat of that great king, had successfully withdrawn a large force, went into the wilderness, led a predatory life, like Jephthah, David, and others, on the borders of the Syrian and Arabian deserts. Then, having acquired great power, he at length became king in Damascus, threw off the yoke, and was "the adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon." He was succeeded by Hadad, whose successors took the official title of Ben-hadad from him, the illustrious founder of the powerful kingdom of Damascene-Syria. These hostile neighbors, who had been long kept in check by the traditional fame of David's victories, took courage; and breaking out towards the latter end of Solomon's reign, they must have not only disturbed his kingdom by their inroads, but greatly crippled his revenue by stopping his lucrative traffic with Tadmor and the Euphrates.

**26-40.** *Jeroboam* — This was an internal enemy of a still more formidable character. He was a young man of talent and energy, who, having been appointed by Solomon superintendent of the engineering works projected around Jerusalem, had risen into public notice, and on being informed by a

very significant act of the prophet Ahijah of the royal destiny which, by divine appointment, awaited him, his mind took a new turn.

**29.** *clad* — rather, "wrapped up." The meaning is, "Ahijah, the Shilonite, the prophet, went and took a fit station *in the way;* and, in order that he might not be known, *he wrapped himself up,* so as closely to conceal himself, in *a new garment,* a *surtout,* which he afterwards tore in twelve pieces." Notwithstanding this privacy, the story, and the prediction connected with it [4010] Kings 11:30-39], probably reached the king's ears; and Jeroboam became a marked man [4010] Kings 11:40]. His aspiring ambition, impatient for the death of Solomon, led him to form plots and conspiracies, in consequence of which he was compelled to flee to Egypt. Though chosen of God, he would not wait the course of God's providence, and therefore incurred the penalty of death by his criminal rebellion. The heavy exactions and compulsory labor (40108) Kings 11:28) which Solomon latterly imposed upon his subjects, when his foreign resources began to fail, had prepared the greater part of the kingdom for a revolt under so popular a demagogue as Jeroboam.

**40.** *Shishak* — He harbored and encouraged the rebellious refugee, and was of a different dynasty from the father-in-law of Solomon.

## **□ID** KINGS 12:1-5.

#### REFUSING THE OLD MEN'S COUNSEL.

1. Rehoboam went to Shechem — He was the oldest, and perhaps the only son of Solomon, and had been, doubtless, designated by his father heir to the throne, as Solomon had been by David. The incident here related took place after the funeral obsequies of the late king and the period for public mourning had past. When all Israel came to make him king, it was not to exercise their old right of election (\*\*\* Samuel 10:19-21), for, after God's promise of the perpetual sovereignty to David's posterity, their duty was submission to the authority of the rightful heir; but their object was, when making him king, to renew the conditions and stipulations to which their constitutional kings were subject (\*\*\*\* Samuel 10:25). To the omission of such rehearsing which, under the peculiar circumstances in which Solomon was made king, they were disposed to ascribe the absolutism of his government.

**Shechem** — This ancient, venerable, and central town was the place of convocation; and it is evident, if not from the appointment of that place, at least from the tenor of their language, and the concerted presence of Jeroboam [41178] Kings 12:3], that the people were determined on revolt.

**4.** Thy father made our yoke grievous — The splendor of Solomon's court and the magnitude of his undertakings being such, that neither the tribute of dependent states, nor the presents of foreign princes, nor the profits of his commercial enterprises, were adequate to carry them on, he had been obliged, for obtaining the necessary revenue, to begin a system of heavy taxation. The people looked only to the burdens, not to the benefits they derived from Solomon's peaceful and prosperous reign — and the evils from which they demanded deliverance were civil oppressions, not idolatry, to which they appear to have been indifferent or approving.

**5-8.** *he said* ... *Depart yet for three days* — It was prudent to take the people's demand into calm and deliberate consideration. Whether, had the advice of the sage and experienced counsellors been followed, any good result would have followed, it is impossible to say. It would at least have removed all pretext for the separation. [See on Chronicles 10:7.] But he preferred the counsel of his young companions (not in age, for they were all about forty-one, but inexperienced), who recommended prompt and decisive measures to quell the malcontents.

**11.** *whips* ... *scorpions* — The latter [instruments], as contrasted with the former, are supposed to mean though thickly set with sharp iron points, used in the castigation of slaves.

15-18. the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the Lord — That was the overruling cause. Rehoboam's weakness Ecclesiastes 2:18,19) and inexperience in public affairs has given rise to the probable conjecture, that, like many other princes in the East, he had been kept secluded in the harem till the period of his accession Ecclesiastes 4:14), his father being either afraid of his aspiring to the sovereignty, like the two sons of David, or, which is more probable, afraid of prematurely exposing his imbecility. The king's haughty and violent answer to a people already filled with a spirit of discontent and exasperation, indicated so great an incapacity to appreciate the gravity of the crisis, so utter a want of common sense, as to create a belief that he was struck with judicial blindness. It was received with mingled scorn and derision. The revolt was accomplished, and yet so quietly, that Rehoboam remained in Shechem, fancying himself the sovereign of a united kingdom, until his chief tax gatherer, who had been most imprudently sent to treat with the people, had been stoned to death. This opened his eyes, and he fled for security to Jerusalem.

**□ KINGS** 12:20-33.

#### JEROBOAM MADE KING OVER THEM.

**20-24.** when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again — This verse closes the parenthetical narrative begun at 411221 Kings 12:2, and 411221

Kings 12:21-24 resume the history from determined to assert his authority by leading a large force into the disaffected provinces. But the revolt of the ten tribes was completed when the prophet Shemaiah ordered, in the Lord's name, an abandonment of any hostile measures against the revolutionists. The army, overawed by the divine prohibition, dispersed, and the king was obliged to submit.

**25.** *Jeroboam built Shechem* — destroyed by Abimelech ( <sup>dual</sup> Judges 9:1-49). It was rebuilt, and perhaps fortified, by Jeroboam, as a royal residence.

**built Penuel** — a ruined city with a tower (\*\*TUDGES 8:9), east of Jordan, on the north bank of the Jabbok. It was an object of importance to restore this fortress (as it lay on the caravan road from Gilead to Damascus and Palmyra) and to secure his frontier on that quarter.

26-32. Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the **house of David** — Having received the kingdom from God, he should have relied on the divine protection. But he did not. With a view to withdraw the people from the temple and destroy the sacred associations connected with Jerusalem, he made serious and unwarranted innovations on the religious observances of the country, on pretext of saving the people the trouble and expense of a distant journey. First, he erected two golden calves — the young bulls, Apis and Mnevis, as symbols (in the Egyptian fashion) of the true God, and the nearest, according to his fancy, to the figures of the cherubim. The one was placed at Dan, in the northern part of his kingdom; the other at Beth-el, the southern extremity, in sight of Jerusalem, and in which place he probably thought God was as likely to manifest Himself as at Jerusalem ( Genesis 32:1-32 Kings 2:2). The latter place was the most frequented — for the words (4123) Kings 12:30) should be rendered, "the people even to Daniel went to worship before the innovation was a sin because it was setting up the worship of God by symbols and images and departing from the place where He had chosen to put His name. Secondly, he changed the feast of tabernacles from the fifteenth of the seventh to the fifteenth of the eighth month. The ostensible reason might be, that the ingathering or harvest was later in the

northern parts of the kingdom; but the real reason was to eradicate the old association with this, the most welcome and joyous festival of the year.

**31.** *made priests of the lowest of the people* — literally, "out of all the people," the Levites refusing to act. He himself assumed to himself the functions of the high priest, at least, at the great festival, probably from seeing the king of Egypt conjoin the royal and sacred offices, and deeming the office of the high priest too great to be vested in a subject.

## **□IDIO** KINGS 13:1-22.

#### JEROBOAM'S HAND WITHERS.

**1.** *there came a man of God out of Judah* — Who this prophet was cannot be ascertained, He came by divine authority. It could not be either Iddo or Ahijah, for both were alive after the events here related.

**2-9.** *he cried against the altar* — which is put for the whole system of worship organized in Israel.

**Behold, a child shall be born ... Josiah by name** — This is one of the most remarkable prophecies recorded in the Scriptures; and, in its clearness, circumstantial minuteness, and exact prediction of an event that took place three hundred sixty years later, it stands in striking contrast to the obscure and ambiguous oracles of the heathen. Being publicly uttered, it must have been well known to the people; and every Jew who lived at the accomplishment of the event must have been convinced of the truth of a religion connected with such a prophecy as this. A present sign was given of the remote event predicted, in a visible fissure being miraculously made on the altar. Incensed at the man's license of speech, Jeroboam stretched out his hand and ordered his attendants to seize the bold intruder. That moment the king's arm became stiff and motionless, and the altar split asunder, so that the fire and ashes fell on the floor. Overawed by the effects of his impiety, Jeroboam besought the prophet's prayer. His request was acceded to, and the hand was restored to its healthy state. Jeroboam was artful, and invited the prophet to the royal table, not to do him honor or show his gratitude for the restoration of his hand, but to win,

by his courtesy and liberal hospitality, a person whom he could not crush by his power. But the prophet informed him of a divine injunction expressly prohibiting him from all social intercourse with any in the place, as well as from returning the same way. The prohibition not to eat or drink in Beth-el was because all the people had become apostates from the true religion, and the reason he was not allowed to return the same way was lest he should be recognized by any whom he had seen in going.

**11.** *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el* — If this were a true prophet, he was a bad man.

**18.** an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord — This circuitous mode of speaking, instead of simply saying, "the LORD spake to me," was adopted to hide an equivocation, to conceal a double meaning — an inferior sense given to the word "angel" — to offer a seemingly superior authority to persuade the prophet, while really the authority was secretly known to the speaker to be inferior. The "angel," that is, "messenger," was his own sons, who were worshippers, perhaps priests, at Beth-el. As this man was governed by self-interest, and wished to curry favor with the king (whose purpose to adhere to his religious polity, he feared, might be shaken by the portents that had occurred), his hastening after the prophet of Judah, the deception he practiced, and the urgent invitation by which, on the ground of a falsehood, he prevailed on the too facile man of God to accompany him back to his house in Beth-el, were to create an impression in the king's mind that he was an impostor, who acted in opposition to his own statement.

**21.** he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah — rather, "it cried," that is, the word of the Lord.

41123-1 KINGS 13:23-32.

#### THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET SLAIN BY A LION.

**24.** *a lion met him by the way, and slew him* — There was a wood near Beth-el infested with lions (\*\*\* Kings 2:24). This sad catastrophe was a severe but necessary judgment of God, to attest the truth of the message

with which the prophet had been charged. All the circumstances of this tragic occurrence (the undevoured carcass, the untouched ass, the passengers unmolested by the lion, though standing there) were calculated to produce an irresistible impression that the hand of God was in it.

**31.** bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried — His motive in making this request was either that his remains might not be disturbed when the predicted events took place (see Kings 23:18), or he had some superstitious hope of being benefited at the resurrection by being in the same cave with a man of God.

## AHIJAH DENOUNCES GOD'S JUDGMENTS AGAINST JEROBOAM.

- **1.** At that time a phrase used often loosely and indefinitely in sacred history. This domestic incident in the family of Jeroboam probably occurred towards the end of his reign; his son Abijah was of age and considered by the people the heir to the throne.
- 2. Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself—His natural and intense anxiety as a parent is here seen, blended with the deep and artful policy of an apostate king. The reason of this extreme caution was an unwillingness to acknowledge that he looked for information as to the future, not to his idols, but to the true God; and a fear that this step, if publicly known, might endanger the stability of his whole political system; and a strong impression that Ahijah, who was greatly offended with him, would, if consulted openly by his queen, either insult or refuse to receive her. For these reasons he selected his wife, as, in every view, the most proper for such a secret and confidential errand, but recommended her to assume the garb and manner of a peasant woman. Strange infatuation, to suppose that the God who could reveal futurity could not penetrate a flimsy disguise!
- **3-11.** And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him This was a present in unison with the peasant character she assumed. Cracknels are a kind of sweet seed-cake. The prophet was blind, but having received divine premonition of the pretended countrywoman's coming, he addressed her as the queen the moment she appeared, apprised her of the calamities which, in consequence of the ingratitude of Jeroboam, his apostasy, and outrageous misgovernment of Israel, impended over their house, as well as over the nation which too readily followed his idolatrous innovations.

- **8.** thou hast not been as my servant David David, though he fell into grievous sins, repented and always maintained the pure worship of God as enjoined by the law.
- **10, 11.** *I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam* Strong expressions are here used to indicate the utter extirpation of his house;

him that is shut up and left in Israel — means those who were concealed with the greatest privacy, as the heirs of royalty often are where polygamy prevails; the other phrase, from the loose garments of the East having led to a different practice from what prevails in the West, cannot refer to men; it must signify either a very young boy, or rather, perhaps, a dog, so entire would be the destruction of Jeroboam's house that none, not even a dog, belonging to it should escape. This peculiar phrase occurs only in regard to the threatened extermination of a family (1982) Samuel 25:22-34). See the manner of extermination (1984) Kings 16:4 21:24).

- **12.** *the child shall die* The death and general lamentation felt through the country at the loss of the prince were also predicted. The reason for the profound regret shown at his death arose, according to Jewish writers, from his being decidedly opposed to the erection of the golden calves, and using his influence with his father to allow his subjects the free privilege of going to worship in Jerusalem.
- **13.** *all Israel shall mourn for him*, *and bury him* the only one of Jeroboam's family who should receive the rites of sepulture.
- **14.** the Lord shall raise him up a king ... but what? even now namely, Baasha (\*11527); he was already raised he was in being, though not in power.
- 17. *Tirzah* a place of pre-eminent beauty (So 6:4), three hours' travelling east of Samaria, chosen when Israel became a separate kingdom, by the first monarch, and used during three short reigns as a residence of the royal house. The fertile plains and wooded hills in that part of the territory of Ephraim gave an opening to the formation of parks and pleasure-grounds similar to those which were the "paradises" of Assyrian and Persian monarchs [Stanley]. Its site is occupied by the large village of Taltise [Robinson]. As soon as the queen reached the gate of the

palace, she received the intelligence that her son was dying, according to the prophet's prediction [4142] Kings 14:12].

**19.** *the rest of the acts of Jeroboam* — None of the threatenings denounced against this family produced any change in his policy or government.

411021 KINGS 14:21-24.

#### REHOBOAM'S WICKED REIGN.

**21.** he reigned ... in Jerusalem — Its particular designation as "the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there," seems given here, both as a reflection on the apostasy of the ten tribes, and as a proof of the aggravated wickedness of introducing idolatry and its attendant vices there.

his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess — Her heathen extraction and her influence as queen mother are stated to account for Rehoboam's tendency to depart from the true religion. Led by the warning of the prophet (\*\*1223), as well as by the large immigration of Israelites into his kingdom (\*\*1217 \*\*12116), he continued for the first three years of his reign a faithful patron of true religion (\*\*1222 Chronicles 11:17). But afterwards he began and encouraged a general apostasy; idolatry became the prevailing form of worship, and the religious state of the kingdom in his reign is described by the high places, the idolatrous statues, the groves and impure rites that with unchecked license were observed in them. The description is suited to the character of the Canaanitish worship.

411451 KINGS 14:25-31.

#### SHISHAK SPOILS JERUSALEM.

**25, 26.** *Shishak king of Egypt came up* — He was the instrument in the hand of Providence for punishing the national defection. Even though this king had been Solomon's father-in-law, he was no relation of Rehoboam's;

but there is a strong probability that he belonged to another dynasty (see on Chronicles 12:2). He was the Sheshonk of the Egyptian monuments, who is depicted on a bas-relief at Karnak, as dragging captives, who, from their peculiar physiognomy, are universally admitted to be Jews.

- **29.** Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam ..., are they not written in the book of the chronicles? not the book so called and comprehended in the sacred canon, but the national archives of Judah.
- **30.** *there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam* The former was prohibited from entering on an aggressive war; but as the two kingdoms kept up a jealous rivalry, he might be forced into vigilant measures of defense, and frequent skirmishes would take place on the borders.

## **□ISOS** 15:1-8.

### ABIJAM'S WICKED REIGN OVER JUDAH.

- **1.** *Abijam* His name was at first Abijah (\*\*\*22 Chronicles 12:16); "Jah," the name of God, according to an ancient fashion, being conjoined with it. But afterwards, when he was found "walking in all the sins of his father" [\*\*\*155] Kings 15:3], that honorable addition was withdrawn, and his name in sacred history changed into Abijam [LIGHTFOOT].
- **2.** Three years reigned he (compare discalable Kings 15:1 with discalable Kings 15:9). Parts of years are often counted in Scripture as whole years. The reign began in Jeroboam's eighteenth year, continued till the nineteenth, and ended in the course of the twentieth.

his mother's name was Maachah — or Michaiah (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 13:2), probably altered from the one to the other on her becoming queen, as was very common under a change of circumstances. She is called the daughter of Abishalom, or Absalom (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 11:21), of Uriel (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 13:2). Hence, it has been thought probable that Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (\*\*\*2 Samuel 14:27 \*\*\*188\*18), had been married to Uriel, and that Maachah was their daughter.

3. his heart was not perfect with the Lord ..., as the heart of David his father — (Compare 41105] Kings 11:4 41:22). He was not positively bad at first, for it appears that he had done something to restore the pillaged treasures of the temple (41155] Kings 15:15). This phrase contains a comparative reference to David's heart. His doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord (41156] Kings 15:5) is frequently used in speaking of the kings of Judah, and means only that they did or did not do that which, in the general course and tendency of their government, was acceptable to God. It furnishes no evidence as to the lawfulness or piety of one specific act.

**4.** for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp — "A lamp" in one's house is an Oriental phrase for continuance of family name and prosperity. Abijam was not rejected only in consequence of the divine promise to David (see on I Kings 11:13-36).

## <sup>4</sup> KINGS 15:9-22.

#### ASA'S GOOD REIGN.

**10-13.** *his mother's name was Maachah* — She was properly his grandmother, and she is here called "the king's mother," from the post of dignity which at the beginning of his reign she possessed. Asa, as a constitutional monarch, acted like the pious David, laboring to abolish the traces and polluting practices of idolatry, and in pursuance of his impartial conduct, he did not spare delinquents even of the highest rank.

13. also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen — The sultana, or queen dowager, was not necessarily the king's natural mother (see Times 2:19), nor was Maachah. Her title, and the privileges connected with that honor and dignity which gave her precedency among the ladies of the royal family, and great influence in the kingdom, were taken away. She was degraded for her idolatry.

because she had made an idol in a grove — A very obscene figure, and the grove was devoted to the grossest licentiousness. His plans of religious reformation, however, were not completely carried through, "the high places were not removed" (see Tkings 3:2). The suppression of this private worship on natural or artificial hills, though a forbidden service after the temple had been declared the exclusive place of worship, the most pious king's laws were not able to accomplish.

**15.** *he brought in the things which his father had dedicated* — Probably the spoils which Abijam had taken from the vanquished army of Jeroboam (see 44362 Chronicles 13:16).

and the things which himself had dedicated — after his own victory over the Cushites (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 14:12).

- 16, 17. there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days Asa enjoyed a ten years' peace after Jeroboam's defeat by Abijam, and this interval was wisely and energetically spent in making internal reforms, as well as increasing the means of national defense (Thronicles 14:1-7). In the fifteenth year of his reign, however, the king of Israel commenced hostilities against him, and, invading his kingdom, erected a strong fortress at Ramah, which was near Gibeah, and only six Roman miles from Jerusalem. Afraid lest his subjects might quit his kingdom and return to the worship of their fathers, he wished to cut off all intercourse between the two nations. Ramah stood on an eminence overhanging a narrow ravine which separated Israel from Judah, and therefore he took up a hostile position in that place.
- **18-20.** Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the ... house of the Lord Asa's religious character is now seen to decline. He trusted not in the Lord (400)2 Chronicles 16:7). In this emergency Asa solicited the powerful aid of the king of Damascene-Syria; and to bribe him to break off his alliance with Baasha, he transmitted to him the treasure lying in the temple and palace. The Syrian mercenaries were gained. Instances are to be found, both in the ancient and modern history of the East, of the violation of treaties equally sudden and unscrupulous, through the presentation of some tempting bribe. Ben-hadad poured an army into the northern provinces of Israel, and having captured some cities in Galilee, on the borders of Syria, compelled Baasha to withdraw from Ramah back within his own territories.

**Ben-hadad** — (See on <sup>□</sup> Kings 11:14).

- **22.** *Then king Asa made a proclamation* The fortifications which Baasha had erected at Ramah were demolished, and with the materials were built other defenses, where Asa thought they were needed at Geba (now Jeba) and Mizpeh (now Neby Samuil), about two hours' travelling north of Jerusalem.
- **23.** in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet (See on Chronicles 16:12, where an additional proof is given of his religious degeneracy.)

## ⁴IISS 15:25-34.

#### NADAB'S WICKED REIGN.

- **25.** *Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign* No record is given of him, except his close adherence to the bad policy of his father.
- **27.** Baasha smote him at Gibbethon This town, within the tribe of Dan, was given to the Levites ( Toshua 19:44). It lay on the Philistine borders, and having been seized by that people, Nadab laid siege to recover it.
- **29.** when he reigned, he smote all the house of Jeroboam It was according to a barbarous practice too common in the East, for a usurper to extirpate all rival candidates for the throne; but it was an accomplishment of Ahijah's prophecy concerning Jeroboam (\*\*1140\*)1 Kings 14:10,11).

## **△IIIO** KINGS 16:1-8.

#### JEHU'S PROPHECY AGAINST BAASHA.

- **1.** Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu This is the only incident recorded in the life of this prophet. His father was also a prophet ( Chronicles 16:7).
- **2.** Forasmuch as I exalted thee The doom he pronounced on Baasha was exactly the same as denounced against Jeroboam and his posterity. Though he had waded through slaughter to his throne, he owed his elevation to the appointment or permission of Him "by whom kings reign."
- *over my people Israel* With all their errors and lapses into idolatry, they were not wholly abandoned by God. He still showed His interest in them by sending prophets and working miracles in their favor, and possessed a multitude of faithful worshippers in the kingdom of Israel.
- 7. also by the hand of the prophet Jehu This is not another prophecy, but merely an addition by the sacred historian, explanatory of the death of Baasha and the extinction of his family. The doom pronounced against Jeroboam (\*\*IRP\*\*1 Kings 14:9), did not entitle him to take the execution of the sentence into his own hands; but from his following the same calfworship, he had evidently plotted the conspiracy and murder of that king in furtherance of his own ambitious designs; and hence, in his own assassination, he met the just reward of his deeds. The similitude to Jeroboam extends to their deaths as well as their lives the reign of their sons, and the ruin of their families.
- **8.** began Elah the son of Baasha to reign (compare dissection 15:33). From this it will appear that Baasha died in the twenty-third year of his reign (see on dissection 15:2), and Elah, who was a prince of dissolute habits, reigned not fully two years.

## **△IM9**1 KINGS 16:9-22.

#### ZIMRI'S CONSPIRACY.

- **9-12.** Zimri ... conspired against him "Arza which was over his house." During a carousal in the house of his chamberlain, Zimri slew him, and having seized the sovereignty, endeavored to consolidate his throne by the massacre of all the royal race.
- 15-18. did Zimri reign seven days The news of his conspiracy soon spread, and the army having proclaimed their general, Omri, king, that officer immediately raised the siege at Gibbethon and marched directly against the capital in which the usurper had established himself. Zimri soon saw that he was not in circumstances to hold out against all the forces of the kingdom; so, shutting himself up in the palace, he set it on fire, and, like Sardanapalus, chose to perish himself and reduce all to ruin, rather than that the palace and royal treasures should fall into the hands of his successful rival. The seven days' reign may refer either to the brief duration of his royal authority, or the period in which he enjoyed unmolested tranquillity in the palace.
- **19.** For his sins which he sinned This violent end was a just retribution for his crimes. "His walking in the ways of Jeroboam" might have been manifested either by the previous course of his life, or by his decrees published on his ascension, when he made a strong effort to gain popularity by announcing his continued support of the calf worship.
- 21, 22. Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts The factions that ensued occasioned a four years' duration (compare 16:15 With 16:15 With 16:23), of anarchy or civil war. Whatever might be the public opinion of Omri's merits a large body of the people disapproved of the mode of his election, and declared for Tibni. The army, however, as usual in such circumstances (and they had the will of Providence favoring them), prevailed over all opposition, and Omri became undisputed possessor of the throne.
- **22.** *Tibni died* The *Hebrew* does not enable us to determine whether his death was violent or natural.

## 411031 KINGS 16:23-28.

#### OMRI BUILDS SAMARIA.

- **23.** In the thirty and first year of Asa ... began Omri to reign The twelve years of his reign are computed from the beginning of his reign, which was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign. He held a contested reign for four years with Tibni; and then, at the date stated in this verse, entered on a sole and peaceful reign of eight years.
- **24.** *he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer* The palace of Tirzah being in ruins, Omri, in selecting the site of his royal residence, was naturally influenced by considerations both of pleasure and advantage. In the center of a wide amphitheatre of mountains, about six miles from Shechem, rises an oblong hill with steep, yet accessible sides, and a long flat top extending east and west, and rising five hundred or six hundred feet above the valley. What Omri in all probability built as a mere palatial residence, became the capital of the kingdom instead of Shechem. It was as though Versailles had taken the place of Paris, or Windsor of London. The choice of Omri was admirable, in selecting a position which combined in a union not elsewhere found in Palestine: strength, beauty, and fertility [Stanley].

two talents of silver — about \$4,250. Shemer had probably made it a condition of the sale, that the name should be retained. But as city and palace were built there by Omri, it was in accordance with Eastern custom to call it after the founder. The Assyrians did so, and on a tablet dug out of the ruins of Nineveh, an inscription was found relating to Samaria, which is called Beth-khumri — the house of Omri [LAYARD]. (See Tigs 17:5).

- **25-27.** *But Omri wrought evil* The character of Omri's reign and his death are described in the stereotyped form used towards all the successors of Jeroboam in respect both to policy as well as time.
- **29-33.** Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him The worship of God by symbols had hitherto been the offensive form of apostasy in Israel, but now gross idolatry is openly patronized by the court. This was done through the influence of

Jezebel, Ahab's queen. She was "the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Zidonians." He was priest of Ashtaroth or Astarte, who, having murdered Philetes, king of Tyre, ascended the throne of that kingdom, being the eighth king since Hiram. Jezebel was the wicked daughter of this regicide and idol priest — and, on her marriage with Ahab, never rested till she had got all the forms of her native Tyrian worship introduced into her adopted country.

**32.** reared up an altar for Baal — that is, the sun, worshipped under various images. Ahab set up one (\*\*\* Kings 3:2), probably as the Tyrian Hercules, in the temple in Samaria. No human sacrifices were offered — the fire was kept constantly burning — the priests officiated barefoot. Dancing and kissing the image (\*\*\* Kings 19:18) were among the principal rites.

## **△IIGE** KINGS 16:34.

# JOSHUA'S CURSE FULFILLED UPON HIEL THE BUILDER OF JERICHO.

34. In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho — (see on Toshua 6:26). The curse took effect on the family of this reckless man but whether his oldest son died at the time of laying the foundation, and the youngest at the completion of the work, or whether he lost all his sons in rapid succession, till, at the end of the undertaking, he found himself childless, the poetical form of the ban does not enable us to determine. Some modern commentators think there is no reference either to the natural or violent deaths of Hiel's sons; but that he began in presence of his oldest son, but some unexpected difficulties, losses, or obstacles, delayed the completion till his old age, when the gates were set up in the presence of his youngest son. But the curse was fulfilled more than five hundred years after it was uttered; and from Jericho being inhabited after Joshua's time ( Judges 3:13 Samuel 10:5), it has been supposed that the act against which the curse was directed, was an attempt at the restoration of the walls — the very walls which had been miraculously cast down. It seems to have been within the territory of Israel; and the unresisted act of Hiel affords a

painful evidence how far the people of Israel had lost all knowledge of, or respect for, the word of God.

## **□ITO** 1 KINGS 17:1-7.

# ELIJAH, PROPHESYING AGAINST AHAB, IS SENT TO CHERITH.

**1.** *Elijah the Tishbite* — This prophet is introduced as abruptly as Melchisedek — his birth, parents, and call to the prophetic office being alike unrecorded. He is supposed to be called the Tishbite from Tisbeh, a place east of Jordan.

who was of the inhabitants of Gilead — or residents of Gilead, implying that he was not an Israelite, but an Ishmaelite, as MICHAELIS conjectures, for there were many of that race on the confines of Gilead. The employment of a Gentile as an extraordinary minister might be to rebuke and shame the apostate people of Israel.

said unto Ahab — The prophet appears to have been warning this apostate king how fatal both to himself and people would be the reckless course he was pursuing. The failure of Elijah's efforts to make an impression on the obstinate heart of Ahab is shown by the penal prediction uttered at parting.

**before whom I stand** — that is, whom I serve (\*\*Deuteronomy 18:5).

there shall not be dew nor rain these years — not absolutely; but the dew and the rain would not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of moisture was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, while an absolute drought would have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste.

**but according to my word** — not uttered in spite, vengeance, or caprice, but as the minister of God. The impending calamity was in answer to his earnest prayer, and a chastisement intended for the spiritual revival of

Israel. Drought was the threatened punishment of national idolatry (\*\*Deuteronomy 11:16,17 \*\*28:23).

- **2, 3.** the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, etc. At first the king may have spurned the prediction as the utterance of a vain enthusiast; but when he found the drought did last and increase in severity, he sought Elijah, who, as it was necessary that he should be far removed from either the violence or the importunities of the king, was divinely directed to repair to a place of retreat, perhaps a cave on "the brook Cherith, that is, before [east of] Jordan." Tradition points it out in a small winter torrent, a little below the ford at Beth-shan.
- 6. the ravens brought him bread The idea of such unclean and voracious birds being employed to feed the prophet has appeared to many so strange that they have labored to make out the *Orebim*, which in our version has been rendered "ravens," to be as the word is used (in "Ezekiel 27:27) "merchants"; or Arabians ("2 Chronicles 21:16 "Nehemiah 4:7); or, the citizens of Arabah, near Beth-shan ("Joshua 15:6 "18:18). But the common rendering is, in our opinion, preferable to these conjectures. And, if Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens, it is idle to inquire where they found the bread and the flesh, for God would direct them. After the lapse of a year, the brook dried up, and this was a new trial to Elijah's faith.

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#### HE IS SENT TO A WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.

**8-16.** *the word of the Lord came to him* — Zarephath, Sarepta, now Surafend, whither he was directed to go, was far away on the western coast of Palestine, about nine miles south of Sidon, and within the dominions of Jezebel's impious father, where the famine also prevailed. Meeting, at his entrance into the town, the very woman who was appointed by divine providence to support him, his faith was severely tested by learning from her that her supplies were exhausted and that she was preparing her last meal for herself and son. The Spirit of God having

prompted him to ask, and her to grant, some necessary succor, she received a prophet's reward (\*\*Matthew 10:41,42), and for the one meal afforded to him, God, by a miraculous increase of the little stock, afforded many to her.

## 417751 KINGS 17:17-24.

#### HE RAISES HER SON TO LIFE.

17-24. the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick — A severe domestic calamity seems to have led her to think that, as God had shut up heaven upon a sinful land in consequence of the prophet, she was suffering on a similar account. Without answering her bitter upbraiding, the prophet takes the child, lays it on his bed, and after a very earnest prayer, had the happiness of seeing its restoration, and along with it, gladness to the widow's heart and home. The prophet was sent to this widow, not merely for his own security, but on account of her faith, to strengthen and promote which he was directed to go to her rather than to many widows in Israel, who would have eagerly received him on the same privileged terms of exception from the grinding famine. The relief of her bodily necessities became the preparatory means of supplying her spiritual wants, and bringing her and her son, through the teachings of the prophet, to a clear knowledge of God, and a firm faith in His word (\*\*Luke 4:25).

**□NOS** 18:1-16.

#### ELIJAH MEETS OBADIAH.

1. the third year — In the New Testament, it is said there was no rain "for the space of three years and six months" [ James 5:17]. The early rain fell in our March, the latter rain in our October. Though Ahab might have at first ridiculed Elijah's announcement, yet when neither of these rains fell in their season, he was incensed against the prophet as the cause of the national judgment, and compelled him, with God's direction, to consult his safety in flight. This was six months after the king was told there would be neither dew nor rain, and from this period the three years in this passage are computed.

Go, show thyself unto Ahab — The king had remained obdurate and impenitent. Another opportunity was to be given him of repentance, and Elijah was sent in order to declare to him the cause of the national judgment, and to promise him, on condition of his removing it, the immediate blessing of rain.

**2.** *Elijah went* — a marvellous proof of the natural intrepidity of this prophet, of his moral courage, and his unfaltering confidence in the protecting care of God, that he ventured to approach the presence of the raging lion.

there was a sore famine in Samaria — Elijah found that the famine was pressing with intense severity in the capital. Corn must have been obtained for the people from Egypt or the adjoining countries, else life could not have been sustained for three years; but Ahab, with the chamberlain of his royal household, is represented as giving a personal search for pasture to his cattle. On the banks of the rivulets, grass, tender shoots of grass, might naturally be expected; but the water being dried up, the verdure would disappear. In the pastoral districts of the East it would be reckoned a most suitable occupation still for a king or chief to go at the

head of such an expedition. Ranging over a large tract of country, Ahab had gone through one district, Obadiah through another.

- **3.** Obadiah feared the Lord greatly Although he did not follow the course taken by the Levites and the majority of pious Israelites at that time of emigration into Judah (\*\*\* Chronicles 11:13-16), he was a secret and sincere worshipper. He probably considered the violent character of the government, and his power of doing some good to the persecuted people of God as a sufficient excuse for his not going to worship in Jerusalem.

**fed them with bread and water** — These articles are often used to include sustenance of any kind. As this succor must have been given them at the hazard, not only of his place, but his life, it was a strong proof of his attachment to the true religion.

- 7-16. Obadiah was in the way ... Elijah met him Deeming it imprudent to rush without previous intimation into Ahab's presence, the prophet solicited Obadiah to announce his return to Ahab. The commission, with a delicate allusion to the perils he had already encountered in securing others of God's servants, was, in very touching terms, declined, as unkind and peculiarly hazardous. But Elijah having dispelled all the apprehensions entertained about the Spirit's carrying him away, Obadiah undertook to convey the prophet's message to Ahab and solicit an interview. But Ahab, bent on revenge, or impatient for the appearance of rain, went himself to meet Elijah.
- 17, 18. Art thou he that troubleth Israel A violent altercation took place. Ahab thought to awe him into submission, but the prophet boldly and undisguisedly told the king that the national calamity was traceable chiefly to his own and his family's patronage and practice of idolatry. But, while rebuking the sins, Elijah paid all due respect to the high rank of the offender. He urged the king to convene, by virtue of his royal mandate, a public assembly, in whose presence it might be solemnly decided which was the troubler of Israel. The appeal could not well be resisted, and

Ahab, from whatever motives, consented to the proposal. God directed and overruled the issue.

**19.** *gather* ... *the prophets of Baal* ... *the prophets of the groves* — From the sequel it appears that the former only came. The latter, anticipating some evil, evaded the king's command.

which eat at Jezebel's table — that is, not at the royal table where she herself dined, but they were maintained from her kitchen establishment (see on 400%) Samuel 20:25 and 400% Kings 4:22). They were the priests of Astarte, the Zidonian goddess.

**20.** *mount Carmel* — is a bold, bluff promontory, which extends from the western coast of Palestine, at the bay of Acre, for many miles eastward, to the central hills of Samaria. It is a long range, presenting many summits, and intersected by a number of small ravines. The spot where the contest took place is situated at the eastern extremity, which is also the highest point of the whole ridge. It is called El-Mohhraka, "the Burning," or "the Burnt Place." No spot could have been better adapted for the thousands of Israel to have stood drawn up on those gentle slopes. The rock shoots up in an almost perpendicular wall of more than two hundred feet in height, on the side of the vale of Esdraelon. This wall made it visible over the whole plain, and from all the surrounding heights, where gazing multitudes would be stationed.

21-40. Elijah said unto all the people, How long halt ye? — They had long been attempting to conjoin the service of God with that of Baal. It was an impracticable union and the people were so struck with a sense of their own folly, or dread of the king's displeasure, that they "answered not a word." Elijah proposed to decide for them the controversy between God and Baal by an appeal, not to the authority of the law, for that would have no weight, but by a visible token from Heaven. As fire was the element over which Baal was supposed to preside, Elijah proposed that two bullocks should be slain and placed on separate altars of wood, the one for Baal, and the other for God. On whichever the fire should descend to consume it, the event should determine the true God, whom it was their duty to serve. The proposal, appearing every way reasonable, was received by the people with unanimous approval. The priests of Baal commenced the ceremony by calling on their god. In vain did they continue

invoking their senseless deity from morning till noon, and from noon till evening, uttering the most piercing cries, using the most frantic gesticulations, and mingling their blood with the sacrifice. No response was heard. No fire descended. Elijah exposed their folly and imposture with the severest irony and, as the day was far advanced, commenced his operations. Inviting the people to approach and see the entire proceeding, he first repaired an old altar of God, which Jezebel had demolished. Then, having arranged the cut pieces of the bullock, he caused four barrels or jars of water to be dashed all over the altar and round in the trench. Once, twice, a third time this precaution was taken, and then, when he had offered an earnest prayer, the miraculous fire descended (\*\*Leviticus 9:24 Judges 6:21 Table 13:20 Thronicles 21:26 Thronicles 7:1), and consumed not only the sacrifice, but the very stones of the altar. The impression on the minds of the people was that of admiration mingled with awe; and with one voice they acknowledged the supremacy of Jehovah as the true God. Taking advantage of their excited feelings, Elijah called on them to seize the priestly impostors, and by their blood fill the channel of the river (Kishon), which, in consequence of their idolatries, the drought had dried up — a direction, which, severe and relentless as it seems, it was his duty as God's minister to give (\*\*Deuteronomy 15:5 18:20). The natural features of the mount exactly correspond with the details of this narrative. The conspicuous summit, 1635 feet above the sea, on which the altars were placed, presents an esplanade spacious enough for the king and the priests of Baal to stand on the one side, and Elijah on the other. It is a rocky soil, on which there is abundance of loose stones, to furnish the twelve stones of which the altar was built — a bed of thick earth, in which a trench could be dug; and yet the earth not so loose that the water poured into it would be absorbed; two hundred fifty feet beneath the altar plateau, there is a perennial fountain, which, being close to the altar of the Lord, might not have been accessible to the people; and whence, therefore, even in that season of severe drought, Elijah could procure those copious supplies of water which he poured over the altar. The distance between this spring and the site of the altar is so short, as to make it perfectly possible to go thrice thither and back again, whereas it would have been impossible *once* in an afternoon to fetch water from the sea [VAN DE VELDE]. The summit is one thousand feet above the Kishon, which nowhere runs from the sea so close to the base of the mount as just

beneath El-Mohhraka; so that the priests of Baal could, in a few minutes, be taken down to the brook (torrent), and slain there.

## **□INE** 1 KINGS 18:41-46.

## ELIJAH, BY PRAYER, OBTAINS RAIN.

**42.** Ahab went up to eat and to drink — Ahab, kept in painful excitement by the agonizing scene, had eaten nothing all the day. He was recommended to refresh himself without a moment's delay; and, while the king was thus occupied, the prophet, far from taking rest, was absorbed in prayer for the fulfillment of the promise (\*\*INT) Kings 18:1).

*put his face between his knees* — a posture of earnest supplication still used.

- **44.** Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand
   The clearness of the sky renders the smallest speck distinctly visible; and this is in Palestine the uniform precursor of rain. It rises higher and higher, and becomes larger and larger with astonishing celerity, till the whole heaven is black, and the cloud bursts in a deluge of rain.

Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not—either by the river Kishon being suddenly so swollen as to be impassable, or from the deep layer of dust in the arid plain being turned into thick mud, so as to impede the wheels.

**45.** Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel — now Zerin, a distance of about ten miles. This race was performed in the midst of a tempest of rain. But all rejoiced at it, as diffusing a sudden refreshment over all the land of Jezreel.

46. Elijah ... girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab — It was anciently, and still is in some countries of the East, customary for kings and nobles to have runners before their chariots, who are tightly girt for the purpose. The prophet, like the Bedouins of his native Gilead, had been trained to run; and, as the Lord was with him, he continued with unabated agility and strength. It was, in the circumstances, a most proper service for Elijah to render. It tended to strengthen the favorable impression made on the heart of Ahab and furnished an answer to the cavils of Jezebel for it showed that he who was so zealous in the service of God, was, at the same time, devotedly loyal to his king. The result of this solemn and decisive contest was a heavy blow and great discouragement to the cause of idolatry. But subsequent events seem to prove that the impressions, though deep, were but partial and temporary.

**△III01** KINGS 19:1-3.

#### ELIJAH FLEES TO BEER-SHEBA.

3. he arose, and went for his life — He entered Jezreel full of hope. But a message from the incensed and hard-hearted queen, vowing speedy vengeance for her slaughtered priests, dispelled all his bright visions of the future. It is probable, however, that in the present temper of the people, even she would not have dared to lay violent hands on the Lord's servant, and purposely threatened him because she could do no more. The threat produced the intended effect, for his faith suddenly failed him. He fled out of the kingdom into the southernmost part of the territories in Judah; nor did he deem himself safe even there, but, dismissing his servant, he resolved to seek refuge among the mountain recesses of Sinai, and there longed for death ( James 5:17). This sudden and extraordinary depression of mind arose from too great confidence inspired by the miracles wrought at Carmel, and by the disposition the people evinced there. Had he remained steadfast and immovable, the impression on the mind of Ahab and the people generally might have been followed by good results. But he had been exalted above measure ( Corinthians 12:7-9), and being left to himself, the great prophet, instead of showing the indomitable spirit of a martyr, fled from his post of duty.

**□■1 KINGS 19:4-18.** 

#### HE IS COMFORTED BY AN ANGEL.

**4-18.** went a day's journey into the wilderness — on the way from Beersheba to Horeb — a wide expanse of sand hills, covered with the retem (not juniper, but broom shrubs), whose tall and spreading branches, with their white leaves, afford a very cheering and refreshing shade. His gracious

God did not lose sight of His fugitive servant, but watched over him, and, miraculously ministering to his wants, enabled him, in a better but not wholly right frame of mind, by virtue of that supernatural supply, to complete his contemplated journey. In the solitude of Sinai, God appeared to instruct him. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" was a searching question addressed to one who had been called to so arduous and urgent a mission as his. By an awful exhibition of divine power, he was made aware of the divine speaker who addressed him; his attention was arrested, his petulance was silenced, his heart was touched, and he was bid without delay return to the land of Israel, and prosecute the Lord's work there. To convince him that an idolatrous nation will not be unpunished, He commissions him to anoint three persons who were destined in Providence to avenge God's controversy with the people of Israel. Anointing is used synonymously with appointment ( Judges 9:8), and is applied to all named, although Jehu alone had the consecrated oil poured over his head. They were all three destined to be eminent instruments in achieving the destruction of idolaters, though in different ways. But of the three commissions, Elijah personally executed only one; namely, the call of Elisha to be his assistant and successor [41199] Kings 19:19], and by him the other two were accomplished ( Kings 8:7-13 9:1-10). Having thus satisfied the fiery zeal of the erring but sincere and pious prophet, the Lord proceeded to correct the erroneous impression under which Elijah had been laboring, of his being the sole adherent of the true religion in the land; for God, who seeth in secret, and knew all that were His, knew that there were seven thousand persons who had not done homage (literally, "kissed the hand") to Baal.

**16.** *Abel-meholah* — that is, "the meadow of dancing," in the valley of the Jordan.

### 411991 KINGS 19:19-21.

#### ELISHA FOLLOWS ELIJAH.

**19.** *Elisha the son of Shaphat* — Most probably he belonged to a family distinguished for piety, and for their opposition to the prevailing calfworship.

**ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen** — indicating that he was a man of substance.

**Elijah ... cast his mantle upon him** — This was an investiture with the prophetic office. It is in this way that the Brahmins, the Persian Sufis, and other priestly or sacred characters in the East are appointed — a mantle being, by some eminent priest, thrown across their shoulders. Elisha had probably been educated in the schools of the prophets.

- **20.** what have I done to thee? that is, Go, but keep in mind the solemn ceremony I have just performed on thee. It is not I, but God, who calls thee. Do not allow any earthly affection to detain you from obeying His call.
- **21.** *took a yoke of oxen* Having hastily prepared ( Samuel 24:22) a farewell entertainment to his family and friends, he left his native place and attached himself to Elijah as his minister.

**■ KINGS 20:1-12.** 

#### BEN-HADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA.

- **1.** Ben-hadad the king of Syria This monarch was the son of that Benhadad who, in the reign of Baasha, made a raid on the northern towns of Galilee (\*\*IST\*) Kings 15:20). The thirty-two kings that were confederate with him were probably tributary princes. The ancient kings of Syria and Phoenicia ruled only over a single city, and were independent of each other, except when one great city, as Damascus, acquired the ascendency, and even then they were allied only in time of war. The Syrian army encamped at the gates and besieged the town of Samaria.
- **2-12.** Thus said Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine To this message sent him during the siege, Ahab returned a tame and submissive answer, probably thinking it meant no more than an exaction of tribute. But the demand was repeated with greater insolence; and yet, from the abject character of Ahab, there is reason to believe he would have yielded to this arrogant claim also, had not the voice of his subjects been raised against it. Ben-hadad's object in these and other boastful menaces was to intimidate Ahab. But the weak sovereign began to show a little more spirit, as appears in his abandoning "my lord the king" for the single "tell him," and giving him a dry but sarcastic hint to glory no more till the victory is won. Kindling into a rage at the cool defiance, Ben-hadad gave orders for the immediate sack of the city.
- **12.** as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions booths made of branches of trees and brushwood; which were reared for kings in the camp, as they still are for Turkish pashas or agas in their expeditions [Keil].

Set yourselves in array — Invest the city.

### 4003 KINGS 20:13-20.

### THE SYRIANS ARE SLAIN.

13-21. behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab — Though the king and people of Israel had highly offended Him, God had not utterly cast them off. He still cherished designs of mercy towards them, and here, though unasked, gave them a signal proof of His interest in them, by a prophet's animating announcement that the Lord would that day deliver the mighty hosts of the enemy into his hand by means of a small, feeble, inadequate band. Conformably to the prophet's instructions, two hundred thirty-two young men went boldly out towards the camp of the enemy, while seven thousand more, apparently volunteers, followed at some little distance, or posted themselves at the gate, to be ready to reinforce those in front if occasion required it. Ben-hadad and his vassals and princes were already, at that early hour — scarcely midday — deep in their cups; and though informed of this advancing company, yet confiding in his numbers, or it may be, excited with wine, he ordered with indifference the proud intruders to be taken alive, whether they came with peaceful or hostile intentions. It was more easily said than done; the young men smote right and left, making terrible havoc among their intended captors; and their attack, together with the sight of the seven thousand, who soon rushed forward to mingle in the fray, created a panic in the Syrian army, who immediately took up flight. Ben-hadad himself escaped the pursuit of the victors on a fleet horse, surrounded by a squadron of horse guards. This glorious victory, won so easily, and with such a paltry force opposed to overwhelming numbers, was granted that Ahab and his people might know that God is the Lord. But we do not read of this acknowledgment being made, or of any sacrifices being offered in token of their national gratitude.

**22-26.** *the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said* — The same prophet who had predicted the victory shortly reappeared, admonishing the king to take every precaution against a renewal of hostilities in the following campaign.

at the return of the year — that is, in spring, when, on the cessation of the rainy season, military campaigns (\*\*\*2 Samuel 11:1), were anciently begun.

It happened as the prophet had forewarned. Brooding over their late disastrous defeat, the attendants of Ben-hadad ascribed the misfortune to two causes — the one arose from the principles of heathenism which led them to consider the gods of Israel as "gods of the hills"; whereas their power to aid the Israelites would be gone if the battle was maintained on the plains. The other cause to which the Syrian courtiers traced their defeat at Samaria, was the presence of the tributary kings, who had probably been the first to take flight; and they recommended "captains to be put in their rooms." Approving of these recommendations, Ben-hadad renewed his invasion of Israel the next spring by the siege of Aphek in the valley of Jezreel (compare "Israel 129:1, with "Israel 28:4), not far from En-dor.

**27-31.** *like two little flocks of kids* — Goats are never seen in large flocks, or scattered, like sheep; and hence the two small but compact divisions of the Israelite force are compared to goats, not sheep. Humanly speaking, that little handful of men would have been overpowered by numbers. But a prophet was sent to the small Israelite army to announce the victory, in order to convince the Syrians that the God of Israel was omnipotent everywhere, in the valley as well as on the hills. And, accordingly, after the two armies had pitched opposite each other for seven days, they came to an open battle. One hundred thousand Syrians lay dead on the field, while the fugitives took refuge in Aphek, and there, crowding on the city walls, they endeavored to make a stand against their pursuers; but the old walls giving way under the incumbent weight, fell and buried twenty-seven thousand in the ruins. Ben-hadad succeeded in extricating himself, and, with his attendants, sought concealment in the city, fleeing from chamber to chamber; or, as some think it, an inner chamber, that is, a harem; but seeing no ultimate means of escape, he was advised to throw himself on the tender mercies of the Israelitish monarch.

**32-34.** *put ropes on their heads* — Captives were dragged by ropes round their necks in companies, as is depicted on the monuments of Egypt. Their voluntary attitude and language of submission flattered the pride of Ahab, who, little concerned about the dishonor done to the God of Israel by the Syrian king, and thinking of nothing but victory, paraded his clemency, called the vanquished king "his brother," invited him to sit in the royal chariot, and dismissed him with a covenant of peace.

**34.** *streets for thee in Damascus* — implying that a quarter of that city was to be assigned to Jews, with the free exercise of their religion and laws, under a judge of their own. This misplaced kindness to a proud and impious idolater, so unbecoming a theocratic monarch, exposed Ahab to the same censure and fate as Saul (OSCO) Samuel 15:9, etc.). It was in opposition to God's purpose in giving him the victory.

### **™** KINGS 20:35-42.

#### A PROPHET REPROVES HIM.

**35-38.** *Smite me* — This prophet is supposed (\*\*\* Kings 20:8) to have been Micaiah. The refusal of his neighbor to smite the prophet was manifestly wrong, as it was a withholding of necessary aid to a prophet in the discharge of a duty to which he had been called by God, and it was severely punished (\*\*\* Kings 20:36), as a beacon to warn others (see on \*\*\* Kings 13:2-24). The prophet found a willing assistant, and then, waiting for Ahab, leads the king unconsciously, in the parabolic manner of Nathan (\*\*\* Samuel 12:1-4), to pronounce his own doom; and this consequent punishment was forthwith announced by a prophet (see on \*\*\* Kings 21:17).

**39.** *a talent of silver* — about \$2,000.

**□200**1 KINGS 21:1-4.

#### NABOTH REFUSES AHAB HIS VINEYARD.

1-3. Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel — Ahab was desirous, from its contiguity to the palace, to possess it for a vegetable garden. He proposed to Naboth to give him a better in exchange, or to obtain it by purchase; but the owner declined to part with it. In persisting in his refusal, Naboth was not actuated by any feelings of disloyalty or disrespect to the king, but solely from a conscientious regard to the divine law, which, for important reasons, had prohibited the sale of a paternal inheritance [\*\*\*Leviticus 25:23 \*\*\*Numbers 36:7]; or if, through extreme poverty or debt, an assignation of it to another was unavoidable, the conveyance was made on the condition of its being redeemable at any time [\*\*\*Leviticus 25:25-27]; at all events, of its reverting at the jubilee to the owner [ Leviticus 25:28]. In short, it could not be alienated from the family, and it was on this ground that Naboth (41208) Kings 21:3) refused to comply with the king's demand. It was not, therefore, any rudeness or disrespect that made Ahab heavy and displeased, but his sulky and pettish demeanor betrays a spirit of selfishness that could not brook to be disappointed of a favorite object, and that would have pushed him into lawless tyranny had he possessed any natural force of character.

**4.** *turned away his face* — either to conceal from his attendants the vexation of spirit he felt, or, by the affectation of great sorrow, rouse them to devise some means of gratifying his wishes.

### 40061 KINGS 21:5-16.

#### JEZEBEL CAUSES NABOTH TO BE STONED.

**7.** Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? — This is not so much a question as an exclamation — a sarcastic taunt; "A pretty king thou art! Canst thou not use thy power and take what thy heart is set upon?"

arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard — After upbraiding Ahab for his pusillanimity and bidding him act as a king, Jezebel tells him to trouble himself no more about such a trifle; she would guarantee the possession of the vineyard.

8. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal—
The seal-ring contained the name of the king and gave validity to the documents to which it was affixed (\*\*\*Esther 8:8\*\*Daniel 6:17). By allowing her the use of his signet-ring, Ahab passively consented to Jezebel's proceeding. Being written in the king's name, it had the character of a royal mandate.

sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city—
They were the civic authorities of Jezreel, and would, in all likelihood, be
the creatures and fit tools of Jezebel. It is evident that, though Ahab had
recently been in Jezreel, when he made the offer to Naboth, both he and
Jezebel were now in Samaria (\*\*IDB\*\*1 Kings 20:43).

9. *Proclaim a fast*, etc. — Those obsequious and unprincipled magistrates did according to orders. Pretending that a heavy guilt lay on one, or some unknown party, who was charged with blaspheming God and the king and that Ahab was threatening vengeance on the whole city unless the culprit were discovered and punished, they assembled the people to observe a solemn fast. Fasts were commanded on extraordinary occasions affecting the public interests of the state (\*\*400\*\*2\*\*Chronicles 20:3\*\*\*\*Ezra 8:21\*\*\*Joel 1:14\*\*\*15\*\*2:15\*\*\*Jonah 3:5). The wicked authorities of Jezreel, by proclaiming the fast, wished to give an external appearance of justice to their proceedings and convey an impression among the people that Naboth's crime amounted to treason against the king's life.

**set Naboth on high** — During a trial the panel, or accused person, was placed on a high seat, in the presence of all the court; but as the guilty person was supposed to be unknown, the setting of Naboth on high among the people must have been owing to his being among the distinguished men of the place.

**13.** *there came in two men* — worthless fellows who had been bribed to swear a falsehood. The law required two witnesses in capital offenses (\*\*Deuteronomy 17:6 \*\*\*\* Numbers 35:30 \*\*\*\* Matthew 26:60). Cursing God and cursing the king are mentioned in the law (\*\*\*\* Exodus 22:28) as offenses closely connected, the king of Israel being the earthly representative of God in His kingdom.

they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him — The law, which forbade cursing the rulers of the people, does not specify the penalty for this offense but either usage had sanctioned or the authorities of Jezreel had originated stoning as the proper punishment. It was always inflicted out of the city (\*\*\*Acts 7:58).

**14-16.** *Jezebel said to Ahab*, *Arise*, *take possession* — Naboth's execution having been announced, and his family being involved in the same fatal sentence (\*\*\* Kings 9:26), his property became forfeited to the crown, not by law, but traditionary usage (see \*\*\* Samuel 16:4).

**16.** *Ahab rose up to go down* — from Samaria to Jezreel.

<sup>◆12175</sup>1 KINGS 21:17-29.

# ELIJAH DENOUNCES JUDGMENTS AGAINST AHAB AND JEZEBEL.

17-19. *Hast thou killed*, *and also taken possession*? — While Ahab was in the act of surveying his ill-gotten possession, Elijah, by divine commission, stood before him. The appearance of the prophet, at such a time, was ominous of evil, but his language was much more so (compare Ezekiel 45:8 46:16-18). Instead of shrinking with horror from the atrocious crime, Ahab eagerly hastened to his newly acquired property.

- **19.** *In the place where dogs licked*, etc. a righteous retribution of Providence. The prediction was accomplished, not in Jezreel, but in Samaria; and not on Ahab personally, in consequence of his repentance (\*\*TES\*1 Kings 21:29), but on his son (\*\*TES\*2 Kings 9:25). The words "in the place where" might be rendered "in like manner as."
- **20.** thou hast sold thyself to work evil that is, allowed sin to acquire the unchecked and habitual mastery over thee ( Kings 17:17 Romans 7:11).
- **21, 22.** *will make thine house*, etc. (see on Single 15:29 and Single 16:3-12). Jezebel, though included among the members of Ahab's house, has her ignominious fate expressly foretold (see Single 9:30).
- **27-29.** Ahab ... rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly He was not obdurate, like Jezebel. This terrible announcement made a deep impression on the king's heart, and led, for a while, to sincere repentance. Going softly, that is, barefoot, and with a pensive manner, within doors. He manifested all the external signs, conventional and natural, of the deepest sorrow. He was wretched, and so great is the mercy of God, that, in consequence of his humiliation, the threatened punishment was deferred.

**□IIII** KINGS 22:1-36.

### AHAB SLAIN AT RAMOTH-GILEAD.

- **1.** continued three years without war between Syria and Israel The disastrous defeat of Ben-hadad had so destroyed his army and exhausted the resources of his country, that, however eager, he was unable to recommence active hostilities against Israel. But that his hereditary enmity remained unsubdued, was manifest by his breach of faith concerning the treaty by which he had engaged to restore all the cities which his father had seized (ALTER) Kings 20:34).
- 2. Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel It was singular that a friendly league between the sovereigns of Israel and Judah should, for the first time, have been formed by princes of such opposite characters the one pious, the other wicked. Neither this league nor the matrimonial alliance by which the union of the royal families was more closely cemented, met the Lord's approval (4400) 2 Chronicles 19:2). It led, however, to a visit by Jehoshaphat, whose reception in Samaria was distinguished by the most lavish hospitality (4400) 2 Chronicles 18:2). The opportunity of this visit was taken advantage of, to push an object on which Ahab's heart was much set.
- 3-8. Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours a Levitical and free town on the north border of Gad (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:43 \*\*\*Doshua 21:38), on the site of the present Salt Lake, in the province of Belka. It lay within the territories of the Israelitish monarch, and was unjustly alienated; but whether it was one of the cities usurped by the first Ben-hadad, which his son had promised to restore, or was retained for some other reasons, the sacred historian has not mentioned. In the expedition which Ahab meditated for the recovery of this town, the aid of Jehoshaphat was asked and promised (see \*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 18:3). Previous to declaring hostilities, it was customary to consult the prophets (see on \*\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 28:8); and

Jehoshaphat having expressed a strong desire to know the Lord's will concerning this war, Ahab assembled four hundred of his prophets. These could not be either the prophets of Baal or of Ashteroth (\*\*\*INDS\*\*) Kings 18:19), but seem (\*\*\*INDS\*\*) Kings 22:12) to have been false prophets, who conformed to the symbolic calf-worship of Jehovah. Being the creatures of Ahab, they unanimously predicted a prosperous issue to the war. But dissatisfied with them, Jehoshaphat inquired if there was any true prophet of the Lord. Ahab agreed, with great reluctance, to allow Micaiah to be summoned. He was the only true prophet then to be found residing in Samaria, and he had to be brought out of prison (\*\*\*INDS\*\*) Kings 22:26), into which, according to JOSEPHUS, he had been cast on account of his rebuke to Ahab for sparing the king of Syria.

**10.** *a void place* — literally, "a threshing-floor," formed at the gate of Samaria.

- **11.** Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron Small projections, of the size and form of our candle extinguishers (worn in many parts of the East as military ornaments), were worn by the Syrians of that time, and probably by the Israelite warriors also. Zedekiah, by assuming two horns, personated two heroes, and, pretending to be a prophet, wished in this manner to represent the kings of Israel and Judah in a military triumph. It was a symbolic action, to impart greater force to his language (see Deuteronomy 33:17); but it was little more than a flourish with a spontoon [CALMET, Fragments].
- 14-17. what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak On the way the messenger who conducted [Micaiah] to the royal presence informed him of the tenor of the prophecies already given and recommended him to agree with the rest, no doubt from the kindly motive of seeing him released from imprisonment. But Micaiah, inflexibly faithful to his divine mission as a prophet, announced his purpose to proclaim honestly whatever God should bid him. On being asked by the king, "Shall I go against Ramothgilead, or shall I forbear?" the prophet gave precisely the same answer as the previous oracles that had been consulted; but it must have been given in a sarcastic tone and in ironical mockery of their way of speaking. Being solemnly urged to give a serious and truthful answer, Micaiah then declared the visionary scene the Spirit had revealed to him; —

- **17.** I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd The purport of this was that the army of Israel would be defeated and dispersed; that Ahab would fall in the battle, and the people return without either being pursued or destroyed by the enemy.
- **18-23.** Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? Since Ahab was disposed to trace this unwelcome truth to personal enmity, Micaiah proceeded fearlessly to tell the incensed monarch in full detail what had been revealed to him. The Hebrew prophets, borrowing their symbolic pictures from earthly scenes, described God in heaven as a king in His kingdom. And as earthly princes do nothing of importance without asking the advice of their counsellors, God is represented as consulting about the fate of Ahab. This prophetic language must not be interpreted literally, and the command must be viewed as only a permission to the lying spirit (\*\*BR\*Romans 11:34) [CALMET].
- **24, 25.** Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek The insolence of this man, the leader of the false prophets, seems to have been provoked by jealousy at Micaiah's assumed monopoly of the spirit of inspiration. This mode of smiting, usually with a shoe, is both severe and ignominious. The calm reply of the Lord's prophet consisted in announcing the fate of the false prophets who suffered as the advisers of the disastrous expedition.
- **26-28.** *Take Micaiah*, ... *Put this fellow in prison* Ahab, under the impulse of vehement resentment, remands the prophet until his return.
- **27, 28.** *bread of affliction*, *water of affliction* that is, the poorest prison fare. Micaiah submitted, but reiterated aloud, in the presence of all, that the issue of the war would be fatal to Ahab.
- **29-38.** went up to Ramoth-gilead The king of Israel, bent on this expedition, marched, accompanied by his ally, with all his forces to the siege; but on approaching the scene of action, his courage failed, and, hoping to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy by a secret stratagem, he assumed the uniform of a subaltern, while he advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal attire. The Syrian king, with a view either to put the speediest end to the war, or perhaps to wipe out the stain of his own humiliation

(MINIST 20:31), had given special instructions to his generals to single out Ahab, and to take or kill him, as the author of the war. The officers at first directed their assault on Jehoshaphat, but, becoming aware of their mistake, desisted. Ahab was wounded by a random arrow, which, being probably poisoned, and the state of the weather increasing the virulence of the poison, he died at sunset. The corpse was conveyed to Samaria; and, as the chariot which brought it was being washed, in a pool near the city, from the blood that had profusely oozed from the wound, the dogs, in conformity with Elijah's prophecy, came and licked it [MINIST 21:19]. Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah [MINIST 22:40].

### THE SECOND BOOK OF

## THE KINGS

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

## CHAPTER 1

2 KINGS 1:1.

#### MOAB REBELS.

**1.** Then Moab rebelled — Subdued by David (\*\*\*2 Samuel 8:2), they had, in the partition of Israel and Judah, fallen to the share of the former kingdom. But they took advantage of the death of Ahab to shake off the yoke (see on \*\*\*2 Kings 3:6). The casualty that befell Ahaziah [\*\*\*\*2 Kings 1:2] prevented his taking active measures for suppressing this revolt, which was accomplished as a providential judgment on the house of Ahab for all these crimes.

<sup>2</sup> KINGS 1:2-8.

### AHAZIAH'S JUDGMENT BY ELIJAH.

**2-8.** Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber — This lattice was either a part of the wooden parapet, or fence, which surrounds the flat roofs of houses, and over which the king was carelessly leaning when it gave way; or it might be an opening like a skylight in the roof itself, done over with lattice — work, which, being slender or rotten, the king stepped on and slipped through. This latter supposition is most

probably the true one, as Ahaziah did not fall either into the street or the court, but "in his upper chamber."

inquire of Baalzebub — Anxious to learn whether he should recover from the effects of this severe fall, he sent to consult Baalzebub, that is, the god of flies, who was considered the patron deity of medicine. A temple to that idol was erected at Ekron, which was resorted to far and wide, though it afterwards led to the destruction of the place (\*\*Zechariah 9:5 Amos 1:8\*Zephaniah 2:4). "After visiting Ekron, 'the god of flies' is a name that gives me no surprise. The flies there swarmed, in fact so innumerably, that I could hardly get any food without these troublesome insects getting into it" [VAN DE VELDE].

- 3. the angel of the Lord not an angel, but the angel, who carried on all communications between the invisible God and His chosen people [HENGSTENBERG]. This angel commissioned Elijah to meet the king's messengers, to stop them peremptorily on the idolatrous errand, and convey by them to the king information of his approaching death. This consultation of an idol, being a breach of the fundamental law of the kingdom (\*\*Deuteronomy 5:7), was a daring and deliberate rejection of the national religion. The Lord, in making this announcement of his death, designed that he should see in that event a judgment for his idolatry.
- **4.** Thou shalt not come down from that bed On being taken up, he had probably been laid on the divan a raised frame, about three feet broad, extended along the sides of a room, covered with cushions and mattresses serving, in short, as a sofa by day and a bed by night, and ascended by steps.

Elijah departed — to his ordinary abode, which was then at Mount Carmel (\*\*\* Kings 2:25 \*\*\* Kings 18:42).

- **5.** *the messengers turned back* They did not know the stranger; but his authoritative tone, commanding attitude, and affecting message determined them at once to return.
- **8.** an hairy man This was the description not of his person, as in the case of Esau, but of his dress, which consisted either of unwrought sheep

or goatskins (\*\*\*Hebrews 11:37), or of camel's haircloth — the coarser manufacture of this material like our rough haircloth. The Dervishes and Bedouins are attired in this wild, uncouth manner, while their hair flows loose on the head, their shaggy cloak is thrown over their shoulders and tied in front on the breast, naked, except at the waist, round which is a skin girdle — a broad, rough leathern belt. Similar to this was the girdle of the prophets, as in keeping with their coarse garments and their stern, uncompromising office.

### <sup>2</sup> KINGS 1:9-16.

# ELIJAH BRINGS FIRE FROM HEAVEN ON AHAZIAH'S MESSENGERS.

- **9.** Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty Any appearance of cruelty that there is in the fate of the two captains and their men will be removed, on a full consideration of the circumstances. God being the King of Israel, Ahaziah was bound to govern the kingdom according to the divine law; to apprehend the Lord's prophet, for discharging a commanded duty, was that of an impious and notorious rebel. The captains abetted the king in his rebellion; and they exceeded their military duty by contemptuous insults.
- *man of God* In using this term, they either spoke derisively, believing him to be no true prophet; or, if they regarded him as a true prophet, the summons to him to surrender himself bound to the king was a still more flagrant insult; the language of the second captain being worse than that of the first.
- **10.** *let fire come down* rather, "fire shall come down." Not to avenge a personal insult of Elijah, but an insult upon God in the person of His prophet; and the punishment was inflicted, not by the prophet, but by the direct hand of God.
- **15, 16.** *he arose, and went down with him* a marvellous instance of faith and obedience. Though he well knew how obnoxious his presence was to the king, yet, on receiving God's command, he goes unhesitatingly,

and repeats, with his own lips, the unwelcome tidings conveyed by the messengers.

<sup>4</sup>2 KINGS 1:17,18.

### AHAZIAH DIES, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY JEHORAM.

17. **Jehoram** — The brother of Ahaziah (see on Kings 3:1).

2 KINGS 2:1-10.

#### ELIJAH DIVINES JORDAN.

**1-7.** when the Lord would take up Elijah — A revelation of this event had been made to the prophet; but, unknown to him, it had also been revealed to his disciples, and to Elisha in particular, who kept constantly beside him.

Gilgal — This Gilgal (Jiljil) was near Ebal and Gerizim; a school of the prophets was established there. At Beth-el there was also a school of the prophets, which Elijah had founded, notwithstanding that place was the headquarters of the calf-worship; and at Jericho there was another ( 2 Kings 2:4). In travelling to these places, which he had done through the impulse of the Spirit ( Kings 2:2,4-6), Elijah wished to pay a farewell visit to these several institutions, which lay on his way to the place of ascension and, at the same time, from a feeling of humility and modesty, to be in solitude, where there would be no eye-witnesses of his glorification. All his efforts, however, to prevail on his attendant to remain behind, were fruitless. Elisha knew that the time was at hand, and at every place the sons of the prophets spoke to him of the approaching removal of his master. Their last stage was at the Jordan. They were followed at a distance by fifty scholars of the prophets, from Jericho, who were desirous, in honor of the great occasion, to witness the miraculous translation of the prophet. The revelation of this striking event to so many was a necessary part of the dispensation; for it was designed to be under the law, like that of Enoch in the patriarchal age, a visible proof of another state, and a type of the resurrection of Christ.

**3.** take away thy master from they head — an allusion to the custom of scholars sitting at the feet of their master, the latter being over their heads (\*\*PTB\*Acts 22:3).

- **8.** Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters Like the rod of Moses, it had the divinely operating power of the Spirit.
- **9.** *Elijah said unto Elisha*, *Ask what I shall do for thee* trusting either that it would be in his power to bequeath it, or that God, at his entreaty, would grant it.

let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me— This request was not, as is commonly supposed, for the power of working miracles exceeding the magnitude and number of his master's, nor does it mean a higher endowment of the prophetic spirit; for Elisha was neither superior to, nor perhaps equally great with, his predecessor. But the phrase, "a double portion," was applied to the first-born [4017]Deuteronomy 21:17], and therefore Elisha's request was, simply, to be heir to the prophetic office and gifts of his master.

**10.** *Thou hast asked a hard thing* — an extraordinary blessing which *I* cannot, and God only, can give. Nevertheless he, doubtless by the secret directions of the Spirit, proposed to Elisha a sign, the observation of which would keep him in the attitude of an anxious waiter, as well as suppliant for the favor.

### <sup>42011</sup>2 KINGS 2:11-18.

#### HE IS TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN IN A CHARIOT OF FIRE.

**11.** behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire — some bright effulgence, which, in the eyes of the spectators, resembled those objects.

went up by a whirlwind — a tempest or storm wind accompanied with vivid flashes of fire, figuratively used for the divine judgments (2006).

**12.** *Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father* — that is, spiritual father, as the pupils of the prophets are called their sons.

the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof — that is, that as earthly kingdoms are dependent for their defense and glory upon warlike preparations, there a single prophet had done more for the preservation and prosperity of Israel than all her chariots and horsemen.

*took hold of his own clothes and rent them* — in token of his grief for his loss.

- **13.** He took up also the mantle of Elijah The transference of this prophetic cloak was, to himself, a pledge of his being appointed successor, and it was an outward token to others of the spirit of Elijah resting upon him.
- **14-18.** *smote the waters* The waving of the mantle on the river, and the miraculous division of the waters consequent upon it, was an evidence that the Lord God of Elijah was with him, and as this miracle was witnessed by the scholars of the prophets from Jericho, they forthwith recognized the pre-eminence of Elisha, as now the prophet of Israel.
- **16-18.** *fifty strong men*, *let them go*, *we pray thee*, *and seek thy master* Though the young prophets from Jericho had seen Elijah's miraculous passage of the Jordan, they had not witnessed the ascension. They imagined that he might have been cast by the whirlwind on some mountain or valley; or, if he had actually been admitted into heaven, they expected that his body would still be remaining somewhere on earth. In compliance with their importunity, he gave them permission, but told them what the result would be.

<sup>400</sup>2 KINGS 2:19-25.

#### ELISHA HEALS THE WATERS.

**20.** Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein — The noxious qualities of the water could not be corrected by the infusion of salt — for, supposing the salt was possessed of such a property, a whole spring could not be purified by a dishful for a day, much less in all future time. The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word of the Lord, by which the spring was healed [Keil].

**23, 24.** *there came forth little children out of the city* — that is, the idolatrous, or infidel young men of the place, who affecting to disbelieve the report of his master's translation, sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious career.

**bald head** — an epithet of contempt in the East, applied to a person even with a bushy head of hair. The appalling judgment that befell them was God's interference to uphold his newly invested prophet.

⁴™2 KINGS 3:1-3.

#### JEHORAM'S EVIL REIGN OVER ISRAEL.

1, 2. Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat — (compare 42281 Kings 22:51). To reconcile the statements in the two passages, we must suppose that Ahaziah, having reigned during the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, was succeeded by his brother Joram or Jehoram, in the end of that eighteenth year, or else that Ahaziah, having reigned two years in conjunction with his father, died at the end of that period when Jehoram ascended the throne. His policy was as hostile as that of his predecessors to the true religion; but he made some changes. Whatever was his motive for this alteration — whether dread of the many alarming judgments the patronage of idolatry had brought upon his father; or whether it was made as a small concession to the feelings of Jehoshaphat, his ally, he abolished idolatry in its gross form and restored the symbolic worship of God, which the kings of Israel, from the time of Jeroboam, had set up as a partition wall between their subjects and those of Judah.

<sup>400</sup>2 KINGS 3:4,5.

### MESHA, KING OF MOAB, REBELS.

**4-6.** *Mesha king of Moab*, etc. — As his dominions embraced an extensive pasture country, he paid, as annual tribute, the wool of a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams. It is still common in the East to pay custom and taxes in the fruits or natural produce of the land.

**5.** *king of Moab rebelled* — This is a repetition of <sup>4002</sup> 2 Kings 1:1, in order to introduce an account of the confederate expedition for crushing this revolt, which had been allowed to continue unchecked during the short reign of Ahaziah.

### <sup>4000</sup>2 KINGS 3:6-24.

#### ELISHA PROMISES WATER AND VICTORY OVER MOAB.

- **6.** *King Jehoram ... numbered Israel* made a levy from his own subjects, and at the same time sought an alliance with Jehoshaphat, which, as on the former occasion with Ahab, was readily promised ( Kings 22:4).
- 8-12. Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom — This was a long and circuitous route, by the southern bend of the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat however preferred it, partly because the part of the Moabite territory at which they would arrive, was the most defenseless; and partly because he would thereby enlist, in the expedition, the forces of the king of Edom. But, in penetrating the deep, rocky valley of Ahsy, which forms the boundary between Edom and Moab, the confederate army was reduced, both man and beast, to the greatest extremities for want of water. They were disappointed by finding the wady of this valley, the brook Zered (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:13-18) [ROBINSON], dry. Jehoram was in despair. But the pious mind of Jehoshaphat inquired for a prophet of the Lord; and, on being informed that Elisha was at hand, the three kings "went down to him"; that is, to his tent, which was either in the camp, or close by it. He had been directed thither by the Spirit of God for this special purpose. They went to him, not only as a mark of respect, but to supplicate for his assistance.
- **11.** which poured water on the hands of Elijah that is, was his servant this being one of the common offices of a servant. The phrase is used here as synonymous with "a true and eminent prophet," who will reveal God's will to us.

- 13, 14. What have I to do with thee? etc. Wishing to produce a deep spirit of humility and contrition, Elisha gave a stern repulse to the king of Israel, accompanied by a sarcastic sneer, in bidding him go and consult Baal and his soothsayers. But the distressed condition, especially the imploring language, of the royal suppliants, who acknowledged the hand of the Lord in this distress, drew from the prophet the solemn assurance, that solely out of respect to Jehoshaphat, the Lord's true servant, did he take any interest in Jehoram.
- **15.** bring me a minstrel The effect of music in soothing the mind is much regarded in the East; and it appears that the ancient prophets, before entering their work, commonly resorted to it, as a preparative, by praise and prayer, to their receiving the prophetic afflatus.

*the hand of the Lord* — a phrase significantly implying that the gift of prophecy was not a natural or inherent gift, but conferred by the power and grace of God.

- **16.** *Make this valley full of ditches* capable of holding water.
- **17.** Ye shall not see wind It is common in the East to speak of seeing wind, from the clouds of straw, dust, or sand, that are often whirled into the air, after a long drought.
- **20-24.** when the meat offering was offered that is, at the time of the morning sacrifice, accompanied, doubtless, with solemn prayers; and these led, it may be, by Elisha on this occasion, as on a similar one by Elijah (\*\*\* 18:36).

behold, there came water by the way of Edom — Far from the Israelitish camp, in the eastern mountains of Edom, a great fall of rain, a kind of cloudburst, took place, by which the wady was at once filled, but they saw neither the wind nor the rains. The divine interposition was shown by introducing the laws of nature to the determined end in the predetermined way [Keil]. It brought not only aid to the Israelitish army in their distress, by a plentiful supply of water, but destruction on the Moabites, who, perceiving the water, under the refulgent rays of the morning sun, red like blood, concluded the confederate kings had quarrelled and deluged the field with their mutual slaughter; so that, rushing to their camp in full

expectation of great spoil, they were met by the Israelites, who, prepared for battle, fought and pursued them. Their country was laid waste in the way, which has always been considered the greatest desolation in the East.

- **25.** *Kir-haraseth* (now Kerak) Castle of Moab then, probably, the only fortress in the land.
- **27.** took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering, etc. By this deed of horror, to which the allied army drove the king of Moab, a divine judgment came upon Israel; that is, the besiegers feared the anger of God, which they had incurred by giving occasion to the human sacrifice forbidden in the law (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 18:21 20:3), and hastily raised the siege.

### <sup>4000</sup>2 KINGS 4:1-7.

### ELISHA AUGMENTS THE WIDOW'S OIL.

**1.** there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets — They were allowed to marry as well as the priests and Levites. Her husband, not enjoying the lucrative profits of business, had nothing but a professional income, which, in that irreligious age, would be precarious and very scanty, so that he was not in a condition to provide for his family.

the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen — By the enactment of the law, a creditor was entitled to claim the person and children of the insolvent debtor, and compel them to serve him as bondmen till the year of jubilee should set them free.

- **2-4.** *a pot* or cruet of oil. This comprising her whole stock of domestic utensils, he directs her to borrow empty vessels not a few; then, secluding herself with her children, [the widow] was to pour oil from her cruse into the borrowed vessels, and, selling the oil, discharge the debt, and then maintain herself and family with the remainder.
- **6.** *the oil stayed* that is, ceased to multiply; the benevolent object for which the miracle had been wrought having been accomplished.

### <sup>42008</sup>2 KINGS 4:8-17.

### PROMISES A SON TO THE SHUNAMMITE.

**8.** *Elisha passed to Shunem* — now Sulam, in the plain of Esdraelon, at the southwestern base of Little Hermon. The prophet, in his journey, was often entertained here by one of its pious and opulent inhabitants.

- **10.** Let us make a little chamber not build, but prepare it. She meant a room in the *oleah*, the porch, or gateway ( Samuel 18:33 Kings 17:19), attached to the front of the house, leading into the court and inner apartments. The front of the house, excepting the door, is a dead wall, and hence this room is called a chamber in the wall. It is usually appropriated to the use of strangers, or lodgers for a night, and, from its seclusion, convenient for study or retirement.
- **13-16.** what is to be done for thee? Wishing to testify his gratitude for the hospitable attentions of this family, he announced to her the birth of a son "about this time next year." The interest and importance of such an intelligence can only be estimated by considering that Oriental women, and Jewish in particular, connect ideas of disgrace with barrenness, and cherish a more ardent desire for children than women in any other part of the world ("Genesis 18:10-15).

### <sup>20</sup> KINGS 4:18-37.

### RAISES HER DEAD SON.

- **19.** *My head*, *my head*! The cries of the boy, the part affected, and the season of the year, make it probable that he had been overtaken by a stroke of the sun. Pain, stupor, and inflammatory fever are the symptoms of the disease, which is often fatal.
- **22.** *she called unto her husband* Her heroic concealment of the death from her husband is not the least interesting feature of the story.
- **24.** *Drive*, *and go forward* It is usual for women to ride on asses, accompanied by a servant, who walks behind and drives the beast with his stick, goading the animal at the speed required by his mistress. The Shunammite had to ride a journey of five or six hours to the top of Carmel.
- **26-28.** *And she answered, It is well* Her answer was purposely brief and vague to Gehazi, for she reserved a full disclosure of her loss for the ear of the prophet himself. She had met Gehazi at the foot of the hill, and she stopped not in her ascent till she had disburdened her heavy-laden spirit at Elisha's feet. The violent paroxysm of grief into which she fell on

approaching him, appeared to Gehazi an act of disrespect to his master; he was preparing to remove her when the prophet's observant eye perceived that she was overwhelmed with some unknown cause of distress. How great is a mother's love! how wondrous are the works of Providence! The Shunammite had not sought a son from the prophet — her child was, in every respect, the free gift of God. Was she then allowed to rejoice in the possession for a little, only to be pierced with sorrow by seeing the corpse of the cherished boy? Perish, doubt and unbelief! This event happened that "the works of God should be made manifest" in this prophet, "and for the glory of God."

**29-31.** take my staff ... and lay ... upon the face of the child — The staff was probably an official rod of a certain form and size. Necromancers used to send their staff with orders to the messengers to let it come in contact with nothing by the way that might dissipate or destroy the virtue imparted to it. Some have thought that Elisha himself entertained similar ideas, and was under an impression that the actual application of his staff would serve as well as the touch of his hand. But this is an imputation dishonorable to the character of the prophet. He wished to teach the Shunammite, who obviously placed too great dependence upon him, a memorable lesson to look to God. By sending his servant forward to lay his staff on the child, he raised [the Shunammite's] expectations, but, at the same time, taught her that his own help was unavailing — "there was neither voice, nor hearing." The command, to salute no man by the way, showed the urgency of the mission, not simply as requiring the avoidance of the tedious and unnecessary greetings so common in the East (\*\*\*Luke 10:1), but the exercise of faith and prayer. The act of Gehazi was allowed to fail, in order to free the Shunammite, and the people of Israel at large, of the superstitious notion of supposing a miraculous virtue resided in any person, or in any rod, and to prove that it was only through earnest prayer and faith in the power of God and for His glory that this and every miracle was to be performed.

**34.** *lay upon the child*, etc. — (see Time 1 Kings 17:21 Acts 20:10). Although this contact with a dead body would communicate ceremonial uncleanness, yet, in performing the great moral duties of piety and benevolence, positive laws were sometimes dispensed with, particularly by the prophets.

**35.** the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes — These were the first acts of restored respiration, and they are described as successive steps. Miracles were for the most part performed instantaneously; but sometimes, also, they were advanced progressively towards completion (\*IISH\*1 Kings 18:44,45 \*INSH\*Mark 8:24,25).

<sup>4088</sup>2 KINGS 4:38-41.

#### PURIFIES DEADLY POTTAGE.

**38.** there was a dearth in the land — (see on TRIP2 Kings 8:1).

the sons of the prophets were sitting before him — When receiving instruction, the scholars sat under their masters. This refers to their being domiciled under the same roof (compare 40012 Kings 6:1).

**Set on the great pot** — As it is most likely that the Jewish would resemble the Egyptian "great pot," it is seen by the monumental paintings to have been a large goblet, with two long legs, which stood over the fire on the floor. The seethed pottage consisted of meat cut into small pieces, mixed with rice or meal and vegetables.

**39.** went out into the field to gather herbs — Wild herbs are very extensively used by the people in the East, even by those who possess their own vegetable gardens. The fields are daily searched for mallow, asparagus, and other wild plants.

wild vine — literally, "the vine of the field," supposed to be the *colocynth*, a cucumber, which, in its leaves, tendrils, and fruit, bears a strong resemblance to the wild vine. The "gourds," or fruit, are of the color and size of an orange bitter to the taste, causing colic, and exciting the nerves, eaten freely they would occasion such a derangement of the stomach and bowels as to be followed by death. The meal which Elisha poured into the pot was a symbolic sign that the noxious quality of the herbs was removed.

*lap full* — The hyke, or large cloak, is thrown loosely over the left shoulder and fastened under the right arm, so as to form a lap or apron.

### <sup>2</sup> KINGS 4:42-44.

### SATISFIES A HUNDRED MEN WITH TWENTY LOAVES.

**43.** They shall eat, and shall leave thereof — This was not a miracle of Elisha, but only a prediction of one by the word of the Lord. Thus it differed widely from those of Christ (\*\*\*Matthew 15:37 \*\*\*Mark 8:8\*\*\*Luke 9:17 \*\*\*\*Dohn 6:12).

**™**2 KINGS 5:1-7.

#### NAAMAN'S LEPROSY.

1. Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master — highly esteemed for his military character and success.

and honorable — rather, "very rich."

*but he was a leper* — This leprosy, which, in Israel, would have excluded him from society, did not affect his free intercourse in the court of Syria.

2-5. a little maid — who had been captured in one of the many predatory incursions which were then made by the Syrians on the northern border of Israel (see TSA) Samuel 30:8 TSA) Kings 13:21 Kings 24:2). By this young Hebrew slave of his wife, Naaman's attention was directed to the prophet of Israel, as the person who would remove his leprosy. Naaman, on communicating the matter to his royal master, was immediately furnished with a letter to the king of Israel, and set out for Samaria, carrying with him, as an indispensable preliminary in the East, very costly presents.

**5.** ten talents of silver — about \$20,000 in silver, \$60,000 in gold.

*ten changes of raiment* — splendid dresses, for festive occasions — the honor being thought to consist not only in the beauty and fineness of the material, but on having a variety to put on one after another, in the same night.

7. when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes — According to an ancient practice among the Eastern people, the main object only was stated in the letter that was carried by the party concerned, while other circumstances were left to be explained at the interview. This explains Jehoram's burst of emotion — not horror at supposed blasphemy, but alarm and suspicion that this was merely made

an occasion for a quarrel. Such a prince as he was would not readily think of Elisha, or, perhaps, have heard of his miraculous deeds.

### <sup>4000</sup>2 KINGS 5:8-15.

### ELISHA SENDS HIM TO JORDAN, AND HE IS HEALED.

- 8-12. when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, ... let him come now to me This was the grand and ultimate object to which, in the providence of God, the journey of Naaman was subservient. When the Syrian general, with his imposing retinue, arrived at the prophet's house, Elisha sent him a message to "go and wash in Jordan seven times." This apparently rude reception to a foreigner of so high dignity incensed Naaman to such a degree that he resolved to depart, scornfully boasting that the rivers of Damascus were better than all the waters of Israel.
- **11.** *strike his hand over the place* that is, wave it over the diseased parts of his body. It was anciently, and still continues to be, a very prevalent superstition in the East that the hand of a king, or person of great reputed sanctity, touching, or waved over a sore, will heal it.
- **12.** *Abana and Pharpar* the Barrady and one of its five tributaries uncertain which. The waters of Damascus are still highly extolled by their inhabitants for their purity and coldness.
- **14.** Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan Persuaded by his calmer and more reflecting attendants to try a method so simple and easy, he followed their instructions, and was cured. The cure was performed on the basis of God's covenant with Israel, by which the land, and all pertaining to it, was blessed. Seven was the symbol of the covenant [Keil].

### <sup>4155</sup>2 KINGS 5:15-19.

### ELISHA REFUSES NAAMAN'S GIFTS.

**15, 16.** *he returned to the man of God* — After the miraculous cure, Naaman returned to Elisha, to whom he acknowledged his full belief in the sole supremacy of the God of Israel and offered him a liberal reward. But to show that he was not actuated by the mercenary motives of the heathen priests and prophets, Elisha, though he accepted presents on other occasions (\*\*TOPE\*2 Kings 4:42), respectfully but firmly declined them on this, being desirous that the Syrians should see the piety of God's servants, and their superiority to all worldly and selfish motives in promoting the honor of God and the interests of true religion.

17. two mules' burden of earth — with which to make an altar (\*\*Exodus 20:24) to the God of Israel. What his motive or his purpose was in this proposal — whether he thought that God could be acceptably worshipped only on his own soil; or whether he wished, when far away from the Jordan, to have the earth of Palestine to rub himself with, which the Orientals use as a substitute for water; or whether, by making such a request of Elisha, he thought the prophet's grant of it would impart some virtue; or whether, like the modern Jews and Mohammedans, he resolved to have a portion of this holy earth for his nightly pillow — it is not easy to say. It is not strange to find such notions in so newly a converted heathen.

**18.** *goeth into the house of Rimmon* — a Syrian deity; probably the sun, or the planetary system, of which a pomegranate (*Hebrew, Rimmon*) was the symbol.

**leaneth on my hand** — that is, meaning the service which Naaman rendered as the attendant of his sovereign. Elisha's prophetic commission not extending to any but the conversion of Israel from idolatry, he makes no remark, either approving or disapproving, on the declared course of Naaman, but simply gives the parting benediction (\*\*2 Kings 5:19).

### <sup>4180</sup>2 KINGS 5:20-27.

# GEHAZI, BY A LIE, OBTAINS A PRESENT, BUT IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY.

- **20-25.** *I* will run after him, and take somewhat of him The respectful courtesy to Elisha, shown in the person of his servant, and the openhanded liberality of his gifts, attest the fullness of Naaman's gratitude; while the lie the artful management is dismissing the bearers of the treasure, and the deceitful appearance before his master, as if he had not left the house give a most unfavorable impression of Gehazi's character.
- **23.** *in two bags* People in the East, when travelling, have their money, in certain sums, put up in bags.
- **27.** *leper as white as snow* (See on <sup>OPCO</sup>Leviticus 13:3). This heavy infliction was not too severe for the crime of Gehazi. For it was not the covetousness alone that was punished; but, at the same time, it was the ill use made of the prophet's name to gain an object prompted by a mean covetousness, and the attempt to conceal it by lying [Keil].

<sup>2</sup> 4100 KINGS 6:1-7.

#### ELISHA CAUSES IRON TO SWIM.

- **1.** the place where we dwell with thee Margin, "sit before thee." The one points to a common residence the other to a common place of meeting. The tenor of the narrative shows the humble condition of Elisha's pupils. The place was either Beth-el or Jericho, probably the latter. The ministry and miracles of Elisha brought great accessions to his schools.
- **2.** *Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan* whose wooded banks would furnish plenty of timber.
- **5.** *it was borrowed* literally, "begged." The scholar's distress arose from the consideration that it had been presented to him; and that, owing to his poverty, he could not procure another.
- **6.** cut down a stick, and cast it in thither Although this means was used, it had no natural adaptation to make the iron swim. Besides, the Jordan is at Jericho so deep and rapid that there were one thousand chances to one against the stick falling into the hole of the axe-head. All attempts to account for the recovery of the lost implement on such a theory must be rejected.

*the iron did swim* — only by the miraculous exertion of Elisha's power.

2 KINGS 6:8-17.

#### DISCLOSES THE KING OF SYRIA'S COUNSEL.

**8-12.** *the king of Syria warred against Israel* — This seems to have been a sort of guerrilla warfare, carried on by predatory inroads on different parts of the country. Elisha apprised King Jehoram of the secret purpose

of the enemy; so, by adopting precautionary measures, he was always enabled to anticipate and defeat their attacks. The frequency of his disappointments having led the Syrian king to suspect some of his servants of carrying on a treacherous correspondence with the enemy, he was informed about Elisha, whose apprehension he forthwith determined to effect. This resolution was, of course, grounded on the belief that however great the knowledge of Elisha might be, if seized and kept a prisoner, he could no longer give information to the king of Israel.

- **13. Dothan** or, "Dothaim," a little north of Samaria (see on Genesis 37:17).
- 15. his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? When the Syrian detachment surrounded the place by night, for the apprehension of the prophet, his servant was paralyzed with fear. This was a new servant, who had only been with him since Gehazi's dismissal and consequently had little or no experience of his master's powers. His faith was easily shaken by so unexpected an alarm.
- 17. Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see The invisible guard of angels that encompass and defend us (\*\*Psalm 34:7). The opening of the eyes, which Elisha prayed for, were those of the Spirit, not of the body the eye of faith sees the reality of the divine presence and protection where all is vacancy or darkness to the ordinary eye. The horses and chariots were symbols of the divine power (see on \*\*TP2\* Kings 2:12); and their fiery nature denoted their supernatural origin; for fire, the most ethereal of earthly elements, is the most appropriate symbol of the Godhead [KEIL].

<sup>4008</sup>2 KINGS 6:18-23.

#### HIS ARMY SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS.

**18.** *Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness* — not a total and material blindness, for then they could not have followed him, but a mental hallucination (see Genesis 19:11) so that they did not perceive or recognize him to be the object of their search.

**19-23.** This is not the way, neither is this the city — This statement is so far true that, as he had now left the place of his residence, they would not have got him by that road. But the ambiguity of his language was purposely framed to deceive them; and yet the deception must be viewed in the light of a stratagem, which has always been deemed lawful in war.

he led them to Samaria — When they were arrived in the midst of the capital, their eyes, at Elisha's request, were opened, and they then became aware of their defenseless condition, for Jehoram had received private premonition of their arrival. The king, so far from being allowed to slay the enemies who were thus unconsciously put in his power, was recommended to entertain them with liberal hospitality and then dismiss them to their own country. This was humane advice; it was contrary to the usage of war to put war captives to death in cold blood, even when taken by the point of the sword, much more those whom the miraculous power and providence of God had unexpectedly placed at his disposal. In such circumstances, kind and hospitable treatment was every way more becoming in itself, and would be productive of the best effects. It would redound to the credit of the true religion, which inspired such an excellent spirit into its professors; and it would not only prevent the future opposition of the Syrians but make them stand in awe of a people who, they had seen, were so remarkably protected by a prophet of the Lord. The latter clause of Kings 6:23 shows that these salutary effects were fully realized. A moral conquest had been gained over the Syrians.

<sup>4102</sup>2 KINGS 6:24-33.

#### BEN-HADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA.

- **24.** *Ben-hadad* ... *besieged Samaria* This was the predicted accomplishment of the result of Ahab's foolish and misplaced kindness (\*\*100°1 Kings 20:42).
- **25.** an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver Though the ass was deemed unclean food, necessity might warrant their violation of a positive law when mothers, in their extremity, were found violating the

law of nature. The head was the worst part of the animal. Eighty pieces of silver, equal to \$50.

*the fourth part of a cab* — A cab was the smallest dry measure. The proportion here stated was nearly half a pint for \$3.

dove's dung — is thought by BOCHART to be a kind of pulse or pea, common in Judea, and still kept in the storehouses of Cairo and Damascus, and other places, for the use of it by pilgrim-caravans; by LINNAEGUS, and other botanists, it is said to be the root or white bulb of the plant *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, Star of Beth-lehem. The sacred historian does not say that the articles here named were regularly sold at the rates described, but only that instances were known of such high prices being given.

- **26.** *as the king was passing* to look at the defenses, or to give some necessary orders for manning the walls.
- **29.** we boiled my son, and did eat him (See on Deuteronomy 28:53).
- **30.** *had sackcloth within upon his flesh* The horrid recital of this domestic tragedy led the king soon after to rend his garment, in consequence of which it was discovered that he wore a penitential shirt of haircloth. It is more than doubtful, however, if he was truly humbled on account of his own and the nation's sins; otherwise he would not have vowed vengeance on the prophet's life. The true explanation seems to be, that Elisha having counselled him not to surrender, with the promise, on condition of deep humiliation, of being delivered, and he having assumed the signs of contrition without receiving the expected relief, regarded Elisha who had proved false and faithless as the cause of all the protracted distress.
- **32.** But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him The latter clause of Clause of Kings 6:33, which contains the king's impatient exclamation, enables us to account for the impetuous order he issued for the beheading of Elisha. Though Jehoram was a wicked king and most of his courtiers would resemble their master, many had been won over, through the prophet's influence, to the true religion. A meeting, probably a prayermeeting, of those was held in the house where he lodged, for he had none

of his own (IRD Kings 19:20,21); and them he not only apprised of the king's design against himself, but disclosed to them the proof of a premeditated deliverance.

### <sup>2000</sup>2 KINGS 7:1-16.

#### ELISHA PROPHESIES INCREDIBLE PLENTY IN SAMARIA.

**1.** Hear ye the word of the Lord — This prediction, though uttered first to the assembled elders, was intimated to the king's messengers, who reported it to Jehoram (\*\* Kings 7:18).

**To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel,** etc. — This may be estimated at a peck of fine flour for a dollar, and two pecks of barley at the same price.

*in the gate of Samaria* — Vegetables, cattle, all sorts of country produce, are still sold every morning at the gates of towns in the East.

- **2.** *a lord on whose hand the king leaned* When an Eastern king walks or stands abroad in the open air, he always supports himself on the arm of the *highest* courtier present.
- if the Lord would make windows in heaven The scoffing infidelity of this remark, which was a sneer against not the prophet only, but the God he served, was justly and signally punished (see Kings 7:20).
- **3.** *there were four leprous men* The account of the sudden raising of the siege and the unexpected supply given to the famishing inhabitants of Samaria, is introduced by a narrative of the visit and discovery, by these poor creatures, of the extraordinary flight of the Syrians.

**leprous men at the entering in of the gate** — living, perhaps, in some lazar house there (\*\*\*Eviticus 13:4-6 \*\*\*Numbers 5:3).

**5.** they rose up in the twilight — that is, the evening twilight (\*\*\*\*2 Kings 7:12).

*the uttermost part of the camp of Syria* — that is, the extremity nearest the city.

- 6, 7. the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots
- This illusion of the sense of hearing, whereby the besiegers imagined the tramp of two armies from opposite quarters, was a great miracle which God wrought directly for the deliverance of His people.
- **8-11.** *these lepers* ... *did eat and drink* After they had appeased their hunger and secreted as many valuables as they could carry, their consciences smote them for concealing the discovery and they hastened to publish it in the city.
- **10.** horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were The uniform arrangement of encampments in the East is to place the tents in the center, while the cattle are picketed all around, as an outer wall of defense; and hence the lepers describe the cattle as the first objects they saw.
- 12-15. the king ... said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done Similar stratagems have been so often resorted to in the ancient and modern wars of the East that there is no wonder Jehoram's suspicions were awakened. But the scouts, whom he despatched, soon found unmistakable signs of the panic that had struck the enemy and led to a most precipitate flight.

<sup>4177</sup>2 KINGS 7:17-20.

#### THE UNBELIEVING LORD TRODDEN TO DEATH.

**17.** *the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned*, — etc. The news spread like lightning through the city, and was followed, as was natural, by a popular rush to the Syrian camp. To keep order at the gate, the king ordered his minister to keep guard; but the impetuosity of the famishing people could not be resisted. The lord was trodden to death, and Elisha's prophecy in all respects accomplished.

### <sup>4</sup>2 KINGS 8:1-6.

#### THE SHUNAMMITE'S LAND RESTORED.

**1.** Then spake Elisha unto the woman — rather "had spoken." The repetition of Elisha's direction to the Shunammite is merely given as an introduction to the following narrative; and it probably took place before the events recorded in the chapters 5 and 6.

the Lord hath called for a famine — All such calamities are chastisements inflicted by the hand of God; and this famine was to be of double duration to that one which happened in the time of Elijah (\*\*\*James 5:17) — a just increase of severity, since the Israelites still continued obdurate and incorrigible under the ministry and miracles of Elisha (\*\*\*Leviticus 26:21,24,28).

- **2.** *she* ... *sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years* Their territory was recommended to her from its contiguity to her usual residence; and now that this state had been so greatly reduced, there was less risk than formerly from the seductions of idolatry; and many of the Jews and Israelites were residing there. Besides, an emigration thither was less offensive to the king of Israel than going to sojourn in Judah.
- 3. she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land In consequence of her long-continued absence from the country, her possessions were occupied by her kindred, or had been confiscated by the crown. No statute in the law of Moses ordained that alienation. But the innovation seems to have been adopted in Israel.
- **4-6.** *the king talked with Gehazi* Ceremonial pollution being conveyed by contact alone, there was nothing to prevent a conference being held with this leper at a distance; and although he was excluded from the *town* of Samaria, this reported conversation may have taken place at the gate or in one of the royal gardens. The providence of God so ordained that King

Jehoram had been led to inquire, with great interest, into the miraculous deeds of Elisha, and that the prophet's servant was in the act of relating the marvellous incident of the restoration of the Shunammite's son when she made her appearance to prefer her request. The king was pleased to grant it; and a state officer was charged to afford her every facility in the recovery of her family possession out of the hands of the occupier.

### **™2 KINGS 8:7-15.**

#### HAZAEL KILLS HIS MASTER, AND SUCCEEDS HIM.

- **7, 8.** *Elisha came to Damascus* He was directed thither by the Spirit of God, in pursuance of the mission formerly given to his master in Horeb (\*\*15), to anoint Hazael king of Syria. On the arrival of the prophet being known, Ben-hadad, who was sick, sent to inquire the issue of his disease, and, according to the practice of the heathens in consulting their soothsayers, ordered a liberal present in remuneration for the service.
- **9.** *forty camels' burden* The present, consisting of the rarest and most valuable produce of the land, would be liberal and magnificent. But it must not be supposed it was actually so large as to require forty camels to carry it. The Orientals are fond of display, and would, ostentatiously, lay upon forty beasts what might very easily have been borne by four.
- **Thy son Ben-hadad** so called from the established usage of designating the prophet "father." This was the same Syrian monarch who had formerly persecuted him (see Kings 6:13,14).
- **10.** Go, say ... Thou mayest certainly recover There was no contradiction in this message. This part was properly the answer to Benhadad's inquiry [\*\*\*2 Kings 8:9]. The second part was intended for Hazael, who, like an artful and ambitious courtier, reported only as much of the prophet's statement as suited his own views (compare \*\*\*2 Kings 8:14).
- **11.** he settled his countenance stedfastly until he was ashamed that is, Hazael. The steadfast, penetrating look of the prophet seemed to have convinced Hazael that his secret designs were known. The deep emotions of Elisha were justified by the horrible atrocities which, too common in

ancient warfare, that successful usurper committed in Israel (\*\*\* Kings 10:32 \*\*\* 13:3,4,22).

15. took a thick cloth, etc. — a coverlet. In the East, this article of bedding is generally a thick quilt of wool or cotton, so that, with its great weight, when steeped in water, it would be a fit instrument for accomplishing the murderous purpose, without leaving any marks of violence. It has been supposed by many that Hazael purposely murdered the king. But it is common for Eastern people to sleep with their faces covered with a mosquito net; and, in some cases of fever, they dampen the bedclothes. Hazael, aware of those chilling remedies being usually resorted to, might have, with an honest intention, spread a refreshing cover over him. The rapid occurrence of the king's death and immediate burial were favorable to his instant elevation to the throne.

<sup>4186</sup>2 KINGS 8:16-23.

#### JEHORAM'S WICKED REIGN.

**16.** Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat ... began to reign — (See on Kings 3:1). His father resigned the throne to him two years before his death.

**18.** *daughter of Ahab* — Athaliah, through whose influence Jehoram introduced the worship of Baal and many other evils into the kingdom of Judah (see <sup>4010</sup>2 Chronicles 21:2-20). This apostasy would have led to the total extinction of the royal family in that kingdom, had it not been for the divine promise to David (<sup>4010</sup>2 Samuel 7:16). A national chastisement, however, was inflicted on Judah by the revolt of Edom, which, being hitherto governed by a tributary ruler (<sup>4010</sup>2 Kings 3:9 <sup>4120</sup>1 Kings 22:47), erected the standard of independence (<sup>4010</sup>2 Chronicles 21:9).

### <sup>2</sup> KINGS 8:24.

### AHAZIAH SUCCEEDS HIM.

**24.** Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead — (See on 4001)2 Chronicles 22:1).

<sup>13902</sup> KINGS 9:1-23.

#### JEHU IS ANOINTED.

**1.** Ramoth-gilead — a city of great importance to the Hebrew people, east of Jordan, as a fortress of defense against the Syrians. Jehoram had regained it (\*\*2 Kings 8:29). But the Israelitish army was still encamped there, under the command of Jehu.

Elisha ... called one of the children of the prophets — This errand referred to the last commission given to Elijah in Horeb (411961 Kings 19:16).

**box of oil** — (See • 1 Samuel 10:1).

- **2.** carry him to an inner chamber both to ensure the safety of the messenger and to prevent all obstruction in the execution of the business.
- **3.** *I have anointed thee king over Israel* This was only a part of the message; the full announcement of which is given (\*\*\* Kings 9:7-10).

*flee*, *and tarry not* — for fear of being surprised and overtaken by the spies or servants of the court.

- **4-6.** So the young man ... went to Ramoth-gilead His ready undertaking of this delicate and hazardous mission was an eminent proof of his piety and obedience. The act of anointing being done through a commissioned prophet, was a divine intimation of his investiture with the sovereign power. But it was sometimes done long prior to the actual possession of the throne (\*\*\* Samuel 16:13); and, in like manner, the commission had, in this instance, been given also a long time before to Elijah (\*\*\* Kings 19:16), who, for good reasons, left it in charge to Elisha; and he awaited God's time and command for executing it [POOLE].
- **10.** *in the portion of Jezreel* that is, that had formerly been the vineyard of Naboth.

- 11. Is all well? etc. Jehu's attendants knew that the stranger belonged to the order of the prophets by his garb, gestures, and form of address; and soldiers such as they very readily concluded such persons to be crackbrained, not only from the sordid negligence of their personal appearance and their open contempt of the world, but from the religious pursuits in which their whole lives were spent, and the grotesque actions which they frequently performed (compare \*\*Deremiah 29:26).
- **13.** *they hasted*, *and took every man his garment* the upper cloak which they spread on the ground, as a token of their homage to their distinguished commander (\*\*\*Matthew 21:7).
- top of the stairs from the room where the prophet had privately anointed Jehu. That general returned to join his brother officers in the public apartment, who, immediately on learning his destined elevation, conducted him to the top of the stairs leading to the roof. This was the most conspicuous place of an Oriental structure that could be chosen, being at the very top of the gate building, and fully in view of the people and military in the open ground in front of the building [KITTO]. The popularity of Jehu with the army thus favored the designs of Providence in procuring his immediate and enthusiastic proclamation as king, and the top of the stairs was taken as a most convenient substitute for a throne.
- **14, 15.** *Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead* rather, "was keeping," guarding, or besieging it, with the greater part of the military force of Israel. The king's wounds had compelled his retirement from the scene of action, and so the troops were left in command of Jehu.
- **16.** So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel Full of ambitious designs, he immediately proceeded to cross the Jordan to execute his commission on the house of Ahab.
- 17-24. there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel The Hebrew palaces, besides being situated on hills had usually towers attached to them, not only for the pleasure of a fine prospect, but as posts of useful observation. The ancient watchtower of Jezreel must have commanded a view of the whole region eastward, nearly down to the Jordan. Beth-shan stands on a rising ground about six or seven miles below it, in a narrow part of the plain; and when Jehu and his retinue reached that point

between Gilboa and Beth-shan, they could be fully descried by the watchman on the tower. A report was made to Joram in his palace below. A messenger on horseback was quickly despatched down into the plain to meet the ambiguous host and to question the object of their approach. "Is it peace?" We may safely assume that this messenger would meet Jehu at the distance of three miles or more. On the report made of his being detained and turned into the rear of the still advancing troops, a second messenger was in like manner despatched, who would naturally meet Jehu at the distance of a mile or a mile and a half down on the plain. He also being turned into the rear, the watchman now distinctly perceived "the driving to be like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." The alarmed monarch, awakened to a sense of his impending danger, quickly summoned his forces to meet the crisis. Accompanied by Ahaziah, king of Judah, the two sovereigns ascended their chariots to make a feeble resistance to the impetuous onset of Jehu, who quickly from the plain ascended the steep northern sides of the site on which Jezreel stood, and the conflicting parties met "in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite," where Joram was quickly despatched by an arrow from the strong arm of Jehu. We were impressed with the obvious accuracy of the sacred historian; the localities and distances being such as seem naturally to be required by the incidents related, affording just time for the transactions to have occurred in the order in which they are recorded [HowE].

- **25.** *cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite*, etc. according to the doom pronounced by divine authority on Ahab (INTE) Kings 21:19), but which on his repentance was deferred to be executed on his son.
- **26.** *the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord* Although their death is not expressly mentioned, it is plainly implied in the confiscation of his property (see death of Lord). Kings 21:16).

### <sup>4</sup>2 KINGS 9:27-35.

#### AHAZIAH IS SLAIN.

**27.** *Ahaziah* — was grandnephew to King Joram, and great-grandson to King Ahab.

**Ibleam** — near Megiddo, in the tribe of Issachar ( Joshua 17:11 Judges 1:27); and Gur was an adjoining hill.

**30.** *Jezebel painted her face* — literally, "her eyes," according to a custom universal in the East among women, of staining the eyelids with a black powder made of pulverized antimony, or lead ore mixed with oil, and applied with a small brush on the border, so that by this dark ligament on the edge, the largeness as well as the luster of the eye itself was thought to be increased. Her object was, by her royal attire, not to captivate, but to overawe Jehu.

35. found no more of her than the skull, and the palms of her hands, etc.The dog has a rooted aversion to prey on the human hands and feet.

<sup>4</sup>2 KINGS 9:36,37.

#### JEZEBEL EATEN BY DOGS.

**36.** *This is the word of the Lord* — (See In Kings 21:23). Jehu's statement, however, was not a literal but a paraphrased quotation of Elijah's prophecy.

<sup>2001</sup>2 KINGS 10:1-17.

# JEHU CAUSES SEVENTY OF AHAB'S CHILDREN TO BE BEHEADED.

- 1-4. Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria As it appears (\*\*222 Kings 10:13), that grandsons are included it is probable that this number comprehended the whole posterity of Ahab. Their being all assembled in that capital might arise from their being left there on the king's departure for Ramoth-gilead, or from their taking refuge in some of the strongholds of that city on the news of Jehu's conspiracy. It may be inferred from the tenor of Jehu's letters that their first intention was to select the fittest of the royal family and set him up as king. Perhaps this challenge of Jehu was designed as a stroke of policy on his part to elicit their views, and to find out whether they were inclined to be pacific or hostile. The bold character of the man, and the rapid success of his conspiracy, terrified the civic authorities of Samaria and Jezreel into submission.
- **5.** *he that was over the house* the governor or chamberlain of the palace.
- the bringers-up of the children Anciently, and still also in many Eastern countries, the principal grandees were charged with the support and education of the royal princes. This involved a heavy expense which they were forced to bear, but for which they endeavored to find some compensation in the advantages of their connection with the court.
- **6.** take ye the heads of the men, your master's sons The barbarous practice of a successful usurper slaughtering all who may have claims to the throne, has been frequently exemplified in the ancient and modern histories of the East.
- **8.** Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate, etc. The exhibition of the heads of enemies is always considered a glorious trophy. Sometimes a pile of heads is erected at the gate of the palace; and a head of

peculiarly striking appearance selected to grace the summit of the pyramid.

- **9-11.** *said to all the people*, *Ye be righteous* A great concourse was assembled to gaze on this novel and ghastly spectacle. The speech which Jehu addressed to the spectators was artfully framed to impress their minds with the idea that so wholesale a massacre was the result of the divine judgments denounced on the house of Ahab; and the effect of it was to prepare the public mind for hearing, without horror, of a similar revolting tragedy which was soon after perpetrated, namely, the extinction of all the influential friends and supporters of the dynasty of Ahab, including those of the royal house of Judah.
- 13, 14. We are the brethren of Ahaziah that is, not full, but step-brothers, sons of Jehoram by various concubines. Ignorant of the revolution that had taken place, they were travelling to Samaria on a visit to their royal relatives of Israel, when they were seized and put to death, because of the apprehension that they might probably stimulate and strengthen the party that still remained faithful in their allegiance to Ahab's dynasty.

*children of the queen* — that is, of the queen mother, or regent, Jezebel.

**15-18.** Jehonadab the son of Rechab — (See Thronicles 2:55). A person who, from his piety and simple primitive manner of life (Thronicles 3:1-19), was highly esteemed, and possessed great influence in the country. Jehu saw in a moment the advantage that his cause would gain from the friendship and countenance of this venerable man in the eyes of the people, and accordingly paid him the distinguished attention of inviting him to a seat in his chariot.

give me thine hand — not simply to aid him in getting up, but for a far more significant and important purpose — the giving, or rather joining hands, being the recognized mode of striking a league or covenant, as well as of testifying fealty to a new sovereign; accordingly, it is said, "he [Jehonadab] gave him [Jehu] his hand."

### <sup>2008</sup>2 KINGS 10:18-29.

#### HE DESTROYS THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL.

- 19. call unto me all the prophets of Baal The votaries of Baal are here classified under the several titles of prophets, priests, and servants, or worshippers generally. They might be easily convened into one spacious temple, as their number had been greatly diminished both by the influential ministrations of Elijah and Elisha, and also from the late King Joram's neglect and discontinuance of the worship. Jehu's appointment of a solemn sacrifice in honor of Baal, and a summons to all his worshippers to join in its celebration, was a deep-laid plot, which he had resolved upon for their extinction, a measure in perfect harmony with the Mosaic law, and worthy of a constitutional king of Israel. It was done, however not from religious, but purely political motives, because be believed that the existence and interests of the Baalites were inseparably bound up with the dynasty of Ahab and because he hoped that by their extermination he would secure the attachment of the far larger and more influential party who worshipped God in Israel. Jehonadab's concurrence must have been given in the belief of his being actuated solely by the highest principles of piety and zeal.
- **22.** Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal The priests of Baal were clad, probably, in robes of white byssus while they were engaged in the functions of their office, and these were kept under the care of an officer in a particular wardrobe of Baal's temple. This treacherous massacre, and the means taken to accomplish it, are paralleled by the slaughter of the Janissaries and other terrible tragedies in the modern history of the East.
- **29.** Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam ... Jehu departed not from after them Jehu had no intention of carrying his zeal for the Lord beyond a certain point, and as he considered it impolitic to encourage his subjects to travel to Jerusalem, he re-established the symbolic worship of the calves.

### **№ 2 KINGS** 11:1-3.

#### JEHOASH SAVED FROM ATHALIAH'S MASSACRE.

**1.** *Athaliah* — (See on decomplete 22:2). She had possessed great influence over her son, who, by her counsels, had ruled in the spirit of the house of Ahab.

destroyed all the seed royal — all connected with the royal family who might have urged a claim to the throne, and who had escaped the murderous hands of Jehu (\*\*\*2\*\*2\*\*Chronicles 21:2-4 22:1 \*\*\*2\*\*2\*\* Kings 10:13,14). This massacre she was incited to perpetrate — partly from a determination not to let David's family outlive hers; partly as a measure of self-defense to secure herself against the violence of Jehu, who was bent on destroying the whole of Ahab's posterity to which she belonged (\*\*\*\*2\*\* Kings 8:18-26); but chiefly from personal ambition to rule, and a desire to establish the worship of Baal. Such was the sad fruit of the unequal alliance between the son of the pious Jehoshaphat and a daughter of the idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab.

2. *Jehosheba* — or Jehoshabeath ( Chronicles 22:11).

daughter of King Joram — not by Athaliah, but by a secondary wife.

*stole him from among the king's sons which were slain* — either from among the corpses, he being considered dead, or out of the palace nursery.

hid him ... in the bedchamber — for the use of the priests, which was in some part of the temple ( Kings 11:3), and of which Jehoiada and his wife had the sole charge. What is called, however, the bedchamber in the East is not the kind of apartment that we understand by the name, but a small closet, into which are flung during the day the mattresses and other bedding materials spread on the floors or divans of the sitting-rooms by day. Such a slumber-room was well suited to be a convenient place for the

recovery of his wounds, and a hiding-place for the royal infant and his nurse.

### <sup>42106</sup>2 KINGS 11:4-12.

#### HE IS MADE KING.

**4.** *the seventh year* — namely, of the reign of Athaliah, and the rescue of Jehoash.

Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers, etc. — He could scarcely have obtained such a general convocation except at the time, or on pretext, of a public and solemn festival. Having revealed to them the secret of the young king's preservation and entered into a covenant with them for the overthrow of the tyrant, he then arranged with them the plan and time of carrying their plot into execution (see on <sup>427</sup>2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21). The conduct of Jehoiada, who acted the leading and chief part in this conspiracy, admits of an easy and full justification; for, while Athaliah was a usurper, and belonged to a race destined by divine denunciation to destruction, even his own wife had a better and stronger claim to the throne; the sovereignty of Judah had been divinely appropriated to the family of David, and therefore the young prince on whom it was proposed to confer the crown, possessed an inherent right to it, of which a usurper could not deprive him. Moreover, Jehoiada was most probably the high priest, whose official duty it was to watch over the due execution of God's laws, and who in his present movement, was encouraged and aided by the countenance and support of the chief authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the country. In addition to all these considerations, he seems to have been directed by an impulse of the Divine Spirit, through the counsels and exhortations of the prophets of the time.

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#### ATHALIAH SLAIN.

**13.** Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people — The profound secrecy with which the conspiracy had been conducted rendered the unusual acclamations of the vast assembled crowd the more startling and roused the suspicions of the tyrant.

she came ... into the temple of the Lord — that is, the courts, which she was permitted to enter by Jehoiada's directions [421182] Kings 11:8] in order that she might be secured.

- **14.** the king stood by a pillar or on a platform, erected for that purpose (see on 4002 Chronicles 6:13).
- **15.** *without the ranges* that is, fences, that the sacred place might not be stained with human blood.

<sup>2</sup> KINGS 11:17-20.

#### JEHOIADA RESTORES GOD'S WORSHIP.

17, 18. a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people — The covenant with the Lord was a renewal of the national covenant with Israel (\*\*Exodus 19:1-24:18; "to be unto him a people of inheritance," Deuteronomy 4:6 \*\*Exodus 19:1-24:19). The covenant between the king and the people was the consequence of this, and by it the king bound himself to rule according to the divine law, while the people engaged to submit, to give him allegiance as the Lord's anointed. The immediate fruit of this renewal of the covenant was the destruction of the temple and the slaughter of the priests of Baal (see \*\*Exodustion\*\* 2 Kings 10:27); the restoration of the pure worship of God in all its ancient integrity; and the establishment of the young king on the hereditary throne of Judah (\*\*Exodustion\*\* 2 Kings 11:19).

### <sup>2000</sup>2 KINGS 12:1-18.

#### JEHOASH REIGNS WELL WHILE JEHOIADA LIVED.

- **2.** Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord so far as related to his outward actions and the policy of his government. But it is evident from the sequel of his history that the rectitude of his administration was owing more to the salutary influence of his preserver and tutor, Jehoiada, than to the honest and sincere dictates of his own mind.
- **3.** But the high places were not taken away The popular fondness for the private and disorderly rites performed in the groves and recesses of hills was so inveterate that even the most powerful monarchs had been unable to accomplish their suppression; no wonder that in the early reign of a young king, and after the gross irregularities that had been allowed during the maladministration of Athaliah, the difficulty of putting an end to the superstitions associated with "the high places" was greatly increased.
- **4.** *Jehoash said to the priests*, etc. There is here given an account of the measures which the young king took for repairing the temple by the levying of taxes:
  - **1.** "The money of every one that passeth the account," namely, half a shekel, as "an offering to the Lord" (\*\*Exodus 30:13).
  - **2.** "The money that every man is set at," that is, the redemption price of every one who had devoted himself or any thing belonging to him to the Lord, and the amount of which was estimated according to certain rules (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 27:1-8).
  - **3.** Free will or voluntary offerings made to the sanctuary. The first two were paid annually (see 40152 Chronicles 24:5).

- 7-10. Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? This mode of collection not proving so productive as was expected (the dilatoriness of the priests was the chief cause of the failure), a new arrangement was proposed. A chest was placed by the high priest at the entrance into the temple, into which the money given by the people for the repairs of the temple was to be put by the Levites who kept the door. The object of this chest was to make a separation between the money to be raised for the building from the other moneys destined for the general use of the priests, in the hope that the people would be more liberal in their contributions when it was known that their offerings would be devoted to the special purpose of making the necessary repairs. The duty of attending to this work was no longer to devolve on the priests, but to be undertaken by the king.
- 11, 12. they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work The king sent his secretary along with an agent of the high priest to count the money in the chest from time to time (12 Chronicles 24:11), and deliver the amount to the overseers of the building, who paid the workmen and purchased all necessary materials. The custom of putting sums of certain amount in bags, which are labelled and sealed by a proper officer, is a common way of using the currency in Turkey and other Eastern countries.
- **13-16.** Howbeit there were not made ... bowls, etc. When the repairs of the temple had been completed, the surplus was appropriated to the purchase of the temple furniture. The integrity of the overseers of the work being undoubted, no account was exacted of the way in which they applied the money given to them, while other moneys levied at the temple were left to the disposal of the priests as the law directed (\*\*\*Leviticus 5:16\*\*\*Numbers 5:8).
- **17, 18.** Then Hazael ... fought against Gath (See on 4022) Chronicles 24:23).

### \*\*\*20092 KINGS 12:19-21.

### HE IS SLAIN.

**20.** his servants arose ... and slew Joash in the house of Millo — (See on Chronicles 24:25).

### <sup>2000</sup>2 KINGS 13:1-7.

#### JEHOAHAZ'S WICKED REIGN OVER ISRAEL.

- 1-3. Jehoahaz ... reigned seventeen years Under his government, which pursued the policy of his predecessors regarding the support of the calfworship, Israel's apostasy from the true God became greater and more confirmed than in the time of his father Jehu. The national chastisement, when it came, was consequently the more severe and the instruments employed by the Lord in scourging the revolted nation were Hazael and his son and general Ben-hadad, in resisting whose successive invasions the Israelitish army was sadly reduced and weakened. In the extremity of his distress, Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and was heard, not on his own account (\*\*Psalm 66:18\*\*\*Proverbs 1:28\*\*\*\*\*15:8), but that of the ancient covenant with the patriarchs (\*\*\*\*2\*\*\*\*\*13:23).
- **4.** *he saw the oppression of Israel* that is, commiserated the fallen condition of His chosen people. The divine honor and the interests of true religion required that deliverance should be granted them to check the triumph of the idolatrous enemy and put an end to their blasphemous taunts that God had forsaken Israel (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:27 \*\*Psalm 12:4).
- **5.** a saviour This refers neither to some patriotic defender nor some signal victory, but to the deliverance obtained for Israel by the two successors of Jehoahaz, namely, Joash, who regained all the cities which the Syrians had taken from his father (\*\*\*2 Kings 13:25); and Jeroboam, who restored the former boundaries of Israel (\*\*\*2 Kings 14:25).
- **6.** there remained the grove Asherah the idol set up by Ahab (\*\*\*\*I Kings 16:33), which ought to have been demolished (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:5).
- **7.** *made them like the dust in threshing* Threshing in the East is performed in the open air upon a level plot of ground, daubed over with a

covering to prevent, as much as possible, the earth, sand, or gravel from rising; a great quantity of them all, notwithstanding this precaution, must unavoidably be taken up with the grain; at the same time the straw is shattered to pieces. Hence it is a most significant figure, frequently employed by Orientals to describe a state of national suffering, little short of extermination ( Saiah 21:10 Micah 4:12 Little Saiah 21:33). The figure originated in a barbarous war custom, which Hazael literally followed (Amos 1:3,4; compare Samuel 18:31 Micah 3:3).

### **□218**2 KINGS 13:8-25.

#### JOASH SUCCEEDS HIM.

- **8.** *his might* This is particularly noticed in order to show that the grievous oppression from foreign enemies, by which the Israelites were ground down, was not owing to the cowardice or imbecility of their king, but solely to the righteous and terrible judgment of God for their foul apostasy.
- **12, 13.** *his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah* (See on Kings 14:8-14). The usual summary of his life and reign occurs rather early, and is again repeated in the account given of the reign of the king of Judah (Kings 14:15).
- **14-19.** *Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died* Every man's death is occasioned by some disease, and so was Elisha's. But in intimating it, there seems a contrast tacitly made between him and his prophetic predecessor, who did not die.
- Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face He visited him where he was lying ill of this mortal sickness, and expressed deep sorrow, not from the personal respect he bore for the prophet, but for the incalculable loss his death would occasion to the kingdom.
- my father, my father! etc. (See on Explicit See Seem to have been a complimentary phrase applied to one who was thought an eminent guardian and deliverer of his country. The particular application

of them to Elisha, who, by his counsels and prayer, had obtained many glorious victories for Israel, shows that the king possessed some measure of faith and trust, which, though weak, was accepted, and called forth the prophet's dying benediction.

15-18. Take bow and arrows — Hostilities were usually proclaimed by a herald, sometimes by a king or general making a public and formal discharge of an arrow into the enemy's country. Elisha directed Joash to do this, as a symbolical act, designed to intimate more fully and significantly the victories promised to the king of Israel over the Syrians. His laying his hands upon the king's hands was to represent the power imparted to the bow shot as coming from the Lord through the medium of the prophet. His shooting the first arrow eastward — to that part of his kingdom which the Syrians had taken and which was east of Samaria — was a declaration of war against them for the invasion. His shooting the other arrows into the ground was in token of the number of victories he was taken to gain; but his stopping at the third betrayed the weakness of his faith; for, as the discharged arrow signified a victory over the Syrians, it is evident that the more arrows he shot the more victories he would gain. As he stopped so soon, his conquests would be incomplete.

**20, 21.** *Elisha died* — He had enjoyed a happier life than Elijah, as he possessed a milder character, and bore a less hard commission. His rough garment was honored even at the court.

coming in of the year — that is, the spring, the usual season of beginning campaigns in ancient times. Predatory bands from Moab generally made incursions at that time on the lands of Israel. The bearers of a corpse, alarmed by the appearance of one of these bands, hastily deposited, as they passed that way, their load in Elisha's sepulcher, which might be easily done by removing the stone at the mouth of the cave. According to the Jewish and Eastern custom, his body, as well as that of the man who was miraculously restored, was not laid in a coffin, but only swathed; so that the bodies could be brought into contact, and the object of the miracle was to stimulate the king's and people of Israel's faith in the still unaccomplished predictions of Elisha respecting the war with the Syrians. Accordingly the historian forthwith records the historical fulfillment of the prediction (1272) Kings 13:22-25), in the defeat of the enemy, in the

recovery of the cities that had been taken, and their restoration to the kingdom of Israel.

<sup>22401</sup>2 KINGS 14:1-6.

#### AMAZIAH'S GOOD REIGN OVER JUDAH.

- 3-6. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father— The beginning of his reign was excellent, for he acted the part of a constitutional king, according to the law of God, yet not with perfect sincerity of heart (compare 425) Chronicles 25:2). As in the case of his father Joash, the early promise was belied by the devious course he personally followed in later life (see 425) Chronicles 20:14), as well as by the public irregularities he tolerated in the kingdom.
- **5.** as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand It was an act of justice no less than of filial piety to avenge the murder of his father. But it is evident that the two assassins must have possessed considerable weight and influence, as the king was obliged to retain them in his service, and durst not, for fear of their friends and supporters, institute proceedings against them until his power had been fully consolidated.
- **6.** But the children of the murderers he slew not This moderation, inspired by the Mosaic law (description Deuteronomy 24:16), displays the good character of this prince; for the course thus pursued toward the families of the regicides was directly contrary to the prevailing customs of antiquity, according to which all connected with the criminals were doomed to unsparing destruction.

2 KINGS 14:7.

#### HE SMITES EDOM.

7. He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand — In the reign of Joram the Edomites had revolted (\*\*\* Kings 8:20). But Amaziah,

determined to reduce them to their former subjection, formed a hostile expedition against them, in which he routed their army and made himself master of their capital.

*the valley of salt* — that part of the Ghor which comprises the salt and sandy plain to the south of the Dead Sea.

**Selah** — literally, "the rock"; generally thought to be Petra.

**Joktheel** — that is, "given" or "conquered by God." See the history of this conquest more fully detailed (\*\*2012 Chronicles 25:6-16).

<sup>2048</sup>2 KINGS 14:8-16.

#### JOASH DEFEATS HIM.

- **8.** Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel This bold and haughty challenge, which was most probably stimulated by a desire of satisfaction for the outrages perpetrated by the discharged auxiliaries of Israel (\*\*\* Chronicles 25:13) on the towns that lay in their way home, as well as by revenge for the massacre of his ancestors by Jehu (\*\*\* Kings 9:1-37) sprang, there is little doubt, from pride and self-confidence, inspired by his victory over the Edomites.
- 9. Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah People in the East very often express their sentiments in a parabolic form, especially when they intend to convey unwelcome truths or a contemptuous sneer. This was the design of the admonitory fable related by Joash in his reply. The thistle, a low shrub, might be chosen to represent Amaziah, a petty prince; the cedar, the powerful sovereign of Israel, and the wild beast that trampled down the thistle the overwhelming army with which Israel could desolate Judah. But, perhaps, without making so minute an application, the parable may be explained generally, as describing in a striking manner the effects of pride and ambition, towering far beyond their natural sphere, and sure to fall with a sudden and ruinous crash. The moral of the fable is contained in Line 2019 2 Kings 14:10.

11-14. But Amaziah would not hear — The sarcastic tenor of this reply incited the king of Judah the more; for, being in a state of judicial blindness and infatuation (4050)2 Chronicles 25:20), he was immovably determined on war. But the superior energy of Joash surprised him ere he had completed his military preparations. Pouring a large army into the territory of Judah, he encountered Amaziah in a pitched battle, routed his army, and took him prisoner. Then having marched to Jerusalem (4040)2 Kings 14:13), he not only demolished part of the city walls, but plundered the treasures of the palace and temple. Taking hostages to prevent any further molestation from Judah, he terminated the war. Without leaving a garrison in Jerusalem, he returned to his capital with all convenient speed, his presence and all his forces being required to repel the troublesome incursions of the Syrians.

### <sup>12417</sup>2 KINGS 14:17-20.

#### HE IS SLAIN BY A CONSPIRACY.

19, 20. they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem — Amaziah's apostasy (\*\*\*2\*2\*2 Chronicles 25:27) was followed by a general maladministration, especially the disastrous issue of the war with Israel. The ruinous condition of Jerusalem, the plunder of the temple, and the loss of their children who were taken as hostages [\*\*\*2\*2\*\*2 Kings 14:13,14], lost him the respect and attachment not of the grandees only, but of his subjects generally, who were in rebellion. The king fled in terror to Lachish, a frontier town of the Philistines, where, however, he was traced and murdered. His friends had his corpse brought without any pomp or ceremony, in a chariot to Jerusalem, where he was interred among his royal ancestors.

### <sup>2101</sup>2 KINGS 14:21,22.

#### AZARIAH SUCCEEDS HIM.

- **21.** all the people of Judah took Azariah or Uzziah (\*\*\*22 Kings 15:30 \*\*\*2 Chronicles 26:1). The popular opposition had been personally directed against Amaziah as the author of their calamities, but it was not extended to his family or heir.
- **22.** *He built Elath* fortified that seaport. It had revolted with the rest of Edom, but was now recovered by Uzziah. His father, who did not complete the conquest of Edom, had left him that work to do.

<sup>2022</sup> KINGS 14:23-29.

#### JEROBOAM'S WICKED REIGN OVER ISRAEL.

**23.** *Jeroboam*, *the son of Joash king of Israel* — This was Jeroboam II who, on regaining the lost territory, raised the kingdom to great political power (\*\* Kings 14:25), but adhered to the favorite religious policy of the Israelitish sovereigns (\*\* Kings 14:24). While God granted him so great a measure of national prosperity and eminence, the reason is expressly stated (\*\* Kings 14:26,27) to be that the purposes of the divine covenant forbade as yet the overthrow of the kingdom of the ten tribes (see \*\* Kings 13:23).

**2150** 2 KINGS 15:1-7.

#### AZARIAH'S REIGN OVER JUDAH.

**1-7.** In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam — It is thought that the throne of Judah continued vacant eleven or twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of his son Azariah. Being a child only four years old when his father was murdered, a regency was appointed during Azariah's minority.

began Azariah ... to reign — The character of his reign is described by the brief formula employed by the inspired historian, in recording the religious policy of the later kings. But his reign was a very active as well as eventful one, and is fully related (4000) 2 Chronicles 26:1-23). Elated by the possession of great power, and presumptuously arrogating to himself, as did the heathen kings, the functions both of the real and sacerdotal offices, he was punished with leprosy, which, as the offense was capital (4000) Numbers 8:7), was equivalent to death, for this disease excluded him from all society. While Jotham, his son, as his viceroy, administered the affairs of the kingdom — being about fifteen years of age (compare 4000) Kings 15:33) — he had to dwell in a place apart by himself (see on 4000) Kings 7:3). After a long reign he died, and was buried in the royal burying-field, though not in the royal cemetery of "the city of David" (4000) Chronicles 26:23).

<sup>2018</sup>2 KINGS 15:8-16.

#### ZECHARIAH'S REIGN OVER ISRAEL.

**8-10.** In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did **Zechariah** the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel — There was an interregnum from some unknown cause between the reign of Jeroboam and

the accession of his son, which lasted, according to some, for ten or twelve years, according to others, for twenty-two years, or more. This prince pursued the religious policy of the calf-worship, and his reign was short, being abruptly terminated by the hand of violence. In his fate was fulfilled the prophecy addressed to Jehu (\*\*\* Kings 10:30; also \*\*\* Hosea 1:4), that his family would possess the throne of Israel for four generations; and accordingly Jehoahaz, Joash, Jehoram, and Zechariah were his successors — but there his dynasty terminated; and perhaps it was the public knowledge of this prediction that prompted the murderous design of Shallum.

- **13-17.** *Shallum* ... *reigned a full month* He was opposed and slain by Menahem, who, according to JOSEPHUS, was commander of the forces, which, on the report of the king's murder, were besieging Tirzah, a town twelve miles east of Samaria, and formerly a seat of the kings of Israel. Raising the siege, he marched directly against the usurper, slew him, and reigned in his stead.
- **16.** *Menahem* ... *smote Tiphsah* Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, the border city of Solomon's kingdom (\*\*Menahem took it by storm. Then thaving spoiled it, he committed the most barbarous excesses, without regard either to age or sex.

### <sup>12576</sup>2 KINGS 15:17-21.

#### MENAHEM'S REIGN.

- **17.** *reigned ten years in Samaria* His government was conducted on the religious policy of his predecessors.
- **19.** *Pul the king of Assyria* This is the first Assyrian king after Nimrod who is mentioned in biblical history. His name has been recently identified with that of Phalluka on the monuments of Nineveh, and that of Menahem discovered also.

came against the land — Elsewhere it is said "Ephraim [Israel] went to the Assyrian" [ \*\*\*\* Hosea 5:13]. The two statements may be reconciled

a thousand talents of silver — equal to \$2,000,000. This tribute, which Menahem raised by a tax on the grandees of Israel, bribed Pul to return to his own country (see on Chronicles 5:26).

<sup>2050</sup>2 KINGS 15:22-24.

#### PEKAHIAH'S REIGN.

- **23.** *Pekahiah* ... *son of Menahem began to reign* On comparing the date given with Azariah's reign, it seems that several months had intervened between the death of Menahem and the accession of Pekahiah, probably owing to a contest about the throne.
- **25.** *with Argob and Arieh*, etc. Many commentators view these as the captain's accomplices. But it is more probable that they were influential friends of the king, who were murdered along with him.

<sup>2057</sup>2 KINGS 15:27-31.

#### PEKAH'S REIGN.

**29.** *in the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser* — This monarch, who succeeded Pul on the throne of Assyria, is the only one of

all the kings who does not give his genealogy, and is therefore supposed to have been an usurper. His annals have been discovered in the Nimroud mound, describing this expedition into Syria. The places taken are here mentioned as they occurred and were conquered in the progress of an invasion.

**30.** Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy ... and slew him — He did not, however, obtain possession of the kingdom till about nine or ten years after the perpetration of this crime [HALES].

in the twentieth year of Jotham — Jotham's reign lasted only sixteen years, but the meaning is that the reign of Hoshea began in the twentieth after the beginning of Jotham's reign. The sacred historian, having not yet introduced the name of Ahaz, reckoned the date by Jotham, whom he had already mentioned (see 40082 Chronicles 27:8).

## <sup>42159</sup>2 KINGS 15:32-38.

#### JOTHAM'S REIGN OVER JUDAH.

- 33. Five and twenty years was he when he began to reign that is, alone for he had ruled as his father's viceroy (\*\*\*\* Kings 15:5).
- **35.** the higher gate of the house of the Lord not the temple itself, but one of its courts; probably that which led into the palace (\*\*22) Chronicles 23:20).
- 37. the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, etc. This is the first intimation of the hostile feelings of the kings of Israel and Syria, to Judah, which led them to form an alliance and make joint preparations for war. [See on Chronicles 27:5.] However, war was not actually waged till the reign of Ahaz.

<sup>22612</sup> KINGS 16:1-16.

#### AHAZ' WICKED REIGN OVER JUDAH.

- 1-4. Ahaz ... did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord [See on 22 Chronicles 28:1.] The character of this king's reign, the voluptuousness and religious degeneracy of all classes of the people, are graphically portrayed in the writings of Isaiah, who prophesied at that period. The great increase of worldly wealth and luxury in the reigns of Azariah and Jotham had introduced a host of corruptions, which, during his reign, and by the influence of Ahaz, bore fruit in the idolatrous practices of every kind which prevailed in all parts of the kingdom (see
- **3.** walked in the way of the kings of Israel This is descriptive of the early part of his ,reign, when, like the kings of Israel, he patronized the symbolic worship of God by images but he gradually went farther into gross idolatry (\*4XII) 2 Chronicles 28:2).
- made his son to pass through the fire (\*\*\*22 Kings 23:10). The hands of the idol Moloch being red hot, the children were passed through between them, which was considered a form of lustration. There is reason to believe that, in certain circumstances, the children were burnt to death (\*\*\*Psalm 106:37). This was strongly prohibited in the law (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 18:21\*\*\*20:2-5 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 18:10), although there is no evidence that it was practiced in Israel till the time of Ahaz.
- **5.** Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem Notwithstanding their great efforts and military preparations, they failed to take it and, being disappointed, raised the siege and returned home (compare \*\* Isaiah 7:1).
- **6.** Rezin ... recovered Elath which Azariah had got into his possession ( Kings 14:22).

*the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day* — The *Septuagint* version has "the Edomites," which the most judicious commentators and travelers [ROBINSON] prefer.

7-9. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser — In spite of the assurance given him by Isaiah by two signs, the one immediate, the other remote ( Isaiah 7:14 S:4), that the confederate kings would not prevail against him, Ahaz sought aid from the Assyrian monarch, to purchase which he sent the treasures of the palace and temple. Tiglath-pileser marched against Damascus, slew Rezin the king, and carried the people of Damascus into captivity to Kir, which is thought to have been the city Karine (now Kerend), in Media.

10-16. And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser — This was a visit of respect, and perhaps of gratitude. During his stay in that heathen city, Ahaz saw an altar with which he was greatly captivated. Forthwith a sketch of it was transmitted to Jerusalem, with orders to Urijah the priest to get one constructed according to the Damascus model, and let this new altar supersede the old one in the temple. Urijah, with culpable complaisance, acted according to his instructions ( Kings 16:16). The sin in this affair consisted in meddling with, and improving according to human taste and fancy, the altars of the temple, the patterns of which had been furnished by divine authority (Exodus 25:40 26:30 27:1 Chronicles 28:19). Urijah was one of the witnesses taken by Isaiah to bear his prediction against Syria and Israel ( Isaiah 8:2).

## <sup>2067</sup>2 KINGS 16:17-19.

#### HE SPOILS THE TEMPLE.

- **17.** *cut off the borders of the bases*, etc. It is thought that he did this to use the elaborate sculpture in adorning his palace.
- **18.** *the covert for the Sabbath* the portico through which the priests entered the temple on the Sabbath.

*the king's entry without* — a private external entrance for the king into the temple. The change made by Ahaz consisted in removing both of these

into the temple from fear of the king of Assyria, that, in case of a siege, he might secure the entrance of the temple from him.

<sup>2001</sup>2 KINGS 17:1-6.

#### HOSHEA'S WICKED REIGN.

- 1. In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, began Hoshea ... to reign

   The statement in Strings 15:30 may be reconciled with the present passage in the following manner: Hoshea conspired against Pekah in the twentieth year of the latter, which was the eighteenth of Jotham's reign. It was two years before Hoshea was acknowledged king of Israel, that is, in the fourth of Ahaz, and twentieth of Jotham. In the twelfth year of Ahaz his reign began to be tranquil and prosperous [CALMET].
- **2.** he did evil ... but not as the kings of Israel Unlike his predecessors from the time of Jeroboam, he neither established the rites of Baal, nor compelled the people to adhere to the symbolic worship of the calves. [See on <sup>4600</sup>2 Chronicles 30:1.] In these respects, Hoshea acted as became a constitutional king of Israel. Yet, through the influence of the nineteen princes who had swayed the scepter before him (all of whom had been zealous patrons of idolatry, and many of whom had been also infamous for personal crimes), the whole nation had become so completely demoralized that the righteous judgment of an angry Providence impended over it.
- **3.** Against him came up Shalmaneser or Shalman (\*\*\*Hosea 10:14), the same as the Sargon of Isaiah [\*\*\*Isaiah 20:1]. Very recently the name of this Assyrian king has been traced on the Ninevite monuments, as concerned in an expedition against a king of Samaria, whose name, though mutilated, Colonel Rawlinson reads as Hoshea.
- **4.** *found conspiracy in Hoshea* After having paid tribute for several years, Hoshea, determined on throwing off the Assyrian yoke, withheld the stipulated tribute. Shalmaneser, incensed at this rebellion, proclaimed war against Israel. This was in the sixth year of Hoshea's reign.

he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt — the Sabaco of the classic historians, a famous Ethiopian who, for fifty years, occupied the Egyptian throne, and through whose aid Hoshea hoped to resist the threatened attack of the Assyrian conqueror. But Shalmaneser, marching against [Hoshea], scoured the whole country of Israel, besieged the capital Samaria, and carried the principal inhabitants into captivity in his own land, having taken the king himself, and imprisoned him for life. This ancient policy of transplanting a conquered people into a foreign land, was founded on the idea that, among a mixed multitude, differing in language and religion, they would be kept in better subjection, and have less opportunity of combining together to recover their independence.

**6.** carried Israel away — that is, the remaining tribes (see on <sup>1252</sup>2 Kings 15:29).

and placed them, etc. — This passage GESENIUS renders thus, omitting the particle by, which is printed in italics to show it is not in the original: "and placed them in Halah, and on the Chabor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

*Halah* — the same as Calah ( Genesis 10:11,12), in the region of the Layous or Zab river, about a day's journey from the ruins of Nineveh.

**Chabor** — is a river, and it is remarkable that there is a river rising in the central highlands of Assyria which retains this name Khabour unchanged to the present day.

Gozan — ("pasture") or Zozan, are the highlands of Assyria, which afford pasturage. The region in which the Chabor and the Zab rise, and through which they flow, is peculiarly of this character. The Nestorians repair to it with their numerous flocks, spending the summer on the banks or in the highlands of the Chabor or the Zab. Considering the high authority we possess for regarding Gozan and Zozan as one name, there can be no doubt that this is the Gozan referred to in this passage.

*cities of the Medes* — "villages," according to the *Syriac* and *Vulgate* versions, or "mountains," according to the *Septuagint*. The Medish inhabitants of Gozan, having revolted, had been destroyed by the kings of Assyria, and nothing was more natural than that they should wish to place

in it an industrious people, like the captive Israelites, while it was well suited to their pastoral life [GRANT, *Nestorians*].

## 2 KINGS 17:7-41.

# SAMARIA TAKEN, AND ISRAEL FOR THEIR SINS CARRIED CAPTIVE.

**7. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned** — There is here given a very full and impressive vindication of the divine procedure in punishing His highly privileged, but rebellious and apostate, people. No wonder that amid so gross a perversion of the worship of the true God, and the national propensity to do reverence to idols, the divine patience was exhausted; and that the God whom they had forsaken permitted them to go into captivity, that they might learn the difference between His service and that of their despotic conquerors.

**24-28.** *the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon* — This was not Shalmaneser, but Esar-haddon (\*\*Ezekiel 4:2). The places vacated by the captive Israelites he ordered to be occupied by several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon and other provinces.

*from Cuthah* — the Chaldee form of Cush or Susiana, now Khusistan.

**Ava** — supposed to be Ahivaz, situated on the river Karuns, which empties into the head of the Persian Gulf.

**Hamath** — on the Orontes.

**Sepharvaim** — Siphara, a city on the Euphrates above Babylon.

placed them in the cities of Samaria, etc. — It must not be supposed that the Israelites were universally removed to a man. A remnant was left, chiefly however of the poor and lower classes, with whom these foreign colonists mingled; so that the prevailing character of society about Samaria was heathen, not Israelite. For the Assyrian colonists became masters of the land; and, forming partial intermarriages with the remnant Jews, the inhabitants became a mongrel race, no longer a people of Ephraim (\*\*Tisaiah 7:6\*). These people, imperfectly instructed in the creed of the

Jews, acquired also a mongrel doctrine. Being too few to replenish the land, lions, by which the land had been infested ( THE Judges 14:5 THE Judges 14:5 Samuel 17:34 Tkings 13:24 20:36 Song of Solomon 4:8), multiplied and committed frequent ravages upon them. Recognizing in these attacks a judgment from the God of the land, whom they had not worshipped, they petitioned the Assyrian court to send them some Jewish priests who might instruct them in the right way of serving Him. The king, in compliance with their request, sent them one of the exiled priests of Israel ( Kings 17:27), who established his headquarters at Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. It is not said that he took a copy of the Pentateuch with him, out of which he might teach them. Oral teaching was much better fitted for the superstitious people than instruction out of a written book. He could teach them more effectually by word of mouth. Believing that he would adopt the best and simplest method for them, it is unlikely that he took the written law with him, and so gave origin to the Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch [DAVIDSON, Criticism]. Besides, it is evident from his being one of the exiled priests, and from his settlement at Beth-el, that he was not a Levite, but one of the calf-worshipping priests. Consequently his instructions would be neither sound nor efficient.

- **29.** Howbeit every nation made gods of their own These Assyrian colonists, however, though instructed in the worship, and acknowledging the being of the God of Israel, did not suppose Him to be the only God. Like other heathens, they combined His worship with that of their own gods; and as they formed a promiscuous society from different nations or provinces, a variety of idols was acknowledged among them.
- **30.** Succoth-benoth that is, the "tents" or "booths of the daughters," similar to those in which the Babylonian damsels celebrated impure rites (\*\*MR\*\* Amos 2:8).

**Nergal** — The Jewish writers say this idol was in the form of a cock, and it is certain that a cock is often associated with a priest on the Assyrian monuments [LAYARD]. But modern critics, looking to the astrological character of Assyrian idolatry, generally consider Nergal as the planet Mars, the god of war. The name of this idol formed part of the appellation of two of the king of Babylon's princes (2008) Jeremiah 39:3).

**Ashima** — an idol under the form of an entirely bald he-goat.

**31.** *Nibhaz* — under that of a dog — that Egyptian form of animalworship having prevailed in ancient Syria, as is evident from the image of a large dog at the mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog river.

*Tartak* — According to the rabbis, it was in the form of an ass, but others understand it as a planet of ill-omen, probably Saturn.

**Adrammelech** — supposed by some to be the same as Molech, and in Assyrian mythology to stand for the sun. It was worshipped in the form of a mule — others maintain in that of a peacock.

**Anammelech** — worshipped in the form of a hare; others say in that of a goat.

**34.** *Unto this day* — the time of the Babylonian exile, when this book was composed. Their religion was a strange medley or compound of the service of God and the service of idols. Such was the first settlement of the people, afterwards called Samaritans, who were sent from Assyria to colonize the land, when the kingdom of Israel, after having continued three hundred fifty-six years, was overthrown.

<sup>21801</sup>2 KINGS 18:1-3.

#### HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

1, 2. Hezekiah ... began to reign. Twenty and five years old — According to this statement (compare Kings 16:2), he must have been born when his father Ahaz was no more than eleven years old. Paternity at an age so early is not unprecedented in the warm climates of the south, where the human frame is matured sooner than in our northern regions. But the case admits of solution in a different way. It was customary for the later kings of Israel to assume their son and heir into partnership in the government during their lives; and as Hezekiah began to reign in the third year of Hoshea ( Kings 18:1), and Hoshea in the twelfth year of Ahaz ( 2 Kings 17:1), it is evident that Hezekiah began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz his father, and so reigned two or three years before his father's death. So that, at the beginning of his reign in conjunction with his father, he might be only twenty-two or twenty-three, and Ahaz a few years older than the common calculation makes him. Or the case may be solved thus: As the ancient writers, in the computation of time, take notice of the year they mention, whether finished or newly begun, so Ahaz might be near twenty-one years old at the beginning of his reign, and near seventeen years older at his death; while, on the other hand, Hezekiah, when he began to reign, might be just entering into his twenty-fifth year, and so Ahaz would be near fourteen years old when his son Hezekiah was born — no uncommon age for a young man to become a father in southern latitudes [PATRICK].

## <sup>1280</sup>2 KINGS 18:4-37.

#### HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

**4.** He removed the high places and brake the images, etc. — The methods adopted by this good king for extirpating idolatry, and accomplishing a thorough reformation in religion, are fully detailed (\*\*C\*\* Chronicles 20:3 31:19). But they are indicated very briefly, and in a sort of passing allusion.

brake in pieces the brazen serpent — The preservation of this remarkable relic of antiquity (\*\*Numbers 21:5-10) might, like the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, have remained an interesting and instructive monument of the divine goodness and mercy to the Israelites in the wilderness: and it must have required the exercise of no small courage and resolution to destroy it. But in the progress of degeneracy it had become an object of idolatrous worship and as the interests of true religion rendered its demolition necessary, Hezekiah, by taking this bold step, consulted both the glory of God and the good of his country.

unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it — It is not to be supposed that this superstitious reverence had been paid to it ever since the time of Moses, for such idolatry would not have been tolerated either by David or by Solomon in the early part of his reign, by Asa or Jehoshaphat had they been aware of such a folly. But the probability is, that the introduction of this superstition does not date earlier than the time when the family of Ahab, by their alliance with the throne of Judah, exercised a pernicious influence in paving the way for all kinds of idolatry. It is possible, however, as some think, that its origin may have arisen out of a misapprehension of Moses' language (\*\*PR\*\*Numbers 21:8). Serpentworship, how revolting soever it may appear, was an extensively diffused form of idolatry; and it would obtain an easier reception in Israel because many of the neighboring nations, such as the Egyptians and Phoenicians, adored idol gods in the form of serpents as the emblems of health and immortality.

**5, 6.** *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel* — without invoking the aid or purchasing the succor of foreign auxiliaries like Asa (\*\*\*\* Kings 15:18,19) and Ahaz (\*\*\*\* Kings 16:17 \*\*\* Isaiah 7:1-25).

so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah — Of course David and Solomon are excepted, they having had the sovereignty of the whole country. In the petty kingdom of Judah, Josiah alone had a similar testimony borne to him (\*\*\* Kings 23:25). But even he was surpassed by Hezekiah, who set about a national reformation at the beginning of his reign, which Josiah did not. The pious character and the excellent course of Hezekiah was prompted, among other secondary influences, by a sense of the calamities his father's wicked career had brought on the country, as well as by the counsels of Isaiah.

7, 8. he rebelled against the king of Assyria — that is, the yearly tribute his father had stipulated to pay, he, with imprudent haste, withdrew. Pursuing the policy of a truly theocratic sovereign, he was, through the divine blessing which rested on his government, raised to a position of great public and national strength. Shalmaneser had withdrawn from Palestine, being engaged perhaps in a war with Tyre, or probably he was dead. Assuming, consequently, that full independent sovereignty which God had settled on the house of David, he both shook off the Assyrian yoke, and, by an energetic movement against the Philistines, recovered from that people the territory which they had taken from his father Ahaz (\*\*2 Chronicles 28:18).

#### **13.** *Sennacherib* — the son and successor of Shalmaneser.

all the fenced cities of Judah — not absolutely all of them; for, besides the capital, some strong fortresses held out against the invader (\*\*2 Kings 18:17 \*\*2 Kings 19:8). The following account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and the remarkable destruction of his army, is repeated almost verbatim in \*\*2 Chronicles 32:1-33 and \*\*\* Isaiah 36:1-37:38. The expedition seems to have been directed against Egypt, the conquest of which was long a leading object of ambition with the Assyrian monarchs. But the invasion of Judah necessarily preceded, that country being the key to Egypt, the highway through which the conquerors from Upper Asia had to pass. Judah had also at this time formed a league of mutual defense with Egypt (\*\*\*\* Kings 18:24). Moreover, it was now laid completely

open by the transplantation of Israel to Assyria. Overrunning Palestine, Sennacherib laid siege to the fortress of Lachish, which lay seven Roman miles from Eleutheropolis, and therefore southwest of Jerusalem on the way to Egypt [ROBINSON]. Among the interesting illustrations of sacred history furnished by the recent Assyrian excavations, is a series of basreliefs, representing the siege of a town, which the inscription on the sculpture shows to be Lachish, and the figure of a king, whose name is given, on the same inscription, as Sennacherib. The legend, sculptured over the head of the king, runs thus: "Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish [Lakhisha], I give permission for its slaughter" [Nineveh and Babylon]. This minute confirmation of the truth of the Bible narrative is given not only by the name Lachish, which is contained in the inscription, but from the physiognomy of the captives brought before the king, which is unmistakably Jewish.

**14-16.** Hezekiah ... sent to Lachish, saying, ... that which thou puttest on me will I bear — Disappointed in his expectations of aid from Egypt, and feeling himself unable to resist so mighty a conqueror who was menacing Jerusalem itself, Hezekiah made his submission. The payment of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold — about \$1,500,000 — brought a temporary respite; but, in raising the imposed tribute, he was obliged not only to drain all the treasures of the palace and the temple, but even to strip the doors and pillars of the sacred edifice of the gold that adorned them.

<sup>2087</sup>2 KINGS 18:17.

#### SENNACHERIB BESIEGES JERUSALEM.

**17.** king of Assyria sent Tartan — general ( Saiah 20:1).

**Rab-saris** — chief of the eunuchs.

**Rab-shakeh** — chief cupbearer. These were the great officers employed in delivering Sennacherib's insulting message to Hezekiah. On the walls of the palace of Sennacherib, at Khorsabad, certain figures have been

identified with the officers of that sovereign mentioned in Scripture. In particular, the figures, Rab-shakeh, Rab-saris, and Tartan, appear as full-length portraits of the persons holding those offices in the reign of Sennacherib. Probably they represent the very individuals sent on this embassy.

with a great host to Jerusalem — Engaged in a campaign of three years in Egypt, Sennacherib was forced by the king of Ethiopia to retreat, and discharging his rage against Jerusalem, he sent an immense army to summon it to surrender. (See on 4820) Chronicles 32:30).

*the conduit of the upper pool* — the conduit which went from the reservoir of the Upper Gihon (Birket et Mamilla) to the lower pool, the Birket es Sultan.

*the highway of the fuller's field* — the public road which passed by that district, which had been assigned them for carrying on their business without the city, on account of the unpleasant smell [KEIL].

**18.** when they had called to the king — Hezekiah did not make a personal appearance, but commissioned his three principal ministers to meet the Assyrian deputies at a conference outside the city walls.

**Eliakim** — lately promoted to be master of the royal household (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 22:20).

**Shebna** — removed for his pride and presumption (\*\*Tsaiah 22:15) from that office, though still royal secretary.

**Joah ... the recorder** — that is, the keeper of the chronicles, an important office in Eastern countries.

**19.** *Rab-shakeh said* — The insolent tone he assumed appears surprising. But this boasting ( <sup>2889</sup>2 Kings 18:19-25), both as to matter and manner, his highly colored picture of his master's powers and resources, and the impossibility of Hezekiah making any effective resistance, heightened by all the arguments and figures which an Oriental imagination could suggest, has been paralleled in all, except the blasphemy, by other messages of defiance sent on similar occasions in the history of the East.

**27.** *that they may eat*, etc. — This was designed to show the dreadful extremities to which, in the threatened siege, the people of Jerusalem would be reduced.

<sup>2001</sup>2 KINGS 19:1-5.

#### HEZEKIAH IN DEEP AFFLICTION.

1-3. when king Hezekiah heard it, he rent his clothes — The rending of his clothes was a mode of expressing horror at the daring blasphemy — the assumption of sackcloth a sign of his mental distress — his entrance into the temple to pray the refuge of a pious man in affliction — and the forwarding an account of the Assyrian's speech to Isaiah was to obtain the prophet's counsel and comfort. The expression in which the message was conveyed described, by a strong figure, the desperate condition of the kingdom, together with their own inability to help themselves; and it intimated also a hope, that the blasphemous defiance of Jehovah's power by the impious Assyrian might lead to some direct interposition for the vindication of His honor and supremacy to all heathen gods.

**4.** *the living God* — "The living God" is a most significant expression taken in connection with the senseless deities that Rab-shakeh boasted were unable to resist his master's victorious arms.

<sup>200</sup>2 KINGS 19:6,7.

#### COMFORTED BY ISAIAH.

**6.** *Isaiah said* ... *Be not afraid* — The prophet's answer was most cheering, as it held out the prospect of a speedy deliverance from the invader. The blast, the rumor, the fall by the sword, contained a brief prediction that was soon fulfilled in all the three particulars — namely, the alarm that hastened his retreat, the destruction that overtook his army, and the violent death that suddenly ended his career.

## <sup>1298</sup>2 KINGS 19:8-13.

# SENNACHERIB SENDS A BLASPHEMOUS LETTER TO HEZEKIAH.

8. So Rab-shakeh ... found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah — Whether Lachish had fallen or not, is not said. But Sennacherib had transferred his battering-rams against the apparently neighboring fortress of Libnah (\*\*\*Joshua 10:29; compare \*\*\*Joshua 10:31 \*\*\*Joshua 10:31\*\*, where the chief-cup-bearer reported the execution of his mission.

9-13. when he heard say of Tirhakah ..., Behold, he is come out to fight against thee, etc. — This was the "rumor" to which Isaiah referred [ 2001] Kings 19:7]. Tirhakah reigned in Upper Egypt, while So (or Sabaco) ruled in Lower Egypt. He was a powerful monarch, another Sesostris, and both he and Sabaco have left many monuments of their greatness. The name and figure of Tirhakah receiving war captives, are still seen in the Egyptian temple of Medinet Abou. This was the expected succor which was sneered at by Rab-shakeh as "a bruised reed" (22 Kings 18:21). Rage against Hezekiah for allying himself with Egypt, or the hope of being better able to meet this attack from the south, induced him, after hearing the rumor of Tirhakah's advance, to send a menacing letter to Hezekiah, in order that he might force the king of Judah to an immediate surrender of his capital. This letter, couched in the same vaunting and imperious style as the speech of Rab-shakeh, exceeded it in blasphemy, and contained a larger enumeration of conquered places, with the view of terrifying Hezekiah and showing him the utter hopelessness of all attempts at resistance

<sup>12942</sup> KINGS 19:14-34.

#### HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

**14-19.** Hezekiah received the letter ... and went up into the house of the Lord — Hezekiah, after reading it, hastened into the temple, spread it in the childlike confidence of faith before the Lord, as containing taunts

deeply affecting the divine honor, and implored deliverance from this proud defier of God and man. The devout spirit of this prayer, the recognition of the Divine Being in the plenitude of His majesty — so strikingly contrasted with the fancy of the Assyrians as to His merely local power; his acknowledgment of the conquests obtained over other lands; and of the destruction of their wooden idols which, according to the Assyrian practice, were committed to the flames — because their tutelary deities were no gods; and the object for which he supplicated the divine interposition — that all the kingdoms of the earth might know that the Lord was the only God — this was an attitude worthy to be assumed by a pious theocratic king of the chosen people.

**20.** *Then Isaiah* ... *sent* — A revelation having been made to Isaiah, the prophet announced to the king that his prayer was heard. The prophetic message consisted of three different portions: — *First*, Sennacherib is apostrophized (\*\*PP2\*\*2 Kings 19:21-28) in a highly poetical strain, admirably descriptive of the turgid vanity, haughty pretensions, and presumptuous impiety of the Assyrian despot. *Secondly*, Hezekiah is addressed (\*\*PP2\*\*2 Kings 19:29-31), and a sign is given him of the promised deliverance — namely, that for two years the presence of the enemy would interrupt the peaceful pursuits of husbandry, but in the third year the people would be in circumstances to till their fields and vineyards and reap the fruits as formerly. *Thirdly*, the issue of Sennacherib's invasion is announced (\*\*PP2\*\*2 Kings 19:32-34).

33. shall not come into this city — nor approach near enough to shoot an arrow, not even from the most powerful engine which throws missiles to the greatest distance, nor shall he occupy any part of the ground before the city by a fence, a mantelet, or covering for men employed in a siege, nor cast (raise) a bank (mound) of earth, overtopping the city walls, whence he may see and command the interior of the city. None of these, which were the principal modes of attack followed in ancient military art, should Sennacherib be permitted to adopt. Though the army under Rab-shakeh marched towards Jerusalem and encamped at a little distance with a view to blockade it, they delayed laying siege to it, probably waiting till the king, having taken Lachish and Libnah, should bring up his detachment, that with all the combined forces of Assyria they might invest the capital. So determined was this invader to conquer Judah and the neighboring

countries ( Isaiah 10:7), that nothing but a divine interposition could have saved Jerusalem. It might be supposed that the powerful monarch who overran Palestine and carried away the tribes of Israel, would leave memorials of his deeds on sculptured slabs, or votive bulls. A long and minute account of this expedition is contained in the Annals of Sennacherib, a translation of which has recently been made into English, and, in his remarks upon it, COLONEL RAWLINSON says the Assyrian version confirms the most important features of the Scripture account. The Jewish and Assyrian narratives of the campaign are, indeed, on the whole, strikingly illustrative of each other [Outlines of Assyrian History].

<sup>2085</sup>2 KINGS 19:35,36.

#### AN ANGEL DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS.

35. in the morning ... they were all dead corpses — It was the miraculous interposition of the Almighty that defended Jerusalem. As to the secondary agent employed in the destruction of the Assyrian army, it is most probable that it was effected by a hot south wind, the simoon, such as to this day often envelops and destroys whole caravans. This conjecture is supported by Kings 19:7, and Figure miah 51:1. The destruction was during the night; the officers and soldiers, being in full security, were negligent; their discipline was relaxed; the camp guards were not alert, or perhaps they themselves were the first taken off, and those who slept, not wrapped up, imbibed the poison plentifully. If this had been an evening of dissolute mirth (no uncommon thing in a camp), their joy (perhaps for a victory), or "the first night of their attacking the city," says Josephus, became, by its effects, one means of their destruction [Calmet, Fragments].

**36.** So Sennacherib king of Assyria ... went and returned — the same way as he came (\*\*\*28\*\*2 Kings 19:33). The route is described (\*\*\*28\*\*15\*\*aiah 10:28\*\*32). The early chariot track near Beyrouth is on the rocky edge of Lebanon, which is skirted by the ancient Lycus (Nahr-el Kelb). On the perpendicular face of the limestone rock, at different heights, are seen slabs with Assyrian inscriptions, which having been deciphered, are found to

contain the name of Sennacherib. Thus, by the preservation of these tablets, the wrath of the Assyrian invaders is made to praise the Lord.

**dwelt at Nineveh** — This statement implies a considerable period of time, and his Annals carry on his history at least five years after his disastrous campaign at Jerusalem. No record of his catastrophe can be found, as the Assyrian practice was to record victories alone. The sculptures give only the sunny side of the picture.

**DBS**2 KINGS 19:37.

#### SENNACHERIB SLAIN.

**37.** as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch — Assaræ, or Asshur, the head of the Assyrian Pantheon, represented not as a vulture-headed figure (that is now ascertained to be a priest), but as a winged figure in a circle, which was the guardian deity of Assyria. The king is represented on the monuments standing or kneeling beneath this figure, his hand raised in sign of prayer or adoration.

his sons smote him with the sword — Sennacherib's temper, exasperated probably by his reverses, displayed itself in the most savage cruelty and intolerable tyranny over his subjects and slaves, till at length he was assassinated by his two sons, whom, it is said, he intended to sacrifice to pacify the gods and dispose them to grant him a return of prosperity. The parricides taking flight into Armenia, a third son, Esar-haddon, ascended the throne.

<sup>2001</sup>2 KINGS 20:1-7.

#### HEZEKIAH'S LIFE LENGTHENED.

**1.** In those days was Hezekiah sick — As his reign lasted twenty-nine years (\*\*DR\*18:2), and his kingdom was invaded in the fourteenth (\*\*DR\*18:13), it is evident that this sudden and severe illness must have occurred in the very year of the Syrian invasion. Between the threatened attack and the actual appearance of the enemy, this incident in Hezekiah's history must have taken place. But according to the usage of the sacred historian, the story of Sennacherib is completed before entering on what was personal to the king of Judah (see also \*\*DR\*18:aiah 37:36-38:1).

Set thine house in order — Isaiah, being of the blood royal, might have access to the king's private house. But since the prophet was commissioned to make this announcement, the message must be considered as referring to matters of higher importance than the settlement of the king's domestic and private affairs. It must have related chiefly to the state of his kingdom, he having not as yet any son (compare 2 Kings 20:6 with 2202 Kings 21:1).

*for thou shall die, and not live* — The disease was of a malignant character and would be mortal in its effects, unless the healing power of God should miraculously interpose.

- **2.** *he turned his face to the wall* not like Ahab ( <sup>depost</sup> 1 Kings 21:4), in fretful discontent, but in order to secure a better opportunity for prayer.
- **3.** remember now how I have walked before thee, etc. The course of Hezekiah's thoughts was evidently directed to the promise made to David and his successors on the throne (\*\*1005\*1 Kings 8:25). He had kept the conditions as faithfully as human infirmity admitted; and as he had been all along free from any of those great crimes by which, through the judgment of God, human life was often suddenly cut short, his great grief might arise

partly from the love of life, partly from the obscurity of the Mosaic dispensation, where life and immortality had not been fully brought to light, and partly from his plans for the reformation of his kingdom being frustrated by his death. He pleaded the fulfillment of the promise.

- **4.** afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court of the royal castle.
- **5.** Thus saith ... the God of David thy father An immediate answer was given to his prayer, containing an assurance that the Lord was mindful of His promise to David and would accomplish it in Hezekiah's experience, both by the prolongation of his life, and his deliverance from the Assyrians.

on the third day — The perfect recovery from a dangerous sickness, within so short a time, shows the miraculous character of the cure (see his thanksgiving song, Saiah 38:9). The disease cannot be ascertained; but the text gives no hint that the plague was raging then in Jerusalem; and although Arab physicians apply a cataplasm of figs to plague-boils, they also do so in other cases, as figs are considered useful in ripening and soothing inflammatory ulcers.

<sup>2018</sup>2 KINGS 20:8-20.

#### THE SUN GOES TEN DEGREES BACKWARD.

8-11. Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What will be the sign that the Lord shall heal me— His recovery in the course of nature was so unlooked for, that the king asked for some token to justify his reliance on the truth of the prophet's communication; and the sign he specified was granted to him. The shadow of the sun went back upon the dial of Ahaz the ten degrees it had gone down. Various conjectures have been formed as to this dial. The word in the original is "degrees," or "steps," and hence many commentators have supposed that it was a stair, so artfully contrived, that the shadows on the steps indicated the hours and course of the sun. But it is more probable that it was a proper instrument, and, from the Hebrews having no term to designate it, that it was one of the foreign novelties imported from Babylon by Ahaz. It seems to have been of such

magnitude, and so placed in the court, that Isaiah could point to it, and the king see it, from his chamber. The retrogression of the sun's shadow on the dial was miraculously accomplished by the omnipotent power of God; but the phenomenon was temporary, local, confined to the notice, and intended for the satisfaction, only of Hezekiah and his court.

- **12-19.** *Berodach-baladan* (\*\*\*Isaiah 39:1), the first king of Babylon mentioned in sacred history; formerly its rulers were viceroys of the Assyrian monarchs. This individual threw off the yoke, and asserting his independence, made with varying success, a long and obstinate resistance [RAWLINSON, *Outlines*]. The message of congratulation to Hezekiah, was, in all likelihood, accompanied with proposals for a defensive alliance against their common Assyrian enemy. The king of Judah, flattered with this honor, showed the ambassadors all his treasures, his armory and warlike stores; and his motive for this was evidently that the Babylonian deputies might be the more induced to prize his friendship.
- 13, 14. the silver, and the gold He paid so much tribute to Sennacherib as exhausted his treasury (compare Kings 18:16). But, after the destruction of Sennacherib, presents were brought him from various quarters, out of respect to a king who, by his faith and prayer, saved his country; and besides, it is by no means improbable that from the corpses in the Assyrian camp, all the gold and silver he had paid might be recovered. The vain display, however, was offensive to his divine liege lord, who sent Isaiah to reprove him. The answer he gave the prophet shows how he was elated by the compliment of their visit; but it was wrong, as presenting a bait for the cupidity of these rapacious foreigners, who, at no distant period, would return and pillage his country, and transfer all the possessions he ostentatiously displayed to Babylon, as well as his posterity to be court attendants in that country (see on Chronicles 32:31).
- **19.** Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken indicating a humble and pious resignation to the divine will. The concluding part of his reply was uttered after a pause and was probably an ejaculation to himself, expressing his thankfulness, that, though great afflictions should befall his descendants, the execution of the divine judgment was to be suspended during his own lifetime.

**20.** *pool and a conduit* — (See on 48802 Chronicles 32:30).

## ◆22002 KINGS 21:1-18.

#### MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN, AND GREAT IDOLATRY.

1-3. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign — He must have been born three years after his father's recovery; and his minority, spent under the influence of guardians who were hostile to the religious principles and reforming policy of his father, may account in part for the anti-theocratic principles of his reign. The work of religious reformation which Hezekiah had zealously carried on was but partially accomplished. There was little appearance of its influence on the heart and manners of the people at large. On the contrary, the true fear of God had vanished from the mass of the people; corruption and vice increased, and were openly practiced (Saiah 28:7, etc.) by the degenerate leaders, who, having got the young prince Manasseh into their power, directed his education, trained him up in their views, and seduced him into the open patronage of idolatry. Hence, when he became sovereign, he introduced the worship of idols, the restoration of high places, and the erection of altars or pillars to Baal, and the placing, in the temple of God itself, a graven image of Asherah, the sacred or symbolic tree, which represented "all the host of heaven." This was not idolatry, but pure star-worship, of Chaldaic and Assyrian origin [Keil]. The sun, as among the Persians, had chariots and horses consecrated to it ( Kings 23:11); and incense was offered to the stars on the housetops ( Kings 23:12 Chronicles 33:5 Jeremiah 19:13 \*\*\*Zephaniah 1:5), and in the temple area with the face turned toward the sunrise (\*\*Ezekiel 8:16).

**5.** the two courts of the house of the Lord — the court of the priests, and the large court of the people.

**6.** made his son pass through the fire — (See on CEGE) Kings 16:3).

*observed times* — from an observation of the clouds.

*used enchantments* — jugglery and spells.

*dealt with familiar spirits* — *Septuagint*, "ventriloquists," who pretended to ask counsel of a familiar spirit and gave the response received from him to others.

and wizards — wise or knowing ones, who pretended to reveal secrets, to recover things lost and hidden treasure, and to interpret dreams. A great influx of these impostors had, at various times, poured from Chaldea into the land of Israel to pursue their gainful occupations, especially during the reigns of the latter kings; and Manasseh was not only their liberal patron, but zealous to appear himself an adept in the arts. He raised them to be an influential class at his court, as they were in that of Assyria and Babylon, where nothing was done till they had ascertained the lucky hour and were promised a happy issue.

- **7.** And he set a graven image The placing of the Asherah within the precincts of the temple, which was dedicated to the worship of the true God, is dwelt upon as the most aggravated outrage of the royal idolater.

*only if they will observe*, etc. — This condition was expressed from the first plantation of Israel in Canaan. But that people not only did not keep it, but through the pernicious influence of Manasseh, were seduced into greater excesses of idolatrous corruption than even the original Canaanites.

- **10-17.** And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets These were Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Isaiah. Their counsels, admonitions, and prophetic warnings, were put on record in the national chronicles (Chronicles 33:18) and now form part of the sacred canon.
- **12.** whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle a strong metaphorical form of announcing an extraordinary and appalling event (see Samuel 3:11 Samuel
- 13. the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab Captives doomed to destruction were sometimes grouped together and marked off by means of a measuring-line and plummet (\*\*\* 2 Samuel 8:2

Isaiah 34:11 Amos 7:7); so that the line of Samaria means the line drawn for the destruction of Samaria; the plummet of the house of Ahab, for exterminating his apostate family; and the import of the threatening declaration here is that Judah would be utterly destroyed, as Samaria and the dynasty of Ahab had been.

*I will wipe Jerusalem*, etc. — The same doom is denounced more strongly in a figure unmistakably significant.

- **14.** *I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance* The people of Judah, who of all the chosen people alone remained. The consequence of the Lord's forsaking them would be their fall into the power of their enemies.
- **16.** *Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood* Not content with the patronage and the practice of idolatrous abomination, he was a cruel persecutor of all who did not conform. The land was deluged with the blood of good men; among whom it is traditionally said Isaiah suffered a horrid death, by being sawn asunder (see on \*\*Hebrews 11:37).

**™2 KINGS 21:19-26.** 

#### AMON'S WICKED REIGN.

**19-24.** Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign—
This prince continued the idolatrous policy of his father; and, after an inglorious reign of two years, he was massacred by some of his own domestics. The people slew the regicide conspirators and placed his son Josiah on the throne.

<sup>2</sup> KINGS 22:1.2.

#### JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

**1, 2.** *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign* — Happier than his grandfather Manasseh, he seems to have fallen during his minority under the care of better guardians, who trained him in the principles and practice of piety; and so strongly had his young affections been enlisted on the side of true and undefiled religion, that he continued to adhere all his life, with undeviating perseverance, to the cause of God and righteousness.

<sup>228</sup>2 KINGS 22:3-7.

#### HE PROVIDES FOR THE REPAIR OF THE TEMPLE.

**3, 4.** *in the eighteenth year of king Josiah* — Previous to this period, he had commenced the work of national reformation. The preliminary steps had been already taken; not only the builders were employed, but money had been brought by all the people and received by the Levites at the door, and various other preparations had been made. But the course of this narrative turns on one interesting incident which happened in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, and hence that date is specified. In fact the whole land was thoroughly purified from every object and all traces of idolatry. The king now addressed himself to the repair and embellishment of the temple and gave directions to Hilkiah the high priest to take a general survey, in order to ascertain what was necessary to be done (see on Chronicles 34:8-15).

## **™2 KINGS 22:8-15.**

### HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

8-11. Hilkiah said ... I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, etc. — that is, the law of Moses, the Pentateuch. It was the temple copy which, had been laid (\*\*Deuteronomy 31:25,26) beside the ark in the most holy place. During the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon — or perhaps under Ahaz, when the temple itself had been profaned by idols, and the ark also ( Chronicles 35:3) removed from its site; it was somehow lost, and was now found again during the repair of the temple [Keil]. Delivered by Hilkiah the discoverer to Shaphan the scribe ( Kings 22:8), it was by the latter shown and read to the king. It is thought, with great probability, that the passage read to the king, and by which the royal mind was so greatly excited, was a portion of Deuteronomy, the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth chapters, in which is recorded a renewal of the national covenant, and an enumeration of the terrible threats and curses denounced against all who violated the law, whether prince or people. The impressions of grief and terror which the reading produced on the mind of Josiah have seemed to many unaccountable. But, as it is certain from the extensive and familiar knowledge displayed by the prophets, that there were numbers of other copies in popular circulation, the king must have known its sacred contents in some degree. But he might have been a stranger to the passage read him, or the reading of it might, in the peculiar circumstances, have found a way to his heart in a manner that he never felt before. His strong faith in the divine word, and his painful consciousness that the woeful and long-continued apostasies of the nation had exposed them to the infliction of the judgments denounced, must have come with overwhelming force on the heart of so pious a prince.

**12-15.** *the king commanded* ... *Go*, *inquire of the Lord for me*, etc. — The agitated feelings of the king prompted him to ask immediate counsel how to avert those curses under which his kingdom lay; and forthwith a deputation of his principal officers was sent to one endowed with the prophetic spirit.

**Ahikam** — a friend of Jeremiah (<sup>appa</sup>Jeremiah 26:24).

14. Achbor — or Abdon (1802) Chronicles 34:20), a man of influence at court (1802) court (1802). The occasion was urgent, and therefore they were sent — not to Zephaniah (1802) zephaniah 1:1), who was perhaps young — nor to Jeremiah, who was probably absent at his house in Anathoth, but to one who was at hand and known for her prophetic gifts — to Huldah, who was probably at this time a widow. Her husband Shallum was grandson of one Harhas, "keeper of the wardrobe." If this means the priestly wardrobe, [Harhas] must have been a Levite. But it probably refers to the royal wardrobe.

she dwelt ... in the college — rather, "in the Misnah," taking the original word as a proper name, not a school or college, but a particular suburb of Jerusalem. She was held in such veneration that Jewish writers say she and Jehoiada the priest were the only persons not of the house of David (40152) Chronicles 24:15,16) who were ever buried in Jerusalem.

**15-20.** she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me — On being consulted, she delivered an oracular response in which judgment was blended with mercy; for it announced the impending calamities that at no distant period were to overtake the city and its inhabitants. But at the same time the king was consoled with an assurance that this season of punishment and sorrow should not be during his lifetime, on account of the faith, penitence, and pious zeal for the divine glory and worship which, in his public capacity and with his royal influence, he had displayed.

<sup>200</sup>2 KINGS 23:1-3.

#### JOSIAH CAUSES THE LAW TO BE READ.

- 1-3. the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders This pious and patriotic king, not content with the promise of his own security, felt, after Huldah's response, an increased desire to avert the threatened calamities from his kingdom and people. Knowing the richness of the divine clemency and grace to the penitent, he convened the elders of the people, and placing himself at their head, accompanied by the collective body of the inhabitants, went in solemn procession to the temple, where ordered the book of the law to be read to the assembled audience, and covenanted, with the unanimous concurrence of his subjects, to adhere steadfastly to all the commandments of the Lord. It was an occasion of solemn interest, closely connected with a great national crisis, and the beautiful example of piety in the highest quarter would exert a salutary influence over all classes of the people in animating their devotions and encouraging their return to the faith of their fathers.
- 2. he read in their ears that is, "caused to be read."
- **3.** *all the people stood to the covenant* that is, they agreed to the proposals made; they assented to what was required of them.

<sup>1200</sup>2 KINGS 23:4-28.

#### HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

**4.** *the king commanded Hilkiah*, etc. — that is, the high priest and other priests, for there was not a variety of official gradations in the temple.

*all the vessels*, etc. — the whole apparatus of idol-worship.

burned them without Jerusalem — The law required them to be consigned to the flames (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 7:25).

in the fields of Kidron — most probably that part of the valley of Kidron, where lies Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It is a level, spacious basin, abounding at present with plantations [Robinson]. The brook winds along the east and south of the city, the channel of which is throughout a large portion of the year almost or wholly dry, except after heavy rains, when it suddenly swells and overflows. There were emptied all the impurities of the temple (\*\*DE\*\*2 Chronicles 29:15,16) and the city. His reforming predecessors had ordered the mutilated relics of idolatry to be thrown into that receptacle of filth (\*\*IISB\*\*1 Kings 15:13 \*\*ISB\*\*2 Chronicles 15:16 \*\*IISB\*\*1 Kings 15:13 \*\*IISB\*\*2 Chronicles IS:16 \*\*IISB\*\*30:14); but Josiah, while he imitated their piety, far outstripped them in zeal; for he caused the ashes of the burnt wood and the fragments of the broken metal to be collected and conveyed to Beth-el, in order thenceforth to associate ideas of horror and aversion with that place, as odious for the worst pollutions.

**5.** put down the idolatrous priests — Hebrew, chemarim, "scorched," that is, Guebres, or fire-worshippers, distinguished by a girdle (23:14-17) or belt of wool and camel's hair, twisted round the body twice and tied with four knots, which had a symbolic meaning, and made it a supposed defense against evil.

them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, etc. — or Baal-shemesh, for Baal was sometimes considered the sun. This form of false worship was not by images, but pure star-worship, borrowed from the old Assyrians.

and — rather, "even to all the host of heaven."

6. brought out the grove — that is, Asherah, the mystic tree, placed by Manasseh in the temple [1275] Kings 21:5 12 Chronicles 33:5], removed by him after his conversion [1272] Chronicles 33:15], but replaced in the sanctuary by his wicked son Amon [1272] Kings 21:20,21]. Josiah had it taken to Kidron, burnt the wood, ground the metal about it to powder, and strewed the ashes "on the graves of the children of the people." The poor were buried in a common on part of the valley of Kidron. But reference is

here made to the graves "of those that had sacrificed" (480)2 Chronicles 34:4).

- 7. brake down the houses of the sodomites not solid houses, but tents, called elsewhere [1.30] Succoth-benoth, "the booths of the young women," who were devoted to the service of Asherah, for which they made embroidered hangings, and in which they gave themselves to unbridled revelry and lust. Or the hangings might be for Asherah itself, as it is a popular superstition in the East to hang pieces of cloth on trees.
- **8, 9.** *he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah*, *and defiled the high places*, etc. Many of the Levitical order, finding in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon the temple-worship abolished and the tithes and other offerings alienated, had been betrayed into the folly of officiating on high places, and presenting such sacrifices as were brought to them. These irregularities, even though the object of that worship was the true God, were prohibited in the law (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 12:11). Those who had been guilty of this sin, Josiah brought to Jerusalem. Regarding them as defiled, he debarred them from the service of the temple, but gave them an allowance out of the temple revenues, like the lame and disabled members of the priesthood (\*\*\*PDELEVITICUS 21:21,22).

*from Geba to to Beer-sheba* — the most northern and the most southern places in Judah — meaning all parts of the kingdom.

the high places ... which were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua — The governor's house and gate were on the left of the city gate, and close by the entrance of that civic mansion house were public altars, dedicated, it might be, to the true God, but contrary to His own ordinance of worship (\*\*Stollar Saiah 57:8).

- **10.** *Topheth* so called from *Toph* a "drum." It is the prevailing opinion among Jewish writers that the cries of the terrified children made to pass through the fire in that place of idolatrous horror were drowned by the sound of that instrument.
- **11.** *took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun* Among the people who anciently worshipped the sun, horses were usually dedicated to that divinity, from the supposed idea that the sun

himself was drawn in a chariot by horses. In some cases these horses were sacrificed; but more commonly they were employed either in the sacred processions to carry the images of the sun, or for the worshippers to ride in every morning to welcome his rise. It seems that the idolatrous kings, Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, or their great officers, proceeded on these horses early on each day from the east gate of the temple to salute and worship the sun at his appearing above the horizon.

- **12.** the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz Altars were reared on the flat roofs of houses, where the worshippers of "the host of heaven" burnt incense (\*\*Tephaniah 1:5 \*\*Teremiah 19:13). Ahaz had reared altars for this purpose on the *oleah*, or upper chamber of his palace, and Manasseh on some portion of the roof of the temple. Josiah demolished both of these structures.
- **13, 14.** the high places ... which Solomon ... had builded (See on Kings 11:5).

the right hand of the mount of corruption — The Mount of Olives is a hilly range on the east of Jerusalem. This range has three summits, of which the central one is the Mount of Corruption, so called from the idol temples built there, and of course the hill on the right hand denotes the southernmost peak. Josiah is said not to have destroyed, but only defiled, "the high places on the hill of corruption." It is most probable that Hezekiah had long before demolished the idolatrous temples erected there by Solomon but, as the superstitious people continued to regard the spot as consecrated ground, Josiah defiled it.

- **14.** *filled their places with the bones of men* Every monument of idolatry in his dominion he in like manner destroyed, and the places where they stood he defiled by strewing them with dead men's bones. The presence of a dead carcass rendered both persons and places unclean in the eyes both of Jews and heathens.
- **15-20.** *Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el*, etc. Not satisfied with the removal of every vestige of idolatry from his own dominion, this zealous iconoclast made a tour of inspection through the cities of Samaria and all the territory formerly occupied by the ten tribes, destroying the altars and temples of the high places, consigning the Asherim to the

flames, putting to death the priests of the high places, and showing his horror at idolatry by ransacking the sepulchers of idolatrous priests, and strewing the burnt ashes of their bones upon the altars before he demolished them.

## 16. according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed

- In carrying on these proceedings, Josiah was prompted by his own intense hatred of idolatry. But it is remarkable that this act was predicted three hundred twenty-six years before his birth, and his name also was expressly mentioned, as well as the very place where it should be done (ITT) Kings 13:2). This is one of the most most remarkable prophecies in the Bible.
- **17.** What title is that that I see? The king's attention probably, had been arrested by a tombstone more conspicuous than the rest around it, bearing on an inscription the name of him that lay beneath; and this prompted his curiosity to make the inquiry.

*the men of the city* — not the Assyrian colonists — for they could know nothing about the ancient transactions of the place — but some of the old people who had been allowed to remain, and perhaps the tomb itself might not then have been discoverable, through the effects of time and neglect, had not some "Old Mortality" garnished the sepulcher of the righteous.

- **21-23.** the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, etc. It was observed with great solemnity and was attended not only by his own subjects, but by the remnant people from Israel (see on Chronicles 35:1-19). Many of the Israelites who were at Jerusalem might have heard of, if they did not hear, the law read by Josiah. It is probable that they might even have procured a copy of the law, stimulated as they were to the better observance of Jehovah's worship by the unusual and solemn transactions at Jerusalem.
- **26.** Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, etc. The national reformation which Josiah carried on was acquiesced in by the people from submission to the royal will; but they entertained a secret and strong hankering after the suppressed idolatries. Though outwardly purified, their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from many passages of the prophetic writings; their thorough

reform was hopeless; and God, who saw no sign of genuine repentance, allowed His decree (\*\*\* 221:12-15) for the subversion of the kingdom to take fatal effect.

**29.** *In his days Pharaoh-nechoh* — (See 485)2 Chronicles 35:20-27).

## <sup>12012</sup> KINGS 24:1-7.

#### JEHOIAKIM PROCURES HIS OWN RUIN.

- 1, 2. Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldee monarchy. This invasion took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (\*\*Peremiah\* 25:1; compare \*\*Peremiah\* 46:2). The young king of Assyria being probably detained at home on account of his father's demise, despatched, along with the Chaldean troops on his border, an army composed of the tributary nations that were contiguous to Judea, to chastise Jehoiakim's revolt from his yoke. But this hostile band was only an instrument in executing the divine judgment (\*\*Peremiah\* 24:2) denounced by the prophets against Judah for the sins of the people; and hence, though marching by the orders of the Assyrian monarch, they are described as sent by the Lord (\*\*Peremiah\* 25:1;
- **4.** the Lord would not pardon (see on \*2282 Kings 23:26; \*2151 Jeremiah 15:1).
- **6.** *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers* This phraseology can mean nothing more than that he died; for he was not buried with his royal ancestors; and whether he fell in battle, or his body was subjected to posthumous insults, he was, according to the prediction (\*\*Department\*\* Jeremiah 22:19), not honored with the rites of sepulture (\*\*Department\*\* Jeremiah 36:30).
- Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead The very brief reign of this prince, which lasted only three months, during which he was a humble vassal of the Assyrians, is scarcely deserving to be taken into account, and therefore is in no way contradictory to the prophetic menace denounced against his father (2860) Jeremiah 36:30).
- 7. the king of Egypt that is, Pharaoh-nechoh.

## <sup>2018</sup>2 KINGS 24:8,9.

#### JEHOIACHIN SUCCEEDS HIM.

**8.** *Jehoiachin* — that is, "God-appointed," contracted into *Jeconiah* and *Coniah* (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 22:24).

eighteen years old when he began to reign — At the age of eight his father took him into partnership in the government (\*\*C Chronicles 36:9). He began to reign alone at eighteen.

**9.** he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord — Untaught by experience, and deaf to the prophetic warnings, he pursued the evil courses which had brought so many disasters upon the royal family as well as the people of Judah. This bad character is figuratively but strongly depicted (\*\*\*\*Ezekiel 19:5-7).

<sup>4240</sup>2 KINGS 24:10-16.

#### JERUSALEM TAKEN.

**10-13.** At that time — within three months after his accession to the throne. It was the spring of the year ( Chronicles 36:10); so early did he indicate a feeling hostile to the interests of his Assyrian liege lord, by forming a league with Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar sent his generals to besiege after he followed in person. Convinced of the hopelessness of making any effectual resistance, Jehoiachin, going to the camp of the besiegers, surrendered ( Kings 24:12), in the expectation, probably, of being allowed to retain his throne as a vassal of the Assyrian empire. But Nebuchadnezzar's clemency towards the kings of Judah was now exhausted, so that Jehoiachin was sent as a captive to Babylon, according to Jeremiah's prediction ( Jeremiah 22:24), accompanied by the queen mother (the same who had held that dignity under Jehoahaz) ( Kings 23:31), his generals, and officers. This happened in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, computing from the time when he was associated with his father in the government. Those that were left consisted chiefly of the poorer sort of people and the unskilled workmen. The palace and the temple were ransacked. The smaller golden vessels had been taken on the first capture of Jerusalem and placed by Nebuchadnezzar in the temple of his god as tokens of victory. They were used by Belshazzar at his impious feast [\*\*Daniel 5:2], for the purpose of rewarding his army with these trophies, among which were probably the golden candlesticks, the ark, etc. (compare \*\*4802\*\*) Chronicles 36:7 \*\*200\*\*Daniel 1:2). Now the gold plating was torn off all the larger temple furniture.

13-16. as the Lord had said — (compare 2 Kings 20:17 230 Isaiah 39:6 20:17 230 Isaiah 39

**□2417**2 KINGS 24:17-20.

#### ZEDEKIAH'S EVIL REIGN.

17-19. the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his father's brother, king in his stead — Adhering to his former policy of maintaining a show of monarchy, Nebuchadnezzar appointed the third and youngest son of Josiah (4085) Chronicles 3:15), full brother of Jehoahaz, and uncle of the captive Jehoiachin. But, according to the custom of conquerors, who changed the names of the great men they took captives in war, in token of their supremacy, he gave him the new name of

**Zedekiah** — that is, "The righteous of God." This being a purely Hebrew name, it seems that he allowed the puppet king to choose his own name, which was confirmed. His heart towards God was the same as that of Jehoiakim, impenitent and heedless of God's word.

20. through the anger of the Lord ... he cast them out from his presence — that is, in the course of God's righteous providence, his policy as king would prove ruinous to his country.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon — instigated by ambassadors from the neighboring states who came to congratulate him on his ascension to the throne (compare \*\* Jeremiah 17:3, with \*\* Jeremiah 28:1), and at the same time get him to join them in a common league to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Though warned by Jeremiah against this step, the infatuated and perjured (\*\* Ezekiel 17:13) Zedekiah persisted in his revolt.

<sup>125</sup>12 KINGS 25:1-3.

#### JERUSALEM AGAIN BESIEGED.

1. Nebuchadnezzar ... came ... against Jerusalem — Incensed by the revolt of Zedekiah, the Assyrian despot determined to put an end to the perfidious and inconstant monarchy of Judea. This chapter narrates his third and last invasion, which he conducted in person at the head of an immense army, levied out of all the tributary nations under his sway. Having overrun the northern parts of the country and taken almost all the fenced cities (<sup>2800</sup>Jeremiah 34:7), he marched direct to Jerusalem to invest it. The date of the beginning as well as the end of the siege is here carefully marked (compare <sup>2801</sup>Ezekiel 24:1 <sup>2801</sup>Jeremiah 39:1 <sup>2802</sup>52:4-6); from which it appears, that, with a brief interruption caused by Nebuchadnezzar's marching to oppose the Egyptians who were coming to its relief but who retreated without fighting, the siege lasted a year and a half. So long a resistance was owing, not to the superior skill and valor of the Jewish soldiers, but to the strength of the city fortifications, on which the king too confidently relied (compare <sup>2001</sup>Jeremiah 21:1-14 <sup>2001</sup>37:1-38:28).

*pitched against it, and ... built forts* — rather, perhaps, drew lines of circumvallation, with a ditch to prevent any going out of the city. On this rampart were erected his military engines for throwing missiles into the city.

3. on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed — In consequence of the close and protracted blockade, the inhabitants were reduced to dreadful extremities; and under the maddening influence of hunger, the most inhuman atrocities were perpetrated (\*\*\*\*Lamentations 2:20,22 \*\*\*\*4:9,10 \*\*\*\*Ezekiel 5:10). This was a fulfillment of the prophetic denunciations threatened on the apostasy of the chosen people (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 28:53-57 \*\*\*\*Deremiah 15:2 \*\*\*\*27:13 \*\*\*\*\*Ezekiel 4:16).

## <sup>12012</sup> KINGS 25:4-30.

#### ZEDEKIAH TAKEN.

**4.** *the city was broken up* — that is, a breach was effected, as we are elsewhere informed, in a part of the wall belonging to the lower city (4835) Chronicles 32:5 468433:14).

the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden — The king's garden was (\*\*\*Nehemiah 3:15) at the pool of Siloam, that is, at the mouth of the Tyroaeligon. A trace of the outermost of these walls appears to be still extant in the rude pathway which crosses the mouth of the Tyropaeligon, on a mound hard by the old mulberry tree, which marks the traditional spot of Isaiah's martyrdom [ROBINSON]. It is probable that the besiegers had overlooked this pass.

*the king went ... toward the plain* — that is, the Ghor, or valley of Jordan, estimated at five hours' distance from Jerusalem. The plain near Jericho is about eleven or twelve miles broad.

## 6, 7. they took the king, and brought him ... to Riblah —

Nebuchadnezzar, having gone from the siege to oppose the auxiliary forces of Pharaoh-hophra, left his generals to carry on the blockade, he himself not returning to the scene of action, but taking up his station at Riblah in the land of Hamath (\*\*\*238\*\*2 Kings 23:33).

- 8-18. on the seventh day of the month ... came Nebuzar-adan (compare remised for the seventh of the seventh of the seventh of the seventh, he did not arrive in Jerusalem till the tenth, or that he did not put his orders in execution till that day. His office as captain of the guard (remised for the seventh of the seventh of the guard (remised for the seventh of the seventh of the guard (remised for the seventh of the sev
- **18.** *the three keepers of the door* not mere porters, but officers of high trust among the Levites (\*\*\* Kings 22:4\*\*\* Chronicles 9:26).
- **19.** *five men of them that were in the king's presence* that is, who belonged to the royal retinue. It is probable that there were five at first, and that other two were found afterwards (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 52:25).
- 22-26. Nebuchadnezzar ... Gedaliah ... ruler The people permitted to remain were, besides the king's daughters, a few court attendants and others (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 40:7) too insignificant to be removed, only the peasantry who could till the land and dress the vineyards. Gedaliah was Jeremiah's friend (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 26:24), and having, by the prophet's counsel, probably fled from the city as abandoned of God, he surrendered himself to the conqueror (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 38:2,17), and being promoted to the government of Judea, fixed his provincial court at Mizpeh. He was well qualified to surmount the difficulties of ruling at such a crisis. Many of the fugitive Jews, as well as the soldiers of Zedekiah who had accompanied the king in his flight to the plains of Jericho, left their retreats (<sup>2401</sup>Jeremiah 40:11,12) and flocked around the governor; who having counselled them to submit, promised them on complying with this condition, security on oath that they would retain their possessions and enjoy the produce of their land (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 40:9).

- **25.** Ishmael ... of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah He had found refuge with Baalis, king of the Ammonites, and he returned with a bad design, being either instigated by envy of a governor not descended from the house of David, or bribed by Baalis to murder Gedaliah. The generous governor, though apprised of his intentions, refused to credit the report, much less to sanction the proposal made by an attached friend to cut off Ishmael. The consequence was, that he was murdered by this same Ishmael, when entertaining him in his own house (authorized premiah 41:1).
- **26.** and all the people ... came to Egypt In spite of Jeremiah's dissuasions (auti Jeremiah 43:7,8) they settled in various cities of that country (auti Jeremiah 44:1).
- **27.** seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin corresponding with the year of Nebuchadnezzar's death, and his son Evilmerodach's ascension to the throne.
- Evil-merodach ... did lift up the head of Jehoiachin ... and spake kindly gave him liberty upon parole. This kindly feeling is said to have originated in a familiar acquaintance formed in prison, in which Evilmerodach had lain till his father's death, on account of some malversation while acting as regent during Nebuchadnezzar's seven years' illness (Daniel 4:32,33). But doubtless the improvement in Zedekiah's condition is to be traced to the overruling providence and grace of Him who still cherished purposes of love to the house of David (Samuel 7:14,15).
- **29.** *Jehoiachin* ... *did eat* ... *continually before him* According to an ancient usage in Eastern courts, had a seat at the royal table on great days, and had a stated provision granted him for the maintenance of his exiled court.

### THE FIRST BOOK OF

## THE CHRONICLES

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

## CHAPTER 1

CHRONICLES 1:1-23.

#### ADAM'S LINE TO NOAH.

- **1.** *Adam*, etc. "Begat" must be understood. Only that one member of the family is mentioned, who came in the direct order of succession.
- **4-23.** *Noah*, *Shem*, *Ham*, *and Japheth* The three sons of this patriarch are enumerated, partly because they were the founders of the new world, and partly because the fulfillment of Noah's prophecy (\*\*Genesis 9:25-27) could not otherwise appear to have been verified.
- **12.** Casluhim (of whom came the Philistines), and Caphtorim a better rendering is, "and Casluhim, of whom came the Philistim and Caphtorim." They were brethren, the sons of Casluhim, and at first dwelt together, whence their names are used interchangeably. The Caphtorim are described as inhabiting Azzah, or Gaza, the seat of the Philistines.
- **14-17.** *the Jebusite*, etc. At all Chronicles 1:14-17 the names are not those of individuals, but of people who all sprang from Canaan; and as several of them became extinct or were amalgamated with their brethren, their national appellations are given instead of the personal names of their ancestors.
- 17. *Uz*, and *Hul*, and *Gether*, and *Meshech* or, "Mash"; these were the children of Aram, and *grandsons* of Shem (\*\*Genesis 10:23).

- **18.** Arphaxad begat Shelah Cainan, the father's name, is omitted here. (See \*\*\*Luke 3:36).
- **19.** *Peleg* (See on Genesis 10:25).
- **22.** *Ebal* or, "Obal" (Genesis 10:28).

## CHRONICLES 1:24-28.

#### SHEM'S LINE TO ABRAHAM.

**24-27.** *Shem*, etc. — This comprises a list of ten, inclusive of Abraham.

### CHRONICLES 1:29-31.

#### SONS OF ISHMAEL.

**29.** These are their generations — the heads of his twelve tribes. The great northern desert of Arabia, including the entire neck, was colonized by these tribes; and if we can recover, in the modern geography of this part of the country, Arab tribes bearing the names of those patriarchs, that is, names corresponding with those preserved in the original catalogue of Scripture, we obtain at once so many evidences, not of mere similarity, but of absolute identification [FORSTER].

**Nebaioth** — gave rise to the Nabathæans of the classic, and the *Beni Nabat* of Oriental writers.

*Kedar* — the Arab tribe, El Khedeyre, on the coast of Hedgar.

**Abdeel** — Abdilla, the name of a tribe in Yemen.

**30.** *Dumah* — Dumah and Tema, the great Arab tribes of Beni Teman. Thus this writer [*Historical Geography of Arabia*] traces the names of all the heads of the twelve tribes of Ishmael as perpetuated in the clans or tribes of the Arabs in the present day.

## 1:32,33.

#### SONS OF KETURAH.

**32.** sons of Keturah — These became founders of nomadic tribes in the north of Arabia and Syria, as Midian of the Midianites (Genesis 36:35 Judges 6:2).

and Shuah — from whom Bildad sprang ( Job 2:11).

### **□ CHRONICLES** 1:34-42.

#### POSTERITY OF ABRAHAM BY ESAU.

**36.** sons of *Eliphaz* — the tribe Adites, in the center country of the Saracens, so called from his mother, Adah (\*\*\*Genesis 36:10).

**Teman** — gave rise to the land of Teman, near the head of the Red Sea.

*Omar* — the tribe Beni-Amma, settled at the northern point of Djebel Shera (Mount Seir).

**Zephi** — the tribe Dzaf.

Gatam — Katam, inhabited by the tribe Al Saruat, or "people of Sarah."

**Kenaz** — the tribe Aenezes, a tribe whose settlement lies in the neighborhood of Syria.

**Amalek** — the Beni Malak of Zohran, and the Beni Maledj of the Shat el Arab.

**37.** *Reuel* — a powerful branch of the great Aeneze tribe, the *Rowalla* Arabs.

**Shammah** — the great tribe Beni Shammar. In the same way, the names of the other kings and dukes are traced in the modern tribes of Arabia. But it is unnecessary to mention any more of these obscure nomads, except to notice that Jobab (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 1:44), one of the kings of Edom, is considered to be Job, and that his seat was in the royal city of Dinahab

(\*\*\*Genesis 36:32 \*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 1:43), identified with O'Daeb, a well-known town in the center of Al Dahna, a great northern desert in the direction of Chaldea and the Euphrates [FORSTER].

## CHRONICLES 2:1,2.

#### SONS OF ISRAEL.

### CHRONICLES 2:3-12.

#### POSTERITY OF JUDAH.

- **3.** The sons of Judah His descendants are enumerated first, because the right and privileges of the primogeniture had been transferred to him Genesis 49:8), and because from his tribe the Messiah was to spring.
- **6. Zimri, and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara** These five are here stated to be the sons of Zerah, that is, of Ezra, whence they were called Ezrahites (\*\*1081\*1 Kings 4:31). In that passage they are called "the sons of Mahol," which, however, is to be taken not as a proper name, but appellatively for "sons of music, dancing," etc. The traditional fame of their great sagacity and acquirements had descended to the time of Solomon and formed a standard of comparison for showing the superior wisdom of that monarch. Jewish writers say that they were looked up to as prophets by their countrymen during the abode in Egypt.
- 7. *the sons of Carmi* He was the son of Zimri, or Zabdi, as he is called (\*\*TJoshua 7:1).

**Achar** — or Achan ( Toshua 7:1). This variety in the form of the name is with great propriety used .here, since Achar means "troubler."

## 10031 CHRONICLES 2:13-17.

#### CHILDREN OF JESSE.

- **15.** David the seventh As it appears (\*\*\*O\*\*D Samuel 16:10 17:12) that Jesse had eight sons, the presumption is from David being mentioned here as the seventh son of his father, that one of them had died at an early age, without leaving issue.
- 17. Jether the Ishmaelite (compare 2 Samuel 17:25). In that passage he is called Ithra an Israelite; and there seems no reason why, in the early days of David, anyone should be specially distinguished as an Israelite. The presumption is in favor of the reading followed by the Septuagint, which calls him "Jetra the Jezreelite." The circumstance of his settling in another tribe, or of a woman marrying out of her own tribe, was sufficiently rare and singular to call for the statement that Abigail was married to a man of Jezreel.

### CHRONICLES 2:18-55.

#### POSTERITY OF CALEB.

- **18.** Caleb the son of Hezron The notices concerning this person appear confused in our version. In The Chronicles 2:19 he is said to be the father of Hur, whereas in The Chronicles 2:50 he is called "the son of Hur." The words in this latter passage have been transposed in the copying, and should be read thus, "Hur the son of Caleb."
- begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth The former was his spouse, while Jerioth seems to have been a secondary wife, and the mother of the children whose names are here given. On the death of his principal wife, he married Ephrath, and by her had Hur [1878] Chronicles 2:19].
- **21.** Hezron ... daughter of Machir the father of Gilead that is, chief of that town, which with the lands adjacent was no doubt the property of Machir, who was so desirous of a male heir. He was grandson of Joseph. The wife of Machir was of the tribe of Manasseh (\*\*Numbers 26:29).

- 22. Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead As the son of Segub and the grandson of Hezron, he was of the tribe of Judah; but from his maternal descent he is called ( Numbers 32:41 Deuteronomy 3:14) "the son of Manasseh." This designation implies that his inheritance lay in that tribe in right of his grandmother; in other words, his maternal and adopting great-grandfather was Machir the son of Manasseh. Jair, inheriting his property, was his lineal representative; and accordingly this is expressly stated to be the case; for the village group of "Havoth-Jair" was awarded to him in that tribe, in consequence of his valiant and patriotic exploits. This arrangement, however, took place previous to the law ( Numbers 36:1-13), by which it was enacted that heiresses were to marry in their own tribe. But this instance of lair shows that in the case of a man obtaining an inheritance in another tribe it required him to become thoroughly incorporated with it as a representative of the family through which the inheritance was received. He had been adopted into Manasseh, and it would never have been imagined that he was other than "a son of Manasseh" naturally, had not this passage given information supplementary to that of the passage in Numbers.
- **23.** *he took* rather "he had taken." This statement is accounting for his acquisition of so large a territory; he got it by right of conquest from the former possessors.

**Kenath** — This place, along with its group of surrounding villages, was gained by Nobah, one of Jair's officers sent by him to capture it (\*\*OFTE\*Numbers 32:1,2).

**All these belonged to the sons of Machir** — In their number Jair is included as having completely identified himself by his marriage and residence in Gilead with the tribe of Manasseh.

**24.** *Caleb-ephratah* — so called from uniting the names of husband and wife (\*\*\* Chronicles 2:19), and supposed to be the same as was afterwards called Beth-lehem-ephratah.

Ashur, the father of Tekoa — (\*\*\* Samuel 14:2-4). He is called the father, either from his being the first founder, or perhaps the ruler, of the city.

- **34.** *Sheshan had no sons, but daughters* either he had no sons alive at his death, or his family consisted wholly of daughters, of whom Ahlai (\*\*\*1 Chronicles 2:31) was one, she being specially mentioned on account of the domestic relations about to be noted.
- 35. Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife The adoption and marriage of a foreign slave in the family where he is serving, is far from being a rare or extraordinary occurrence in Eastern countries. It is thought, however, by some to have been a connection not sanctioned by the law of Moses [MICHAELIS]. But this is not a well-founded objection, as the history of the Jews furnishes not a few examples of foreign proselytes in the same manner obtaining an inheritance in Israel; and doubtless Jarha had previously embraced the Jewish faith in place of the grovelling idolatries of his native Egypt. In such a case, therefore, there could be no legal difficulty. Being a foreign slave, he had no inheritance in a different tribe to injure by this connection; while his marriage with Sheshan's daughter led to his adoption into the tribe of Judah, as well as his becoming heir of the family property.
- **42.** *the sons of Caleb* (compare The Chronicles 2:18,25). The sons here noticed were the fruit of his union with a third wife.
- **55.** *the families of the scribes* either civil or ecclesiastical officers of the Kenite origin, who are here classed with the tribe of Judah, not as being descended from it, but as dwelling within its territory, and in a measure incorporated with its people.

**Jabez** — a place in Judah (\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 4:9).

**Kenites that came of Hemath** — who settled in Judah, and were thus distinguished from another division of the Kenite clan which dwelt in Manasseh ( Judges 4:11).

## CHRONICLES 3:1-9.

#### SONS OF DAVID.

- 1-3. Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron It is of consequence for the proper understanding of events in the domestic history of David, to bear in mind the place and time of his sons' birth. The oldest son, born after his father's accession to the sovereign authority, is according to Eastern notions, the proper heir to the throne. And hence the natural aspirations of ambition in Ammon, who was long unaware of the alienation of the crown, and could not be easily reconciled to the claims of a younger brother being placed above his own (see on Table 2 Samuel 3:1-5).
- 3. Eglah his wife supposed to be another name of Michal, who, though she had no son after her mockery of David for dancing before the ark [10002] Samuel 6:16,20], might have had one previous to that time. She has the title of wife appended to her name because she was his proper wife; and the mention of her name last probably arose from the circumstance that, having been withdrawn from David and married to another husband but afterwards restored, she had in reality become the last of his wives
- **5.** four, of Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel or, "Bath-sheba" (\*\*\*D2\*\*) Samuel 11:3), and there her father is called "Eliam." Of course Solomon was not her "only son," but he is called so (\*\*\*DProverbs 4:3) from the distinguished affection of which he was the object; and though the oldest, he is named the last of Bath-sheba's children.
- **6. Elishama and Eliphelet** Two sons of the same name are twice mentioned (\*\*\*1 Chronicles 3:8). They were the children of different mothers, and had probably some title or epithet appended by which the one was distinguished from the other. Or, it might be, that the former two

were dead, and their names had been given to sons afterwards born to preserve their memories.

**8.** *nine* — The number of David's sons born after his removal to Jerusalem, was eleven (\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 5:14), but only nine are mentioned here: two of them being omitted, either in consequence of their early deaths or because they left no issue.

## 1001 CHRONICLES 3:10-16.

#### HIS LINE TO ZEDEKIAH.

- **10.** *Solomon's son was Rehoboam*, etc. David's line is here drawn down to the captivity, through a succession of good and bad, but still influential and celebrated, monarchs. It has rarely happened that a crown has been transmitted from father to son, in lineal descent, for seventeen reigns. But this was the promised reward of David's piety. There is, indeed, observable some vacillation towards the close of this period the crown passing from one brother to another, an even from uncle to nephew a sure sign of disorderly times and a disjointed government.
- **15. Zedekiah** called the son of Josiah (compare \*\*\* Jeremiah 1:3 37:1), but in \*\*\* 2 Chronicles 36:19 he is described as the brother of Jehoiachin, who was the son of Jehoiakim, and consequently the *grandson* of Josiah. Words expressive of affinity or relationship are used with great latitude in the Hebrew.

**Shallum** — No king of this name is mentioned in the history of Josiah's sons (2002) Kings 14:1-29 (23:1-37), but there is a notice of Shallum the son of Josiah (2013) Jeremiah 22:11), who reigned in the stead of his father, and who is generally supposed to be Jehoahaz, a younger son, here called the fourth, of Josiah.

## CHRONICLES 3:17-24.

#### SUCCESSORS OF JECONIAH.

- 17. the sons of Jeconiah; Assir rather, "Jeconiah the prisoner," or "captive." This record of his condition was added to show that Salathiel was born during the captivity in Babylon (compare "Matthew 1:12). Jeconiah was written childless ("Deremiah 22:30), a prediction which (as the words that follow explain) meant that this unfortunate monarch should have no son succeeding him on the throne.
- **18.** *Malchiram also* As far as Jeconiah, everything is plain; but there is reason to suspect that the text in the subsequent verses has been dislocated and disarranged. The object of the sacred historian is to trace the royal line through Zerubbabel; yet, according to the present reading, the genealogical stem cannot be drawn from Jeconiah downwards. The following arrangement of the text is given as removing all difficulties [DAVIDSON, *Hermeneutics*]: — Thronicles 3:17. And the sons of Jeconiah the the captive, Salathiel (Shealtiel, Ezra 3:2 Nehemiah 12:1 Haggai 1:12,14 2:2) his son. Thronicles 3:18. And the sons of Salathiel; Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister. Thronicles 3:19. And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hezed. (Chronicles 3:20. And Malchiram, and Rephaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. The sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah and Jesaiah; the sons of Rephaiah; his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah.

## CHRONICLES 4:1-8.

#### POSTERITY OF JUDAH BY CALEB THE SON OF HUR.

**1.** *the sons of Judah* — that is, "the descendants," for with the exception of Pharez, none of those here mentioned were his immediate sons. Indeed, the others are mentioned solely to introduce the name of Shobal, whose genealogy the historian intended to trace (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 2:52).

## CHRONICLES 4:9-20.

### OF JABEZ, AND HIS PRAYER.

9, 10. Jabez — was, as many think, the son of Coz, or Kenaz, and is here eulogized for his sincere and fervent piety, as well, perhaps, as for some public and patriotic works which he performed. The Jewish writers affirm that he was an eminent doctor in the law, whose reputation drew so many scribes around him that a town was called by his name ( Chronicles 2:55); and to the piety of his character this passage bears ample testimony. The memory of the critical circumstances which marked his birth was perpetuated in his name (compare Genesis 35:15); and yet, in the development of his high talents or distinguished worth in later life, his mother must have found a satisfaction and delight that amply compensated for all her early trials. His prayer which is here recorded, and which, like Jacob's, is in the form of a vow ( Genesis 28:20), seems to have been uttered when he was entering on an important or critical service, for the successful execution of which he placed confidence neither on his own nor his people's prowess, but looked anxiously for the aid and blessing of God. The enterprise was in all probability the expulsion of the Canaanites from the territory he occupied; and as this was a war of extermination, which God Himself had commanded, His blessing could be

the more reasonably asked and expected in preserving them from all the evils to which the undertaking might expose him. In these words, "that it may not grieve me," and which might be more literally rendered, "that I may have no more sorrow," there is an allusion to the meaning of his name, Jabez, signifying "grief"; and the import of this petition is, Let me not experience the grief which my name implies, and which my sins may well produce.

- **10.** God granted him that which he requested Whatever was the kind of undertaking which roused his anxieties, Jabez enjoyed a remarkable degree of prosperity, and God, in this instance, proved that He was not only the hearer, but the answerer of prayer.
- **13.** *the sons of Kenaz* the grandfather of Caleb, who from that relationship is called a Kenezite (\*\*PD\*\*Numbers 32:12).
- **14.** *Joab*, *the father of the valley* literally, "the father of the inhabitants of the valley" "the valley of craftsmen," as the word denotes. They dwelt together, according to a custom which, independently of any law, extensively prevails in Eastern countries for persons of the same trade to inhabit the same street or the same quarter, and to follow the same occupation from father to son, through many generations. Their occupation was probably that of carpenters, and the valley where they lived seems to have been in the neighborhood of Jerusalem (\*\*\*Nehemiah 11:35).
- **17, 18.** *she bare Miriam* It is difficult, as the verses stand at present, to see who is meant. The following readjustment of the text clears away the obscurity: "These are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took, and she bare Miriam, and his wife Jehudijah bare Jezreel," etc.
- **18.** *Jehudijah* "the Jewess," to distinguish her from his other wife, who was an Egyptian. This passage records a very interesting fact the marriage of an Egyptian princess to a descendant of Caleb. The marriage must have taken place in the wilderness. The barriers of a different national language and national religion kept the Hebrews separate from the Egyptians; but they did not wholly prevent intimacies, and even occasional intermarriages between private individuals of the two nations.

Before such unions, however, could be sanctioned, the Egyptian party must have renounced idolatry, and this daughter of Pharaoh, as appears from her name, had become a convert to the worship of the God of Israel.

## 1 CHRONICLES 4:21-23.

#### POSTERITY OF SHELAH.

21. Laadah ... the father ... of the house of them that wrought fine linen

— Here, again, is another incidental evidence that in very early times certain trades were followed by particular families among the Hebrews, apparently in hereditary succession. Their knowledge of the art of linen manufacture had been, most probably, acquired in Egypt, where the duty of bringing up families to the occupations of their forefathers was a

compulsory obligation, whereas in Israel, as in many parts of Asia to this

day, it was optional, though common.

**22, 23.** *had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem* — "And these are ancient things" seems a strange rendering of a proper name; and, besides, it conveys a meaning that has no bearing on the record. The following improved translation has been suggested: "Sojourned in Moab, but returned to Beth-lehem and Adaberim-athekim. These and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gedera were potters employed by the king in his own work." Gedera or Gederoth, and Netaim, belonged to the tribe of Judah, and lay on the southeast border of the Philistines' territory (Joshua 15-36 <sup>4888</sup> 2 Chronicles 28:18).

## CHRONICLES 4:24-43.

#### OF SIMEON.

**24.** *The sons of Simeon* — They are classed along with those of Judah, as their possession was partly taken out of the extensive territory of the latter (\*\*\*Joshua 19:1). The difference in several particulars of the genealogy given here from that given in other passages is occasioned by

some of the persons mentioned having more than one name [compare Genesis 46:10 CENTRAL MUMBERS 26:12].

- **27.** his brethren had not many children (see Numbers 1:22 26:14).
- **31-43.** These were their cities unto the reign of David In consequence of the sloth or cowardice of the Simeonites, some of the cities within their allotted territory were only nominally theirs. They were never taken from the Philistines until David's time, when, the Simeonites having forfeited all claim to them, he assigned them to his own tribe of Judah (\*\*\* Samuel 27:6).
- **38, 39.** *increased greatly, and they went to the entrance of Gedor* Simeon having only a part of the land of Judah, they were forced to seek accommodation elsewhere; but their establishment in the new and fertile pastures of Gederah was soon broken up; for, being attacked by a band of nomad plunderers, they were driven from place to place till some of them effected by force a settlement on Mount Seir.

## CHRONICLES 5:1-10.

#### THE LINE OF REUBEN.

- **1.** Now the sons of Reuben In proceeding to give this genealogy, the sacred historian states, in a parenthesis ( Chronicles 5:1,2), the reason why it was not placed first, as Reuben was the oldest son of Jacob. The birthright, which by a foul crime he had forfeited, implied not only dominion, but a double portion (\*\*Deuteronomy 21:17); and both of these were transferred to Joseph, whose two sons having been adopted as the children of Jacob ( Genesis 48:5), received each an allotted portion, as forming two distinct tribes in Israel. Joseph then was entitled to the precedency; and yet, as his posterity was not mentioned first, the sacred historian judged it necessary to explain that "the genealogy was not to be reckoned after the birthright," but with a reference to a superior honor and privilege that had been conferred on Judah — not the man, but the tribe, whereby it was invested with the pre-eminence over all the other tribes, and out of it was to spring David with his royal lineage, and especially the great Messiah (\*\*\*Hebrews 7:14). These were the two reasons why, in the order of enumeration, the genealogy of Judah is introduced before that of Reuben.
- **9.** Eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates The settlement was on the east of Jordan, and the history of this tribe, which never took any part in the public affairs or movements of the nation, is comprised in "the multiplication of their cattle in the land of Gilead," in their wars with the Bedouin sons of Hagar, and in the simple labors of pastoral life. They had the right of pasture over an extensive mountain range the great wilderness of Kedemoth (\*\*Deuteronomy 2:26) and the Euphrates being a security against their enemies.

## CHRONICLES 5:11-26.

#### THE LINE OF GAD.

- **16.** *Sharon* The term "Sharon" was applied as descriptive of any place of extraordinary beauty and productiveness. There were three places in Palestine so called. This Sharon lay east of the Jordan.
- *upon their borders* that is, of Gilead and Bashan: Gilead proper, or at least the largest part, belonged to the Reubenites; and Bashan, the greatest portion of it, belonged to the Manassites. The Gadites occupied an intermediate settlement on the land which lay upon their borders.
- **17.** All these were reckoned ... in the days of Jotham His long reign and freedom from foreign wars as well as intestine troubles were favorable for taking a census of the people.
- and in the days of Jeroboam the second of that name.
- **18-22.** *Hagarites* or, "Hagarenes," originally synonymous with "Ishmaelites," but afterwards applied to a particular tribe of the Arabs (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:6).
- Jetur His descendants were called Itureans, and the country Auranitis, from Hauran, its chief city. These, who were skilled in archery, were invaded in the time of Joshua by a confederate army of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, who, probably incensed by the frequent raids of those marauding neighbors, took reprisals in men and cattle, dispossessed almost all of the original inhabitants, and colonized the district themselves.
- **26.** *the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul* the Phalluka of the Ninevite monuments (see on TESP) Kings 15:19).

and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser — the son of the former. By them the trans-jordanic tribes, including the other half of Manasseh, settled in Galilee, were removed to Upper Media. This was the *first* captivity (\*\*\*22 Kings 15:29).

### CHRONICLES 6:1-48.

#### LINE OF THE PRIESTS.

- **5.** *Uzzi* It is supposed that, in his days, the high priesthood was, for unrecorded reasons, transferred from Eleazar's family to Ithamar's, in which it continued for several generations.
- **10.** he it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem It is doubtful whether the person in favor of whom this testimony is borne be Johanan or Azariah. If the former, he is the same as Jehoiada, who rendered important public services (2 Kings 11); if the latter, it refers to the worthy and independent part he acted in resisting the unwarrantable encroachments of Uzziah (4007) Chronicles 26:17).
- *in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem* described in this particular manner to distinguish it from the second temple, which was in existence at the time when this history was written.
- **14.** *Azariah begat Seraiah* He filled the supreme pontifical office at the destruction of Jerusalem, and, along with his deputy and others, he was executed by Nebuchadnezzar's orders at Riblah (\*\*\*28\*\*2 Kings 25:18,21). The line of high priests, under the first temple, which from Zadok amounted to twelve, terminated with him.
- **16-48.** The sons of Levi; Gershom, etc. This repetition (see Chronicles 6:1) is made, as the historian here begins to trace the genealogy of the Levitical families who were not priests. The list is a long one, comprising the chiefs or heads of their several families until David's reign, who made a new and different classification of them by courses.
- **20.** Zimmah his son his grandson (The 1 Chronicles 6:42).
- **24.** *Uriel* or Zephaniah ( Chronicles 6:36).

- **27.** *Elkanah* the father of the prophet Samuel ( Samuel 1:1).
- **28.** *the sons of Samuel* The sons of Samuel are here named Vashni and Abiah. The first-born is called Joel (\*\*\* Samuel 8:2); and this name is given to him in \*\* Chronicles 6:33. It is now generally thought by the best critics that, through an error of the copyists, an omission has been made of the oldest son's name, and that Vashni, which is not the name of a person, merely signifies "and the second." This critical emendation of the text makes all clear, as well as consistent with other passages relating to the family of Samuel.
- **32.** before the dwelling-place, etc. that is, in the tent which David had erected for receiving the ark after it was removed from the house of Obededom [40072] Samuel 6:17]. This was a considerable time before the temple was built.
- *they waited on their office according to their order* which David, doubtless by the direction of the Holy Spirit, had instituted for the better regulation of divine worship.
- **33.** *Shemuel* that is, Samuel. This is the exact representation of the Hebrew name.
- **39.** *his brother Asaph* They were brothers naturally, both being descended from Levi, as well as officially, both being of the Levitical order.
- **42.** *Ethan* or Jeduthun ( Chronicles 9:16 Chronicles 35:15).
- **48.** Their brethren also the Levites were appointed unto all manner of service Those of them who were endowed with musical tastes and talents were employed in various other departments of the temple service.

## CHRONICLES 6:49-81.

#### OFFICE OF AARON AND HIS SONS.

**49.** *But Aaron and his sons offered*, etc. — The office and duties of the high priests having been already described, the names of those who successively filled that important office are recorded.

- **60.** thirteen cities No more than eleven are named here; but two additional ones are mentioned (40216 Joshua 21:16,17), which makes up the thirteen.
- **61.** *unto the sons of Kohath*, *which were left* that is, in addition to the priests belonging to the same family and tribe of Levi.
- by lot, ten cities (\*\*Doshua 21:26). The sacred historian gives an explanation (\*\*Time 11:26). Eight of these are mentioned, but only two of them are taken out of the haft tribe of Manasseh (\*\*Time 11:21). The names of the other two are given (\*\*Time 11:21), where full and detailed notices of these arrangements may be found.
- **62.** to the sons of Gershom Supply "the children of Israel gave."
- 67-81. they gave unto them of the cities of refuge The names of the cities given here are considerably different from those applied to them ( Joshua 21:13-19). In the lapse of centuries, and from the revolutions of society, changes might have been expected to take place in the form or dialectic pronunciation of the names of those cities; and this will sufficiently account for the variations that are found in the lists as enumerated here and in an earlier book. As to these cities themselves that were assigned to the Levites, they were widely remote and separated partly in fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy ( Genesis 49:7), and partly that the various districts of the country might obtain a competent supply of teachers who might instruct the people in the knowledge, and animate them to the observance, of a law which had so important a bearing on the promotion both of their private happiness and their national prosperity.

## CHRONICLES 7:1-5.

#### SONS OF ISSACHAR.

- **1.** *Jashub* or Job ( Genesis 46:13).
- **2.** whose number was in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred Although a census was taken in the reign of David by order of that monarch, it is not certain that the sacred historian had it in mind, since we find here the tribe of Benjamin enumerated [4006] Chronicles 7:6-12], which was not taken in David's time; and there are other points of dissimilarity.
- **3.** *five*: *all of them chief men* Four only are mentioned; so that as they are stated to be five, in this number the father, Izrahiah, must be considered as included; otherwise one of the names must have dropped out of the text. They were each at the head of a numerous and influential division of their tribe.
- **5.** *fourscore and seven thousand* exclusive of the 58,600 men which the Tola branch had produced (The Interval of Chronicles 7:24), so that in the days of David the tribe would have contained a population of 45,600. This large increase was owing to the practice of polygamy, as well as the fruitfulness of the women. A plurality of wives, though tolerated among the Hebrews, was confined chiefly to the great and wealthy; but it seems to have been generally esteemed a privilege by the tribe of Issachar, "for they had many wives and sons" [Thronicles 7:4].

## **4376**1 CHRONICLES 7:6-12.

#### OF BENJAMIN.

- **6.** The sons of Benjamin Ten are named in Genesis 46:21, but only five later (Genesis 8:1 Numbers 26:38). Perhaps five of them were distinguished as chiefs of illustrious families, but two having fallen in the bloody wars waged against Benjamin (Genesis 46:21, but only three branches of this tribe, and these only are enumerated.
- 7. *the sons of Bela* Each of them was chief or leader of the family to which he belonged. In an earlier period seven great families of Benjamin are mentioned (\*\*Numbers 26:38), five of them being headed by these five sons of Benjamin, and two descended from Bela. Here five families of Bela are specified, whence we are led to conclude that time or the ravages of war had greatly changed the condition of Benjamin, or that the five families of Bela were subordinate to the other great divisions that sprang directly from the five sons of the patriarch.
- **12.** *Shuppim also*, *and Huppim* They are called Muppim and Huppim (\*\*\*Genesis 46:21) and Hupham and Shupham (\*\*\*Numbers 26:39). They were the children of Ir, or Iri (\*\*\*\*IT) Chronicles 7:7).

and Hushim, the sons — "son."

of Aher — "Aher" signifies "another," and some eminent critics, taking "Aher" as a common noun, render the passage thus, "and Hushim, another son." Shuppim, Muppim, and Hushim are plural words, and therefore denote not individuals, but the heads of their respective families; and as they were not comprised in the above enumeration ("The Chronicles 7:7,9) they are inserted here in the form of an appendix. Some render the passage, "Hushim, the son of another," that is, tribe or family. The name occurs among the sons of Daniel ("Genesis 46:23), and it is a presumption in favor of this being the true rendering, that after having recorded the genealogy of Naphtali ("The Chronicles 7:13) the sacred historian adds, "the sons of Bilhah, the handmaid, who was the mother of Daniel and Naphtali." We naturally expect, therefore, that these two will be noticed together, but Daniel is not mentioned at all, if not in this passage.

## CHRONICLES 7:13.

#### OF NAPHTALI.

13. *Shallum* — or Shillem (Genesis 46:24).

sons of Bilhah — As Daniel and Naphtali were her sons, Hushim, as well as these enumerated in 4003 Chronicles 7:13, were her grandsons.

### **CHRONICLES** 7:14-40.

#### OF MANASSEH.

- **14,15.** *The sons of Manasseh* or descendants; for Ashriel was a grandson, and Zelophehad was a generation farther removed in descent (\*\*Mumbers 26:33). The text, as it stands, is so confused and complicated that it is exceedingly difficult to trace the genealogical thread, and a great variety of conjectures have been made with a view to clear away the obscurity. The passage (\*\*\*The sons of Manasseh were Ashriel, whom his Syrian concubine bare to him, and Machir, the father of Gilead (whom his wife bare to him). Machir took for a wife Maachah, sister to Huppim and Shuppim."
- 21. whom the men of Gath ... slew, etc. This interesting little episode gives us a glimpse of the state of Hebrew society in Egypt; for the occurrence narrated seems to have taken place before the Israelites left that country. The patriarch Ephraim was then alive, though he must have arrived at a very advanced age; and the Hebrew people, at all events those of them who were his descendants, still retained their pastoral character. It was in perfect consistency with the ideas and habits of Oriental shepherds that they should have made a raid on the neighboring tribe of the Philistines for the purpose of plundering their flocks. For nothing is more common among them than hostile incursions on the inhabitants of towns, or on other nomad tribes with whom they have no league of amity. But a different view of the incident is brought out, if, instead of "because," we render the Hebrew particle "when" they came down to take their cattle,

for the tenor of the context leads rather to the conclusion that "the men of Gath" were the aggressors, who, making a sudden foray on the Ephraimite flocks, killed the shepherds including several of the sons of Ephraim. The calamity spread a deep gloom around the tent of their aged father, and was the occasion of his receiving visits of condolence from his distant relatives, according to the custom of the East, which is remarkably exemplified in the history of Job (\*\*Pli\*Job 2:11; compare \*\*RID\*John 11:19).

## CHRONICLES 8:1-32.

#### SONS AND CHIEF MEN OF BENJAMIN.

- 1. Now Benjamin begat, etc. This chapter contains some supplementary particulars in addition to what has been already said regarding the tribe of Benjamin (see on Chronicles 7:6). The names of many of the persons mentioned are different from those given by Moses — a diversity which may be accounted for in part on grounds formerly stated, namely, either that the persons had more than one name, or that the word "sons" is used in a loose sense for grandsons or descendants. But there are other circumstances to be taken into account in considering the details of this chapter; namely, first, that the genealogies of the Benjamites were disordered or destroyed by the almost total extermination of this tribe ( Judges 20:11-48); secondly, that a great number of Benjamites, born in Assyria, are mentioned here, who returned from the long captivity in Babylon, and established themselves — some in Jerusalem, others in different parts of Judea. There were more returned from Babylon of the families belonging to this tribe than to any other except Judah; and hence many strange names are here introduced; some of which will be found in the list of the restored exiles (compare Ezra 2:1-70).
- **6.** these are the sons of Ehud most probably the judge of Israel (\*\*TUDGES\*\* 3:15). His descendants, who had at first been established in Geba in Benjamin, emigrated in a body under the direction of Gera (\*\*TUDGES\*\* 1) to Manahath, where their increased numbers would find more ample accommodation. Manahath was within the territory of Judah.
- **8.** Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab He had probably been driven to take refuge in that foreign land on the same calamitous occasion that forced Elimelech to emigrate thither (\*\*Ruth 1:1). But, destitute of natural affection, he forsook or divorced his two wives, and in the land of his sojourn married a third, by whom he had several sons. But

there is another explanation given of the conduct of this Benjamite polygamist. His children by Hushim are mentioned (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 8:11), while his other wife is unnoticed. Hence it has been thought probable that it is Baara who is mentioned under the name of Hodesh, so called because her husband, after long desertion, returned and cohabited with her as before.

**28.** *These dwelt in Jerusalem* — The ordinary and stated inhabitants of Jerusalem were Judahites, Benjamites, and Levites. But at the time referred to here, the chiefs or heads of the principal families who are enumerated (Thronicles 8:14-27) established themselves in the city after their return from the captivity.

### CHRONICLES 8:33-40.

#### STOCK OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

**33.** *Ner begat Kish* — The father of Ner, though not mentioned here, is stated (\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 9:35) to have been Jehiel. Moreover, the father of Kish is said (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 9:1) to have been Abiel, the son of Zeror, whence it would seem that Abiel and Ner were names of the same person.

**Abinadab** — the same as Ishui (\*\*\*\*1 Samuel 14:49).

**Esh-baal** — that is, Ish-bosheth.

- **34.** *Merib-baal* that is, Mephibosheth.
- **36.** *Jehoadah* or, Jara (4002) Chronicles 9:42).
- **40.** *mighty men of valor, archers* (see on Guess 20:16). Great strength as well as skill was requisite in ancient archery, as the bow, which was of steel, was bent by treading with the feet, and pulling the string with both hands.

## CHRONICLES 9:1-26.

# ORIGINAL REGISTERS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH'S GENEALOGIES.

- 1. all Israel were reckoned by genealogies From the beginning of the Hebrew nation, public records were kept, containing a registration of the name of every individual, as well as the tribe and family to which he belonged. "The book of the kings of Israel and Judah" does not refer to the two canonical books that are known in Scripture by that name, but to authenticated copies of those registers, placed under the official care of the sovereigns; and as a great number of the Israelites ( Chronicles 9:3) took refuge in Judah during the invasion of Shalmaneser, they carried the public records along with them. The genealogies given in the preceding chapters were drawn from the public records in the archives both of Israel and Judah; and those given in this chapter relate to the period subsequent to the restoration; whence it appears (compare Chronicles 3:17-24) that the genealogical registers were kept during the captivity in Babylon. These genealogical tables, then, are of the highest authority for truth and correctness, the earlier portion being extracted from the authenticated records of the nation; and as to those which belong to the time of the captivity, they were drawn up by a contemporary writer, who, besides enjoying the best sources of information, and being of the strictest integrity, was guided and preserved from all error by divine inspiration.
- **2.** the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions This chapter relates wholly to the first returned exiles. Almost all the names recur in Nehemiah (\*\*\*PNehemiah 11:1-36), although there are differences which will be explained there. The same division of the people into four classes was continued after, as before the captivity; namely, the priests, Levites, natives, who now were called by the common name of Israelites, and the Nethinims (\*\*\*\*PJoshua 9:27\*\*\*Ezra 2:43 8:20). When the historian speaks of "the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions," he implies that

there were others who afterwards returned and settled in possessions not occupied by the first. Accordingly, we read of a great number returning successively under Ezra, Nehemiah, and at a later period. And some of those who returned to the ancient inheritance of their fathers, had lived before the time of the captivity (\*\*\*Ezra 3:12 \*\*\*\*Haggai 2:4,10).

**18.** *the king's gate* — The king had a gate from his palace into the temple (\*\*22 Kings 16:18), which doubtless was kept constantly closed except for the monarch's use; and although there was no king in Israel on the return from the captivity, yet the old ceremonial was kept up, probably in the hope that the scepter would, ere long, be restored to the house of David. It is an honor by which Eastern kings are distinguished, to have a gate exclusively devoted to their own special use, and which is kept constantly closed, except when he goes out or returns (\*\*Ezekiel 44:2). There being no king then in Israel, this gate would be always shut.

## CHRONICLES 10:1-7.

### SAUL'S OVERTHROW AND DEATH.

- **1.** Now the Philistines fought against Israel The details of this chapter have no relation to the preceding genealogies and seem to be inserted solely to introduce the narrative of David's elevation to the throne of the whole kingdom. The parallel between the books of Samuel and Chronicles commences with this chapter, which relates the issue of the fatal battle of Gilboa almost in the very same words as <sup>QBIL</sup>1 Samuel 31:1-13.
- 3. the battle went sore against Saul; and the archers hit him, and he was wounded The Hebrew words may be thus rendered: "The archers found (attacked) him, and he feared the archers." He was not wounded, at least not dangerously, when he resolved on committing suicide. The deed was the effect of sudden terror and overwhelming depression of spirits [Calmet].
- **4.** his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid He was, of course, placed in the same perilous condition as Saul. But it is probable that the feelings that restrained him from complying with Saul's wish were a profound respect for royalty, mingled with apprehension of the shock which such a catastrophe would give to the national feelings and interests.
- **6.** Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house his sons and courtiers who were there engaged in the battle. But it appears that Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth were kept at Gibeah on account of their youth.

## **□ CHRONICLES** 10:8-14.

#### THE PHILISTINES TRIUMPH OVER HIM.

**10.** *put his armor in the house of their gods* — It was common among the heathen to vow to a national or favorite deity, that, in the event of a victory, the armor of the enemy's king, or of some eminent leader, should be dedicated to him as an offering of gratitude. Such trophies were usually suspended on the pillars of the temple.

**fastened his head in the temple of Dagon** — while the trunk or headless corpse was affixed to the wall of Beth-shan (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 31:10).

- 13. Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord—in having spared the king of the Amalekites and taken the flocks of the people as spoils [1980] Samuel 15:9], as well as in having consulted a pythoness [1980] Samuel 28:7]. Both of these acts were great sins—the first as a violation of God's express and positive command [1980] Samuel 15:3], and the second as contrary to a well-known statute of the kingdom (1980) Leviticus 19:31).
- **14.** And inquired not of the Lord He had done so in form ( <sup>GENT</sup> 1 Samuel 28:6), but not in the spirit of a humble penitent, nor with the believing confidence of a sincere worshipper. His enquiry was, in fact, a mere mockery, and his total want of all right religious impressions was manifested by his rushing from God to a wretched impostor in the service of the devil [ <sup>GENT</sup> 1 Samuel 28:7].

## CHRONICLES 11:1-3.

### DAVID MADE KING.

**1.** Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron — This event happened on the death of Ish-bosheth (see on <sup>1882</sup>2 Samuel 5:1). The convention of the estates of the kingdom, the public and solemn homage of the representatives of the people, and the repeated anointing of the new king in their presence and by their direction, seem to have been necessary to the general acknowledgment of the sovereign on the part of the nation (compare <sup>19115</sup>1 Samuel 11:15).

## CHRONICLES 11:4-9.

# HE WINS THE CASTLE OF ZION FROM THE JEBUSITES BY JOAB'S VALOR.

- **4.** David and all Israel went to ... Jebus (See on Samuel 5:6).
- **8.** Joab repaired the rest of the city David built a new town to the north of the old one on Mount Zion; but Joab was charged with a commission to restore the part that had been occupied by the ancient Jebus, to repair the breaches made during the siege, to rebuild the houses which had been demolished or burned in the sacking of the town, and to preserve all that had escaped the violence of the soldiery. This work of reconstruction is not noticed elsewhere [CALMET].

## CHRONICLES 11:10-47.

### A CATALOGUE OF HIS WORTHIES.

- **10.** These ... are the chief of the mighty men (See on <sup>1288</sup>2 Samuel 23:8). They are here described as those who held strongly with him (Margin) to make him king, etc. In these words the sacred historian assigns a reason for introducing the list of their names, immediately after his account of the election of David as king, and the conquest of Jerusalem; namely, that they assisted in making David king. In the original form of the list, and the connection in which it occurs in Samuel, there is no reference to the choice of a king; and even in this passage it is only in the clause introduced into the superscription that such a reference occurs [Keil].
- **11-13.** *Jashobeam*, *an Hachmonite* or, "son of Hachmoni." He is called also son of Zabdiel ( Chronicles 27:2), so that, strictly speaking, he was the grandson of Hachmoni (compare Chronicles 27:32).
- lifted up his spear against three hundred slain by him at one time The feat is said (4000) Samuel 23:8) to have been a slaughter of eight hundred in one day. Some endeavor to reconcile the statements in that passage and in this by supposing that he slew eight hundred on one occasion and three hundred on another; while others conjecture that he attacked a body of eight hundred, and, having slain three hundred of them, the rest fled [LIGHTFOOT].
- **12.** *the three mighties* Only two are mentioned; namely, Jashobeam and Eleazar the third, Shammah ( Samuel 23:11), is not named in this passage.
- **13.** He was with David at Pas-dammim It was at the time when he was a fugitive in the wilderness, and, parched with thirst under the burning heat of noonday, he wistfully thought of the cool fountain of his native village [12352] Samuel 23:15 [1317] Chronicles 11:17]. This is a notice of the achievement, to which Eleazar owed his fame, but the details are found only in [12302] Samuel 23:9-11, where it is further said that he was aided by the valor of Shammah, a fact corroborated in the passage before us (131141) Chronicles 11:141), where it is recorded of the heroes, that "they set

themselves in the midst of that parcel." As the singular number is used in speaking of Shammah (1992) Samuel 23:12), the true view seems to be that when Eleazar had given up from exhaustion, Shammah succeeded, and by his fresh and extraordinary prowess preserved the field.

**barley** — or lentils ( Samuel 23:11). Ephes-dammim was situated between Shocoh and Azekah, in the west of the Judahite territory. These feats were performed when David acted as Saul's general against the Philistines.

- **15-19.** David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink ... of the well of Beth-lehem (See on Samuel 23:15). This chivalrous act evinces the enthusiastic devotion of David's men, that they were ready to gratify his smallest wish at the risk of their lives. It is probable that, when uttering the wish, David had no recollection of the military posted at Beth-lehem. It is generally taken for granted that those who fought a way to the well of Beth-lehem were the three champions just mentioned [see on Chronicles 11:13]. But this is far from being clear. On the contrary, it would seem that three different heroes are referred to, for Abishai (Chronicles 11:20) was one of them. The camp of the Philistines was in the valley of Rephaim (Chronicles 11:15), which lay on the west of Jerusalem, but an outpost was stationed at Beth-lehem (Chronicles 11:16), and through this garrison they had to force a passage.
- **21.** *howbeit he attained not to the first three* (See on <sup>3228</sup>2 Samuel 23:19).
- **22. Benaiah** ... of **Kabzeel** a town in the south of Judah ( The Judah 15:21 Nehemiah 11:25). It is said that "he had done many acts," though three only are mentioned as specimens of his daring energy and fearless courage.

*slew two lionlike men of Moab* — literally, "lions of God," that is, great lions or champions. This gallant feat was probably achieved in David's hostile invasion of Moab (\*\*\* Samuel 8:2).

also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day — probably a cave into which Benaiah had taken refuge from the snowstorm, and in which he encountered a savage lion which had its lair there. In a spacious

cave the achievement would be far greater than if the monster had been previously snared or cabined in a pit.

**23.** *he went down* — the ordinary phraseology for expressing an engagement in battle. The encounter of Benaiah with this gigantic Egyptian reminds us, in some respects, of David's combat with Goliath. At least, the height of this giant, which was about eight feet, and his armor, resembled his of Gath.

with a staff—that is, having no other weapon in his hand than his walking stick.

- **25.** *David set him over his guard* the Cherethites and Pelethites that composed the small bodyguard in immediate attendance on the king.
- **26.** Also the valiant men of the armies This was the third degree of military rank, and Asahel was their chief; the names of few of those mentioned are historically known.
- **27.** *Shammoth* Between this name and Hebez, that of Elikah has evidently fallen out, as we may see (4EEE) Samuel 23:25,26) [BERTHEAU].
- **30.** *Maharai* chief of the detachment of the guards who attended on the king in the tenth month, January (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 27:13 \*\*\*\* Samuel 23:28).
- **39.** *Naharai* armorbearer to Joab (\*\*\*2 Samuel 23:37). The non-occurrence of Joab's name in any of the three catalogues is most probably to be accounted for by the circumstance that his office as commander-inchief raised him to a position superior to all these orders of military knighthood.
- 41. *Uriah the Hittite* The enrolment of this name in such a list, attesting, as it does, his distinguished merits as a brave and devoted officer, aggravates the criminality of David's outrage on his life and honor. The number of the names at doesn't Chronicles 11:26-41 (exclusive of Asahel and Uriah, who were dead) is thirty, and at doesn't Chronicles 11:41-47 is sixteen making together forty-eight (see on doesn't Chronicles 27:1-34). Of those mentioned (doesn't Chronicles 11:26-41), the greater part belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; the sixteen names (doesn't Chronicles 11:41-47)

are all associated with places unknown, or with cities and districts on the east of the Jordan. The northern tribes do not appear to have furnished any leaders [Bertheau].

### CHRONICLES 12:1-22.

### THE COMPANIES THAT CAME TO DAVID AT ZIKLAG.

**1-7.** Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag — There are three lists given in this chapter, arranged, apparently, according to the order of time when the parties joined the standard of David.

while he yet kept himself close because of Saul — that is, when the king's jealousy had driven him into exile from the court and the country.

**Ziklag** — (See on See on Samuel 27:6). It was during his retirement in that Philistine town that he was joined in rapid succession by the heroes who afterwards contributed so much to the glory of his reign.

- 2. of Saul's brethren of Benjamin that is, of the tribe of Benjamin (compare 12:29), but some of them might be relatives of the king. This movement to which the parties were led, doubtless by the secret impulse of the Spirit, was of vast importance to the cause of David, as it must have been founded on their observation of the evident withdrawal of God's blessing from Saul, and His favoring presence with David, to whom it was universally known the Divine King of Israel had given the crown in reversion. The accession of the Benjamites who came first and their resolution to share his fortunes must have been particularly grateful to David. It was a public and emphatic testimony by those who had enjoyed the best means of information to the unblemished excellence of his character, as well as a decided protest against the grievous wrong inflicted by causelessly outlawing a man who had rendered such eminent services to his country.
- **4.** *Ismaiah the Gibeonite* It appears that not only the Canaanites who were admitted into the congregation (\*\*GET\*Joshua 9:1-27), but people of the tribe of Benjamin, were among the inhabitants of Gibeon. The mention of "the Gederathite," probably from Gederah (\*\*GET\*Joshua 15:36), in the

lowlands of Judah; of the Korhites (\*\*\*1251\*) Chronicles 12:6), from Korah (\*\*\*1251\*) Chronicles 2:43), and of Gedor (\*\*\*1251\*) Chronicles 12:7), a town in Judah, to the southwest of Beth-lehem (compare \*\*\*1001\*) Chronicles 4:4), shows that this first list contains men of Judah as well as Benjamin [Bertheau].

**8-13.** of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David — that is, from the service of Saul and from the rest of the Gadites who remained steadfast adherents of his cause.

*into the hold* — or fortress, that is, of Ziklag, which was in the wilderness of Judah.

whose faces were like the faces of lions, etc. — A fierce, lion-like countenance (\*\*\*22 Samuel 1:23), and great agility in pursuit (\*\*\*22 Samuel 2:18), were qualities of the highest estimation in ancient warfare.

- 14. one of the least was over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand David, while at Ziklag, had not so large an amount of forces as to give to each of these the command of so many men. Another meaning, therefore, must obviously be sought, and excluding was, which is a supplement by our translators, the import of the passage is, that one of the least could discomfit a hundred, and the greatest was worth a thousand ordinary men; a strong hyperbole to express their uncommon valor.
- **15.** These are they that went over Jordan in the first month that is, in spring, when the swollen river generally fills up the banks of its channel (see on 4004 Joshua 3:14; 4004 Joshua 4:19; and 4005 Joshua 5:10).

they put to flight all them of the valleys — This was probably done at the time of their separating themselves and their purpose being discovered, they had to cut their passage through the opposing adherents of Saul, both on the eastern and western banks. The impossibility of taking the fords at such a time, and the violent rapidity of the current, make this crossing of the Jordan — in whatever way these Gadites accomplished it — a remarkable feat.

**16.** *the children of Benjamin and Judah* — It is probable that the Benjamites invited the Judahites to accompany them, in order to prevent David being suspicious of them. Their anticipations, as the result showed,

were well founded. He did suspect them, but the doubts of David as to their object in repairing to him, were promptly dispelled by Amasai or Amasa, who, by the secret impulse of the Spirit, assured him of their strong attachment and their zealous service from a unanimous conviction that his cause was owned and blessed of God (\*\*\*C1 Samuel 18:12-14).

**19-22.** *there fell some of Manasseh* — The period of their accession is fixed as the time when David came with the Philistines against Saul to battle.

but they helped them not — (See on 4994).

**20.** As he went to Ziklag — If those Manassites joined him on his return to Ziklag, after his dismissal from the Philistine army, then their arrival took place before the battle of Gilboa could have been fought (compare display Samuel 29:11). Convinced of the desperate state of Saul's affairs, they abandoned him, and resolved to transfer their allegiance to David. But some learned men think that they came as fugitives from that disastrous field [CALMET and EWALD].

*captains of the thousands ... of Manasseh* — Those seven were commanders of the large military divisions of their tribe.

- **21, 22.** *they helped David against the band* that is, the Amalekites who had pillaged Ziklag in David's absence. This military expedition was made by all his men ( Samuel 30:9), who, as David's early helpers, are specially distinguished from those who are mentioned in the latter portion of the chapter.
- **22.** *the host of God* that is, a great and powerful army.

1 CHRONICLES 12:23-40.

### THE ARMIES THAT CAME TO HIM AT HEBRON.

23. these are the numbers of the bands ... that came to David to Hebron
— after the death of Ish-bosheth (see on Samuel 5:1).

to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord—(4304] Chronicles 10:14 4312 11:3,10). The account commences with the southern tribes, Levi being associated with Judah and Simeon, as the great majority of the leading men in this tribe resided in Judah; and, after recounting the representatives of the northern tribes, it concludes with those on the east of Jordan.

- 27. Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites not the high priest, for that was Abiathar ( Samuel 23:9), but the leader of the Aaronite warriors, supposed to be the father of Benaiah ( Chronicles 11:22).
- **29.** *Benjamin* ... *three thousand* This small number shows the unpopularity of the movement in this tribe; and, indeed, it is expressly stated that the mass of the population had, even after Ish-bosheth's death, anxiously endeavored to secure the crown in the family of Saul.
- **32.** children of Issachar, ... that had understanding of the times, etc. Jewish writers say that the people of this tribe were eminent for their acquirements in astronomical and physical science; and the object of the remark was probably to show that the intelligent and learned classes were united with the military, and had declared for David.
- **33. Zebulun** ... **could keep rank** that is, were more disciplined soldiers than the rest

*not of double heart* — Though their numbers were large, all were in a high degree well affected to David.

- **38.** *all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king* that is, entertained a unanimous desire for his elevation.
- **39, 40.** there they were with David three days, eating and drinking According to the statements made in the preceding verses, the number of armed warriors assembled in Hebron on this occasion amounted to three hundred thousand. Supplies of provisions were abundantly furnished, not only by the people of the neighborhood, but from distant parts of the country, for all wished the festivities to be on a scale of liberality and magnificence suitable to the auspicious occasion.

## CHRONICLES 13:1-8.

### DAVID FETCHES THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM.

1-3. David consulted ... And let us bring again the ark of our God — Gratitude for the high and splendid dignity to which he had been elevated would naturally, at this period, impart a fresh animation and impulse to the habitually fervent piety of David; but, at the same time, he was animated by other motives. He fully understood his position as ruler under the theocracy, and, entering on his duties, he was resolved to fulfill his mission as a constitutional king of Israel. Accordingly, his first act as a sovereign related to the interests of religion. The ark being then the grand instrument and ornament of it, he takes the opportunity of the official representatives of the nation being with him, to consult them about the propriety of establishing it in a more public and accessible locality. The assembly at which he spoke of this consisted of the Sheloshim, princes of thousands ( Samuel 6:1). During the reign of the late king, the ark had been left in culpable neglect. Consequently the people had, to a great extent, been careless about the ordinances of divine worship, or had contented themselves with offering sacrifices at Gibeon, without any thought of the ark, though it was the chief and most vital part of the tabernacle. The duty and advantages of this religious movement suggested by the king were apparent, and the proposal met with universal approval.

**2.** If it seem good unto you, and ... it be of the Lord — that is, I shall conclude that this favorite measure of mine is agreeable to the mind of God, if it receive your hearty concurrence.

*let us send abroad to our brethren everywhere* — He wished to make it known throughout the country, in order that there might be a general assembly of the nation, and that preparations might be made on a scale and of a kind suitable to the inauguration of the august ceremonial.

with them also to the priests and Levites ... in their cities and suburbs — (See on ONE) Numbers 35:2). The original terms, "Let us send," imply immediate execution; and, doubtless, the publication of the royal edict would have been followed by the appointment of an early day for the contemplated solemnity, had it not been retarded by a sudden invasion of the Philistines, who were twice repulsed with great loss (ONE) Samuel 5:17), by the capture of Jerusalem, and the transference of the seat of government to that city. Finding, however, soon after, peace restored and his throne established, he resumed his preparations for removing the ark to the metropolis.

**5.** from Shihor of Egypt — (\*\*\*\*\*Joshua 15:4,47 \*\*\*Numbers 34:5 \*\*\*\*\*1 Kings 8:65 \*\*\*2 Kings 24:7 \*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 7:8); a small brook flowing into the Mediterranean, near the modern El-arish, which forms the southern boundary of Palestine.

*unto the entering of Hemath* — the defile between the mountain ranges of Syria and the extreme limit of Palestine on the north.

**6-14.** *David went up*, *and all Israel*, *to Baalah* — (See on 6:1-11).

whose name is called on it — rather, "who is worshipped there" (\*\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 6:2).

## CHRONICLES 14:1,2.

### HIRAM'S KINDNESS TO DAVID; DAVID'S FELICITY.

- 1. Now Hiram king of Tyre [See on 25 Samuel 5:11]. The alliance with this neighboring king, and the important advantages derived from it, were among the most fortunate circumstances in David's reign. The providence of God appeared concurrent with His promise in smoothing the early course of his reign. Having conquered the Jebusites and made Zion the royal residence, he had now, along with internal prosperity, established an advantageous treaty with a neighboring prince; and hence, in immediate connection with the mention of this friendly league, it is said, "David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel."
- 2. his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel This is an important truth, that sovereigns are invested with royal honor and authority, not for their own sakes so much as for that of their people. But while it is true of all kings, it was especially applicable to the monarchs of Israel, and even David was made to know that all his glory and greatness were given only to fit him, as the minister of God, to execute the divine purposes towards the chosen people.

## CHRONICLES 14:3-7.

#### HIS WIVES.

**3.** David took more wives at Jerusalem — (See on TRE) Samuel 3:5). His concubines are mentioned (TRE) Chronicles 3:9), where also is given a list of his children (TRE) Chronicles 14:5-8), and those born in Jerusalem (TRE) Samuel 5:14-16). In that, however, the names of Eliphalet and Nogah do not occur, and Beeliada appears to be the same as Eliada.

## **CHRONICLES** 14:8-17.

### HIS VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES.

- **8.** all the Philistines went up to seek David in the hope of accomplishing his ruin (for so the phrase is used, <sup>1025</sup>1 Samuel 23:15 <sup>1020</sup>24:2,3) before his throne was consolidated. Their hostility arose, both from a belief that his patriotism would lead him, erelong, to wipe out the national dishonor at Gilboa, and by fear, that in any invasion of their country, his thorough knowledge of their weak points would give him superior advantages. They resolved, therefore, to surprise and crush him before he was fairly seated on his throne.
- **11.** *they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there* In an engagement fought at Mount Perazim ( Isaiah 28:21), in the valley of Rephaim, a few miles west of Jerusalem, the Philistines were defeated and put to flight.
- **12.** when they had left their gods (See on See Samuel 5:21).
- **13.** *the Philistines yet again spread themselves* They renewed the campaign the next season, taking the same route. David, according to divine directions, did not confront them.
- **14.** Go not up after them The text in Samuel 5:23, more correctly has, "Go not up."

*turn away from them* — that is, by stealing round a baca-grove, come upon their rear.

- **15.** for God is gone forth before thee that is, the rustling of the leaves by a strong breeze suddenly rising, was the sign by which David was divinely apprised of the precise moment for the attack. The impetuosity of his onset was like the gush of a pent-up torrent, which sweeps away all in its course; and in allusion to this incident the place got its name.
- **16.** from Gibeon ... to Gazer Geba or Gibea (\*\*\*2 Samuel 5:25), now Yefa, in the province of Judah. The line from this to Gazer was intersected by the roads which led from Judah to the cities of the Philistines. To recover possession of it, therefore, as was effected by this decisive battle,

was equivalent to setting free the whole mountain region of Judah as far as their most westerly slope [Bertheau].

## CHRONICLES 15:1-24.

### DAVID BRINGS THE ARK FROM OBEDEDOM.

**1.** David made him houses in the city of David — Through the liberality of his Tyrian ally ( Chronicles 14:1), David was enabled to erect not only a palace for himself, but to furnish suitable accommodation for his numerous family. Where polygamy prevails, each wife has a separate house or suite of apartments for herself and children.

prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent — that is, made an entirely new one upon the model of the former. The old tabernacle, which Moses had constructed in the wilderness and which had hitherto served the purpose of a sacred covering, was to be left at Gibeon, either because of the unwillingness of the inhabitants to part with such a venerable relic, or because there was no use for it in Jerusalem, where a more solid and sumptuous edifice was contemplated. If it appear surprising that David "made him houses" before he prepared this new tabernacle, it should be remembered that he had received no divine intimation respecting such a work.

- **3.** David gathered all Israel together Some are of opinion that this was done on one of the three great festivals, but at whatever time the ceremonial took place, it was of great importance to summon a general convocation of the people, many of whom, from the long-continued

disorders of the kingdom, might have had little or no opportunity of knowing anything of the ark, which had been allowed to remain so long in obscurity and neglect.

- 4. David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites The children of Aaron were the two priests (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 15:11), Zadok and Abiathar, heads of the two priestly houses of Eleazar and Ithamar, and colleagues in the high priesthood (\*\*\*\* Samuel 20:25). The Levites were the chiefs of their father's house (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 15:12); four belonging to the Kohathite branch, on whose shoulders the ark was to be borne; namely, Uriel, Shemaiah descended from Elizaphan or Elzaphan (\*\*\*\* Exodus 6:22), Hebron (\*\*\*\* Exodus 6:18 \*\*\*\* Chronicles 6:2), and Amminadab from Uzziel (\*\*\*\* Exodus 6:22).
- **12.** *sanctify yourselves* This special sanctification, which was required on all grave and important occasions, consisted in observing the strictest abstinence, as well as cleanliness, both in person and dress (see on Genesis 35:2; DExodus 19:10,15); and in the neglect of these rules no step could have been taken (HIP) Chronicles 30:3).
- **16-24.** David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint ... the singers with instruments These eminent Levites were instructed to train the musicians and singers who were under them, for the solemn procession. The performers were ranged in three choirs or bands, and the names of the principal leaders are given (\*\*\* Chronicles 15:17,18,21), with the instruments respectively used by each. "Ben" (\*\*\* Chronicles 15:18) is omitted. Either it was used merely as a common noun, to intimate that Zechariah was the son of Jaaziel or Aziel, or Ben is the same as Azaziah.
- **22.** Chenaniah, chief of the Levites He was not of the six heads of the Levitical families, but a chief in consequence of his office, which required learning, without regard to birth or family.

*instructed about the song* — He directed all these bands as to the proper time when each was to strike in or change their notes; or, as some render the passage, "He led the burdens, for he was skilled," that is, in the custom which it was necessary to observe in the carriage of the holy things [Bertheau].

- **23.** *Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers* who marched immediately in front, while Obed-edom and Jeiel went in the rear, of the ark.
- 25. So David, and the elders ... and captains ... went The pious design of David in ordering all his principal ministers and officers to take part in this solemn work and imparting so much pomp and imposing ceremony to the procession, was evidently to inspire the popular mind with a profound veneration for the ark and to give the young especially salutary impressions of religion, which would be renewed by the remembrance that they had been witnesses of the august solemnity in which the king and the highest aristocracy of the land participated, vying with all other classes to do honor to the God of Israel.
- **26.** *it came to pass*, etc. (See on Samuel 6:13-23).

they offered seven bullocks and seven rams — The Levites seem to have entered on this duty with fear and trembling; and finding that they might advance without any such indications of divine wrath as Uzza had experienced (1830) Chronicles 13:10), they offered an ox and a fatted sheep immediately after starting (1832) Samuel 6:13), and seven bullocks and seven rams — a perfect sacrifice, at the close of the procession (1831) Chronicles 16:1). It is probable that preparations had been made for the offering of similar sacrifices at regular intervals along the way.

**27.** *a robe of fine linen* — *Hebrew*, *Butz* — is rather supposed in the later books to denote cotton.

an ephod — a shoulder-garment, a cincture or cape over his dress. It was worn by the priests, but was not so peculiar to them as to be forbidden others (\*\*928\*1 Samuel 2:18 22:18).

**29.** *Michal* ... *saw* ... *David dancing and playing* — His movements would be slow and solemn, suitable to the grave and solemn character of the music. Though his royal robes were laid aside, he was attired like the other officials, showing a becoming humility in the immediate presence of God. The feelings manifested by Michal were only an ebullition of spleen from a proud and passionate woman.

## (3)(6)1 CHRONICLES 16:1-6.

# DAVID'S FESTIVAL SACRIFICE AND LIBERALITY TO THE PEOPLE.

- **2.** he blessed the people in the name of the Lord The king commended their zeal, supplicated the divine blessing upon them, and ordered the remains of the thank offerings which had been profusely sacrificed during the procession, to be distributed in certain proportions to every individual, that the ceremonial might terminate with appropriate festivities (\*\*Deuteronomy 12:7).
- **3.** *flagon of wine* The two latter words are a supplement by our translators, and the former is, in other versions, rendered not a "flagon," but a "cake," a confection, as the *Septuagint* renders it, made of flour and honey.
- **4-6.** he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord No sooner was the ark deposited in its tent than the Levites, who were to officiate in the choirs before it, entered upon their duties. A select number of the musicians were chosen for the service from the list (1359) Chronicles 15:19-21) of those who had taken a prominent part in the recent procession. The same arrangement was to be observed in their duties, now that the ark again was stationary; Asaph, with his associates, composing the first or principal company, played with cymbals; Zechariah and his colleagues, with whom were conjoined Jeiel and Obededom, forming the second company, used harps and similar instruments.
- **5. Jeiel** the same as Aziel ( Chronicles 15:20).
- **6.** *Benaiah also and Jahaziel* The name of the former is mentioned among the priests (\*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 15:24), but not the latter. The office assigned to them was that of blowing trumpets at regular intervals before the ark and in the tabernacle.

## CHRONICLES 16:7-43.

### HIS PSALM OF THANKSGIVING.

- 7. Then on that day David delivered first this psalm Among the other preparations for this solemn inauguration, the royal bard had composed a special hymn for the occasion. Doubtless it had been previously in the hands of Asaph and his assistants, but it was now publicly committed to them as they entered for the first time on the performance of their sacred duties. It occupies the greater part of this chapter (43681 Chronicles 16:8-36), and seems to have been compiled from other psalms of David, previously known to the Israelites, as the whole of it will be found, with very slight variations, in Psalm 96:1-13 105:1-15 106:47,48. In the form, however, in which it is given by the sacred historian, it seems to have been the first psalm given for use in the tabernacle service. Abounding, as it does, with the liveliest ascriptions of praise to God for the revelation of His glorious character and the display of His marvellous works and containing, as it does, so many pointed allusions to the origin, privileges, and peculiar destiny of the chosen people, it was admirably calculated to animate the devotions and call forth the gratitude of the assembled multitude.
- **36.** all the people said, Amen (Compare \*\*Psalm 72:19,20 \*\*\*\* 106:48). In the former, the author of the doxology utters the "amen" himself, while in the latter the people are exhorted to say "amen." This may arise from the fact that the latter psalm originally concluded with the injunction to say "amen." But in this historical account of the festival, it was necessary to relate that the people obeyed this injunction on the occasion referred to, and therefore the words "let them praise," were altered into "and they praised" [BERTHEAU].
- **37-42.** So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord Asaph and his brethren, etc. The sequel of the chapter describes the appointment of the sacred musicians and their respective duties.
- **38.** *Obed-edom with their brethren* Hosah, mentioned at the close of the verse, and a great number besides (see on Chronicles 26:1).

*to be porters* — doorkeepers.

**39, 40.** And Zadok ... before the tabernacle ... at Gibeon — While the above-mentioned officers under the superintendence of Abiathar, were appointed to officiate in Jerusalem, whither the ark had been brought, Zadok and the priests subordinate to him were stationed at Gibeon to perform the sacred service before the ancient tabernacle which still remained there.

**40.** *continually morning and evening* — as the law enjoined (\*Exodus 29:38 \*Numbers 28:3,6).

and do according to all that is written in the law — (See ONNumbers 28:1-31). Thus, in the time of David, the worship was performed at two places, where the sacred things that had been transmitted from the age of Moses were preserved. Before the Ark in Jerusalem, Asaph and his brethren officiated as singers, Obed-edom and Hosah served as doorkeepers, and Benaiah and Jahaziel blew the trumpets. While at the tabernacle and burnt offering in Gibeon, Heman and Jeduthun presided over the sacred music, the sons of Jeduthun were door keepers, and Zadok, with his suite of attendant priests, offered the sacrifices.

## CHRONICLES 17:1-10.

### DAVID FORBIDDEN TO BUILD GOD A HOUSE.

- **1.** as David sat in his house The details of this chapter were given in nearly similar terms (\*\*\* 2 Samuel 7:1-29). The date was towards the latter end of David's reign, for it is expressly said in the former book to have been at the cessation of all his wars. But as to narrate the preparations for the removal of the ark and the erection of the temple was the principal object of the historian, the exact chronology is not followed.
- 5. I ... have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another—
  The literal rendering is, "I was walking in a tent and in a dwelling." The evident intention (as we may see from GTTT Chronicles 17:6) was to lay stress upon the fact that God was a Mithhatlek (a travelling God) and went from one place to another with His tent and His entire dwelling (the dwelling included not merely the tent, but the fore-courts with the altar of burnt offerings, etc.) [Bertheau].
- **6.** *spake I a word to any of the judges* In <sup>4000</sup>2 Samuel 7:7 it is "any of the tribes" of Israel. Both are included. But the judges "who were commanded to feed the people," form the more suitable antithesis to David.

Why have ye not built me an house of cedars? — that is, a solid and magnificent temple.

**7.** Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote — a round tower of rude construction, high walled, but open at the top, in which sheep are often enclosed at night to protect them from wild beasts. The meaning is, I elevated you to the throne from a humble condition solely by an act of divine grace, and not from any antecedent merits of your own (see on on a Samuel 16:11), and I enabled you to acquire renown, equal or superior to any other monarch. Your reign will ever be afterwards regarded

as the best and brightest era in the history of Israel, for it will secure to the nation a settled inheritance of prosperity and peace, without any of the oppressions or disorders that afflicted them in early times.

**9, 10.** at the beginning, and since the time that I commanded judges — that is, including the whole period from Joshua to Saul.

*I tell thee that the Lord will build thee an house* — This was the language of Nathan himself, who was specially directed to assure David, not only of personal blessing and prosperity, but of a continuous line of royal descendants.

- 11. I will raise up thy seed (See on See on Samuel 7:12).
- 13. I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee My procedure in dealing with him will be different from My disposal of Saul. Should his misconduct call for personal chastisement, I shall spare his family. If I see it necessary to withdraw My favor and help for a time, it will be a corrective discipline only to reform and restore, not to destroy. (On this passage some have founded an argument for Solomon's repentance and return to God).
- **14.** *I will settle him in my house* over My people Israel.

and in my kingdom for ever — God here asserts His right of supreme sovereignty in Israel. David and Solomon, with their successors, were only the vicegerents whom He nominated, or, in His providence, permitted.

his throne shall be established for evermore — The posterity of David inherited the throne in a long succession — but not always. In such a connection as this, the phrase "for evermore" is employed in a restricted sense (see on Lamentations 3:31). We naturally expect the prophet to revert to David before concluding, after having spoken (Thronicles 17:12) of the building of Solomon's temple. The promise that his house should be blessed was intended as a compensation for the disappointment of his wish to build the temple, and hence this assurance is appropriately repeated at the conclusion of the prophet's address [Bertheau].

**15.** *According to all* ... *this vision* — The revelation of the divine will was made to the prophet in a dream.

**16.** David the king ... sat before the Lord, and said — (See on 30782 Samuel 7:18).

## CHRONICLES 18:1,2.

### DAVID SUBDUES THE PHILISTINES AND MOABITES.

- 1. David ... took Gath and her towns The full extent of David's conquests in the Philistine territory is here distinctly stated, whereas in the parallel passage (\*\*\*2 Samuel 8:1) it was only described in a general way. Gath was the "Metheg-ammah," or "arm-bridle," as it is there called either from its supremacy as the capital over the other Philistine towns, or because, in the capture of that important place and its dependencies, he obtained the complete control of his restless neighbors.
- **2.** *he smote Moab* The terrible severities by which David's conquest of that people was marked, and the probable reason of their being subjected to such a dreadful retribution, are narrated ( Samuel 8:2).

the Moabites ... brought gifts — that is, became tributary to Israel.

## CHRONICLES 18:3-17.

#### DAVID SMITES HADADEZER AND THE SYRIANS.

- **3.** *Hadarezer* or, "Hadadezer" (\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 8:3), which was probably the original form of the name, was derived from Hadad, a Syrian deity. It seems to have become the official and hereditary title of the rulers of that kingdom.
- **Zobah** Its situation is determined by the words "unto" or "towards Hamath," a little to the northeast of Damascus, and is supposed by some to be the same place as in earlier times was called Hobah (\*\*Genesis 14:15). Previous to the rise of Damascus, Zobah was the capital of the kingdom which held supremacy among the petty states of Syria.

as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates — Some refer this to David, who was seeking to extend his possessions in one direction towards a point bordering on the Euphrates, in accordance with the promise (\*\*Genesis 15:18 \*\*OPET\*\* Numbers 24:17). But others are of opinion that, as David's name is mentioned (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 18:4), this reference is most applicable to Hadadezer.

4-8. And David took from him a thousand chariots — (See on Samuel 8:3-14). In Samuel 8:4 David is said to have taken seven hundred horsemen, whereas here it is said that he took seven thousand. This great discrepancy in the text of the two narratives seems to have originated with a transcriber in confounding the two Hebrew letters which indicate the numbers, and in neglecting to mark or obscure the points over one of them. We have no means of ascertaining whether seven hundred or seven thousand be the more correct. Probably the former should be adopted [Davidson's Hermenutics].

*but reserved of them an hundred chariots* — probably to grace a triumphal procession on his return to Jerusalem, and after using them in that way, destroy them like the rest.

- **8.** from Tibhath and from Chun These places are called Betah and Berothai (\*\*1008\*\*2 Samuel 8:8). Perhaps the one might be the Jewish, the other the Syrian, name of these towns. Neither their situation nor the connection between them is known. The Arabic version makes them to be Emesa (now Hems) and Baal-bek, both of which agree very well with the relative position of Zobah.
- **9-13.** *Tou* or Toi whose dominions border on those of Hadadezer. (See on Samuel 8:9-12; Samuel 8:9-12).
- **17.** *the Cherethites and the Pelethites* who formed the royal bodyguard. The Cherethites were, most probably, those brave men who all along accompanied David while among the Philistines, and from that people derived their name (\*\*\*\* Samuel 30:14 \*\*\*\* Ezekiel 25:16 \*\*\* Zephaniah 2:5) as well as their skill in archery while the Pelethites were those who joined him at Ziklag, took their name from Pelet, the chief man in the company (\*\*\* Chronicles 12:3), and, being Benjamites, were expert in the use of the sling.

### □ CHRONICLES 19:1-5.

# DAVID'S MESSENGERS, SENT TO COMFORT HANUN, ARE DISGRACEFULLY TREATED.

1. after this — This phrase seems to indicate that the incident now to be related took place immediately, or soon after the wars described in the preceding chapter. But the chronological order is loosely observed, and the only just inference that can be drawn from the use of this phrase is, that some farther account is to be given of the wars against the Syrians.

*Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died* — There had subsisted a very friendly relation between David and him, begun during the exile of the former, and cemented, doubtless, by their common hostility to Saul.

- 3. are not his servants come unto thee for to search? that is, thy capital, Rabbah (\*\*\*2 Samuel 10:3).
- **4, 5.** *shaved them* not completely, but only the half of their face. This disrespect to the beard, and indecent exposure of their persons by their clothes being cut off from the girdle downwards, was the grossest indignity to which Jews, in common with all Orientals, could be subjected. No wonder that the men were ashamed to appear in public that the king recommended them to remain in seclusion on the border till the mark of their disgrace had disappeared and then they might, with propriety, return to the court.

## 19061 CHRONICLES 19:6-15.

### JOAB AND ABISHAI OVERCOME THE AMMONITES.

**6.** when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David — One universal feeling of indignation was roused

throughout Israel, and all classes supported the king in his determination to avenge this unprovoked insult on the Hebrew nation.

*Hanun* ... sent a thousand talents of silver — a sum equal to about \$2,000,000 to procure the services of foreign mercenaries.

*chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia* ... *Syria-maachah*, *and* ... *Zobah* — The Mesopotamian troops did not arrive during this campaign (4896) Chronicles 19:16). Syria-maachah lay on the north of the possessions of the trans-jordanic Israelites, near Gilead.

**Zobah** — (see on See on Chronicles 18:3).

- 7. So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots Hebrew, "riders," or "cavalry," accustomed to fight either on horseback or in chariots, and occasionally on foot. Accepting this as the true rendering, the number of hired auxiliaries mentioned in this passage agrees exactly with the statement in OSS Samuel 10:6: twenty thousand (from Syria), twelve thousand (from Tob), equal to thirty-two thousand, and one thousand with the king of Maachah.
- **8.** David ... sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men All the forces of Israel, including the great military orders, were engaged in this war.
- **9-15.** children of Ammon ... put the battle in array before the gate of the city that is, outside the walls of Medeba, a frontier town on the Arnon.

the kings that were come were by themselves in the field — The Israelitish army being thus beset by the Ammonites in front, and by the Syrian auxiliaries behind, Joab resolved to attack the latter (the more numerous and formidable host), while he directed his brother Abishai, with a suitable detachment, to attack the Ammonites. Joab's address before the engagement displays the faith and piety that became a commander of the Hebrew people. The mercenaries being defeated, the courage of the Ammonites failed; so that, taking flight, they entrenched themselves within the fortified walls.

## 13061 CHRONICLES 19:16-19.

### SHOPHACH SLAIN BY DAVID.

**16.** And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before **Israel** — (See on Samuel 10:15-19).

**18.** David slew of the Syrians seven thousand men — (Compare Samuel 10:18, which has seven hundred chariots). Either the text in one of the books is corrupt [Keil, Davidson], or the accounts must be combined, giving this result — seven thousand horsemen, seven thousand chariots, and forty thousand footmen [Kennicott, Houbigant, Calmet].

## CHRONICLES 20:1-3.

# RABBAH BESIEGED BY JOAB, SPOILED BY DAVID, AND THE PEOPLE TORTURED.

**1.** at the time when kings go out to battle — in spring, the usual season in ancient times for entering on a *campaign*; that is, a year subsequent to the Syrian war.

Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country ... of Ammon — The former campaign had been disastrous, owing chiefly to the hired auxiliaries of the Ammonites; and as it was necessary, as well as just, that they should be severely chastised for their wanton outrage on the Hebrew ambassadors, Joab ravaged their country and invested their capital, Rabbah. After a protracted siege, Joab took one part of it, the lower town or "city of waters," insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok. Knowing that the fort called "the royal city" would soon fall, he invited the king to come in person, and have the honor of storming it. The knowledge of this fact (mentioned in "22 Samuel 12:26) enables us to reconcile the two statements — "David tarried at Jerusalem" ("2001] Chronicles 20:1), and "David and all the people returned to Jerusalem" ("2001] Chronicles 20:3).

**2.** David took the crown of their king ... a talent of gold — equal to one hundred twenty-five pounds. Some think that Malcom, rendered in our version "their king," should be taken as a proper name, Milcom or Molech, the Ammonite idol, which, of course, might bear a heavy weight. But, like many other state crowns of Eastern kings, the crown got at Rabbah was not worn on the head, but suspended by chains of gold above the throne.

*precious stones* — *Hebrew*, a "stone," or cluster of precious stones, which was set on David's head.

**3.** cut them with saws, etc. — The Hebrew word, "cut them," is, with the difference of the final letter, the same as that rendered "put them," in the parallel passage of Samuel [12:31]; and many consider that putting them to saws, axes, and so forth, means nothing more than that David condemned the inhabitants of Rabbah to hard and penal servitude.

## CHRONICLES 20:4-8.

# THREE OVERTHROWS OF THE PHILISTINES AND THREE GIANTS SLAIN.

**4.** war at Gezer — or Gob (see Samuel 21:18-22).

## 1 CHRONICLES 21:1-13.

### DAVID SINS IN NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

**1.** Satan stood up against Israel — God, by withdrawing His grace at this time from David (see on Samuel 24:1), permitted the tempter to prevail over him. As the result of this successful temptation was the entail of a heavy calamity as a punishment from God upon the people, it might be said that "Satan stood up against Israel."

**number Israel** — In the act of taking the census of a people, there is not only no evil, but much utility. But numbering Israel — that people who were to become as the stars for multitude, implying a distrust of the divine promise, was a sin; and though it had been done with impunity in the time of Moses, at that enumeration each of the people had contributed "half a shekel towards the building of the tabernacle," that there might be no plague among them when he numbered them (Exodus 30:12). Hence the numbering of that people was in itself regarded as an undertaking by which the anger of God could be easily aroused; but when the arrangements were made by Moses for the taking of the census, God was not angry because the people were numbered for the express purpose of the tax for the sanctuary, and the money which was thus collected ("the atonement money," Exodus 30:16) appeased Him. Everything depended, therefore, upon the design of the census [Bertheau]. The sin of David numbering the people consisted in its being either to gratify his pride to ascertain the number of warriors he could muster for some meditated plan of conquest; or, perhaps, more likely still, to institute a regular and permanent system of taxation, which he deemed necessary to provide an adequate establishment for the monarchy, but which was regarded as a tyrannical and oppressive exaction — an innovation on the liberty of the people — a departure from ancient usage unbecoming a king of Israel.

- **3.** why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? or bring an occasion of punishment on Israel. In Hebrew, the word "sin" is often used synonymously with the punishment of sin. In the course of Providence, the people frequently suffer for the misconduct of their rulers.
- **6.** Levi and Benjamin counted he not If this census was ordered with a view to the imposition of taxes, this alone would account for Levi, who were not warriors ( Chronicles 21:5), not being numbered (see on Numbers 1:47-54). The population of Benjamin had been taken (see on Chronicles 7:6-11), and the register preserved in the archives of that tribe. This, however, was taken on another occasion, and by other agency than that of Joab. The non-numbering of these two tribes might have originated in the special and gracious providence of God, partly because Levi was devoted to His service, and Benjamin had become the least of all the tribes ( Judges 21:1-25); and partly because God foresaw that they would remain faithful to the house of David in the division of the tribes. and therefore He would not have them diminished [POOLE]. From the course followed in this survey (see on Samuel 24:4-8), it would appear that Judah and Benjamin were the last tribes that were to be visited; and that, after the census in Judah had been finished, Joab, before entering on that of Benjamin, had to return to Jerusalem, where the king, now sensible of his great error, gave orders to stop all further proceedings in the business. Not only the remonstrance of Joab at the first, but his slow progress in the survey (\*\*\* 2 Samuel 24:8) showed the strong repugnance and even horror of the old general at this unconstitutional measure.

- **9.** *the Lord spake unto Gad*, *David's seer* Although David was himself endowed with a prophetic gift, yet, in matters relating to himself or his kingdom, he was in the habit of consulting the Lord through the medium of the priests; and when he failed to do so, a prophet was sent on extraordinary occasions to admonish or chastise him. Gad, a private friend, was occasionally employed as the bearer of these prophetic messages.
- **11, 12.** *Choose thee*, etc. To the *three* evils these correspond in beautiful agreement: *three* years, *three* months, *three* days [Bertheau]. (See on 4002 Samuel 24:13).
- **13.** *let me fall now into the hand of the Lord* ... *let me not fall into the hand of man* Experience had taught him that human passion and vengeance had no bounds, whereas our wise and gracious Father in heaven knows the kind, and regulates the extent, of chastisement which every one needs.
- **14, 15.** So the Lord ... sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it The infliction only of the pestilence is here noticed, without any account of its duration or its ravages, while a minute description is given of the visible appearance and menacing attitude of the destroying angel.
- **15.** stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite Ornan was probably his Hebrew or Jewish, Araunah his Jebusite or Canaanitish, name. Whether he was the old king of Jebus, as that title is given to him ( Samuel 24:23), or not, he had been converted to the worship of the true God, and was possessed both of property and influence.
- **16.** David and the elders ... clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces They appeared in the garb and assumed the attitude of humble penitents, confessing their sins, and deprecating the wrath of God.

49181 CHRONICLES 21:18-30.

#### HE BUILDS AN ALTAR.

**18.** the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say — The order about the erection of an altar, as well as the indication of its site, is described (\*\*\*2\*\*2\*\*)

- Samuel 24:18) as brought directly by Gad. Here we are informed of the quarter whence the prophet got his commission. It is only in the later stages of Israel's history that we find angels employed in communicating the divine will to the prophets.
- **20, 21.** *Ornan was threshing wheat* If the census was entered upon in autumn, the beginning of the civil year, the nine and a half months it occupied would end at wheat harvest. The common way of threshing corn is by spreading it out on a high level area, and driving backwards and forwards upon it two oxen harnessed to a clumsy sledge with three rollers and some sharp spikes. The driver sits on his knees on the box, while another person is employed in drawing back the straw and separating it from the grain underneath. By this operation the chaff is very much chopped, and the grain threshed out.
- **23.** I give thee ... the threshing instruments for wood that is, to burn the sacrifice of the oxen. Very little real import the haste and the value of the present offered can be understood in this country. The offering was made for instant use. Ornan, hereby hoping to terminate the pestilence without a moment's delay, "gave all," oxen, the large threshing machine, and the wheat.
- 25. David gave ... for the place six hundred shekels of gold At first he bought only the cattle and the threshing instruments, for which he paid fifty shekels of silver (\*\* Samuel 24:24); afterwards he purchased the whole property, Mount Moriah, on which the future temple stood. High in the center of the mountain platform rises a remarkable rock, now covered by the dome of "the Sakrah." It is irregular in its form, and measures about sixty feet in one direction and fifty feet in the other. It is the natural surface of Mount Moriah and is thought by many to be the rock of the threshing-floor of Araunah, selected by David, and continued by Solomon and Zerubbabel as "the unhewn stone" on which to build the altar [BARTLETT, Walks about Jerusalem; STANLEY].
- **26.** *David built there an altar* He went in procession with his leading men from the royal palace, down Mount Zion, and through the intervening city. Although he had plenty of space on his own property, he was commanded, under peremptory *direction*, to go a considerable distance from his home, up Mount Moriah, to erect an altar on premises which he

had to buy. It was on or close to the spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac.

answered him by fire from heaven — (See Leviticus 9:24 Lings 18:21-23 Kings 1:12 Chronicles 7:1).

**28.** when David saw that the Lord had answered him ..., he sacrificed there — or, "he continued to sacrifice there." Perceiving his sacrifice was acceptable, he proceeded to make additional offerings there, and seek favor by prayer and expiatory rites; for the dread of the menacing angel destroying Jerusalem while he was absent in the center of worship at Gibeon, especially reverence for the Divine Being, led him to continue his adorations in that place which God (\*\*\* Chronicles 3:1) had hallowed by the tokens of His presence and gracious acceptance.

## CHRONICLES 22:1-5.

### DAVID PREPARES FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

- **1.** David said, This is the home of the Lord God By the miraculous sign of fire from heaven, and perhaps other intimations, David understood it to be the will of God that the national place of worship should be fixed there, and he forthwith proceeded to make preparations for the erection of the temple on that spot.
- **2.** David commanded to gather together the strangers partly the descendants of the old Canaanites (\*\*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 8:7-10), from whom was exacted a tribute of bond service, and partly war captives (\*\*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 2:7), reserved for the great work he contemplated.

**CHRONICLES** 22:6-19.

### HE INSTRUCTS SOLOMON.

**6.** Then he called for Solomon ... and charged him — The earnestness and solemnity of this address creates an impression that it was given a little before the old king's decease. He unfolded his great and long cherished plan, enjoined the building of God's house as a sacred duty on him as his son and successor, and described the resources that were at command for carrying on the work. The vast amount of personal property he had accumulated in the precious metals [ Chronicles 22:14] must have been spoil taken from the people he had conquered, and the cities he had sacked.

## CHRONICLES 23:1.

### DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING.

**1.** when David was old ... he made Solomon ... king — This brief statement, which comprises the substance of different Kings 1:32-48, is made here solely to introduce an account of the preparations carried on by David during the latter years of his life for providing a national place of worship.

### CHRONICLES 23:2-6.

### NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEVITES.

- **2.** *he gathered together all the princes of Israel* All important measures relating to the public interest were submitted for consideration to a general assembly of the representatives of the tribes (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 13:1\*\*\*\*15:25\*\*\*22:17\*\*\*26:1-32).
- 3. the Levites were numbered ... thirty and eight thousand Four times their number at the early census taken by Moses (see on Numbers 4:1-49; 26:1-51). It was, in all likelihood, this vast increase that suggested and rendered expedient that classification, made in the Fast year of David's reign, which the present and three subsequent chapters describe.

by their polls, man by man — Women and children were not included.

**4.** twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord — They were not to preside over all the services of the temple. The Levites were subject to the priests, and they were superior to the Nethinim and other servants, who were not of the race of Levi. But they had certain departments of duty assigned, some of which are here specified.

- **5.** praised the Lord with the instruments which I made David seems to have been an inventor of many of the musical instruments used in the temple (\*\*\*Amos 6:5).
- **6.** David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi These are enumerated according to their fathers' houses, but no more of these are mentioned here than the twenty-four thousand who were engaged in the work connected with the Lord's house. The fathers' houses of those Levites corresponded with the classes into which they [JOSEPHUS, Antiquities] as well as the priests were divided (see on 4000)1 Chronicles 24:20-31; 4000)1 Chronicles 26:20-28).

### CHRONICLES 23:7-11.

### SONS OF GERSHON.

**7-11.** *the Gershonites* — They had nine fathers' houses, six descended from Laadan, and three from Shimei.

# 1 CHRONICLES 23:12-20.

#### OF KOHATH.

- **12.** *The sons of Kohath* He was the founder of nine Levitical fathers' houses.
- **13.** Aaron was separated as high priest (see on Chronicles 25:1-19).
- **14.** *concerning Moses* His sons were ranked with the Levites generally, but not introduced into the distinctive portion of the descendants of Levi, who were appointed to the special functions of the priesthood.

## 1 CHRONICLES 23:21-23.

### OF MERARI.

**21-23.** *The sons of Merari* — They comprised six fathers' houses. Summing them together, Gershon founded nine fathers houses, Kohath nine, and Merari six: total, twenty-four.

## 1 CHRONICLES 23:24-32.

### OFFICE OF THE LEVITES.

## 1 CHRONICLES 24:1-19.

# DIVISION OF THE SONS OF AARON INTO FOUR AND TWENTY ORDERS.

- **1.** Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron (See on Chronicles 23:6).
- **2.** *Nadab and Abihu died before their father* that is, not in his presence, but during his lifetime (see Numbers 3:4 \*\*26:61).

therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office — In consequence of the death of his two oldest sons without issue, the descendants of Aaron were comprised in the families of Eleazar and Ithamar. Both of these sons discharged the priestly functions as assistants to their father. Eleazar succeeded him, and in his line the high priesthood continued until it was transferred to the family of Ithamar, in the person of Eli.

3. Zadok ... and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar — This statement, taken in connection with 15:24,35 16:20:25) Abiathar is mentioned as the person conjoined in David's time with Zadok, in the collegiate exercise of the high priesthood. Some think that the words have been transposed, reading Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. But there is no ground for regarding the text as faulty. The high priests of the line of Ithamar were the following: Ahiah or Ahimelech, his son Abiathar, his son Ahimelech. We frequently find the grandfather and grandson called by the same name (see list of high priests of the line of Eleazar, 10:00 Chronicles 6:30-41). Hence the author of the Chronicles was acquainted with Ahimelech, son of Abiathar, who, for some reason, discharged the duties of high priest in David's reign, and during the lifetime of his father (for Abiathar was living in the time of Solomon, 11:00 Eleazar) [Keil].

- **4.** *there were more chief men found* The *Hebrew* may be translated, "There were more men as to heads of the sons of Eleazar." It is true, in point of fact, that by the census the number of individuals belonging to the family of Eleazar was found greater than in that of Ithamar. And this, of necessity, led to there being more fathers' houses, and consequently more chiefs or presidents in the former.
- **5.** Thus were they divided by lot This method of allocation was adopted manifestly to remove all cause of jealousy as to precedence and the right of performing particular duties.
- **6.** one principal household The marginal reading is preferable, "one house of the father." The lot was cast in a deliberate and solemn manner in presence of the king, the princes, the two high priests, and the chiefs of the priestly and Levitical families. The heads of families belonging to Eleazar and Ithamar were alternately brought forward to draw, and the name of each individual, as called, registered by an attendant secretary. To accommodate the casting of the lots to the inequality of the number, there being sixteen fathers' houses of Eleazar, and only eight of Ithamar, it was arranged that every house of Ithamar should be followed by two of Eleazar, or, what is the same thing, that every two houses of Eleazar should be followed by one of Ithamar. If, then, we suppose a commencement to have been made by Eleazar, the order would be as follows: one and two, Eleazar; three, Ithamar; four and five, Eleazar; six, Ithamar; seven and eight, Eleazar; nine, Ithamar; and so forth [Bertheau]. The lot determined also the order of the priests' service. That of the Levites was afterwards distributed by the same arrangement ( Chronicles 24:31).

### CHRONICLES 25:1-7.

### NUMBER AND OFFICE OF THE SINGERS.

- **1.** David and the captains of the host that is, the princes (\*\*\*P1 Chronicles 23:2 \*\*\*24:6). It is probable that the king was attended on the occasion of arranging the singers by the same parties that are mentioned as having assisted him in regulating the order of the priests and Levites.
- **2.** according to the order of the king Hebrew, "by the hands of the king," that is, "according to the king's order," under the personal superintendence of Asaph and his colleagues.
- which prophesied that is, in this connection, played with instruments. This metaphorical application of the term "prophecy" most probably originated in the practice of the prophets, who endeavored to rouse their prophetic spirit by the animating influence of music (see on <sup>1000</sup>2 Kings 3:15). It is said that Asaph did this "according to David's order," because by royal appointment he officiated in the tabernacle on Zion (<sup>1000</sup>1 Chronicles 16:37-41), while other leaders of the sacred music were stationed at Gibeon.
- **5.** Heman the king's seer The title of "seer" or "prophet of David" is also given to Gad (\*\*\*) Chronicles 21:9), and to Jeduthun (\*\*\*\*) Chronicles 29:14,15), in the words (*Margin*, "matters") of God.
- to lift up the horn that is, to blow loudly in the worship of God; or perhaps it means nothing more than that he presided over the wind instruments, as Jeduthun over the harp. Heman had been appointed at first to serve at Gibeon (\*\*\* Chronicles 16:41). But his destination seems to have been changed at a subsequent period.

God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters — The daughters are mentioned, solely because from their musical taste and talents they formed part of the choir (\*\*PS\*\*Psalm 68:25).

**6, 7.** *All these were under the hands of their father* — Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six, and Heman fourteen, equal to twenty-four; making the musicians with their brethren the singers, an amount of two hundred eighty-eight. For, like the priests and Levites, they were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve men each, equal to two hundred eighty-eight, who served a week in rotation; and these, half of whom officiated every week with a proportionate number of assistants, were skillful and experienced musicians, capable of leading and instructing the general musical corps, which comprised no less than four thousand (4205) Chronicles 23:5).

### CHRONICLES 25:8-31.

### THEIR DIVISION BY LOT INTO FOUR AND TWENTY ORDERS.

**8.** they cast lots, ward against ward — "Ward" is an old English word for "division" or "company." The lot was cast to determine the precedence of the classes or divisions over which the musical leaders presided; and, in order to secure an impartial arrangement of their order, the master and his assistants, the teacher and his scholars, in each class or company took part in this solemn casting of lots. In the first catalogue given in this chapter the courses are classed according to their employment as musicians. In the second, they are arranged in the order of their service.

### 1 CHRONICLES 26:1-12.

### DIVISIONS OF THE PORTERS.

**1, 2.** Concerning the divisions of the porters — There were four thousand (\*\*DTO\*1 Chronicles 23:6), all taken from the families of the Kohathites and Merarites (\*\*TO\*1 Chronicles 26:14), divided into twenty-four courses — as the priests and musicians.

Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph — Seven sons of Meshelemiah are mentioned (\*\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 26:2), whereas eighteen are given (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 26:9), but in this latter number his relatives are included.

- **5.** *God blessed him* that is, Obed-edom. The occasion of the blessing was his faithful custody of the ark (\*\*\*\* Samuel 6:11,12). The nature of the blessing (\*\*\*\* Psalm 127:5) consisted in the great increase of progeny by which his house was distinguished; seventy-two descendants are reckoned.
- **6.** *mighty men of valor* The circumstance of physical strength is prominently noticed in this chapter, as the office of the porters required them not only to act as sentinels of the sacred edifice and its precious furniture against attacks of plunderers or popular insurrection to be, in fact, a military guard but, after the temple was built, to open and shut the gates, which were extraordinarily large and ponderous.
- **10.** *Simri the chief* ... *though* ... *not the first-born* probably because the family entitled to the right of primogeniture had died out, or because there were none of the existing families which could claim that right.
- **12.** Among these were the divisions of the porters, even among the chief men These were charged with the duty of superintending the watches, being heads of the twenty-four courses of porters.

## 1 CHRONICLES 26:13-19.

### THE GATES ASSIGNED BY LOT.

- **13.** *they cast lots* Their departments of duty, such as the gates they should attend to, were allotted in the same manner as those of the other Levitical bodies, and the names of the chiefs or captains are given, with the respective gates assigned them.
- **15.** *the house of Asuppim* or, "collections," probably a storehouse, where were kept the grain, wine, and other offerings for the sustenance of the priests.
- **16.** *the gate Shallecheth* probably the rubbish gate, through which all the accumulated filth and sweepings of the temple and its courts were poured out.

by the causeway of the going up — probably the ascending road which was cast up or raised from the deep valley between Mount Zion and Moriah, for the royal egress to the place of worship (490) 2 Chronicles 9:4).

ward against ward — Some refer these words to Shuppim and Hosah, whose duty it was to watch both the western gate and the gate Shallecheth, which was opposite, while others take it as a general statement applicable to all the guards, and intended to intimate that they were posted at regular distances from each other, or that they all mounted and relieved guard at the same time in uniform order.

**17-19.** *Eastward were six Levites* — because the gate there was the most frequented. There were four at the north gate; four at the south, at the storehouse which was adjoining the south, and which had two entrance gates, one leading in a southwesterly direction to the city, and the other direct west, two porters each. At the Parbar towards the west, there were six men posted — four at the causeway or ascent (\*\*\* 100 Chronicles 26:16), and two at Parbar, amounting to twenty-four in all, who were kept daily on guard.

**18.** *Parbar* — is, perhaps, the same as Parvar ("suburbs," <sup>12212</sup> Kings 23:11), and if so, this gate might be so called as leading to the suburbs [Calmet].

## 1 CHRONICLES 26:20-28.

### LEVITES THAT HAD CHARGE OF THE TREASURES.

20. of the Levites, Ahijah — The heading of this section is altogether strange as it stands, for it looks as if the sacred historian were going to commence a new subject different from the preceding. Besides, "Ahijah, whose name occurs after" the Levites, is not mentioned in the previous lists. It is totally unknown and is introduced abruptly without further information; and lastly, Ahijah must have united in his own person those very offices of which the occupants are named in the verses that follow. The reading is incorrect. The Septuagint has this very suitable heading, "And their Levitical brethren over the treasures," etc. [Bertheau]. The names of those who had charge of the treasure chambers at their respective wards are given, with a general description of the precious things committed to their trust. Those treasures were immense, consisting of the accumulated spoils of Israelitish victories, as well as of voluntary contributions made by David and the representatives of the people.

## 1 CHRONICLES 26:29-32.

#### OFFICERS AND JUDGES.

**29.** *officers and judges* — The word rendered "officers" is the term which signifies scribes or secretaries, so that the Levitical class here described were magistrates, who, attended by their clerks, exercised judicial functions; there were six thousand of them (\*\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 23:4), who probably acted like their brethren on the principle of rotation, and these were divided into three classes — one (\*\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 26:29) for the outward business over Israel; one (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 26:30), consisting of seventeen hundred, for the west of Jordan "in all business of the Lord, and

in the service of the king"; and the third (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 26:31,32), consisting of twenty-seven hundred, "rulers for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king."

## CHRONICLES 27:1-15.

### TWELVE CAPTAINS FOR EVERY MONTH.

1. came in and went out month by month — Here is an account of the standing military force of Israel. A militia formed, it would seem, at the beginning of David's reign (see Chronicles 27:7) was raised in the following order: Twelve legions, corresponding to the number of tribes, were enlisted in the king's service. Each legion comprised a body of twenty-four thousand men, whose term of service was a month in rotation, and who were stationed either at Jerusalem or in any other place where they might be required. There was thus always a force sufficient for the ordinary purposes of state, as well as for resisting sudden attacks or popular tumults; and when extraordinary emergencies demanded a larger force, the whole standing army could easily be called to arms, amounting to two hundred eighty-eight thousand, or to three hundred thousand, including the twelve thousand officers that naturally attended on the twelve princes ( Chronicles 27:16-24). Such a military establishment would be burdensome neither to the country nor to the royal treasury; for attendance on this duty being a mark of honor and distinction, the expense of maintenance would be borne probably by the militiaman himself, or furnished out of the common fund of his tribe. Nor would the brief period of actual service produce any derangement of the usual course of affairs; for, on the expiry of the term, every soldier returned to the pursuits and duties of private life during the other eleven months of the year. Whether the same individuals were always enrolled, cannot be determined. The probability is, that provided the requisite number was furnished, no stricter scrutiny would be made. A change of men might, to a certain degree, be encouraged, as it was a part of David's policy to train all his subjects to skill in arms; and to have made the enlistment fall always on the same individuals would have defeated that purpose. To have confined each month's levy rigidly within the limits of one tribe might have fallen

hard upon those tribes which were weak and small. The rotation system being established, each division knew its own month, as well as the name of the commander under whom it was to serve. These commanders are styled, "the chief fathers," that is, the hereditary heads of tribes who, like chieftains of clans, possessed great power and influence.

captains of thousands and hundreds — The legions of twenty-four thousand were divided into regiments of one thousand, and these again into companies of a hundred men, under the direction of their respective subalterns, there being, of course, twenty-four captains of thousands, and two hundred forty centurions.

*and their officers* — the Shoterim, who in the army performed the duty of the commissariat, keeping the muster-roll, etc.

- **2, 3.** Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel (See on Chronicles 11:11 and Samuel 23:8). Hachmoni was his father, Zabdiel probably one of his ancestors; or there might be different names of the same individual. In the rotation of the military courses, the dignity of precedence, not of authority, was given to the hero.
- **4.** second month was Dodai or, "Dodo." Here the text seems to require the supplement of "Eleazar the son of Dodo" (123) Samuel 23:9).
- 7. **Asahel** This officer having been slain at the very beginning of David's reign [4022] Samuel 2:23], his name was probably given to this division in honor of his memory, and his son was invested with the command.

# <sup>4276</sup>1 CHRONICLES 27:16-24.

### PRINCES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

**16.** over the tribes of Israel: the ruler — This is a list of the hereditary chiefs or rulers of tribes at the time of David's numbering the people. Gad and Asher are not included; for what reason is unknown. The tribe of Levi had a prince ( Chronicles 27:17), as well as the other tribes; and although it was ecclesiastically subject to the high priest, yet in all civil

matters it had a chief or head, possessed of the same authority and power as in the other tribes, only his jurisdiction did not extend to the priests.

- **18.** *Elihu* probably the same as Eliab ( Samuel 16:6).
- **23.** But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under The census which David ordered did not extend to all the Israelites; for to contemplate such an enumeration would have been to attempt an impossibility (\*\*Genesis 28:14), and besides would have been a daring offense to God. The limitation to a certain age was what had probably quieted David's conscience as to the *lawfulness* of the measure, while its *expediency* was strongly pressed upon his mind by the army arrangements he had in view.
- **24.** neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of King David either because the undertaking was not completed, Levi and Benjamin not having been numbered (\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 21:6), or the full details in the hands of the enumerating officers were not reported to David, and, consequently, not registered in the public archives.

*the chronicles* — were the daily records or annals of the king's reign. No notice was taken of this census in the historical register, as from the public calamity with which it was associated it would have stood as a painful record of the divine judgment against the king and the nation.

**25.** *over the king's treasures* — Those treasures consisted of gold, silver, precious stones, cedar-wood, etc.; those which he had *in* Jerusalem as distinguished from others *without* the city.

*the storehouses in the fields* — Grain covered over with layers of straw is frequently preserved in the fields under little earthen mounds, like our potato pits.

**27.** *the vineyards* — These seem to have been in the vine growing districts of Judah, and were committed to two men of that quarter.

*wine-cellars* — The wine is deposited in jars sunk in the court of the house.

- **28.** *olive trees and the sycamore trees ... in the low plains* that is, the Shephela, the rich, low-lying ground between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Judah.
- **29.** *herds that fed in Sharon* a fertile plain between Cæsarea and Joppa.
- **30.** *camels* These were probably in the countries east of the Jordan, and hence an Ishmaelite and Nazarite were appointed to take charge of them.
- **31.** rulers of the substance that was king David's How and when the king acquired these demesnes and this variety of property whether it was partly by conquests, or partly by confiscation, or by his own active cultivation of waste lands is not said. It was probably in all these ways. The management of the king's private possessions was divided into twelve parts, like his public affairs and the revenue derived from all these sources mentioned must have been very large.

### CHRONICLES 28:1-8.

### DAVID EXHORTS THE PEOPLE TO FEAR GOD.

**1.** David assembled all the princes of Israel — that is, the representatives of the people, the leading men of the kingdom, who are enumerated in this verse according to their respective rank or degree of authority.

*princes of the tribes* — ( Chronicles 27:16-22). Those patriarchal chiefs are mentioned first as being the highest in rank — a sort of hereditary noblesse.

*the captains of the companies* — the twelve generals mentioned (<sup>4501</sup>1 Chronicles 27:1-15).

the stewards, etc. — ( Thronicles 27:25-31).

the officers — Hebrew, "eunuchs," or attendants on the court (\*\*\*\* Samuel 8:15 \*\*\* Kings 22:9 \*\*\* Kings 22:18); and besides Joab, the commander-in-chief of the army, the heroes who had no particular office (\*\*\* Chronicles 11:10-12:40 \*\*\* Samuel 23:8-39). This assembly, a very mixed and general one, as appears from the parties invited, was more numerous and entirely different from that mentioned (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 23:2).

**2.** Hear me, my brethren, and my people — This was the style of address becoming a constitutional king of Israel (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 17:20 \*\*\*\*Samuel 30:23 \*\*\*\*Samuel 5:1).

*I had in mine heart* — I proposed, or designed.

to build an house of rest — a solid and permanent temple.

*for the footstool of our God* — God seated between the cherubim, at the two extremities of the ark, might be said to be enthroned in His glory, and the coverlet of the ark to be His footstool.

- and had made ready for the building The immense treasures which David had amassed and the elaborate preparations he had made, would have been amply sufficient for the erection of the temple of which he presented the model to Solomon.
- **3.** thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood The church or spiritual state of the world, of which the temple at Jerusalem was to be a type, would be presided over by One who was to be pre-eminently the Prince of Peace, and therefore would be represented not so fitly by David, whose mission had been a preparatory one of battle and conquest, as by his son, who should reign in unbroken peace.
- 7. I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments The same condition is set before Solomon by God (\*\*\*18\*\*1 Kings 3:14 \*\*\*199\*\*9:4).
- **8.** Now ... in the sight of all Israel, ... keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord, etc. This solemn and earnest exhortation to those present, and to all Israel through their representatives, to continue faithful in observing the divine law as essential to their national prosperity and permanence, is similar to that of Moses (\*\*TE\*Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

# CHRONICLES 28:9-20.

#### HE ENCOURAGES SOLOMON TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.

**9, 10.** *And thou*, *Solomon my son* — The royal speaker now turns to Solomon, and in a most impressive manner presses upon him the importance of sincere and practical piety.

- **know thou** He did not mean head knowledge, for Solomon possessed that already, but that experimental acquaintance with God which is only to be obtained by loving and serving Him.
- **11.** Then David gave to Solomon ... the pattern He now put into the hands of his son and successor the plan or model of the temple, with the elevations, measurements, apartments, and chief articles of furniture, all of which were designed according to the pattern given him by divine revelation (TON) 1 Chronicles 28:19).
- **12.** *the pattern of all that he had by the spirit* rather, "with him in spirit"; that is, was floating in his mind.
- **15, 16.** *the candlesticks of silver* Solomon made them all of gold in this and a few minor particulars departing from the letter of his father's instructions, where he had the means of executing them in a more splendid style. There was only one candlestick and one table in the tabernacle, but ten in the temple.
- 18, 19. the chariot of the cherubim The expanded wings of the cherubim formed what was figuratively styled the throne of God, and as they were emblematical of rapid motion, the throne or seat was spoken of as a chariot (\*\*Psalm 18:10\*\*99:1). It is quite clear that in all these directions David was not guided by his own taste, or by a desire for taking any existing model of architecture, but solely by a regard to the express revelation of the divine will. In a vision, or trance, the whole edifice, with its appurtenances, had been placed before his eyes so vividly and permanently, that he had been able to take a sketch of them in the models delivered to Solomon.
- **20.** *Be strong and of good courage* The address begun in Chronicles 28:9 is resumed and concluded in the same strain.
- **21.** *behold*, *the courses of the priests and Levites* They were, most probably, represented in this assembly though they are not named.
- *also the princes and all the people* that is, as well the skillful, expert, and zealous artisan, as the workman who needs to be directed in all his labors.

## CHRONICLES 29:1-9.

# DAVID CAUSES THE PRINCES AND PEOPLE TO OFFER FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.

- 1, 2. Solomon ... is yet young and tender Though Solomon was very young when he was raised to the sovereign power, his kingdom escaped the woe pronounced (\*\*DEcclesiastes 10:16). Mere childhood in a prince is not always a misfortune to a nation, as there are instances of the government being wisely administered during a minority. Solomon himself is a most illustrious proof that a young prince may prove a great blessing; for when he was but a mere child, with respect to his age, no nation was happier. His father, however, made this address before Solomon was endowed with the divine gift of wisdom, and David's reference to his son's extreme youth, in connection with the great national undertaking he had been divinely appointed to execute, was to apologize to this assembly of the estates or, rather, to assign the reason of his elaborate preparations for the work.
- **3, 4.** *Moreover* ... *I have of mine own proper good*, etc. In addition to the immense amount of gold and silver treasure which David had already bequeathed for various uses in the service of the temple, he now made an additional contribution destined to a specific purpose that of overlaying the walls of the house. This voluntary gift was from the private fortune of the royal donor, and had been selected with the greatest care. The gold was "the gold of Ophir," then esteemed the purest and finest in the world (\*\*\*2\*\*150\*\*28:16\*\*\*15aiah 13:12). The amount was three thousand talents of gold and seven thousand talents of refined silver.
- **5.** who then is willing to consecrate his service Hebrew, "fill his hand"; that is, make an offering (Exodus 32:29 Leviticus 8:33 Leviticus 8:33 Kings 13:33). The meaning is, that whoever would contribute voluntarily, as he had done, would be offering a freewill offering to the Lord. It was a

sacrifice which every one of them could make, and in presenting which the offerer himself would be the priest. David, in asking freewill offerings for the temple, imitated the conduct of Moses in reference to the tabernacle (\*\*Exodus 25:1-8).

**6-8.** *Then the chief of the fathers* — or heads of the fathers (<sup>4398</sup>1 Chronicles 24:31 <sup>4390</sup>27:1).

princes of the tribes — ( The Chronicles 27:16-22).

*rulers of the king's work* — those who had charge of the royal demesnes and other possessions (497.51 Chronicles 27:25-31).

- offered willingly Influenced by the persuasive address and example of the king, they acted according to their several abilities, and their united contributions amounted to the gross sum of gold worth about \$125,000,000; and of silver, about \$17,000,000, besides brass and iron.
- **7.** *drams* rather, "darics," a Persian coin, with which the Jews from the time of the captivity became familiar, and which was afterwards extensively circulated in the countries of Western Asia. It is estimated as equal in value to about \$5 in American currency.
- of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron In Scripture, iron is always referred to as an article of comparatively low value, and of greater abundance and cheaper than bronze [Napier].
- **8.** and they with whom precious stones were found rather, "whatever was found along with it of precious stones they gave" [Bertheau]. These gifts were deposited in the hands of Jehiel, whose family was charged with the treasures of the house of the Lord (43001) Chronicles 26:21).

CHRONICLES 29:10-25.

#### HIS THANKSGIVING.

**10-19.** Wherefore David blessed the Lord — This beautiful thanksgiving prayer was the effusion overflowing with gratitude and delight at seeing

the warm and widespread interest that was now taken in forwarding the favorite project of his life. Its piety is displayed in the fervor of devotional feeling — in the ascription of all worldly wealth and greatness to God as the giver, in tracing the general readiness in contributing to the influence of His grace, in praying for the continuance of this happy disposition among the people, and in solemnly and earnestly commending the young king and his kingdom to the care and blessing of God.

Sum accumulated and in public treasury ( Chronicles 22:14):

**Gold** \$2,500,000,000

**Silver** 1,700,000,000

Contributed by David personally ( Chronicles 29:4):

**Gold** 82,000,000

**Silver** 12,000,000

Contributed by assembled rulers ( Chronicles 29:7):

**Gold** 125,000,000

**Silver** 17,000,000

A grand total of approximately \$4,436,000,000.

Though it has been the common practice of Eastern monarchs to hoard vast sums for the accomplishment of any contemplated project, this amount so far exceeds not only every Oriental collection on record, but even the bounds of probability, that it is very generally allowed that either

there is a corruption of the text in Chronicles 22:14, or that the reckoning of the historian was by the Babylonian, which was only a half, or the Syrian, which was only a fifth part, of the Hebrew talent. This would bring the Scripture account more into accordance with the statements of JOSEPHUS, as well as within the range of credibility.

- **20.** all the congregation ... worshipped the Lord, and the king Though the external attitude might be the same, the sentiments of which it was expressive were very different in the two cases of divine worship in the one, of civil homage in the other.
- **21, 22.** *they sacrificed* ... *And did eat and drink* After the business of the assembly was over, the people, under the exciting influence of the occasion, still remained, and next day engaged in the performance of solemn rites, and afterwards feasted on the remainder of the sacrifices.
- **22.** *before the Lord* either in the immediate vicinity of the ark, or, perhaps, rather in a religious and devout spirit, as partaking of a sacrificial meal.

made Solomon ... king the second time — in reference to the first time, which was done precipitately on Adonijah's conspiracy (1151 Kings 1:35).

*they* ... *anointed* ... *Zadok* — The statement implies that his appointment met the popular approval. His elevation as sole high priest was on the disgrace of Abiathar, one of Adonijah's accomplices.

- **23.** *Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord* As king of Israel, he was the Lord's vicegerent.
- **24.** *submitted themselves Hebrew*, "put their hands under Solomon," according to the custom still practiced in the East of putting a hand under the king's extended hand and kissing the back of it (\*\*2005\*2 Kings 10:15).

1 CHRONICLES 29:26-30.

#### HIS REIGN AND DEATH.

**26.** Thus David ... reigned — (See ITM) Kings 2:11).

### THE SECOND BOOK OF

# THE CHRONICLES

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

4002 CHRONICLES 1:1-6.

#### SOLEMN OFFERING OF SOLOMON AT GIBEON.

**2-5.** Then Solomon spake unto all Israel — The heads, or leading officers, who are afterwards specified, were summoned to attend their sovereign in a solemn religious procession. The date of this occurrence was the second year of Solomon's reign, and the high place at Gibeon was chosen for the performance of the sacred rites, because the tabernacle and all the ancient furniture connected with the national worship were deposited there. Zadok was the officiating high priest ( Chronicles 16:39). It is true that the ark had been removed and placed in a new tent which David had made for it at Jerusalem (4002 Chronicles 1:4). But the brazen altar, "before the tabernacle of the Lord," on which the burnt offerings were appointed by the law to be made, was at Gibeon. And although David had been led by extraordinary events and tokens of the divine presence to sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Araunah, Solomon considered it his duty to present his offerings on the legally appointed spot "before the tabernacle," and on the time-honored altar prepared by the skill of Bezaleel in the wilderness (Exodus 38:1).

**6.** offered a thousand burnt offerings — This holocaust he offered, of course, by the hands of the priests. The magnitude of the oblation became the rank of the offerer on this occasion of national solemnity.

## 4002 CHRONICLES 1:7-13.

### HIS CHOICE OF WISDOM IS BLESSED BY GOD.

7. In that night did God appear unto Solomon — (See on I Kings 3:5).

## **№**2 CHRONICLES 1:14-17.

#### HIS STRENGTH AND WEALTH.

**14.** Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen — His passion for horses was greater than that of any Israelitish monarch before or after him. His stud comprised fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses. This was a prohibited indulgence, whether as an instrument of luxury or power. But it was not merely for his own use that he imported the horses of Egypt. The immense equestrian establishment he erected was not for show merely, but also for profit. The Egyptian breed of horses was highly valued; and being as fine as the Arabian, but larger and more powerful, they were well fitted for being yoked in chariots. These were light but compact and solid vehicles, without springs. From the price stated [40]2 Chronicles 1:17] as given for a chariot and a horse, it appears that the chariot cost four times the value of a horse. A horse brought a hundred fifty shekels, which amounts to about \$100, while a chariot brought six hundred shekels, equal to about \$400. As an Egyptian chariot was usually drawn by two horses, a chariot and pair would cost about \$600. As the Syrians, who were fond of the Egyptian breed of horses, could import them into their own country only through Judea, Solomon early perceived the commercial advantages to be derived from this trade, and established a monopoly. His factors or agents purchased them in the markets or fairs of Egypt and brought them to the "chariot cities," the depots and stables he had erected on the frontiers of his kingdom, such as Bethmarcaboth, "the house of chariots," and Hazarsusah, "the village of horses" ("Joshua 19:5 <sup>41108</sup>1 Kings 10:28).

**17.** brought ... for all the kings of the Hittites — A branch of this powerful tribe, when expelled from Palestine, had settled north of Lebanon, where they acquired large possessions contiguous to the Syrians.

## 48062 CHRONICLES 2:1,2.

### SOLOMON'S LABORERS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

**1.** Solomon determined to build — The temple is the grand subject of this narrative, while the palace — here and in other parts of this book — is only incidentally noticed. The duty of building the temple was reserved for Solomon before his birth. As soon as he became king, he addressed himself to the work, and the historian, in proceeding to give an account of the edifice, begins with relating the preliminary arrangements.

## CHRONICLES 2:3-10.

### MESSAGE TO HURAM FOR SKILFUL ARTIFICERS.

**3-6.** *Solomon sent to Huram* — The correspondence was probably conducted on both sides in writing ( Chronicles 2:11; also see on Kings 5:8).

As thou didst deal with David my father— This would seem decisive of the question whether the Huram then reigning in Tyre was David's friend (see on Tkings 5:1-6). In opening the business, Solomon grounded his request for Tyrian aid on two reasons:

- **1.** The temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building because the worship was to be continued in perpetuity; and therefore the building materials must be of the most durable quality.
- 2. It must be a magnificent structure because it was to be dedicated to the God who was greater than all gods; and, therefore, as it might seem a presumptuous idea to erect an edifice for a Being "whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain," it was explained that

Solomon's object was not to build a house for Him to dwell in, but a temple in which His worshippers might offer sacrifices to His honor.

No language could be more humble and appropriate than this. The pious strain of sentiment was such as became a king of Israel.

- 7. Send me now therefore a man cunning to work Masons and carpenters were not asked for. Those whom David had obtained ( Chronicles 14:1) were probably still remaining in Jerusalem, and had instructed others. But he required a master of works; a person capable, like Bezaleel (Exodus 35:31), of superintending and directing every department; for, as the division of labor was at that time little known or observed, an overseer had to be possessed of very versatile talents and experience. The things specified, in which he was to be skilled, relate not to the building, but the furniture of the temple. Iron, which could not be obtained in the wilderness when the tabernacle was built, was now, through intercourse with the coast, plentiful and much used. The cloths intended for curtains were, from the crimson or scarlet-red and hyacinth colors named, evidently those stuffs, for the manufacture and dyeing of which the Tyrians were so famous. "The graving," probably, included embroidery of figures like cherubim in needlework, as well as wood carving of pomegranates and other ornaments.
- **8.** Send me ... cedar trees, etc. The cedar and cypress were valued as being both rare and durable; the algum or almug trees (likewise a foreign wood), though not found on Lebanon, are mentioned as being procured through Huram (see on Tkings 10:11).
- **10.** behold, I will give to thy servants ... beaten wheat Wheat, stripped of the husk, boiled, and saturated with butter, forms a frequent meal with the laboring people in the East (compare Kings 5:11). There is no discrepancy between that passage and this. The yearly supplies of wine and oil, mentioned in the former, were intended for Huram's court in return for the cedars sent him; while the articles of meat and drink specified here were for the workmen on Lebanon.

# **440112 CHRONICLES 2:11-18.**

### HURAM'S KIND ANSWER.

- **11.** *Because the Lord hath loved his people*, etc. This pious language creates a presumption that Huram might have attained some knowledge of the true religion from his long familiar intercourse with David. But the presumption, however pleasing, may be delusive (see on Tkings 5:7).
- **13, 14.** *I have sent a cunning man* (See on <sup>⊲1078</sup>1 Kings 7:13-51).
- **17, 18.** Solomon numbered all the strangers, etc. (See on See on Kings 5:13; Kings 5:18).

## 4802 CHRONICLES 3:1,2.

### PLACE AND TIME OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

**1.** Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David — These words seem to intimate that the region where the temple was built was *previously* known by the name of Moriah ( Genesis 22:2), and do not afford sufficient evidence for affirming, as has been done [STANLEY], that the name was first given to the mount, in consequence of the vision seen by David. Mount Moriah was one summit of a range of hills which went under the general name of Zion. The platform of the temple is now, and has long been, occupied by the haram, or sacred enclosure, within which stand the three mosques of Omar (the smallest), of El Aksa, which in early times was a Christian church, and of Kubbet el Sakhara, "The dome of the rock," so called from a huge block of limestone rock in the center of the floor, which, it is supposed, formed the elevated threshing-floor of Araunah, and on which the great brazen altar stood. The site of the temple, then, is so far established for an almost universal belief is entertained in the authenticity of the tradition regarding the rock El Sakhara; and it has also been conclusively proved that the area of the temple was identical on its western, eastern, and southern sides with the present enclosure of the haram [ROBINSON]. "That the temple was situated *somewhere* within the oblong enclosure on Mount Moriah, all topographers are agreed, although there is not the slightest vestige of the sacred fane now remaining; and the greatest diversity of sentiment prevails as to its exact position within that large area, whether in the center of the haram, or in its southwest corner" [BARCLAY]. Moreover, the full extent of the temple area is a problem that remains to be solved, for the platform of Mount Moriah being too narrow for the extensive buildings and courts attached to the sacred edifice, Solomon resorted to artificial means of enlarging and levelling it, by erecting vaults, which, as JOSEPHUS states, rested on immense earthen mounds raised from the slope of the hill. It should be borne in mind at the

outset that the grandeur of the temple did not consist in its colossal structure so much as in its internal splendor, and the vast courts and buildings attached to it. It was not intended for the reception of a worshipping assembly, for the people always stood in the outer courts of the sanctuary.

## <sup>4006</sup>2 CHRONICLES 3:3-7.

#### MEASURES AND ORNAMENTS OF THE HOUSE.

- 3. these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God by the written plan and specifications given him by his father. The measurements are reckoned by cubits, "after the first measure," that is, the old Mosaic standard. But there is great difference of opinion about this, some making the cubit eighteen, others twenty-one inches. The temple, which embodied in more solid and durable materials the ground-form of the tabernacle (only being twice as large), was a rectangular building, seventy cubits long from east to west, and twenty cubits wide from north to south.
- **4.** *the porch* The breadth of the house, whose length ran from east to west, is here given as the measure of the length of the piazza. The portico would thus be from thirty to thirty-five feet long, and from fifteen to seventeen and a half feet broad.
- the height was an hundred and twenty cubits This, taking the cubit at eighteen inches, would be one hundred eighty feet; at twenty-one inches, two hundred ten feet; so that the porch would rise in the form of a tower, or two pyramidal towers, whose united height was one hundred twenty cubits, and each of them about ninety or one hundred five feet high [STIEGLITZ]. This porch would thus be like the propylaeum or gateway of the palace of Khorsabad [LAYARD], or at the temple of Edfou.
- 5. *the greater house* that is, the holy places, the front or outer chamber (see 4000) 1 Kings 6:17).
- **6.** he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty better, he paved the house with precious and beautiful marble [Kitto]. It may be,

after all, that these were stones with veins of different colors for decorating the walls. This was an ancient and thoroughly Oriental kind of embellishment. There was an under pavement of marble, which was covered with planks of fir. The whole interior was lined with boards, richly decorated with carved work, clusters of foliage and flowers, among which the pomegranate and lotus (or water-lily) were conspicuous; and overlaid, excepting the floor, with gold, either by gilding or in plates (\*\*\*IND\*\*11.38\*\*).

## 4882 CHRONICLES 3:8-13.

### DIMENSIONS, &C., OF THE MOST HOLY HOUSE.

8. the most holy house — It was a perfect cube (compare of Kings 6:20). overlaid it with ... gold, amounting to six hundred talents — equal to about \$16,000,000.

**10-13.** *two cherubims* — These figures in the tabernacle were of pure gold (\*\*DEX\*\* Exodus 25:1-40) and overshadowed the mercy seat. The two placed in the temple were made of olive wood, overlaid with gold. They were of colossal size, like the Assyrian sculptures; for each, with expanded wings, covered a space of ten cubits in height and length — two wings touched each other, while the other two reached the opposite walls; their faces were inward, that is, towards the most holy house, conformably to their use, which was to veil the ark.

<sup>4684</sup>2 Chronicles 3:14-17. VEIL AND PILLARS (see <sup>4102</sup>1 Kings 6:21).

The united height is here given; and though the exact dimensions would be thirty-six cubits, each column was only seventeen cubits and a half, a half cubit being taken up by the capital or the base. They were probably described as they were lying together in the mould before they were set up [Poole]. They would be from eighteen to twenty-one feet in circumference, and stand forty feet in height. These pillars, or obelisks, as some call them, were highly ornamented, and formed an entrance in keeping with the splendid interior of the temple.

## 4002 CHRONICLES 4:1.

### ALTAR OF BRASS.

**1.** *he made an altar of brass* — Steps must have been necessary for ascending so elevated an altar, but the use of these could be no longer forbidden (\*\*Exodus 20:26) after the introduction of an official costume for the priests (\*\*Exodus 28:42). It measured thirty-five feet by thirty-five, and in height seventeen and a haft feet. The thickness of the metal used for this altar is nowhere given; but supposing it to have been three inches, the whole weight of the metal would not be under two hundred tons [NAPIER].

## 4002 CHRONICLES 4:2-5.

### MOLTEN SEA.

- **2.** he made a molten sea (See on See on Strings 7:23), as in that passage "knops" occur instead of "oxen." It is generally supposed that the rows of ornamental knops were in the form of ox heads.
- 3. Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast The meaning is, that the circular basin and the brazen oxen which supported it were all of one piece, being east in one and the same mould. There is a difference in the accounts given of the capacity of this basin, for while in 40261 Kings 7:26 it is said that two thousand baths of water could be contained in it, in this passage no less than three thousand are stated. It has been suggested that there is here a statement not merely of the quantity of water which the basin held, but that also which was necessary to work it, to keep it flowing as a fountain; that which was required to fill both it and its accompaniments. In support of this view, it may be remarked that different words are employed: the one in 41261 Kings 7:26 rendered

contained; the two here rendered, received and held. There was a difference between receiving and holding. When the basin played as a fountain, and all its parts were filled for that purpose, the latter, together with the sea itself, received three thousand baths; but the sea exclusively held only two thousand baths, when its contents were restricted to those of the circular basin. It received and held three thousand baths [CALMET, Fragments].

## **4006**2 CHRONICLES 4:6-18.

### THE TEN LAVERS, CANDLESTICKS, AND TABLES.

- **6.** *ten lavers* (See on See on Strings 7:27). The laver of the tabernacle had probably been destroyed. The ten new ones were placed between the porch and the altar, and while the molten sea was for the priests to cleanse their hands and feet, these were intended for washing the sacrifices.
- **7.** ten candlesticks (See on See on Kings 7:49). The increased number was not only in conformity with the characteristic splendor of the edifice, but also a standing emblem to the Hebrews, that the growing light of the word was necessary to counteract the growing darkness in the world [LIGHTFOOT].
- **11.** *Huram made* (See on 4174) Kings 7:40).

## 4802 CHRONICLES 5:1.

#### THE DEDICATED TREASURES.

**1.** Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated—the immense sums and the store of valuable articles which his father and other generals had reserved and appropriated for the temple (4324) Chronicles 22:14 4333726:26).

#### 4802 CHRONICLES 5:2-13.

#### BRINGING UP OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

- **2, 3.** Then Solomon assembled ... in the feast which was in the seventh month The feast of the dedication of the temple was on the eighth day of that month. This is related, word for word, the same as in Kings 8:1-10.
- **9.** *there it is unto this day* that is, at the time when this history was composed; for after the Babylonish captivity there is no trace of either ark or staves.
- **11.** *all the priests that were present* ... *did not then wait by course* The rotation system of weekly service introduced by David was intended for the ordinary duties of the priesthood; on extraordinary occasions, or when more than wonted solemnity attached to them, the priests attended in a body.
- **12.** *the Levites which were the singers* On great and solemn occasions, such as this, a full choir was required, and their station was taken with scrupulous regard to their official parts: the family of Heman occupied the central place, the family of Asaph stood on his right, and that of Jeduthun

on his left; the place allotted to the vocal department was a space between the court of Israel and the altar in the east end of the priests' court.

with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets — The trumpet was always used by the priests, and in the divine service it was specially employed in calling the people together during the holy solemnities, and in drawing attention to new and successive parts of the ritual. The number of trumpets used in the divine service could not be less than two ("Numbers 10:2), and their greatest number never exceeded the precedent set at the dedication of the temple. The station where the priests were sounding with trumpets was apart from that of the other musicians; for while the Levite singers occupied an orchestra east of the altar, the priests stood at the marble table on the southwest of the altar. There both of them stood with their faces to the altar. The manner of blowing the trumpets was, first, by a long plain blast, then by one with breakings and quaverings, and then by a long plain blast again [Brown, Jewish Antiquities].

13. the house was filled with a cloud — (See on See on Kings 8:10).

## **4400**2 CHRONICLES 6:1-41.

#### SOLOMON BLESSES THE PEOPLE AND PRAISES GOD.

- 1. The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness This introduction to Solomon's address was evidently suggested by the remarkable incident recorded at the close of the last chapter: the phenomenon of a densely opaque and uniformly shaped cloud, descending in a slow and majestic manner and filling the whole area of the temple. He regarded it himself, and directed the people also to regard it, as an undoubted sign and welcome pledge of the divine presence and acceptance of the building reared to His honor and worship. He referred not to any particular declaration of God, but to the cloud having been all along in the national history of Israel the recognized symbol of the divine presence (\*\*TEXOGUS 16:10 \*\*\*24:16 \*\*\*40:34 \*\*\*\*000\*\*\*Numbers 9:15 \*\*\*\*10 \*\*\*10.11).
- **13.** Solomon had made a brazen scaffold a sort of platform. But the *Hebrew* term rendered "scaffold," being the same as that used to designate the basin, suggests the idea that this throne might bear some resemblance, in form or structure, to those lavers in the temple, being a sort of round and elevated pulpit, placed in the middle of the court, and in front of the altar of burnt offering.

upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees — After ascending the brazen scaffold, he assumed those two attitudes in succession, and with different objects in view. He stood while he addressed and blessed the surrounding multitude (4002 Chronicles 6:3-11). Afterwards he knelt down and stretched out his hands towards heaven, with his face probably turned towards the altar, while he gave utterance to the beautiful and impressive prayer which is recorded in the remainder of this chapter. It is deserving of notice that there was no seat in this pulpit — for the king either stood or knelt all the time he was in it. It is not improbable that it

was surmounted by a canopy, or covered by a veil, to screen the royal speaker from the rays of the sun.

18-21. how much less this house which I have built! Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant — No person who entertains just and exalted views of the spiritual nature of the Divine Being will suppose that he can raise a temple for the habitation of Deity, as a man builds a house for himself. Nearly as improper and inadmissible is the idea that a temple can contribute to enhance the glory of God, as a monument may be raised in honor of a great man. Solomon described the true and proper use of the temple, when he entreated that the Lord would "hearken unto the supplications of His servant and His people Israel, which they should make towards this place." In short, the grand purpose for which the temple was erected was precisely the same as that contemplated by churches — to afford the opportunity and means of public and social worship, according to the ritual of the Mosaic dispensation — to supplicate the divine mercy and favor — to render thanks for past instances of goodness, and offer petitions for future blessings (see on 1821) Kings 8:22). This religious design of the temple — the ONE temple in the world — is in fact its standpoint of absorbing interest.

22. If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house, etc.

— In cases where the testimony of witnesses could not be obtained and there was no way of settling a difference or dispute between two people but by accepting the oath of the accused, the practice had gradually crept in and had acquired the force of consuetudinary law, for the party to be brought before the altar, where his oath was taken with all due solemnity, together with the imprecation of a curse to fall upon himself if his disavowal should be found untrue. There is an allusion to such a practice in this passage.

**38.** If they return to thee ... in the land of their captivity ... and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers — These words gave rise to the favorite usage of the ancient as well as modern Jews, of turning in prayer toward Jerusalem, in whatever quarter of the world they might be, and of directing their faces toward the temple when in Jerusalem itself or in any part of the holy land (\*IRNH) Kings 8:44).

**41.** *arise*, *O Lord God into thy resting-place* — These words are not found in the record of this prayer in the First Book of Kings; but they occur in \*Psalm 132:8, which is generally believed to have been composed by David, or rather by Solomon, in reference to this occasion. "Arise" is a very suitable expression to be used when the ark was to be removed from the tabernacle in Zion to the temple on Mount Moriah.

into thy resting-place — the temple so called (\*\*\*Isaiah 66:1), because it was a fixed and permanent mansion (\*\*\*Psalm 132:14).

the ark of thy strength — the abode by which Thy glorious presence is symbolized, and whence Thou dost issue Thine authoritative oracles, and manifest Thy power on behalf of Thy people when they desire and need it. It might well be designated the ark of God's strength, because it was through means of it the mighty miracles were wrought and the brilliant victories were won, that distinguish the early annals of the Hebrew nation. The sight of it inspired the greatest animation in the breasts of His people, while it diffused terror and dismay through the ranks of their enemies (compare \*\*\*PSalm 78:61).

let thy priests ... be clothed with salvation — or with righteousness (\*\*Psalm 132:9), that is, be equipped not only with the pure white linen garments Thou hast appointed for their robe of office, but also adorned with the moral beauties of true holiness, that their person and services may be accepted, both for themselves and all the people. Thus they would be "clothed with salvation," for that is the effect and consequence of a sanctified character.

**42.** *turn not away the face of thine anointed* — that is, of me, who by Thy promise and appointment have been installed as king and ruler of Israel. The words are equivalent in meaning to this: Do not reject my present petitions; do not send me from Thy throne of grace dejected in countenance and disappointed in heart.

remember the mercies of David thy servant — that is, the mercies promised to David, and in consideration of that promise, hear and answer my prayer (compare \*\*Psalm 132:10).

### 4002 CHRONICLES 7:1-3.

# GOD GIVES TESTIMONY TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER; THE PEOPLE WORSHIP.

**1.** the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering — Every act of worship was accompanied by a sacrifice. The preternatural stream of fire kindled the mass of flesh, and was a token of the divine acceptance of Solomon's prayer (see on \*\*Everythicus 9:24; \*\*\* Kings 18:38).

*the glory of the Lord filled the house* — The cloud, which was the symbol of God's presence and majesty, filled the interior of the temple (\*\*Exodus 40:35).

- **2.** *the priests could not enter* Both from awe of the miraculous fire that was burning on the altar and from the dense cloud that enveloped the sanctuary, they were unable for some time to perform their usual functions (see on Kings 8:10). But afterwards, their courage and confidence being revived, they approached the altar and busied themselves in the offering of an immense number of sacrifices.
- 3. all the children of Israel ... bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement This form of prostration (that of lying on one's knees with the forehead touching the earth), is the manner in which the Hebrews, and Orientals in general, express the most profound sentiments of reverence and humility. The courts of the temple were densely crowded on the occasion, and the immense multitude threw themselves on the ground. What led the Israelites suddenly to assume that prostrate attitude on the occasion referred to, was the spectacle of the symbolical cloud slowly and majestically descending upon the temple, and then entering it.

## 40062 CHRONICLES 7:4-11.

#### SOLOMON'S SACRIFICES.

- **4.** Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices Whether the individual worshippers slaughtered their own cattle, or a certain portion of the vast number of the Levitical order in attendance performed that work, as they sometimes did, in either case the offerings were made through the priests, who presented the blood and the fat upon the altar (see on Kings 8:62).
- **5, 6.** so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God The ceremonial of dedication consisted principally in the introduction of the ark into the temple, and in the sacrificial offerings that were made on a scale of magnitude suitable to the extraordinary occasion. All present, the king, the people, and the priests, took part according to their respective stations in the performance of the solemn service. The duty, of course, devolved chiefly on the priests, and hence in proceeding to describe their several departments of work, the historian says, generally, "the priests waited on their offices." While great numbers would be occupied with the preparation and offering of the victims, others sounded with their trumpets, and the different bands of the Levites praised the Lord with vocal and instrumental music, by \*\*Psalm 136:1-26, the hundred thirty-sixth Psalm, the oft-recurring chorus of which is, "for His mercy endureth for ever."
- **7.** Solomon hallowed the middle of the court On this extraordinary occasion, when a larger number of animals were offered than one altar and the usual place of rings to which the animals were bound would admit, the whole space was taken in that was between the place of rings and the west end of the court to be used as a temporary place for additional altars. On that part of the spacious court holocausts were burning all round.
- **8.** Solomon kept the feast seven days The time chosen for the dedication of the temple was immediately previous to the feast of tabernacles (see on Kings 8:1-12). That season, which came after the harvest, corresponding to our September and October, lasted seven days, and during so prolonged a festival there was time afforded for the offering

of the immense sacrifices enumerated. A large proportion of these were peace offerings, which afforded to the people the means of festive enjoyment.

*all Israel* ... *from the entering in of Hamath* — that is, the defile at Lebanon.

*unto the river of Egypt* — that is, Rhinocorura, now El-Arish, the south boundary of Palestine.

**10.** on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month — This was the last day of the feast of tabernacles.

## **⁴470**<sup>2</sup> CHRONICLES 7:12-22.

#### GOD APPEARS TO HIM.

12. the Lord appeared to Solomon by night — (See on decision of the temple must have been an occasion of intense national interest to Solomon and his subjects. Nor was the interest merely temporary or local. The record of it is read and thought of with an interest that is undiminished by the lapse of time. The fact that this was the only temple of all nations in which the true God was worshipped imparts a moral grandeur to the scene and prepares the mind for the sublime prayer that was offered at the dedication. The pure theism of that prayer — its acknowledgment of the unity of God as well as of His moral perfections in providence and grace, came from the same divine source as the miraculous fire. They indicated sentiments and feelings of exalted and spiritual devotion, which sprang not from the unaided mind of man, but from the fountain of revelation. The reality of the divine presence was attested by the miracle, and that miracle stamped the seal of truth upon the theology of the temple-worship.

### 44002 CHRONICLES 8:1-6.

#### SOLOMON'S BUILDINGS.

**2.** cities which Huram had restored ... Solomon built them, etc. — These cities lay in the northwest of Galilee. Though included within the limits of the promised land, they had never been conquered. The right of occupying them Solomon granted to Huram, who, after consideration, refused them as unsuitable to the commercial habits of his subjects (see on Kings 9:11). Solomon, having wrested them from the possession of the Canaanite inhabitants, repaired them and filled them with a colony of Hebrews.

**3-6.** *And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah* — Hamath was on the Orontes, in Coele-Syria. Its king, Toi, had been the ally of David; but from the combination, Hamath and Zobah, it would appear that some revolution had taken place which led to the union of these two petty kingdoms of Syria into one. For what cause the resentment of Solomon was provoked against it, we are not informed, but he sent an armed force which reduced it. He made himself master also of Tadmor, the famous Palmyra in the same region. Various other cities along the frontiers of his extended dominions he repaired and fitted up, either to serve as store-places for the furtherance of his commercial enterprises, or to secure his kingdom from foreign invasion (see on 4011) 2 Chronicles 1:14; 41051 Kings 9:15).

◆NNO CHRONICLES 8:7-11.

#### THE CANAANITES MADE TRIBUTARIES.

7. all the people that were left, etc. — The descendants of the Canaanites who remained in the country were treated as war prisoners, being obliged to "pay tribute or to serve as galley slaves" (400%) Chronicles 2:18), while

the Israelites were employed in no works but such as were of an honorable character.

- **10.** *two hundred and fifty that bare rule* (Compare displaying 9:23). It is generally agreed that the text of one of these passages is corrupt.
- **11.** Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her On his marriage with the Egyptian princess at the beginning of his reign, he assigned her a temporary abode in the city of David, that is, Jerusalem, until a suitable palace for his wife had been erected. While that palace was in progress, he himself lodged in the palace of David, but he did not allow her to occupy it, because he felt that she being a heathen proselyte, and having brought from her own country an establishment of heathen maid-servants, there would have been an impropriety in her being domiciled in a mansion which was or had been hallowed by the reception of the ark. It seems she was received on her arrival into his mother's abode (2008) Song of Solomon 3:48:2).

## 44852 CHRONICLES 8:15-18.

#### SOLOMON'S FESTIVAL SACRIFICES.

**15.** they departed not from the commandment of the king — that is, David, in any of his ordinances, which by divine authority he established.

unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures — either in regulating the courses of the priests and Levites, or in the destination of his accumulated treasures to the construction and adornment of the temple.

17. Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth — These two maritime ports were situated at the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, now called the Gulf of Akaba. Eloth is seen in the modern Akaba, Ezion-geber in El Gudyan [ROBINSON]. Solomon, determined to cultivate the arts of peace, was sagacious enough to perceive that his kingdom could become great and glorious only by encouraging a spirit of commercial enterprise among his

subjects; and, accordingly, with that in mind he made a contract with Huram for ships and seamen to instruct his people in navigation.

**18.** Huram sent him ... ships — either sent him ship-men, able seamen, overland; or, taking the word "sent" in a looser sense, supplied him, that is, built him ships — namely, in docks at Eloth (compare <sup>1006</sup>1 Kings 9:26,27). This navy of Solomon was manned by Tyrians, for Solomon had no seamen capable of performing distant expeditions. The Hebrew fishermen, whose boats plied on the Sea of Tiberias or coasted the shores of the Mediterranean, were not equal to the conducting of large vessels laden with valuable cargoes on long voyages and through the wide and unfrequented ocean.

four hundred and fifty talents of gold — (Compare 4008) Kings 9:28). The text in one of these passages is corrupt.

## **400**2 CHRONICLES 9:1-12.

# THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON; SHE ADMIRES HIS WISDOM AND MAGNIFICENCE.

**1-4.** when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon — (See on Kings 10:1-13). It is said that among the things n Jerusalem which drew forth the admiration of Solomon's royal visitor was "his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord." This was the arched viaduct that crossed the valley from Mount Zion to the opposite hill. In the commentary on the passage quoted above, allusion was made to the recent discovery of its remains. Here we give a full account of what, for boldness of conceptions for structure and magnificence, was one of the greatest wonders in Jerusalem. "During our first visit to the southwest corner of the area of the mosque, we observed several of the large stones jutting out from the western wall, which at first seemed to be the effect of a bursting of the wall from some mighty shock or earthquake. We paid little regard to this at the moment; but on mentioning the fact not long after to a circle of our friends, the remark was incidentally dropped that the stones had the appearance of having once belonged to a large arch. At this remark, a train of thought flashed across my mind, which I hardly dared to follow out until I had again repaired to the spot, in order to satisfy myself with my own eyes as to the truth or falsehood of the suggestion. I found it even so. The courses of these immense stones occupy their original position; their external surface is hewn to a regular curve; and, being fitted one upon another, they form the commencement or foot of an immense arch which once sprung out from this western wall in a direction towards Mount Zion, across the Tyropoeon valley. This arch could only have belonged to the bridge, which, according to JOSEPHUS, led from this part of the temple to the Xystus (covered colonnade) on Zion; and it proves incontestably the antiquity of that portion from which it springs" [ROBINSON]. The distance from this point to the steep rock of Zion ROBINSON calculates to

be about three hundred and fifty feet, the probable length of this ancient viaduct. Another writer adds, that "the arch of this bridge, if its curve be calculated with an approximation to the truth, would measure *sixty* feet, and must have been one of five sustaining the viaduct (allowing for the abutments on either side), and that the piers supporting the center arch of this bridge must have been of great altitude — not less, perhaps, than one hundred and thirty feet. The whole structure, when seen from the southern extremity of the Tyropoeon, must have had an aspect of grandeur, especially as connected with the lofty and sumptuous edifices of the temple, and of Zion to the right and to the left" [ISAAC TAYLOR'S EDITION OF TRAILL'S JOSEPHUS].

## 40052 CHRONICLES 9:13-28.

#### HIS RICHES.

- **13.** Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year (See on Kings 10:14-29).
- six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold The sum named is equal to about \$17,000,000; and if we take the proportion of silver (40042 Chronicles 9:14), which is not taken into consideration, at one to nine, there would be about \$2,000,000, making a yearly supply of nearly \$19,000,000, being a vast amount for an infant effort in maritime commerce [NAPIER].
- **21.** *the king's ships went to Tarshish* rather, "the king's ships of Tarshish went" with the servants of Huram.
- *ships of Tarshish* that is, in burden and construction like the large vessels built for or used at Tarshish [CALMET, *Fragments*].
- **25.** *Solomon had four thousand stalls* It has been conjectured [GESENIUS, *Hebrew Lexicon*] that the original term may signify not only stall or stable, but a number of horses occupying the same number of stalls. Supposing that ten were put together in one part, this would make forty thousand. According to this theory of explanation, the historian in Kings refers to horses [see Thing 10:26]; while the historian in

Chronicles speaks of the stalls in which they were kept. But more recent critics reject this mode of solving the difficulty, and, regarding the four thousand stalls as in keeping with the general magnificence of Solomon's establishments, are agreed in considering the text in Kings as corrupt, through the error of some copyist.

28. they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt — (See on Chronicles 1:14). Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pitch of worldly glory. His completion of the grand work, the centralizing of the national worship at Jerusalem, whither the natives went up three times a year, has given his name a prominent place in the history of the ancient church. But his reign had a disastrous influence upon "the peculiar people," and the example of his deplorable idolatries, the connections he formed with foreign princes, the commercial speculations he entered into, and the luxuries introduced into the land, seem in a great measure to have altered and deteriorated the Jewish character.

## 4002 CHRONICLES 10:1-15.

#### REHOBOAM REFUSING THE OLD MEN'S GOOD COUNSEL.

- **1.** Rehoboam went to Shechem (See on Strings 12:1). This chapter is, with a few verbal alterations, the same as in Strings 12:1-19.
- 7. If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them In the Book of Kings [ Kings 12:7], the words are, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people, and wilt serve them." The meaning in both is the same, namely, If thou wilt make some reasonable concessions, redress their grievances, and restore their abridged liberties, thou wilt secure their strong and lasting attachment to thy person and government.

## 15-17. the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God

— Rehoboam, in following an evil counsel, and the Hebrew people, in making a revolutionary movement, each acted as free agents, obeying their own will and passions. But God, who permitted the revolt of the northern tribes, intended it as a punishment of the house of David for Solomon's apostasy. That event demonstrates the immediate superintendence of His providence over the revolutions of kingdoms; and thus it affords an instance, similar to many other striking instances that are found in Scripture, of divine predictions, uttered long before, being accomplished by the operation of human passions, and in the natural course of events.

#### **№2 CHRONICLES** 11:1-17.

# REHOBOAM, RAISING AN ARMY TO SUBDUE ISRAEL, IS FORBIDDEN BY SHEMAIAH.

- 1-4. Rehoboam ... gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin ... to fight against Israel (See 41221 Kings 12:21-24).
- 5-11. built cities for defense in Judah This is evidently used as the name of the southern kingdom. Rehoboam, having now a bitter enemy in Israel, deemed it prudent to lose no time in fortifying several cities that lay along the frontier of his kingdom. Jeroboam, on his side, took a similar precaution (\*\*IDES\*1 Kings 12:25). Of the fifteen cities named, Aijalon and Zorah lay within the province of Benjamin. Gath, though a Philistine city, had been subject to Solomon. And Etham, which was on the border of Simeon, now incorporated with the kingdom of Israel, was fortified to repel danger from that quarter. These fortresses Rehoboam placed under able commanders and stocked them with provisions and military stores, sufficient, if necessary, to stand a siege. In the crippled state of his kingdom, he seems to have been afraid lest it might be made the prey of some powerful neighbors.

#### 13-17. the priests and the Levites ... resorted to him out of all their coasts

— This was an accession of moral power, for the maintenance of the true religion is the best support and safeguard of any nation; and as it was peculiarly the grand source of the strength and prosperity of the Hebrew monarchy, the great numbers of good and pious people who sought an asylum within the territories of Judah contributed greatly to consolidate the throne of Rehoboam. The cause of so extensive an emigration from the kingdom of Israel was the deep and daring policy of Jeroboam, who set himself to break the national unity by entirely abolishing, within his dominions, the religious institutions of Judaism. He dreaded an eventual reunion of the tribes if the people continued to repair thrice a year to

worship in Jerusalem as they were obliged by law to do. Accordingly, on pretense that the distance of that city was too great for multitudes of his subjects, he fixed upon two more convenient places, where he established a new mode of worshipping God under gross and prohibited symbols [41226] Kings 12:26-33]. The priests and Levites, refusing to take part in the idolatrous ceremonies, were ejected from their living (41132 Chronicles 11:13,14). Along with them a large body of the people who faithfully adhered to the instituted worship of God, offended and shocked by the impious innovations, departed from the kingdom.

**15.** *he ordained him priests* — The persons he appointed to the priesthood were low and worthless creatures (\*\*1251 Kings 12:31 \*\*13:33); any were consecrated who brought a bullock and seven rams (\*\*1252 Chronicles 13:9 \*\*1255 Exodus 29:37).

*for the high places* — Those favorite places of religious worship were encouraged throughout the country.

*for the devils* — a term sometimes used for idols in general (\*\*\*Eviticus 17:7). But here it is applied distinctively to the goat deities, which were probably worshipped chiefly in the northern parts of his kingdom, where the heathen Canaanites still abounded.

for the calves which he had made — figures of the ox gods Apis and Mnevis, with which Jeroboam's residence in Egypt had familiarized him. (See on Tkings 12:26).

**17.** they strengthened the kingdom of Judah — The innovating measures of Jeroboam were not introduced all at once. But as they were developed, the secession of the most excellent of his subjects began, and continuing to increase for three years, lowered the tone of religion in his kingdom, while it proportionally quickened its life and extended its influence in that of Judah.

## 41182 CHRONICLES 11:18-23.

#### HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN.

- **18.** *Rehoboam took Mahalath* The names of her father and mother are given. Jerimoth, the father, must have been the son of one of David's concubines (\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 3:9). Abihail was, of course, his cousin, previous to their marriage.
- **20.** after her he took Maachah ... daughter that is, granddaughter ( Samuel 14:27) of Absalom, Tamar being, according to JOSEPHUS, her mother. (Compare Samuel 18:18).
- **21.** *he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines* This royal harem, though far smaller than his father's, was equally in violation of the law, which forbade a king to "multiply wives unto himself" [4577] Deuteronomy 17:17].
- **22.** *made Abijah* ... *chief* ... *ruler among his brethren* This preference seems to have been given to Abijah solely from the king's doting fondness for his mother and through her influence over him. It is plainly implied that Abijah was not the oldest of the family. In destining a younger son for the kingdom, without a divine warrant, as in Solomon's case, Rehoboam acted in violation of the law (\*\*DIS\*\*Deuteronomy 21:15).
- **23.** *he dealt wisely* that is, with deep and calculating policy (\*\*Exodus 1:10).

and dispersed of all his children ... unto every fenced city — The circumstance of twenty-eight sons of the king being made governors of fortresses would, in our quarter of the world, produce jealousy and dissatisfaction. But Eastern monarchs ensure peace and tranquillity to their kingdom by bestowing government offices on their sons and grandsons. They obtain an independent provision, and being kept apart, are not likely to cabal in their father's lifetime. Rehoboam acted thus, and his sagacity will appear still greater if the wives he desired for them belonged to the cities where each son was located. These connections would bind them more closely to their respective places. In the modern countries of the East, particularly Persia and Turkey, younger princes

were, till very lately, shut up in the harem during their father's lifetime; and, to prevent competition, they were blinded or killed when their brother ascended the throne. In the former country the old practice of dispersing them through the country as Rehoboam did, has been again revived.

## 400°2 CHRONICLES 12:1-12.

#### REHOBOAM, FORSAKING GOD, IS PUNISHED BY SHISHAK.

- 1. when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself (See on description of the first three years of his reign his royal influence was exerted in the encouragement of the true religion. Security and ease led to religious decline, which, in the fourth year, ended in open apostasy. The example of the court was speedily followed by his subjects, for "all Israel was with him," that is, the people in his own kingdom. The very next year, the fifth of his reign, punishment was inflicted by the invasion of Shishak.
- **2.** Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem He was the first king of the twenty-second or Bubastic Dynasty. What was the immediate cause of this invasion? Whether it was in resentment for some provocation from the king of Judah, or in pursuance of ambitious views of conquest, is not said. But the invading army was a vast horde, for Shishak brought along with his native Egyptians an immense number of foreign auxiliaries.
- **3-5.** *the Lubims* the Libyans of northeastern Africa.
- *the Sukkiims* Some think these were the Kenite Arabs, dwellers in tents, but others maintain more justly that these were Arab troglodytes, who inhabited the caverns of a mountain range on the western coast of the Red Sea
- and the Ethiopians from the regions south of Egypt. By the overwhelming force of numbers, they took the fortresses of Judah which had been recently put in a state of defense, and marched to lay siege to the capital. While Shishak and his army was before Jerusalem, the prophet Shemaiah addressed Rehoboam and the princes, tracing this calamity to the national apostasy and threatening them with utter destruction in consequence of having forsaken God (44276) Chronicles 12:6).

- **6.** the princes of Israel (compare 4025) Chronicles 12:5, "the princes of Judah").
- 7, 8. when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves Their repentance and contrition was followed by the best effects; for Shemaiah was commissioned to announce that the phial of divine judgment would not be fully poured out on them that the entire overthrow of the kingdom of Judah would not take place at that time, nor through the agency of Shishak; and yet, although it should enjoy a respite from total subversion, [Judah] should become a tributary province of Egypt in order that the people might learn how much lighter and better is the service of God than that of idolatrous foreign despots.
- **9.** So Shishak ... came up against Jerusalem After the parenthetical clause (440252 Chronicles 12:5-8) describing the feelings and state of the beleaguered court, the historian resumes his narrative of the attack upon Jerusalem, and the consequent pillage both of the temple and the palace.

*he took all* — that is, everything valuable he found. The cost of the targets and shields has been estimated as about \$1,200,000 [NAPIER, *Ancient Workers in Metal*].

the shields of gold — made by Solomon, were kept in the house of the forest of Lebanon (40062 Chronicles 9:16). They seem to have been borne, like maces, by the guards of the palace, when they attended the king to the temple or on other public processions. Those splendid insignia having been plundered by the Egyptian conqueror, others were made of inferior metal and kept in the guard room of the palace, to be ready for use; as, notwithstanding the tarnished glory of the court, the old state etiquette was kept up on public and solemn occasions. An account of this conquest of Judah, with the name of "king of Judah" in the cartouche of the principal captive, according to the interpreters, is carved and written in hieroglyphics on the walls of the great palace of Karnak, where it may be seen at the present day. This sculpture is about twenty-seven hundred years old, and is of peculiar interest as a striking testimony from Egypt to the truth of Scripture history.

**12.** when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him — The promise (\*44111) Chronicles 12:7) was verified. Divine providence

preserved the kingdom in existence, a reformation was made in the court, while true religion and piety were diffused throughout the land.

### 440352 CHRONICLES 12:13-16.

#### HIS REIGN AND DEATH.

**13, 14.** *Rehoboam strengthened* ... *and reigned* — The Egyptian invasion had been a mere predatory expedition, not extending beyond the limits of Judah, and probably, erelong, repelled by the invaded. Rehoboam's government acquired new life and vigor by the general revival of true religion, and his reign continued many years after the departure of Shishak. But

he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord—that is, he did not adhere firmly to the good course of reformation he had begun, "and he did evil," for through the unhappy influence of his mother, a heathen foreigner, he had no doubt received in his youth a strong bias towards idolatry (see on Kings 14:21).

### 4802 CHRONICLES 13:1-20.

# ABIJAH, SUCCEEDING, MAKES WAR AGAINST JEROBOAM, AND OVERCOMES HIM.

**2.** His mother's name also was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel — the same as Maachah (see on Signal Kings 15:2). She was "the daughter," that is, granddaughter of Absalom (Signal Kings 15:2; compare Signal 14:1-33), mother of Abijah, "mother," that is, grandmother (Signal Kings 15:10, Margin) of Asa.

*of Gibeah* — probably implies that Uriel was connected with the house of Saul.

there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam — The occasion of this war is not recorded (see "INTO I Kings 15:6,7), but it may be inferred from the tenor of Abijah's address that it arose from his youthful ambition to recover the full hereditary dominion of his ancestors. No prophet now forbade a war with Israel ("ALIZ2 Chronicles 11:23) for Jeroboam had forfeited all claim to protection.

**3.** Abijah set the battle in array — that is, took the field and opened the campaign.

with ... four hundred thousand chosen men ... Jeroboam with eight hundred thousand — These are, doubtless, large numbers, considering the smallness of the two kingdoms. It must be borne in mind, however, that Oriental armies are mere mobs — vast numbers accompanying the camp in hope of plunder, so that the gross numbers described as going upon an Asiatic expedition are often far from denoting the exact number of fighting men. But in accounting for the large number of soldiers enlisted in the respective armies of Abijah and Jeroboam, there is no need of resorting to this mode of explanation; for we know by the census of David the

**4-12.** Abijah stood up upon Mount Zemaraim — He had entered the enemy's territory and was encamped on an eminence near Beth-el ( Joshua 18:22). Jeroboam's army lay at the foot of the hill, and as a pitched battle was expected, Abijah, according to the singular usage of ancient times, harangued the enemy. The speakers in such circumstances, while always extolling their own merits, poured out torrents of invective and virulent abuse upon the adversary. So did Abijah. He dwelt on the divine right of the house of David to the throne; and sinking all reference to the heaven-condemned offenses of Solomon and the divine appointment of Jeroboam, as well as the divine sanction of the separation, he upbraided Jeroboam as a usurper, and his subjects as rebels, who took advantage of the youth and inexperience of Rehoboam. Then contrasting the religious state of the two kingdoms, he drew a black picture of the impious innovations and gross idolatry introduced by Jeroboam, with his expulsion and impoverishment (44112 Chronicles 11:14) of the Levites. He dwelt with reasonable pride on the pure and regular observance of the ancient institutions of Moses in his own dominion ( Chronicles 13:11) and concluded with this emphatic appeal: "O children of Israel, fight ye not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper."

## 13-17. But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them

— The oration of Abijah, however animating an effect it might have produced on his own troops, was unheeded by the party to whom it was addressed; for while he was wasting time in useless words, Jeroboam had ordered a detachment of his men to move quietly round the base of the hill, so that when Abijah stopped speaking, he and his followers found themselves surprised in the rear, while the main body of the Israelitish forces remained in front. A panic might have ensued, had not the leaders "cried unto the Lord," and the priests "sounded with the trumpets" — the pledge of victory ("Numbers 10:9 31:6). Reassured by the well-known signal, the men of Judah responded with a war shout, which, echoed by the whole army, was followed by an impetuous rush against the foe. The shock was resistless. The ranks of the Israelites were broken, for "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel." They took to flight, and the merciless

slaughter that ensued can be accounted for only by tracing it to the rancorous passions enkindled by a civil war.

- **19.** Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him This sanguinary action widened the breach between the people of the two kingdoms. Abijah abandoned his original design of attempting the subjugation of the ten tribes, contenting himself with the recovery of a few border towns, which, though lying within Judah or Benjamin, had been alienated to the new or northern kingdom. Among these was Beth-el, which, with its sacred associations, he might be strongly desirous to wrest from profanation.
- **20.** Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah The disastrous action at Zemaraim, which caused the loss of the flower and chivalry of his army, broke his spirits and crippled his power.

the Lord struck him, and he died — that is, Jeroboam. He lived, indeed, two years after the death of Abijah (\*\*" Kings 14:20 15:9). But he had been threatened with great calamities upon himself and his house, and it is apparently to the execution of these threatenings, which issued in his death, that an anticipatory reference is here made.

#### **440**12 CHRONICLES 14:1-5.

#### ASA DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

- **1.** In his days the land was quiet ten years This long interval of peace was the continued effect of the great battle of Zemaraim (compare Kings 15:11-14).
- **2.** Asa did that which was good and right (compare distance 15:14). Still his character and life were not free from faults (2 Chronicles distance 16:7,10,12).
- **3.** brake down the images of Baal (see on desired) Chronicles 34:4; desired Leviticus 26:30).

cut down the groves — rather, "Asherim."

**5.** *he took away ... the high places* — that is, those devoted to idolatrous rites.

took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images — All public objects and relics of idolatry in Jerusalem and other cities through his kingdom were destroyed; but those high places where God was worshipped under the figure of an ox, as at Beth-el, were allowed to remain (\*\*ISS4\*] Kings 15:14); so far the reformation was incomplete.

## **4406**2 CHRONICLES 14:6-8.

# HAVING PEACE, HE STRENGTHENS HIS KINGDOM WITH FORTS AND ARMIES.

**6.** he built fenced cities in Judah — (See on IIII) Kings 15:22).

7. while the land is yet before us — that is, while we have free and undisputed progress everywhere; no foe is near; but, as this happy time of peace may not last always and the kingdom is but small and weak, let us prepare suitable defenses in case of need. He had also an army of five hundred eighty thousand men. Judah furnished the heavily armed soldiers, and Benjamin the archers. This large number does not mean a body of professional soldiers, but all capable of bearing arms and liable to be called into service.

### **4405**2 CHRONICLES 14:9-15.

#### HE OVERCOMES ZERAH, AND SPOILS THE ETHIOPIANS.

**9.** there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian — This could not have been from Ethiopia south of the cataracts of the Nile, for in the reign of Osorkon I, successor of Shishak, no foreign army would have been allowed a free passage through Egypt. Zerah must, therefore, have been chief of the Cushites, or Ethiopians of Arabia, as they were evidently a nomad horde who had a settlement of tents and cattle in the neighborhood of Gerar.

a thousand, and three hundred chariots — "Twenty camels employed to carry couriers upon them might have procured that number of men to meet in a short time. As Zerah was the aggressor, he had time to choose when he would summon these men and attack the enemy. Every one of these Cushite shepherds, carrying with them their own provisions of flour and water, as is their invariable custom, might have fought with Asa without eating a loaf of Zerah's bread or drinking a pint of his water" [Bruce, Travels].

**10.** Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array ... at Mareshah — one of the towns which Rehoboam fortified (4418) Chronicles 11:8), near a great southern pass in the low country of Judah (4654) Joshua 15:44). The engagement between the armies took place in a plain near the town, called "the valley of Zephathah," supposed to be the broad way coming down Beit Jibrin towards Tell Es-Safren [ROBINSON].

11-13. Asa cried unto the Lord his God — Strong in the confidence that the power of God was able to give the victory equally with few as with many, the pious king marched with a comparatively small force to encounter the formidable host of marauders at his southern frontier. Committing his cause to God, he engaged in the conflict — completely routed the enemy, and succeeded in obtaining, as the reward of his victory, a rich booty in treasure and cattle from the tents of this pastoral horde.

### **480**2 CHRONICLES 15:1-15.

#### JUDAH MAKES A SOLEMN COVENANT WITH GOD.

- **1.** Azariah the son of Oded This prophet, who is mentioned nowhere else, appears at this stage of the sacred story in the discharge of an interesting mission. He went to meet Asa, as he was returning from his victorious pursuit of the Ethiopians, and the congratulatory address here recorded was publicly made to the king in presence of his army.
- **2.** The Lord is with you, while ye be with him You have had, in your recent signal success, a remarkable proof that God's blessing is upon you; your victory has been the reward of your faith and piety. If you steadfastly adhere to the cause of God, you may expect a continuance of His favor; but if you abandon it, you will soon reap the bitter fruits of apostasy.
- **3-6.** Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, etc. Some think that Azariah was referring to the sad and disastrous condition to which superstition and idolatry had brought the neighboring kingdom of Israel. His words should rather be taken in a wider sense, for it seems manifest that the prophet had his eye upon many periods in the national history, when the people were in the state described — a state of spiritual destitution and ignorance — and exhibited its natural result as widespread anarchy, mutual dissension among the tribes, and general suffering Judges 9:23 12:4 20:21 12:4 Chronicles 13:17). These calamities God permitted to befall them as the punishment of their apostasy. Azariah's object in these remarks was to establish the truth of his counsel (4002 Chronicles 15:2), threatening, in case of neglecting it by describing the uniform course of the divine procedure towards Israel, as shown in all periods of their history. Then after this appeal to national experience, he concluded with an earnest exhortation to the king to prosecute the work of reformation so well begun ( Chronicles 15:7).

**7. Be ye strong** — Great resolution and indomitable energy would be required to persevere in the face of the opposition your reforming measures will encounter.

**your work shall be rewarded** — What you do in the cause and for the glory of God will assuredly be followed by the happiest results both to yourself and your subjects.

**8.** when Asa heard ... the prophecy of Oded the prophet — The insertion of these words, "of Oded the prophet," is generally regarded as a corruption of the text. "The sole remedy is to erase them. They are, probably, the remains of a note, which crept in from the margin into the text" [Bertheau].

*he took courage* — Animated by the seasonable and pious address of Azariah, Asa became a more zealous reformer than ever, employing all his royal authority and influence to extirpate every vestige of idolatry from the land.

renewed the altar of the Lord ... before the porch — that is, the altar of burnt offering. As this was done on or about the fifteenth year of the reign of this pious king, the renewal must have consisted in some splendid repairs or embellishments, which made it look like a new dedication, or in a reconstruction of a temporary altar, like that of Solomon (4002 Chronicles 7:7), for extraordinary sacrifices to be offered on an approaching occasion.

**9-15.** *he gathered all Judah and Benjamin* — Not satisfied with these minor measures of purification and improvement, As a meditated a grand scheme which was to pledge his whole kingdom to complete the work of reformation, and with this in view he waited for a general assembly of the people.

and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh — The population of Asa's kingdom had been vastly increased by the continued

influx of strangers, who, prompted by motives either of interest or of piety, sought in his dominions that security and freedom which they could not enjoy amid the complicated troubles which distracted Israel.

and out of Simeon — Although a portion of that tribe, located within the territory of Judah, were already subjects of the southern kingdom, the general body of the Simeonites had joined in forming the northern kingdom of Israel. But many of them now returned of their own accord.

**10-14.** *the third month* — when was held the feast of pentecost. On this occasion, it was celebrated at Jerusalem by an extraordinary sacrifice of seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep, the spoil of the Ethiopians being offered. The assembled worshippers entered with great and holy enthusiasm into a national covenant; and, at the same time, to execute with rigor the laws which made idolatry punishable with death (\*\*\* Chronicles 15:13 \*\*\* Deuteronomy 17:2-5 \*\*\* Hebrews 10:2,8). The people testified unbounded satisfaction with this important religious movement, and its moral influence was seen in the promotion of piety, order, and tranquillity throughout the land.

**18.** *the things that his father had dedicated* — probably part of the booty obtained by his signal victory over Jeroboam, but which, though dedicated, had hitherto been unrepresented.

and that he himself had dedicated — of the booty taken from the Ethiopians. Both of these were now deposited in the temple as votive offerings to Him whose right hand and holy arm had given them the victory.

## 44012 CHRONICLES 16:1-14.

# ASA, BY A LEAGUE WITH THE SYRIANS, DIVERTS BAASHA FROM BUILDING RAMAH.

**1-6.** In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha ... came up against Judah — Baasha had died several years before this date (\*\*\*15:33), and the best biblical critics are agreed in considering this date to be calculated from the separation of the kingdoms, and coincident with the sixteenth year of Asa's reign. This mode of reckoning was, in all likelihood, generally followed in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, the public annals of the time (\*\*\*\*1612\*\*2 Chronicles 16:11), the source from which the inspired historian drew his account.

Baasha ... built Ramah — that is, fortified it. The blessing of God which manifestly rested at this time on the kingdom of Judah, the signal victory of Asa, the freedom and purity of religious worship, and the fame of the late national covenant, were regarded with great interest throughout Israel, and attracted a constantly increasing number of emigrants to Judah. Baasha, alarmed at this movement, determined to stem the tide; and as the high road to and from Jerusalem passed by Ramah, he made that frontier town, about six miles north of Asa's capital, a military station, where the vigilance of his sentinels would effectually prevent all passage across the boundary of the kingdom (see on Tibis 15:16-22; also Teremiah 41:9).

**4.** Ben-hadad ... sent the captains of his armies ... and they smote ... Abelmaim — "The meadow of waters," supposed to have been situated on the marshy plain near the uppermost lake of the Jordan. The other two towns were also in the northern district of Palestine. These unexpected hostilities of his Syrian ally interrupted Baasha's fortifications at Ramah, and his death, happening soon after, prevented his resuming them.

- **7-10.** Hanani the seer came to Asa ... and said His object was to show the king his error in forming his recent league with Ben-hadad. The prophet represented the appropriation of the temple treasures to purchase the services of the Syrian mercenaries, as indicating a distrust in God most blameable with the king's experience. He added, that in consequence of this want of faith, Asa had lost the opportunity of gaining a victory over the united forces of Baasha and Ben-hadad, more splendid than that obtained over the Ethiopians. Such a victory, by destroying their armies, would have deprived them of all power to molest him in the future; whereas by his foolish and worldly policy, so unworthy of God's vicegerent, to misapply the temple treasures and corrupt the fidelity of an ally of the king of Israel, he had tempted the cupidity of the one, and increased the hostility of the other, and rendered himself liable to renewed troubles ( Kings 15:32). This rebuke was pungent and, from its truth and justness, ought to have penetrated and afflicted the heart of such a man as Asa. But his pride was offended at the freedom taken by the honest reprover of royalty, and in a burst of passionate resentment, he ordered Hanani to be thrown into prison.
- **10.** Asa oppressed some of the people the same time The form or degree of this oppression is not recorded. The cause of his oppressing them was probably due to the same offense as that of Hanani a strong expression of their dissatisfaction with his conduct in leaguing with Ben-hadad, or it may have been his maltreatment of the Lord's servant.
- **12.** Asa ... was diseased in his feet probably the gout.

yet his disease was exceeding great — better, "moved upwards" in his body, which proves the violent and dangerous type of the malady.

yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians — most probably Egyptian physicians, who were anciently in high repute at foreign courts, and who pretended to expel diseases by charms, incantations, and mystic arts. Asa's fault consisted in his trusting to such physicians, while he neglected to supplicate the aid and blessing of God. The best and holiest men have been betrayed for a time into sins, but through repentance have risen again; and as Asa is pronounced a good man (44572 Chronicles 15:17), it may be presumed that he also was restored to a better state of mind.

**14.** *they buried him in his own sepulchres* — The tombs in the neighborhood of Jerusalem were excavated in the side of a rock. One cave contained several tombs or sepulchres.

laid him in the bed ... filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices

— It is evident that a sumptuous public funeral was given him as a tribute of respect and gratitude for his pious character and patriotic government. But whether "the bed" means a state couch on which he lay exposed to public view, the odoriferous perfumes being designed to neutralize the offensive smell of the corpse, or whether it refers to an embalmment, in which aromatic spices were always used in great profusion, it is impossible to say.

they made a very great burning for him — according to some, for consuming the spices. According to others, it was a magnificent pile for the cremation of the corpse — a usage which was at that time, and long after, prevalent among the Hebrews, and the omission of which in the case of royal personages was reckoned a great indignity (4017)2 Chronicles 21:19

(SRIP) Samuel 31:12 (2017) Jeremiah 34:5 (3017) Amos 6:10).

## <sup>44706</sup>2 CHRONICLES 17:1-6.

#### JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS WELL AND PROSPERS.

- **1.** Jehoshaphat ... strengthened himself against Israel The temper and proceedings of the kings of Israel rendered it necessary for him to prepare vigorous measures of defense on the northern frontier of his kingdom. These consisted in filling all the fortresses with their full complement of troops and establishing military stations in various parts of the country, as well as in the cities of Mount Ephraim, which belonged to Jehoshaphat (450) Chronicles 15:8).
- **3-5.** he walked in the first ways of his father David He imitated the piety of his great ancestor in the early part of his reign before he made those unhappy lapses which dishonored his character.

and sought not unto Baalim — a term used for idols generally in contradistinction to the Lord God of his father.

- **4.** and not after the doings of Israel He observed with scrupulous fidelity, and employed his royal influence to support the divine institutions as enacted by Moses, abhorring that spurious and unlawful calf-worship that now formed the established religion in Israel. Being thus far removed, alike from gross idolatry and Israelitish apostasy, and adhering zealously to the requirements of the divine law, the blessing of God rested on his government. Ruling in the fear of God, and for the good of his subjects, "the Lord established the kingdom in his hand."
- **5.** all Judah brought ... presents This was customary with the people generally at the beginning of a reign (\*\*\*\* Samuel 10:27), and with the nobles and high functionaries yearly afterwards. They were given in the form of voluntary offerings, to avoid the odious idea of a tax or tribute.

**6.** his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord — Full of faith and piety, he possessed zeal and courage to undertake the reformation of manners, to suppress all the works and objects of idolatry (see on Chronicles 20:33), and he held out public encouragement to the pure worship of God.

### <sup>4100</sup>2 CHRONICLES 17:7-11.

#### HE SENDS LEVITES TO TEACH IN JUDAH.

- 7-11. Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, ... to teach in the cities of Judah The ordinary work of teaching devolved on the priests. But extraordinary commissioners were appointed, probably to ascertain whether the work had been done or neglected. This deputation of five princes, assisted by two priests and nine Levites, was to make a circuit of the towns in Judah. It is the first practical measure we read of as being adopted by any of the kings for the religious instruction of the people. Time and unbroken opportunities were afforded for carrying out fully this excellent plan of home education, for the kingdom enjoyed internal tranquillity as well as freedom for foreign wars. It is conformable to the pious style of the sacred historian to trace this profound peace to the "fear of the Lord having fallen on all kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah."
- **9.** *the book of the law* that is, either the whole Pentateuch or only the book of Deuteronomy, which contains an abridgment of it.
- *the Arabians* the nomad tribes on the south of the Dead Sea, who, seeking the protection of Jehoshaphat after his conquest of Edom, paid their tribute in the way most suitable to their pastoral habits the present of so many head of cattle.

### **⁴4772** CHRONICLES 17:12-19.

#### HIS GREATNESS, CAPTAINS, AND ARMIES.

**14.** *these are the numbers* — The warriors were arranged in the army according to their fathers houses. The army of Jehoshaphat, commanded by five great generals and consisting of five unequal divisions, comprised one million one hundred and sixty thousand men, without including those who garrisoned the fortresses. No monarch, since the time of Solomon, equalled Jehoshaphat in the extent of his revenue, in the strength of his fortifications, and in the number of his troops.

### <sup>44KI</sup>CHRONICLES 18:1-34.

#### JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB GO AGAINST RAMOTH-GILEAD.

**2.** after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria — This is word for word, the same as Tkings 22:1-53. (See commentary on that chapter).

### 44902 CHRONICLES 19:1-4.

#### JEHOSHAPHAT VISITS HIS KINGDOM.

Chronicles 18:16). Not long after he had resumed the ordinary functions of

1-4. Jehoshaphat ... returned to his house in peace — (See

royalty in Jerusalem, he was one day disturbed by an unexpected and ominous visit from a prophet of the Lord (\*\*\*\*P2\*\* Chronicles 19:2). This was Jehu, of whose father we read in \*\*\*P2\*\* Chronicles 16:7. He himself had been called to discharge the prophetic office in Israel. But probably for his bold rebuke to Baasha (\*\*\*IT\*\* Kings 16:1), he had been driven by that arbitrary monarch within the territory of Judah, where we now find him with the privileged license of his order, taking the same religious supervision of Jehoshaphat's proceedings as he had formerly done of Baasha's. At the interview here described, he condemned, in the strongest terms, the king of Judah's imprudent and incongruous league with Ahab — God's open enemy (\*\*\*IT\*\* Kings 22:2) — as an unholy alliance that would be conducive neither to the honor and comfort of his house nor to the best interests of his kingdom. He apprised Jehoshaphat that, on account of that grave

offense, "wrath was upon him from before the Lord," a judgment that was inflicted soon after (see 4002 Chronicles 20:1). The prophet's rebuke, however, was administered in a mingled strain of severity and mildness; for he interposed "a nevertheless" (4002 Chronicles 19:3), which implied

that the threatened storm would be averted, in token of the divine approval of his public efforts for the promotion of the true religion, as

well as of the sincere piety of his personal character and life.

**4.** *he went out again through the people* — This means his reappointing the commissioners of public instruction (\*\*\*\* 2 Chronicles 17:7-9), perhaps with new powers and a larger staff of assistants to overtake every part of the land. The complement of teachers required for that purpose would be easily obtained because the whole tribe of Levites was now concentrated within the kingdom of Judah.

### 44052 CHRONICLES 19:5-7.

#### HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JUDGES.

**5-7.** *he set judges in the land* — There had been judicial courts established at an early period. But Jehoshaphat was the first king who modified these institutions according to the circumstances of the now fragmentary kingdom of Judah. He fixed local courts in each of the fortified cities, these being the provincial capitals of every district (see on Deuteronomy 16:18).

### 44982 CHRONICLES 19:8-11.

#### TO THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

**8.** set of the Levites ... priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel — A certain number of these three classes constituted a supreme court, which sat in Jerusalem to review appellate cases from the inferior courts. It consisted of two divisions: the first of which had jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters; the second, in civil, fiscal, and criminal cases. According to others, the two divisions of the supreme court adjudicated: the one according to the law contained in the sacred books; the other according to the law of custom and equity. As in Eastern countries at the present day, the written and unwritten law are objects of separate jurisdiction.

### **400** 2 CHRONICLES 20:1-21.

# JEHOSHAPHAT, INVADED BY THE MOABITES, PROCLAIMS A FAST.

- 1. the children of Moab ... Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites supposed to be rather the name of a certain people called Mohammonim or Mehunim (4400)2 Chronicles 26:7), who dwelt in Mount Seir either a branch of the old Edomite race or a separate tribe who were settled there.
- 2. from beyond the sea on this side Syria Instead of "Syria," some versions read "Edom," and many able critics prefer this reading, both because the nomad tribes here mentioned were far from Syria, and because express mention is made of Mount Seir, that is, Edom. The meaning then is: this confederate horde was composed of the different tribes that inhabited the far distant regions bordering on the northern and eastern coasts of the Red Sea. Their progress was apparently by the southern point of the Dead Sea, as far as En-gedi, which, more anciently, was called Hazezon-tamar ( Genesis 14:7). This is the uniform route taken by the Arabs in their marauding expeditions at the present day; and in coming round the southern end of the Dead Sea, they can penetrate along the lowlying Ghor far north, without letting their movements be known to the tribes and villages west of the mountain chain [ROBINSON]. Thus, anciently, the invading horde in Jehoshaphat's time had marched as far north as En-gedi, before intelligence of their advance was conveyed to the court. En-gedi is recognized in the modern Ainjidy and is situated at a point of the western shore, nearly equidistant from both extremities of the lake [ROBINSON].
- **3, 4.** Jehoshaphat ... proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah Alarmed by the intelligence and conscious of his total inability to repel this host of invaders, Jehoshaphat felt his only refuge was at the horns of the altar. He

resolved to employ the aid of his God, and, in conformity with this resolution, he summoned all his subjects to observe a solemn fast at the sanctuary. It was customary with the Hebrew kings to proclaim fasts in perilous circumstances, either in a city, a district, or throughout the entire kingdom, according to the greatness of the emergency. On this occasion, it was a universal fast, which extended to infants (\*\*C\*\*2\*\*Chronicles\*\*20:13; see also \*\*D\*\*5\*\*Joel 2:15,16 \*\*T\*\*Jonah 3:7).

- 5-13. Jehoshaphat stood ... in the house of the Lord, before the new court that is, the great or outer court (\*\*\*\* 2 Chronicles 4:9) called the new court, probably from having been at that time enlarged or beautified.
- **6-12.** *And said, O Lord God of our fathers* This earnest and impressive prayer embraces every topic and argument which, as king and representative of the chosen people, he could urge. Then it concludes with an earnest appeal to the justice of God to protect those who, without provocation, were attacked and who were unable to defend themselves against overwhelming numbers.
- **14-18.** Then upon Jahaziel ... came the Spirit of the Lord This prophet is not elsewhere mentioned, but his claim to the inspiration of a prophetic spirit was verified by the calm and distinct announcement he gave, both of the manner and the completeness of the deliverance he predicted.
- **16.** *they come up by the cliff of Ziz* This seems to have been nothing else than the present pass which leads northwards, by an ascent from Engedi to Jerusalem, issuing a little below Tekoa. The wilderness of Jeruel was probably the large flat district adjoining the desert of Tekoa, called El-Husasah, from a wady on its northern side [ROBINSON].
- **18.** *Jehoshaphat bowed his head* ... *and all Judah*, etc. This attitude was expressive of reverence to God and His Word, of confidence in His promise, and thankfulness for so extraordinary a favor.
- **19.** *the Levites* ... *stood up to praise the Lord* doubtless by the king's command. Their anthem was sung with such a joyful acclaim as showed that they universally regarded the victory as already obtained.

- **20, 21.** as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood ... Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem probably in the gate of Jerusalem, the place of general rendezvous; and as the people were on the eve of setting out, he exhorted them to repose implicit trust in the Lord and His prophet, not to be timid or desponding at sight of the enemy, but to remain firm in the confident assurance of a miraculous deliverance, without their striking a single stroke.
- **21.** he appointed singers ... that they should praise ... as they went out before the army Having arranged the line of procession, he gave the signal to move forwards. The Levites led the van with their musical instruments; and singing the 136th Psalm, the people went on, not as an army marching against an enemy, but returning in joyful triumph after a victory.

### <sup>4022</sup>2 CHRONICLES 20:22-30.

#### THE OVERTHROW OF HIS ENEMIES.

- 22. when they began to sing and to praise the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir Some think that this was done by angels in human form, whose sudden appearance diffused an uncontrollable panic. Others entertain the more probable opinion that, in the camp of this vast horde, composed of different tribes, jealousies and animosities had sprung up, which led to widespread dissensions and fierce feuds, in which they drew the sword against each other. The consequence was, that as the mutual strife commenced when the Hebrew procession set out from Jerusalem, the work of destruction was completed before Jehoshaphat and his people arrived at the battlefield. Thus easy is it for God to make the wrath of man to praise Him, to confound the counsels of His enemies and employ their own passions in defeating the machinations they have devised for the overthrow of His Church and people.
- **24-26.** when Judah came toward the watchtower in the wilderness Most probably the conical hill, Jebel Fereidis, or Frank Mountain, from the summit of which they obtained the first view of the scene of slaughter.

Jehoshaphat and his people found the field strewed with dead bodies, so that they had not to fight at all, but rather to take possession of an immense booty, the collection of which occupied three days. On the fourth they set out on their return to Jerusalem in the same order and joyful mood as they came. The place where they mustered previous to departure was, from their public thanksgiving service, called, "The Valley of Berachah" ("benediction"), now Wady Bereikut.

### 40002 CHRONICLES 20:31-37.

#### HIS REIGN.

- **31.** *Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah* (See 40012 Chronicles 24:1).
- **32.** walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it He was more steadfast and consistently religious (compare 41582 Chronicles 15:18).
- **33.** *the high places were not taken away* Those on which idolatry was practiced were entirely destroyed (\*4000)2 Chronicles 17:6); but those where the people, notwithstanding the erection of the temple, continued to worship the true God, prudence required to be slowly and gradually abolished, in deference to popular prejudice.
- **35-37.** after this did Jehoshaphat ... join himself with Ahaziah ... to make ships A combined fleet was built at Ezion-geber, the destination of which was to voyage to Tartessus, but it was wrecked. Jehoshaphat's motive for entering into this partnership was to secure a free passage through Israel, for the vessels were to be conveyed across the Isthmus of Suez, and to sail to the west of Europe from one of the ports of Palestine on the Mediterranean. Eliezer, a prophet, denounced this unholy alliance, and foretold, as divine judgment, the total wreck of the whole fleet. The consequence was, that although Jehoshaphat broke off in obedience to the divine will his league with Ahaziah, he formed a new scheme of a merchant fleet, and Ahaziah wished to be admitted a partner [4128] Kings 22:48]. The proposal of the Israelitish king was respectfully declined [4128] Kings 22:49]. The destination of this new fleet was to Ophir, because the

Israelitish seaports were not accessible to him for the Tartessus trade; but the ships, when just off the docks, were wrecked in the rocky creek of Ezion-geber.

### 42012 CHRONICLES 21:1-4.

#### JEHORAM SUCCEEDS JEHOSHAPHAT.

**1-4.** Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers ... Jehoram ... reigned — The late king left seven sons; two of them are in our version named Azariah; but in the Hebrew they appear considerably different, the one being spelt "Azariah," and the other "Azariahu." Though Jehoshaphat had made his family arrangements with prudent precaution, and while he divided the functions of royalty in his lifetime (compare Kings 8:16), as well as fixed the succession to the throne in his oldest son, he appointed each of the others to the government of a fenced city, thus providing them with an honorable independence. But this good intentions were frustrated; for no sooner did Jehoram find himself in the sole possession of sovereign power than, from jealousy, or on account of their connections, he murdered all his brothers, together with some leading influential persons who, he suspected, were attached to their interest, or would avenge their deaths. Similar tragedies have been sadly frequent in Eastern courts, where the heir of the crown looks upon his brothers as his most formidable enemies, and is therefore tempted to secure his power by their death.

40062 CHRONICLES 21:5-7.

#### HIS WICKED REIGN.

**6, 7.** he walked ... as did the house of Ahab, for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife — The precepts and examples of his excellent father were soon obliterated by his matrimonial alliance with a daughter of the royal house of Israel. Through the influence of Athaliah he abolished the worship of the Lord, and encouraged an introduction of all the corruptions prevalent in the sister kingdom. The divine vengeance was denounced

against him, and would have utterly destroyed him and his house, had it not been for a tender regard to the promise made to David (\*\*\*2 Samuel 7:29 \*\*\*2 Kings 8:19).

### **№2 CHRONICLES 21:8-17.**

#### EDOM AND LIBNAH REVOLT.

- 8-10. the Edomites revolted That nation had been made dependent by David, and down to the time of Jehoshaphat was governed by a tributary ruler (\*\*\*P\$\frac{11200}{2}\$ Kings 22:47 \*\*\*P\$\frac{11200}{2}\$ Kings 3:9). But that king having been slain in an insurrection at home, his successor thought to ingratiate himself with his new subjects by raising the flag of independence [Josephus]. The attempt was defeated in the first instance by Jehoram, who possessed all the military establishments of his father; but being renewed unexpectedly, the Edomites succeeded in completely emancipating their country from the yoke of Judah (\*\*\*\*Genesis 27:40). Libnah, which lay on the southern frontier and towards Edom, followed the example of that country.
- **12-15.** there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet That prophet's translation having taken place in the reign of Jehoshaphat [ Kings 2:11,12], we must conclude that the name of Elijah has, by the error of a transcriber, been put for that of Elisha.
- 13-19. hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab that is, introduced the superstitions and vices of Phoenician idolatry (see on Deuteronomy 13:6-14). On this account, as well as for his unnatural cruelties, divine vengeance was denounced against him, which was soon after executed exactly as the prophet had foretold. A series of overwhelming calamities befell this wicked king; for in addition to the revolts already mentioned, two neighboring tribes (see Chronicles 17:11) made hostile incursions on the southern and western portions of his kingdom. His country was ravaged, his capital taken, his palace plundered, his wives carried off, and all his children slain except the youngest. He himself was seized with an incurable dysentery, which, after subjecting him to the most painful suffering for the unusual period of two years, carried him off, a monument

of the divine judgment. To complete his degradation, his death was unlamented, his burial unhonored by his subjects. This custom, similar to what obtained in Egypt, seems to have crept in among the Hebrews, of giving funeral honors to their kings, or withholding them, according to the good or bad characters of their reign.

### <sup>42012</sup> CHRONICLES 22:1-9.

#### AHAZIAH SUCCEEDING JEHORAM, REIGNS WICKEDLY.

- **1.** *the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah ... king* or Jehoahaz (\*\*PIT\*2 Chronicles 21:17). All his older brothers having been slaughtered by the Arab marauders, the throne of Judah rightfully belonged to him as the only legitimate heir.
- 2. Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign—
  (Compare \*\*R\*12\* Kings 8:26). According to that passage, the commencement of his reign is dated in the twenty-second year of his age, and, according to this, in the forty-second year of the kingdom of his mother's family [LIGHTFOOT]. "If Ahaziah ascended the throne in the twenty-second year of his life, he must have been born in his father's nineteenth year. Hence, it may seem strange that he had older brothers; but in the East they marry early, and royal princes had, besides the wife of the first rank, usually concubines, as Jehoram had (\*\*POT\*2\* Chronicles 21:17); he might, therefore, in the nineteenth year of his age, very well have several sons" [KEIL] (compare \*\*POT\*2\* Chronicles 21:20 \*\*POT\*2\* Kings 8:17).

**Athaliah the daughter of Omri** — more properly, "granddaughter." The expression is used loosely, as the statement was made simply for the purpose of intimating that she belonged to that idolatrous race.

**3, 4.** *his mother was his counsellor* ... *they were his counsellors* — The facile king surrendered himself wholly to the influence of his mother and her relatives. Athaliah and her son introduced a universal corruption of morals and made idolatry the religion of the court and the nation. By them he was induced not only to conform to the religion of the northern kingdom, but to join a new expedition against Ramoth-gilead (see Kings 9:10).

- **5.** went ... to war against Hazael, king of Syria It may be mentioned as a very minute and therefore important confirmation of this part of the sacred history that the names of Jehu and Hazael, his contemporary, have both been found on Assyrian sculptures; and there is also a notice of Ithbaal, king of Sidon, who was the father of Jezebel.
- **6.** *Azariah went down* that is, from Ramoth-gilead, to visit the king of Israel, who was lying ill of his wounds at Jezreel, and who had fled there on the alarm of Jehu's rebellion.
- 9. he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (for he was hid in Samaria) (compare (Sings 9:27-29)). The two accounts are easily reconciled. "Ahaziah fled first to the garden house and escaped to Samaria; but was here, where he had hid himself, taken by Jehu's men who pursued him, brought to Jehu, who was still near or in Jezreel, and at his command slain at the hill Gur, beside Ibleam, in his chariot; that is, mortally wounded with an arrow, so that he, again fleeing, expired at Megiddo" [KEIL]. Jehu left the corpse at the disposal of the king of Judah's attendants, who conveyed it to Jerusalem, and out of respect to his grandfather Jehoshaphat's memory, gave him an honorable interment in the tombs of the kings.

So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom — His children were too young to assume the reins of government, and all the other royal princes had been massacred by Jehu (4208) Chronicles 22:8).

### **№**2 CHRONICLES 22:10-12.

# ATHALIAH, DESTROYING THE SEED ROYAL SAVE JOASH, USURPS THE KINGDOM.

**10.** Athaliah ... arose and destroyed all the seed royal — (See on Sings 11:1-3). Maddened by the massacre of the royal family of Ahab, she resolved that the royal house of David should have the same fate. Knowing the commission which Jehu had received to extirpate the whole of Ahab's posterity, she expected that he would extend his sword to her. Anticipating his movements, she resolved, as her only defense and

security, to usurp the throne and destroy "the seed royal," both because they were hostile to the Phoenician worship of Baal, which she was determined to uphold, and because, if one of the young princes became king, his mother would supersede Athaliah in the dignity of queen mother.

**12.** *he was with them hid in the house of God* — Certain persons connected with the priesthood had a right to occupy the buildings in the outer wall, and all within the outer wall was often called the temple. Jehoiada and his family resided in one of these apartments.

### 42012 CHRONICLES 23:1-11.

#### JEHOIADA MAKES JOASH KING.

- **1.** in the seventh year Jehoiada ... took the captains of hundreds, etc. (See on Divided Kings 11:4; Divided Kings 11:17). The five officers mentioned here had been probably of the royal guard, and were known to be Strongly disaffected to the government of Athaliah.
- **2.** chief of all the fathers of Israel This name is frequently used in Chronicles for Judah and Benjamin, now all that remained of Israel. Having cautiously entrusted the secret of the young prince's preservation to all the leading men in the kingdom, he enlisted their interest in the royal cause and got their pledge to support it by a secret oath of fidelity.
- *they came to Jerusalem* The time chosen for the grand discovery was, probably, one of the annual festivals, when there was a general concourse of the nation at the capital.
- **4-9.** This is the thing that ye shall do The arrangements made for defense are here described. The people were divided into three bodies; one attended as guards to the king, while the other two were posted at all the doors and gates, and the captains and military officers who entered the temple unarmed to lull suspicion, were furnished with weapons out of the sacred armory, where David had deposited his trophies of victory and which was reopened on this occasion.
- **8.** *Jehoiada* ... *dismissed not the courses* As it was necessary to have as large a disposable force as he could command on such a crisis, the high priest detained those who, in other circumstances, would have returned home on the expiry of their week of service.
- 11. Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony Some think that the original word rendered

"testimony," as its derivation warrants, may signify here the regalia, especially the bracelet (\*\*\*D2 Samuel 1:10); and this view they support on the ground that "gave him" being supplemented, the text properly runs thus, "put upon him the crown and testimony." At the same time, it seems equally pertinent to take "the testimony" in the usual acceptation of that term; and, accordingly, many are of opinion that a roll containing a copy of the law (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 17:18) was placed in the king's hands, which he held as a scepter or truncheon. Others, referring to a custom of Oriental people, who when receiving a letter or document from a highly respected quarter, lift it up to their heads before opening it, consider that Joash, besides the crown, had the book of the law laid upon his head (see \*\*\*\*Job 31:35,36).

God save the king — literally, "Long live the king."

### **1212** CHRONICLES 23:12-15.

#### ATHALIAH SLAIN.

- 12. Athaliah heard the noise of the people The unusual commotion, indicated by the blast of the trumpets and the vehement acclamations of the people, drew her attention, or excited her fears. She might have flattered herself that, having slain all the royal family, she was in perfect security; but it is just as likely that, finding on reflection, one had escaped her murderous hands, she might not deem it expedient to institute any enquiries; but the very idea would keep her constantly in a state of jealous suspicion and irritation. In that state of mind, the wicked usurper, hearing across the Tyropoeon the outburst of popular joy, rushed across the bridge to the temple grounds, and, penetrating from a single glance the meaning of the whole scene, raised a shriek of "Treason!"
- **13.** behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in The king's pillar was in the people's court, opposite that of the priests'. The young king, arrayed in the royal insignia, had been brought out of the inner, to stand forth in the outer court, to the public view. Some think that he stood on the brazen scaffold of Solomon, erected beside the pillar [see on Chronicles 6:13].

14, 15. Slay her not in the house of the Lord ... and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there

— The high priest ordered her immediately to be taken out of the temple grounds and put to death. "And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain" ("ZIIIS 11:16). "Now, we are not to suppose that horses came into [the king's house] of residence, but into the king's (horses') house or hippodrome (the gate of the king's mules) [JOSEPHUS], he had built for them on the southeast of the temple, in the immediate vicinity of the horse gate in the valley of Kedron — a valley which was at that time a kind of desecrated place by the destruction of idols and their appurtenances" ("ZZIII2 Kings 23:2,6,12) [BARCLAY, City of the Great King].

**42362** CHRONICLES 23:16.

### JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF GOD, AND SETTLES THE KING.

**16.** Jehoiada made a covenant — (See on Alli? Kings 11:17).

### **42012** CHRONICLES 24:1-14.

#### JOASH REIGNS WELL ALL THE DAYS OF JEHOIADA.

- **1-3.** *Joash* ... *began to reign* (See on Tings 12:1-3).
- **3.** *Jehoiada took for him two wives* As Jehoiada was now too old to contract such new alliances, the generality of interpreters apply this statement to the young king.
- **4-14.** Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord (See on Example 12:4-16).

### **40**152 CHRONICLES 24:15,16.

#### JEHOIADA BEING DEAD.

**15, 16.** *Jehoiada waxed old ... and died* — His life, protracted to unusual longevity and spent in the service of his country, deserved some tribute of public gratitude, and this was rendered in the posthumous honors that were bestowed on him. Among the Hebrews, intramural interment was prohibited in every city but Jerusalem, and there the exception was made only to the royal family and persons of eminent merit, on whom the distinction was conferred of being buried in the city of David, among the kings, as in the case of Jehoiada.

**4017**2 CHRONICLES 24:17-22.

#### JOASH FALLS INTO IDOLATRY.

17-22. Now came the princes of Judah, and make obeisance to the king

— Hitherto, while Joash occupied the throne, his uncle had held the reins

of sovereign power, and by his excellent counsels had directed the young king to such measures as were calculated to promote both the civil and religious interests of the country. The fervent piety, practical wisdom, and inflexible firmness of that sage counsellor exerted immense influence over all classes. But now that the helm of the state-ship was no longer steered by the sound head and firm hand of the venerable high priest, the real merits of Joash's administration appear; and for want of good and enlightened principle, as well as, perhaps, of natural energy of character, he allowed himself to be borne onward in a course which soon wrecked the vessel upon hidden rocks.

the king hearkened unto them — They were secretly attached to idolatry, and their elevated rank affords sad proof how extensively and deeply the nation had become corrupted during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah. With strong professions of allegiance they humbly requested that they might not be subjected to the continued necessity of frequent and expensive journeys to Jerusalem, but allowed the privilege their fathers had enjoyed of worshipping God in high places at home. They framed their petition in this plausible and least offensive manner, well knowing that, if excused attendance at the temple, they might — without risk of discovery or disturbance — indulge their tastes in the observance of any private rites they pleased. The weak-minded king granted their petition; and the consequence was, that when they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, they soon "served groves and idols."

**18.** wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem — The particular mention of Jerusalem as involved in the sin implies that the neglect of the temple and the consequent idolatry received not only the king's toleration, but his sanction; and it naturally occurs to ask how, at his mature age, such a total abandonment of a place with which all his early recollections were associated can be accounted for. It has been suggested that what he had witnessed of the conduct of many of the priests in the careless performance of the worship, and especially their unwillingness to collect the money, as well as apply a portion of their revenues for the repairs of the temple, had alienated and disgusted him [LE CLERC].

- **19.** *Yet he sent prophets* Elisha, Micah, Jehu son of Hanani, Jahaziel son of Zechariah (\*\*2 Chronicles 20:14), Eliezer son of Dodavah (\*\*2 Chronicles 20:37), lived and taught at that time. But all their prophetic warnings and denunciations were unheeded.
- **20, 21.** *the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada* probably a younger son, for his name does not occur in the list of Aaron's successors (40061 Chronicles 6:4-47).

*stood above the people* — Being of the priestly order, he spoke from the inner court, which was considerably higher than that of the people.

and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper, etc. — His near relationship to the king might have created a feeling of delicacy and reluctance to interfere; but at length he, too, was prompted by an irresistible impulse to protest against the prevailing impiety. The bold freedom and energy of [Zechariah's] remonstrance, as well as his denunciation of the national calamities that would certainly follow, were most unpalatable to the king; while they so roused the fierce passions of the multitude that a band of miscreants, at the secret instigation of Joash, stoned him to death. This deed of violence involved complicated criminality on the part of the king. It was a horrid outrage on a prophet of the Lord — base ingratitude to a family who had preserved his life — atrocious treatment of a true Hebrew patriot — an illegal and unrighteous exercise of his power and authority as a king.

**22.** when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it and require it — These dying words, if they implied a vindictive imprecation, exhibit a striking contrast to the spirit of the first Christian martyr (\*\*4000\*\*Acts 7:60). But, instead of being the expression of a personal wish, they might be the utterance of a prophetic doom.

### **4025**2 CHRONICLES 24:23-27.

#### HE IS SLAIN BY HIS SERVANTS.

**23.** at the end of the year the host of Syria came up — This invasion took place under the personal conduct of Hazael, whom Joash, to save the miseries of a siege, prevailed on to withdraw his forces by a large present of gold (DEC) Kings 12:18). Most probably, also, he promised the payment of an annual tribute, on the neglect or refusal of which the Syrians returned the following year, and with a mere handful of men inflicted a total and humiliating defeat on the collected force of the Hebrews.

**25.** *they left him in great diseases* — The close of his life was embittered by a painful malady, which long confined him to bed.

his own servants conspired against him — These two conspirators (whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens) were probably courtiers, who, having constant access to the bedchamber, could the more easily execute their design.

for the blood of the sons — read "the son" of Jehoiada. Public opinion seems to have ascribed the disasters of his life and reign to that foul crime. And as the king had long lost the esteem and respect of his subjects, neither horror nor sorrow was expressed for his miserable end!

### **4201**2 CHRONICLES 25:1-4.

#### AMAZIAH BEGINS TO REIGN WELL.

1. Amaziah was twenty and five years old, etc. — (See 22 Kings 14:1-6).

**4215**2 CHRONICLES 25:5-10.

# HAVING HIRED AN ARMY OF ISRAELITES AGAINST THE EDOMITES, AT THE WORD OF A PROPHET HE LOSES A HUNDRED TALENTS AND DISMISSES THEM.

**5.** Amaziah ... made captains, etc. — As all who were capable of bearing arms were liable to serve, it was quite natural in making up the muster-roll to class them according to their respective families and to appoint the officers of each corps from the same quarter; so that all the soldiers who formed a regiment were brothers, relatives, friends. Thus the Hebrew troops were closely linked together, and had strong inducements to keep steady in their ranks.

found them three hundred thousand choice men — This was only a fourth part of Jehoshaphat's army (44742 Chronicles 17:14-19), showing how sadly the kingdom of Judah had, in the space of eighty-two years, been reduced in population by foreign wars, no less than by internal corruptions. But the full amount of Amaziah's troops may not be here stated.

**6.** He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valor ... for an hundred talents of silver — This sum was paid into the treasury of Jehoahaz — not given as bounty to the mercenaries who were obliged to serve at the sovereign's call; their remuneration consisting only in the booty they might obtain. It was about \$170,000 in our currency, or \$17

per man, including officers — a very paltry pay, compared with the bounty given for a soldier in this country. But it must be remembered that in ancient times campaigns were short and the hazards of the service comparatively small.

- 7, 8. there came a man of God sent to dissuade Amaziah from the course he was following, on the ground that "the Lord is not with Israel." This statement was perfectly intelligible to the king. But the historian, writing long after, thought it might require explanation, and therefore added the comment, "with all the children of Ephraim." Idolatry had long been the prevailing religion in that kingdom, and Ephraim its headquarters. As to the other part of the prophet's advice (\*\* 2 Chronicles 25:8), considerable obscurity hangs over it, as the text stands; and hence some able critics have suggested the insertion of "not" in the middle clause, so that the verse will be thus: "But if thou wilt go [alone], do, be strong for the battle; God shall *not* make thee fall before the enemy."
- **10.** separated them ... the army ... out of Ephraim ... their anger was greatly kindled against Judah Amaziah, who knew his position as the Lord's viceroy, complied with the prophet's counsel, and, consenting to forfeit the purchase money of the Israelitish soldiers, discharged them. Exasperated at this treatment, they resolved to indemnify themselves for the loss of their expected booty, and so on their return home they plundered all the towns in their way, committing great havoc both of life and property without any stoppage, as the king of Judah and his army had set out on their expedition ( Kings 14:7).
- 11. valley of salt This ravine lies to the south of the Dead Sea. The arms of Amaziah, in reward for his obedience to the divine will, were crowned with victory ten thousand of the Edomites were slain on the field, and as many taken prisoners, who were put to death by precipitation "from the top of the rock" [400 2 Chronicles 25:12]. This rock might be situated in the neighborhood of the battlefield, but more probably it formed one of the high craggy cliffs of Selah (Petra), the capital of the Edomites, whither Amaziah marched directly from the Valley of Salt, and which he captured (400 2 Kings 14:7). The savage cruelty dealt out to them was either in retaliation for similar barbarities inflicted on the Hebrews, or to strike terror into so rebellious a people for the future. The mode of

execution, by dashing against stones (\*\*\*Psalm 137:9), was common among many ancient nations.

14-16. Amaziah ... brought the gods of the children of Seir — The Edomites worshipped the sun under different forms and with various rites. But burning incense upon altars was a principal act of worship, and this was the very thing Amaziah is described as having with strange infatuation performed. Whether he had been captivated with the beauty of the images, or hoped by honoring the gods to disarm their spite at him for his conquest and harsh treatment of their votaries, his conduct in establishing these objects of religious homage in Jerusalem was foolish, ignorant, and highly offensive to God, who commissioned a prophet to rebuke him for his apostasy, and threaten him with the calamity that soon after befell him.

**16.** as he talked with him, etc. — Those who were invested with the prophetic character were entitled to counsel kings. Amaziah, had he not been offended by unwelcome truths, would have admitted the claim of this prophet, who was probably the same that had given him counsel previous to the war with Edom. But victory had elated and blinded him.

### 445T2 CHRONICLES 25:17.

#### HE PROVOKES JOASH TO HIS OVERTHROW.

17. Then Amaziah ... sent to Joash ... Come, let us see one another in the face — (See on TREE X Kings 14:8-20).

### **4400**2 CHRONICLES 26:1-8.

# UZZIAH SUCCEEDS AMAZIAH AND REIGNS WELL IN THE DAYS OF ZECHARIAH.

- **1.** Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah (See on All Kings 14:21; All Kings 15:1).
- **2.** *He built Eloth* or, "He it was who built Eloth." The account of the fortifications of this port on the Red Sea, which Uzziah restored to the kingdom of Judah (46622 Chronicles 33:13), is placed before the chronological notices (44002 Chronicles 26:3), either on account of the importance attached to the conquest of Eloth, or from the desire of the historian to introduce Uzziah as the king, who was known as the conqueror of Eloth. Besides, it indicates that the conquest occurred in the early part of his reign, that it was important as a port, and that Hebrew merchants maintained the old trade between it and the countries of the East [Bertheau].
- **5.** he sought God in the days of Zechariah a wise and pious counsellor, who was skilled in understanding the meaning and lessons of the ancient prophecies, and who wielded a salutary influence over Uzziah.
- **6, 7.** *he went forth and warred against the Philistines* He overcame them in many engagements dismantled their towns, and erected fortified cities in various parts of the country, to keep them in subjection.
- **Jabneh** the same as Jabneel ( Joshua 15:11).
- 7. *Gur-baal* thought by some to be Gerar, and by others Gebal.
- **8.** *the Ammonites gave gifts* The countries east of the Jordan became tributary to him, and by the rapid succession and extent of his victories, his kingdom was extended to the Egyptian frontier.

### <sup>4009</sup>2 CHRONICLES 26:9,10.

#### HIS BUILDINGS.

- 9. *Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem*, etc. whence resistance could be made, or missiles discharged against assailants. The sites of the principal of these towers were: at the corner gate ( Chronicles 25:23), the northwest corner of the city; at the valley gate on the west, where the Joppa gate now is; at the "turning" a curve in the city wall on the eastern side of Zion. The town, at this point, commanded the horse gate which defended Zion and the temple hill on the southeast [Bertheau].
- **10.** Also he built towers in the desert for the threefold purpose of defense, of observation, and of shelter to his cattle. He dug also a great many wells, for he loved and encouraged all branches of agriculture. Some of these "were in the desert," that is, in the district to the southeast of Jerusalem, on the west of the Dead Sea, an extensive grazing district "in the low country" lying between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean; "and in the plains," east of the Jordan, within the territory of Reuben ("Deuteronomy 4:43" Joshua 20:8).

*in Carmel* — This mountain, being within the boundary of Israel, did not belong to Uzziah; and as it is here placed in opposition to the vine-bearing mountains, it is probably used, not as a proper name, but to signify, as the word denotes, "fruitful fields" (*Margin*).

### 44012 CHRONICLES 26:11-15.

### HIS HOST, AND ENGINES OF WAR.

11-15. an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands — He raised a strong body of militia, divided into companies or regiments of uniform size, which served in rotation. The enumeration was performed by two functionaries expert in the drawing up of military muster-rolls, under the superintendence of Hananiah, one of the high officers of the crown. The army consisted of 307,500 picked men, under the command of two thousand gallant officers, chiefs or heads of fathers' houses, so that

each fathers house formed a distinct band. They were fully equipped with every kind of military accoutrements, from brazen helmets, a habergeon or coat of mail, to a sling for stones.

**15.** he made ... engines, invented by cunning men ... to shoot arrows and great stones — This is the first notice that occurs in history of the use of machines for throwing projectiles. The invention is apparently ascribed to the reign of Uzziah, and PLINY expressly says they originated in Syria.

*he was marvellously helped till he was strong* — He conducted himself as became the viceroy of the Divine King, and prospered.

### 40062 CHRONICLES 26:16-21.

### HE INVADES THE PRIEST'S OFFICE, AND IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY.

- **16-21.** *he transgressed against the Lord*, etc. (See on CEE) Kings 15:5). This daring and wicked act is in both records traced to the intoxicating influence of overweening pride and vanity. But here the additional circumstances are stated, that his entrance was opposed, and strong remonstrances made (CEE) Chronicles 6:10) by the high priest, who was accompanied by eighty inferior priests. Rage and threats were the only answers he deigned to return, but God took care to vindicate the sacredness of the priestly office. At the moment the king lifted the censer, He struck him with leprosy. The earthquake mentioned (CEE) Amos 1:1) is said to have been felt at the moment [JOSEPHUS].
- **21.** *dwelt in a several house* in an infirmary [Bertheau].
- 23. they buried him ... in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings He was interred not in, but near, the sepulcher of the kings, as the corpse of a leper would have polluted it.

### PATTE 2 CHRONICLES 27:1-4.

#### JOTHAM, REIGNING WELL, PROSPERS.

**1.** Jotham was twenty and five years old — (See on See Section 15:32-35).

His mother's name ... Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok — or descendant of the famous priest of that name [41872] Samuel 8:17].

**2.** *he did that which was right* — The general rectitude of his government is described by representing it as conducted on the excellent principles which had guided the early part of his father's reign.

3. He built the high gate of the house of the Lord — situated on the north — that portion of the temple hill which was high compared with the southern part — hence "the higher," or upper gate (see on 15:35).

and on the wall of Ophel — Hebrew, "the Ophel," that is, the mound, or eminence on the southeastern slope of the temple mount, a ridge lying between the valleys Kedron and Tyropoeon, called "the lower city" [JOSEPHUS]. He

**built much** — having the same desire as his father to secure the defense of Jerusalem in every direction.

**4.** in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers — that is, in the elevated and wooded spots where fortified cities could not be placed, he erected castles and towers.

### PARTICIPATION CHRONICLES 27:5.

#### HE SUBDUES THE AMMONITES.

**5.** He fought also with the king of the Ammonites — This invasion he not only repelled, but, pursuing the Ammonites into their own territory, he imposed on them a yearly tribute, which, for two years, they paid. But when Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, combined to attack the kingdom of Judah, they took the opportunity of revolting, and Jotham was too distracted by other matters to attempt the reconquest (see on Kings 15:37).

### **480**2 CHRONICLES 28:1-21.

# AHAZ, REIGNING WICKEDLY, IS AFFLICTED BY THE SYRIANS.

- **1-4.** Ahaz was twenty years old (See on <sup>200</sup>2 Kings 16:1-4). This prince, discarding the principles and example of his excellent father, early betrayed a strong bias to idolatry. He ruled with an arbitrary and absolute authority, and not as a theocratic sovereign: he not only forsook the temple of God, but embraced first the symbolic worship established in the sister kingdom, and afterwards the gross idolatry practiced by the Canaanites.
- 5-7. the Lord ... delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria ... he was also delivered into the hand of the King of Israel These verses, without alluding to the formation of a confederacy between the Syrian and Israelitish kings to invade the kingdom of Judah, or relating the commencement of the war in the close of Jotham's reign (\*\* Kings\*\* 15:37), give the issue only of some battles that were fought in the early part of the campaign.

delivered him ... smote him ... he was also delivered — that is, his army, for Ahaz was not personally included in the number either of the slain or the captives. The slaughter of one hundred twenty thousand in one day was a terrible calamity, which, it is expressly said, was inflicted as a judgment on Judah, "because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers." Among the slain were some persons of distinction:

**7.** *Maaseiah the king's son* — the sons of Ahaz being too young to take part in a battle, this individual must have been a younger son of the late King Jotham;

Azrikam the governor of the house — that is, "the palace"; and

Elkanah that was next to the king — that is, the vizier or prime minister (\*\*Genesis 41:40 \*\*Time\*Esther 10:3). These were all cut down on the field by Zichri, an Israelitish warrior, or as some think, ordered to be put to death after the battle. A vast number of captives also fell into the power of the conquerors; and an equal division of war prisoners being made between the allies, they were sent off under a military escort to the respective capitals of Syria and Israel (\*\*4008)2 Chronicles 28:8).

8-14. the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two **hundred thousand** — These captives included a great number of women, boys, and girls, a circumstance which creates a presumption that the Hebrews, like other Orientals, were accompanied in the war by multitudes of non-combatants (see on "Judges 4:8). The report of these "brethren," being brought as captives to Samaria, excited general indignation among the better-disposed inhabitants; and Oded, a prophet, accompanied by the princes ( Chronicles 28:12, compared with Chronicles 28:14), went out, as the escort was approaching, to prevent the disgraceful outrage of introducing such prisoners into the city. The officers of the squadron were, of course, not to blame; they were simply doing their military duty in conducting those prisoners of war to their destination. But Oded clearly showed that the Israelitish army had gained the victory — not by the superiority of their arms, but in consequence of the divine judgment against Judah. He forcibly exposed the enormity of the offense of keeping "their brethren" as slaves got in war. He protested earnestly against adding this great offense of unnatural and sinful cruelty (\*\*\*Leviticus 25:43,44 Micah 2:8,9) to the already overwhelming amount of their own national sins. Such was the effect of his spirited remonstrance and the opposing tide of popular feeling, that "the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation."

15. the men which were expressed by name rose up — These were either the "heads of the children of Ephraim" (mentioned <sup>1820</sup>2 Chronicles 28:12), or some other leading individuals chosen for the benevolent office. Under their kindly superintendence, the prisoners were not only released, but out of the spoils were comfortably relieved with food and clothing, and conveyed as far as Jericho on their way back to their own homes. This is a beautiful incident, and full of interest, as showing that even at this period

of national decline, there were not a few who steadfastly adhered to the law of God.

- **16.** At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria "kings," the plural for the singular, which is found in many ancient versions. "At that time," refers to the period of Ahaz' great distress, when, after a succession of defeats, he retreated within the walls of Jerusalem. Either in the same or a subsequent campaign, the Syrian and Israelitish allies marched there to besiege him (see on <sup>2067</sup>2 Kings 16:7). Though delivered from this danger, other enemies infested his dominions both on the south and the west.
- **17.** again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah This invasion must have been after Rezin (at the beginning of the recent Syro-Israelitish war), had released that people from the yoke of Judah (\*\*\*12" Chronicles 15:11; compare \*\*266\*2 Kings 16:6).
- **18.** *Gederoth* on the Philistine frontier ( on 15:41).
- Gimzo now Jimza, a little east of Ludd (Lydda) [ROBINSON]. All these disasters, by which the "Lord brought Judah low," were because of Ahaz, king of Israel (Judah), see <sup>→∞02</sup>2 Chronicles 21:2 <sup>→∞02</sup>24:16 <sup>→∞02</sup>28:27, who made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord.
- **20.** *Tilgath-pilneser* ... *distressed him*, *but strengthened him not* that is, notwithstanding the temporary relief which Tilgath-pilneser afforded him by the conquest of Damascus and the slaughter of Rezin (\*\*269\*2 Kings 16:9), little advantage resulted from it, for Tilgath-pilneser spent the winter in voluptuous revelry at Damascus; and the connection formed with the Assyrian king was eventually a source of new and greater calamities and humiliation to the kingdom of Judah (\*\*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 28:2,3).

### **4822** CHRONICLES 28:22-27.

#### HIS IDOLATRY IN HIS DISTRESS.

**22.** in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord—
This infatuated king surrendered himself to the influence of idolatry and exerted his royal authority to extend it, with the intensity of a passion—
with the ignorance and servile fear of a heathen (4000) Chronicles 28:23) and a ruthless defiance of God (see on 4000) Kings 16:10-20).

### 40012 CHRONICLES 29:1,2.

#### HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

**1.** *Hezekiah began to reign*, etc. — (see on See on Strings 18:1). His mother's name, which, in Strings 18:2, appears in an abridged form, is here given in full.

### <sup>4005</sup>2 CHRONICLES 29:3-11.

#### HE RESTORES RELIGION.

**3.** in the first year of his reign, in the first month — not the first month after his accession to the throne, but in Nisan, the first month of the sacred year, the season appointed for the celebration of the passover.

he opened the doors of the house of the Lord — which had been closed up by his father (4984)2 Chronicles 28:24).

and repaired them — or embellished them (compare \*\*2 Kings 18:16).

- **4, 5.** *the east street* the court of the priests, which fronted the eastern gate of the temple. Assembling the priests and Levites there, he enjoined them to set about the immediate purification of the temple. It does not appear that the order referred to the removal of idols, for objects of idolatrous homage could scarcely have been put there, seeing the doors had been shut up (400)2 Chronicles 29:3); but in its forsaken and desolate state the temple and its courts had been polluted by every kind of impurity.
- **6, 7.** *our fathers have trespassed* Ahaz and the generation contemporary with him were specially meant, for they "turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord," and whether or not they turned east to the rising

sun, they abandoned the worship of God. They "shut up the doors of the porch," so that the sacred ritual was entirely discontinued.

- 8, 9. Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem This pious king had the discernment to ascribe all the national calamities that had befallen the kingdom to the true cause, namely, apostasy from God. The country had been laid waste by successive wars of invasion, and its resources drained. Many families mourned members of their household still suffering the miseries of foreign captivity; all their former prosperity and glory had fled; and to what was this painful and humiliating state of affairs to be traced, but to the manifest judgment of God upon the kingdom for its sins?
- 10, 11. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God Convinced of the sin and bitter fruits of idolatry, Hezekiah intended to reverse the policy of his father, and to restore, in all its ancient purity and glory, the worship of the true God. His commencement of this resolution at the beginning of his reign attests his sincere piety. It also proves the strength of his conviction that righteousness exalteth a nation; for, instead of waiting till his throne was consolidated, he devised measures of national reformation at the beginning of his reign and vigorously faced all the difficulties which, in such a course, he had to encounter, after the people's habits had so long been moulded to idolatry. His intentions were first disclosed to this meeting of the priests and Levites for the agency of these officials was to be employed in carrying them into effect.

4902 CHRONICLES 29:12-36.

#### THE HOUSE OF GOD CLEANSED.

**12-19.** Then the Levites arose — Fourteen chiefs undertook the duty of collecting and preparing their brethren for the important work of cleansing the Lord's house. Beginning with the outer courts — that of the priests and that of the people — the cleansing of these occupied eight days, after which they set themselves to purify the interior; but as the Levites were not allowed to enter within the walls of the temple, the priest brought all the sweepings out to the porch, where they were received by the Levites

and thrown into the brook Kedron. This took eight days more. At the end of this period they repaired to the palace and announced that not only had the whole of the sacred edifice, within and without, undergone a thorough purification, but all the vessels which the late king had taken away and applied to a common use in his palace, had been restored, "and sanctified."

20-30. Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city — His anxiety to enter upon the expiatory service with all possible despatch, now that the temple had been properly prepared for it, prevented his summoning all the representatives of Israel. The requisite number of victims having been provided, and the officers of the temple having sanctified themselves according to the directions of the law, the priests were appointed to offer sacrifices of atonement successively, for "the kingdom," that is, for the sins of the king and his predecessors; for "the sanctuary," that is, for the sins of the priests themselves and for the desecration of the temple; "and for Judah," that is, for the people who, by their voluntary consent, were involved in the guilt of the national apostasy. Animals of the kinds used in sacrifice were offered by sevens, that number indicating completeness. The Levites were ordered to praise God with musical instruments, which, although not originally used in the tabernacle, had been enlisted in the service of divine worship by David on the advice of the prophets Gad and Nathan, as well calculated to animate the devotions of the people. At the close of the special services of the occasion, namely, the offering of atonement sacrifices, the king and all civic rulers who were present joined in the worship. A grand anthem was sung Chronicles 29:30) by the choir, consisting of some of the psalms of David and Asaph, and a great number of thank offerings, praise offerings, and freewill burnt offerings were presented at the invitation of the king.

**31.** Hezekiah ... said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near — This address was made to the priests as being now, by the sacrifice of the expiation offerings, anew consecrated to the service of God and qualified to resume the functions of their sacred office (\*Exodus 28:41\*\*29:32).

the congregation brought in — that is, the body of civic rulers present.

34-36. the priests were too few, ... wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them — The skins of beasts intended as peace offerings might be

taken off by the officers, because, in such cases, the carcass was not wholly laid upon the altar; but animals meant for burnt offerings which were wholly consumed by fire could be flayed by the priests alone, not even the Levites being allowed to touch them, except in cases of unavoidable necessity (\*\*\* Chronicles 35:11). The duty being assigned by the law to the priests (\*\*\* Leviticus 1:6), was construed by consuetudinary practice as an exclusion of all others not connected with the Aaronic family.

for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests — that is, displayed greater alacrity than the priests. This service was hastened by the irrepressible solicitude of the king. Whether it was that many of the priests, being absent in the country, had not arrived in time — whether from the long interruption of the public duties, some of them had relaxed in their wonted attentions to personal cleanliness, and had many preparations to make — or whether from some having participated in the idolatrous services introduced by Ahaz, they were backward in repairing to the temple — a reflection does seem to be cast upon their order as dilatory and not universally ready for duty (compare difference of the priority of the pious king and all the people.

#### **480**€2 CHRONICLES 30:1-12.

#### HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER.

1-5. Hezekiah sent to all ... Judah ... to come to ... Jerusalem, to keep the passover — This great religious festival had not been regularly observed by the Hebrews in their national capacity for a long time because of the division of the kingdom and the many disorders that had followed that unhappy event. Hezekiah longed extremely to see its observance revived; and the expression of his wishes having received a hearty response from the princes and chief men of his own kingdom, the preparatory steps were taken for a renewed celebration of the national solemnity.

letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh — The names of these leading tribes are used for the whole kingdom of Israel. It was judged impossible, however, that the temple, the priests, and people could be all duly sanctified at the usual time appointed for the anniversary, namely, the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan). Therefore it was resolved, instead of postponing the feast till another year, to observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month; a liberty which, being in certain circumstances (\*\*Numbers 9:6-13) granted to individuals, might, it was believed, be allowed to all the people. Hezekiah's proclamation was, of course, authoritative in his own kingdom, but it could not have been made and circulated in all the towns and villages of the neighboring kingdom without the concurrence, or at least the permission, of the Israelitish sovereign. Hoshea, the reigning king, is described as, though evil in some respects, yet more favorably disposed to religious liberty than any of his predecessors since the separation of the kingdom. This is thought to be the meaning of the mitigating clause in his character ( Kings 17:2).

**6.** *the posts* — that is, runners, or royal messengers, who were taken from the king's bodyguard (\*\*2 Chronicles 23:1,2). Each, well mounted, had a certain number of miles to traverse. Having performed his course, he was

relieved by another, who had to scour an equal extent of ground; so that, as the government messengers were despatched in all directions, public edicts were speedily diffused throughout the country. The proclamation of Hezekiah was followed by a verbal address from himself, piously urging the duty, and setting forth the advantages, of a return to the pure faith and institutions which God had delivered to their ancestors through Moses.

10-12. the posts passed from city to city — It is not surprising that after so long a discontinuance of the sacred festival, this attempt to revive it should, in some quarters, have excited ridicule and opposition.

Accordingly, among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, Hezekiah's messengers met with open insults and ill usage. Many, however, in these very districts, as well as throughout the kingdom of the ten tribes, generally complied with the invitation; while, in the kingdom of Judah, there was one unanimous feeling of high expectation and pious delight. The concourse that repaired to Jerusalem on the occasion was very great, and the occasion was ever after regarded as one of the greatest passovers that had ever been celebrated.

48152 CHRONICLES 30:13-27.

#### THE ASSEMBLY DESTROYS THE ALTARS OF IDOLATRY.

**14.** they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem — As a necessary preparation for the right observance of the approaching solemnity, the removal of the altars, which Ahaz had erected in the city, was resolved upon ( Chronicles 28:24); for, as the people of God, the

Hebrews were bound to extirpate all traces of idolatry; and it was a happy sign and pledge of the influence of the Spirit pervading the minds of the people when they voluntarily undertook this important preliminary work.

- **15.** *the priests and the Levites were ashamed* Though the Levites are associated in this statement, the priests were principally referred to; those of them who had been dilatory or negligent in sanctifying themselves (Chronicles 29:34) were put to the blush and stimulated to their duty by the greater alacrity and zeal of the people.
- **16-18.** the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites This was a deviation from the established rules and practices in presenting the offerings of the temple. The reason was, that many present on the occasion having not sanctified themselves, the Levites slaughtered the paschal victims (see on Chronicles 35:5) for everyone that was unclean. At other times the heads of families killed the lambs themselves, the priests receiving the blood from their hands and presenting it on the altar. Multitudes of the Israelites, especially from certain tribes (Chronicles 30:18), were in this unsanctified state, and yet they ate the passover an exceptional feature and one opposed to the law (Chronicles 9:6); but this exception was allowed in answer to Hezekiah's prayer (Chronicles 30:18-20).
- **20.** *the Lord* ... *healed the people* We imagine the whole affair to have been the following: In consequence of their transgressions they had cause to fear disease and even death (\*\*\*Leviticus 15:31). Hezekiah prayed for the nation, which was on the point of being diseased, and might therefore be regarded as sick already [Bertheau].
- 21-24. the children of Israel ... kept the feast The time appointed by the law for the continuance of the feast was seven days [\*\*Exodus 12:15 13:6 \*\*Exodus 12:15 1
- **24.** *and a great number of priests sanctified themselves* so that there would be a sufficient number of hands for the additional services.

#### 4802 CHRONICLES 31:1-10.

#### THE PEOPLE FORWARD IN DESTROYING IDOLATRY.

**1.** all Israel ... present went out to the cities of Judah — The solemnities of this paschal season left a deep and salutary impression on the minds of the assembled worshippers; attachment to the ancient institutions of their country was extensively revived; ardor in the service of God animated every bosom; and under the impulse of the devout feelings inspired by the occasion, they took measures at the close of the passover for extirpating idolatrous statues and altars out of every city, as at the beginning of the festival they had done in Jerusalem.

**Judah and Benjamin** — denote the southern kingdom.

**Ephraim also and Manasseh** — refer to the northern kingdom. This unsparing demolition of the monuments of idolatry would receive all encouragement from the king and public authorities of the former; and the force of the popular movement was sufficient to effect the same results among the tribes of Israel, whatever opposition the power of Hoshea or the invectives of some profane brethren might have made. Thus the reign of idolatry being completely overthrown and the pure worship of God reestablished throughout the land, the people returned every one to his own home, in the confident expectation that, through the divine blessing, they would enjoy a happy future of national peace and prosperity.

**2-5.** Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests, etc. — The king now turned his attention to provide for the orderly performance of the templeworship — arranging the priests and Levites in their courses, assigning to every one his proper place and functions — and issuing edicts for the regular payment of those dues from which the revenues of the sanctuary were derived. To set a proper example to his subjects, his own proportion was announced in the first instance, for to the king it belonged, out of his privy purse, to defray the expenses of the altar, both stated and occasional

- Numbers 28:3,4,9,11,19); and in making this contribution from his own means, Hezekiah followed the course which David and Solomon had taken before him (see Chronicles 8:14 Kings 9:25). Afterwards he reappointed the people's dues to the temple; and from its being necessary to issue a royal mandate in reference to this matter, it appears that the sacred tribute had been either totally neglected, or (as the idolatrous princes were known to appropriate it to their own purposes) the people had in many cases refused or evaded the duty. But with the improved state of public feeling, Hezekiah's commandment was readily obeyed, and contributions of first-fruits and tithes were poured in with great liberality from all parts of Judah, as well as from Israel. The first-fruits, even of some articles of produce that were unfit for sacrifice (\*\*Eviticus 2:11), such as honey (Margin, "dates"), were appropriated to the priests (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 18:4). The tithes (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 27:31) were intended for the support of the whole Levitical tribe Numbers 18:8,20,24).
- **6, 7.** and laid them by heaps The contributions began to be sent in shortly after the celebration of the passover, which had taken place in the middle of the second month. Some time would elapse before the king's order reached all parts of the kingdom. The wheat harvest occurred in the third month, so that the sheaves of that grain, being presented before any other, formed "the foundation," an under-layer in the corn stores of the temple. The first-fruits of their land produce which were successively sent in all the summer till the close of the fruit and vintage season, that is, the seventh month, continued to raise heap upon heap.
- **9.** Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps The object of his enquiries was to ascertain whether the supplies afforded the prospect of a sufficient maintenance for the members of the sacred order.
- **10.** Azariah ... answered ... we have had enough This is probably the person mentioned (\*\*2 Chronicles 26:17), and his reply was to the following purport: There has been an abundant harvest, and a corresponding plenty in the incoming of first-fruits and tithes; the people have testified their gratitude to Him who has crowned the year with His goodness by their liberality towards His servants.

#### 48112 CHRONICLES 31:11-19.

#### HEZEKIAH APPOINTS OFFICERS TO DISPOSE OF THE TITHES.

11-18. Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord — storehouses, granaries, or cellars; either the old ones, which had been allowed through neglect to fall into decay, were to be repaired, or additional ones built. Private individuals brought their own first-fruits to the temple; but the tithes were levied by the Levites, who kept a faithful account of them in their several places of abode and transmitted the allotted proportion to the priests. Officers were appointed to distribute equal rations to all in the cities of the priests who, from age or other reasons, could not repair to the temple. With the exception of children under three years of age — an exception made probably from their being considered too young to receive solid food — lists were kept of the number and age of every male; of priests according to their fathers' house, and Levites from twenty years (see Numbers 4:3 28:24 123:1 Chronicles 23:24). But, besides, provision was also made for their wives, daughters, and servants.

**18.** for in their set office they sanctified themselves — This is the reason assigned for providing for the wives and children out of the revenues of the sanctuary, that priests, withdrawing from those secular pursuits by which they might have maintained their households, devoted themselves entirely to the functions of the ministry.

48002 CHRONICLES 31:20,21.

#### HIS SINCERITY OF HEART.

**20.** Hezekiah ... wrought that which was good and right — He displayed the qualities of a constitutional king, in restoring and upholding the ancient institutions of the kingdom; while his zealous and persevering efforts to promote the cause of true religion and the best interests of his subjects

entitled him to be ranked with the most illustrious of his predecessors (  $^{2085}2$  Kings 18:15).

#### 480)2 CHRONICLES 32:1-20.

#### SENNACHERIB INVADES JUDAH.

**1.** After these things, and the establishment thereof — that is, the restoration of the temple-worship. The precise date is given, <sup>1382</sup>2 Kings 18:13. Determined to recover the independence of his country, Hezekiah had decided to refuse to pay the tribute which his father had bound himself to pay to Assyria.

Sennacherib ... entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities — The whole land was ravaged; the strong fortresses of Ashdod (\*\*Isaiah 20:1) and Lachish had fallen; the siege of Libnah had commenced, when the king of Judah, doubting his ability to resist, sent to acknowledge his fault, and offer terms of submission by paying the tribute. The commencement of this Assyrian war was disastrous to Hezekiah (\*\*\*2\*\*2\*\* Kings 18:13). But the misfortunes of the early period of the war are here passed over, as the historian hastens to relate the remarkable deliverance which God wrought for His kingdom of Judah.

- **2-8.** when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib ... was purposed to fight against Jerusalem An account of the means taken to fortify Jerusalem against the threatened siege is given only in this passage. The polluting or filling up of wells, and the altering of the course of rivers, is an old practice that still obtains in the wars of the East. Hezekiah's plan was to cover the fountain heads, so that they might not be discovered by the enemy, and to carry the water by subterranean channels or pipes into the city a plan which, while it would secure a constant supply to the inhabitants, would distress the besiegers, as the country all around Jerusalem was very destitute of water.
- **4.** So there was gathered much people ... who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land "Where these various fountains were, we have now no positive means of ascertaining;

though En-rogel, and the spring now called the Virgin's Fount, may well be numbered among them. Josephus mentions the existence of various fountains without the city, but does not mention any of them in this connection but Siloam. 'The brook,' however, is located with sufficient precision to enable us to trace it very definitely. We are told that it 'ran through the midst of the land.' Now a stream running through either the Kedron or Hinnom Valley, could, in no proper sense, be said to run through the midst of the land, but one flowing through the true Gihon valley, and separating Akra and Zion from Bezetha, Moriah, and Ophel, as a stream once, doubtless, did, could, with peculiar propriety, be said to run through the midst of the land on which the [Holy] City was built. And that this is the correct meaning of the phrase is not only apparent from the force of circumstances, but is positively so declared in the Septuagint, where, moreover, it is called a 'river,' which, at least, implies a much larger stream than the Kedron, and comports well with the marginal reading, where it is said to overflow through the midst of the land. Previous to the interference of man, there was, no doubt, a very copious stream that gushed forth in the upper portion of that shallow, basin-like concavity north of Damascus Gate, which is unquestionably the upper extremity of the Gihon valley, and pursuing its meandering course through this valley, entered the Tyropoeon at its great southern curve, down which it flowed into the valley of the Kedron" [BARCLAY, City of the Great King].

- **5, 6.** *he strengthened himself* He made a careful inspection of the city defenses for the purpose of repairing breaches in the wall here, renewing the masonry there, raising projecting machines to the towers, and especially fortifying the lower portion of Zion, that is, Millo, "(in) the original city of David." "In" is a supplement of our translators, and the text reads better without it, for it was not the whole city that was repaired, but only the lower portion of Zion, or the original "city of David."
- **6.** he ... gathered them together ... in the street that is, the large open space at the gate of Eastern cities. Having equipped his soldiers with a full suit of military accourrements, he addressed them in an animated strain, dwelling on the motives they had to inspire courage and confidence of success, especially on their consciousness of the favor and helping power of God.

**9-20.** (See on Kings 18:17-35; also Kings 19:8-34).

**18.** they cried with a loud voice ... unto the people of Jerusalem ... on the wall — It appears that the wall on the west side of the city reached as far to the side of the uppermost pool of Gihon at that time as it does now, if not farther; and the wall was so close to that pool that those sent to negotiate with the Assyrian general answered him in their own tongue (see on TKINGS 18:27).

#### 48222 CHRONICLES 32:21-33.

#### AN ANGEL DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS.

**21.** an angel ... cut off all the mighty men — (See on ESS 2 Kings 19:35-37).

#### 4922 CHRONICLES 32:24-26.

#### HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.

**24.** *In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death* — (See on <sup>4200</sup>2 Kings 20:1-11).

#### <sup>4022</sup>2 CHRONICLES 32:27-33.

#### HIS RICHES AND WORKS.

27-29. he had exceeding much riches and honor — (compare 22 Kings 20:13 23 Isaiah 39:2). A great portion of his personal wealth, like that of David and Uzziah, consisted in immense possessions of agricultural and pastoral produce. Besides, he had accumulated large treasures in gold, silver, and precious things, which he had taken as spoils from the Philistines, and which he had received as presents from neighboring states, among which he was held in great honor as a king under the special protection of Heaven. Much of his great wealth he expended in improving

his capital, erecting forts, and promoting the internal benefit of his kingdom.

30. stopped the ... watercourse of Gihon, and brought it ... to the west side of the city — (Compare Time 20:20). Particular notice is here taken of the aqueduct, as among the greatest of Hezekiah's works. "In exploring the subterranean channel conveying the water from Virgin's Fount to Siloam, I discovered a similar channel entering from the north, a few yards from its commencement; and on tracing it up near the Mugrabin gate, where it became so choked with rubbish that it could be traversed no farther, I there found it turn to the west in the direction of the south end of the cleft, or saddle, of Zion, and if this channel was not constructed for the purpose of conveying the waters of Hezekiah's aqueduct, I am unable to suggest any purpose to which it could have been applied. Perhaps the reason why it was not brought down on the Zion side, was that Zion was already well-watered in its lower portion by the Great Pool, 'the lower pool of Gihon.' And accordingly WILLIAMS [Holy City] renders this passage, 'He stopped the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon, and led them down westward to the city" [BARCLAY, City of the Great King]. The construction of this aqueduct required not only masonic but engineering skill; for the passage was bored through a continuous mass of rock. Hezekiah's pool or reservoir made to receive the water within the northwest part of the city still remains. It is an oblong quadrangular tank, two hundred forty feet in length, from one hundred forty-four to one hundred fifty in breadth, but, from recent excavations, appears to have extended somewhat farther towards the north.

**31.** in the business of the ambassadors who sent ... to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, etc. — They brought a present (\*\*\*22 Chronicles 32:23; see on \*\*\*22 Kings 20:12,13), and a letter of congratulation on his recovery, in which particular enquiries were made about the miracle of the sun's retrocession — a natural phenomenon that could not fail to excite great interest and curiosity at Babylon, where astronomy was so much studied. At the same time, there is reason to believe that they proposed a defensive league against the Assyrians.

*God left him*, to try him, etc. — Hezekiah's offense was not so much in the display of his military stores and treasures, as in not giving to God the

glory both of the miracle and of his recovery, and thus leading those heathen ambassadors to know Him.

#### **480**2 CHRONICLES 33:1-10.

#### MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN.

**1, 2.** Manasseh ... did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord — (See on <sup>42211</sup>2 Kings 21:1-16).

<sup>4811</sup>2 CHRONICLES 33:11-19.

# HE IS CARRIED UNTO BABYLON, WHERE HE HUMBLES HIMSELF BEFORE GOD, AND IS RESTORED TO HIS KINGDOM.

11. the captains of the host of the king of Assyria — This king was Esarhaddon. After having devoted the first years of his reign to the consolidation of his government at home, he turned his attention to repair the loss of the tributary provinces west of the Euphrates, which, on the disaster and death of Sennacherib, had taken the opportunity of shaking off the Assyrian yoke. Having overrun Palestine and removed the remnant that were left in the kingdom of Israel, he despatched his generals, the chief of whom was Tartan (2011), with a portion of his army for the reduction of Judah also. In a successful attack upon Jerusalem, they took multitudes of captives, and got a great prize, including the king himself, among the prisoners.

took Manasseh among the thorns — This may mean, as is commonly supposed, that he had hid himself among a thicket of briers and brambles. We know that the Hebrews sometimes took refuge from their enemies in thickets (\*\*\* 1 Samuel 13:6). But, instead of the Hebrew, Bacochim, "among the thorns", some versions read Bechayim, "among the living", and so the passage would be "took him alive."

bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon — The Hebrew word rendered "fetters" denotes properly two chains of brass. The humiliating state in which Manasseh appeared before the Assyrian monarch may be judged of by a picture on a tablet in the Khorsabad palace, representing prisoners led bound into the king's presence. "The captives represented appear to be inhabitants of Palestine. Behind the prisoners stand four persons with inscriptions on the lower part of their tunics; the first two are bearded, and seem to be accusers; the remaining two are nearly defaced; but behind the last appears the eunuch, whose office it seems to be to usher into the presence of the king those who are permitted to appear before him. He is followed by another person of the same race as those under punishment; his hands are manacled, and on his ankles are strong rings fastened together by a heavy bar" [Nineveh and Its Palaces]. No name is given, and, therefore, no conclusion can be drawn that the figure represents Manasseh. But the people appear to be Hebrews, and this pictorial scene will enable us to imagine the manner in which the royal captive from Judah was received in the court of Babylon. Esar-haddon had established his residence there; for though from the many revolts that followed the death of his father, he succeeded at first only to the throne of Assyria, yet having some time previous to his conquest of Judah, recovered possession of Babylon, this enterprising king had united under his sway the two empires of Babylon and Chaldea and transferred the seat of his government to Babylon.

12, 13. when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God — In the solitude of exile or imprisonment, Manasseh had leisure for reflection. The calamities forced upon him a review of his past life, under a conviction that the miseries of his dethronement and captive condition were owing to his awful and unprecedented apostasy (4872 Chronicles 33:7) from the God of his fathers. He humbled himself, repented, and prayed for an opportunity of bringing forth the fruits of repentance. His prayer was heard; for his conqueror not only released him, but, after two years' exile, restored him, with honor and the full exercise of royal power, to a tributary and dependent kingdom. Some political motive, doubtless, prompted the Assyrian king to restore Manasseh, and that was most probably to have the kingdom of Judah as a barrier between Egypt and his Assyrian dominions. But God overruled this measure for higher purposes.

Manasseh now showed himself, by the influence of sanctified affliction, a new and better man. He made a complete reversal of his former policy, by not only destroying all the idolatrous statues and altars he had formerly erected in Jerusalem, but displaying the most ardent zeal in restoring and encouraging the worship of God.

14. he built a wall without the city ... on the west side of Gihon ... even to the entering in at the fish gate — "The well-ascertained position of the fish gate, shows that the valley of Gihon could be no other than that leading northwest of Damascus gate, and gently descending southward, uniting with the Tyropoeon at the northeast corner of Mount Zion, where the latter turns at right angles and runs towards Siloam. The wall thus built by Manasseh on the west side of the valley of Gihon, would extend from the vicinity of the northeast corner of the wall of Zion in a northerly direction, until it crossed over the valley to form a junction with the outer wall at the trench of Antonia, precisely in the quarter where the temple would be most easily assailed" [BARCLAY].

17. the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only — Here it appears that the worship on high places, though it originated in a great measure from the practice of heathenism, and too often led to it, did not necessarily imply idolatry.

4812 CHRONICLES 33:20-25.

#### HE DIES AND AMON SUCCEEDS HIM.

**20, 21.** Manasseh slept with his fathers ... Amon began to reign — (See on 422182 Kings 21:19).

#### **4801**2 CHRONICLES 34:1,2.

#### JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

**1.** Josiah was eight years old — (See on English 22:1). The testimony borne to the undeviating steadfastness of his adherence to the cause of true religion places his character and reign in honorable contrast with those of many of his royal predecessors.

#### **4805**2 CHRONICLES 34:3-7.

#### HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

3. in the eighth year of his reign — This was the sixteenth year of his age, and, as the kings of Judah were considered minors till they had completed their thirteenth year, it was three years after he had attained majority. He had very early manifested the piety and excellent dispositions of his character. In the twelfth year of his reign, but the twentieth of his age, he began to take a lively interest in the purgation of his kingdom from all the monuments of idolatry which, in his father's short reign, had been erected. At a later period, his increasing zeal for securing the purity of divine worship led him to superintend the work of demolition in various parts of his dominion. The course of the narrative in this passage is somewhat different from that followed in the Book of Kings. For the historian, having made allusion to the early manifestation of Josiah's zeal, goes on with a full detail of all the measures this good king adopted for the extirpation of idolatry; whereas the author of the Book of Kings sets out with the cleansing of the temple, immediately previous to the celebration of the passover, and embraces that occasion to give a general description of Josiah's policy for freeing the land from idolatrous pollution. The exact chronological order is not followed either in Kings or

Chronicles. But it is clearly recorded in both that the abolition of idolatry began in the twelfth and was completed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. Notwithstanding Josiah's undoubted sincerity and zeal and the people's apparent compliance with the king's orders, he could not extinguish a strongly rooted attachment to idolatries introduced in the early part of Manasseh's reign. This latent predilection appears unmistakably developed in the subsequent reigns, and the divine decree for the removal of Judah, as well as Israel, into captivity was irrevocably passed.

- **4.** the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them He treated the graves themselves as guilty of the crimes of those who were lying in them [Bertheau].
- **5.** he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars A greater brand of infamy could not have been put on idolatrous priests than the disinterment of their bones, and a greater defilement could not have been done to the altars of idolatry than the burning upon them the bones of those who had there officiated in their lifetime.
- **6.** with their mattocks or, "in their deserts" so that the verse will stand thus: "And so did [namely, break the altars and burn the bones of priests] he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their deserted suburbs." The reader is apt to be surprised on finding that Josiah, whose hereditary possessions were confined to the kingdom of Judah, exercised as much authority among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, and others as far as Naphtali, as he did within his own dominion. Therefore, it is necessary to observe that, after the destruction of Samaria by Shalmaneser, the remnant that continued on the mountains of Israel maintained a close intercourse with Judah, and looked to the sovereigns of that kingdom as their natural protectors. Those kings acquired great influence over them, which Josiah exercised in removing every vestige of idolatry from the land. He could not have done this without the acquiescence of the people in the propriety of this proceeding, conscious that this was conformable to their ancient laws and institutions. The Assyrian kings, who were now masters of the country, might have been displeased at the liberties Josiah took beyond his own territories. But either they were not informed of his doings, or they did not

trouble themselves about his religious proceedings, relating, as they would think, to the god of the land, especially as he did not attempt to seize upon any place or to disturb the allegiance of the people [CALMET].

#### **4808**2 CHRONICLES 34:8-18.

#### HE REPAIRS THE TEMPLE.

**8.** in the eighteenth year of his reign ... he sent Shaphan — (See on <sup>4228</sup>2 Kings 22:3-9).

**2 CHRONICLES 34:19-33.** 

# AND, CAUSING THE LAW TO BE READ, RENEWS THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE.

**19.** when the king had heard the words of the law, etc. — (See on  $^{4221}$ 2 Kings 22:11-20  $^{4221}$ 23:1-3).

#### 480/2 CHRONICLES 35:1-19.

#### JOSIAH KEEPS A SOLEMN PASSOVER.

**1-3.** Moreover Josiah kept a passover — (See on Explanation 23:21). The first nine verses give an account of the preparations made for the celebration of the solemn feast (4802 Chronicles 35:1-9). The day appointed by the law was kept on this occasion (compare 4002 Chronicles 30:2,13). The priests were ranged in their courses and exhorted to be ready for their duties in the manner that legal purity required (compare 400) Chronicles 29:5). The Levites, the ministers or instructors of the people in all matters pertaining to the divine worship, were commanded (480) Chronicles 35:3) to "put the holy ark in the house which Solomon did build." Their duty was to transport the ark from place to place according to circumstances. Some think that it had been ignominiously put away from the sanctuary by order of some idolatrous king, probably Manasseh, who set a carved image in the house of God ( Chronicles 33:7), or Amon; while others are of opinion that it had been temporarily removed by Josiah himself into some adjoining chamber, during the repairs on the temple. In replacing it, the Levites had evidently carried it upon their shoulders, deeming that still to be the duty which the law imposed on them. But Josiah reminded them of the change of circumstances. As the service of God was now performed in a fixed and permanent temple, they were not required to be bearers of the ark any longer; and, being released from the service, they should address themselves with the greater alacrity to the discharge of other functions.

**4.** prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses — Each course or division was to be composed of those who belonged to the same fathers' house.

according to the writing of David and ... Solomon — Their injunctions are recorded (\*\*\*2 Chronicles 8:14 (\*\*\*121) Chronicles 23:1-26:32).

- **5.** stand in the holy place in the court of the priests, the place where the victims were killed. The people were admitted according to their families in groups or companies of several households at a time. When the first company entered the court (which consisted commonly of as many as it could well hold), the gates were shut and the offering was made. The Levites stood in rows from the slaughtering places to the altar, and handed the blood and fat from one to another of the officiating priests (\*\*\*Chronicles 30:16-18).
- **6.** So kill the passover, etc. The design of the minute directions given here was to facilitate the distribution of the paschal lambs. These were to be eaten by the respective families according to their numbers (Exodus 12:3). But multitudes of the people, especially those from Israel, having been reduced to poverty through the Assyrian devastations, were to be provided with the means of commemorating the passover. Therefore, the king enjoined the Levites that when the paschal lambs were brought to them to be killed (Chronicles 35:7-9) they should take care to have everything put in so orderly a train, that the lambs, after due presentation, might be easily delivered to the various families to be roasted and eaten by themselves apart.
- 7. Josiah gave to the people ... lambs and kids These were in all probability destined for the poor; a lamb or a kid might be used at convenience (\*Exodus 12:5).
- *and* ... *bullocks* which were offered after the lambs on each of the successive days of the feast.
- 8, 9. his princes These gave to the priests and Levites; as those of Hezekiah's princes (480)2 Chronicles 30:24). They were ecclesiastical princes; namely, Hilkiah the high priest (480)2 Chronicles 34:9). Zechariah, probably the second priest of the Eleazar (400)2 Kings 16:18), and Jehiel, of the Ithamar line. And as the Levitical tribes were not yet sufficiently provided (460)2 Chronicles 35:9), some of their eminent brethren who had been distinguished in Hezekiah's time (460)2 Chronicles 31:12-15), gave a large additional contribution for the use of the Levites exclusively.
- **10, 11.** *So the service was prepared*, etc. All the necessary preparations having been completed, and the appointed time having arrived for the

passover, the solemnity was celebrated. One remarkable feature in the account is the prominent part that was taken by the Levites in the preparation of the sacrifices; namely, the killing and stripping of the skins, which were properly the peculiar duties of the priests; but as those functionaries were not able to overtake the extraordinary amount of work and the Levites had been duly sanctified for the service, they were enlisted for the time in this priestly employment. At the passover in Hezekiah's time, the Levites officiated in the same departments of duty, the reason assigned for that deviation from the established rule being the unprepared state of many of the people (48072 Chronicles 30:17). But on this occasion the whole people had been duly sanctified, and therefore the exceptional enlistment of the Levites' services must have been rendered unavoidably necessary from the multitudes engaged in celebrating the passover.

- **12.** *they removed the burnt offerings* Some of the small cattle being designed for burnt offerings were put apart by themselves, that they might not be intermingled with the paschal lambs, which were carefully selected according to certain rules, and intended to be sacramentally eaten; and the manner in which those burnt offerings were presented seems to have been the following: "All the subdivisions of the different fathers' houses came one after another to the altar in solemn procession to bring to the priests the portions which had been cut off, and the priests laid these pieces upon the fire of the altar of burnt offering."

divided them speedily among the people — The haste was either owing to the multiplicity of the priests' business, or because the heat and flavor of the viands would have been otherwise diminished. Hence it appears that the meal consisted not of the paschal lambs alone, but of the meat of the thank offerings — for part of the flesh fell to the portion of the offerer, who, being in this instance, the king and the princes, were by them made over to the people, who were recommended to eat them the day they were offered, though not absolutely forbidden to do so on the next (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 7:15-18).

- **14.** *afterwards they made ready for themselves, and for the priests* The Levites rendered this aid to the priests solely because they were so engrossed the entire day that they had no leisure to provide any refreshments for themselves.
- 15. And the singers ..., were in their place While the priests and people were so much engaged, the choir was not idle. They had to sing certain Psalms, namely, the hundred thirteenth to the hundred eighteenth inclusive, once, twice, and even a third time, during the continuance of each company of offerers. As they could not leave their posts, for the singing was resumed as every fresh company entered, the Levites prepared for them also; for the various bands relieved each other in turn, and while the general choir was doing duty, a portion of the tuneful brethren, relieved for a time, partook of the viands that were brought them.
- **18.** there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel One feature by which this passover was distinguished was the liberality of Josiah. But what distinguished it above all preceding solemnities was, not the imposing grandeur of the ceremonies, nor the immensity of the assembled concourse of worshippers; for these, with the exception of a few from the kingdom of Israel, were confined to two tribes; but it was the ardent devotion of the king and people, the disregard of purely traditional customs, and the unusually strict adherence, even in the smallest minutiæ, to the forms of observance prescribed in the book of the law, the discovery of an original copy of which had produced so great a sensation. Instead of "from the days of Samuel," the author of the Book of Kings says, "from the days of the judges who judged Israel" [1222] Kings 23:22]. The meaning is the same in both passages, for Samuel concluded the era of the judges.
- all Judah and Israel that were present The great majority of the people of the northern kingdom were in exile, but some of the remaining inhabitants performed the journey to Jerusalem on this occasion. 37,600 paschal lambs and kids were used, which [480]2 Chronicles 35:7], at ten to a company, would make 376,000 persons attending the feast.
- 19. In the eighteenth year of the reign Josiah was this passover kept—
  "It is said ( Kings 22:3) that Josiah sent Shaphan to Hilkiah in the eighth month of that year." If this statement rests upon an historical basis,

all the events narrated here (at 4882 Chronicles 34:8-35:19) must have happened in about the space of five months and a half. We should then have a proof that the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign was reckoned from the autumn (compare 4882 Chronicles 29:3). "The eighth month" of the sacred year in the eighteenth year of his reign would be the second month of his eighteenth year, and the first month of the new year would be the seventh month [Bertheau].

#### 4812 CHRONICLES 35:20-27.

#### HIS DEATH.

**20.** After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple — He most probably calculated that the restoration of the divine worship, with the revival of vital religion in the land, would lead, according to God's promise and the uniform experience of the Hebrew people, to a period of settled peace and increased prosperity. His hopes were disappointed. The bright interval of tranquillity that followed his re-establishment of the true religion was brief. But it must be observed that this interruption did not proceed from any unfaithfulness in the divine promise, but from the state into which the kingdom of Judah had brought itself by the national apostasy, which was drawing down upon it the long threatened but long deferred judgments of God.

#### Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates

— Necho, son of Psammetichus, succeeded to the throne of Egypt in the twentieth year of Josiah. He was a bold and enterprising king, who entered with all his heart into the struggle which the two great powers of Egypt and Assyria had long carried on for the political ascendency. Each, jealous of the aggressive movements of its rival, was desirous to maintain Palestine as a frontier barrier. After the overthrow of Israel, the kingdom of Judah became in that respect doubly important. Although the king and people had a strong bias for alliance with Egypt, yet from the time of Manasseh it had become a vassal of Assyria. Josiah, true to his political no less than his religious engagements, thought himself bound to support the interests of his Assyrian liege lord. Hence, when "Necho king of Egypt

came up to fight Carchemish, Josiah went out against him." Carchemish, on the eastern side of the Euphrates, was the key of Assyria on the west, and in going thither the king of Egypt would transport his troops by sea along the coast of Palestine, northwards. Josiah, as a faithful vassal, resolved to oppose Necho's march across the northern parts of that country. They met in the "valley of Megiddo," that is, the valley or plain of Esdraelon. The Egyptian king had come either by water or through the plains of Philistia, keeping constantly along the coast, round the northwest corner of Carmel, and so to the great plain of Megiddo. This was not only his direct way to the Euphrates, but the only route fit for his chariots, while thereby also he left Judah and Jerusalem quite to his right. In this valley, however, the Egyptian army had necessarily to strike across the country, and it was on that occasion that Josiah could most conveniently intercept his passage. To avoid the difficulty of passing the river Kishon, Necho kept to the south of it, and must, therefore, have come past Megiddo. Josiah, in following with his chariots and horsemen from Jerusalem, had to march northwards along the highway through Samaria by Kefr-Kud (the ancient Caper-Cotia) to Megiddo [VAN DE VELDE].

- **21, 22.** But he sent ambassadors ... What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? Not wishing to spend time, or strength in vain, Necho informed the king of Judah that he had no intention of molesting the Jews; that his expedition was directed solely against his old Assyrian enemy; and that he had undertaken it by an express commission from God. Commentators are not agreed whether it was really a divine commission given him through Jeremiah, or whether he merely used the name of God as an authority that Josiah would not refuse to obey. As he could not know the truth of Necho's declaration, Josiah did not sin in opposing him; or, if he sinned at all, it was a sin of ignorance. The engagement took place. Josiah was mortally wounded (4852) Chronicles 35:23).
- **24.** *took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot* the carriage he had for ordinary use, and which would be more comfortable for the royal sufferer than the war chariot. The death of this good king was the subject of universal and lasting regret.
- **25.** *Jeremiah lamented for Josiah*, etc. The elegy of the prophet has not reached us; but it seems to have been long preserved among his

countrymen and chanted on certain public occasions by the professional singers, who probably got the dirges they sang from a collection of funeral odes composed on the death of good and great men of the nation. The spot in the valley of Megiddo where the battle was fought was near the town of Hadad-rimmon; hence the lamentation for the death of Josiah was called "the lamentation of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo," which was so great and so long continued, that the lamentation of Hadad passed afterwards into a proverbial phrase to express any great and extraordinary sorrow (SECI) Zechariah 12:11).

#### 48012 CHRONICLES 36:1-4.

#### JEHOAHAZ, SUCCEEDING, IS DEPOSED BY PHARAOH.

- **1.** the people of the land took Jehoahaz Immediately after Josiah's overthrow and death, the people raised to the throne Shallum ( Chronicles 3:15), afterwards called Jehoahaz, in preference to his older brother Eliakim, from whom they expected little good. Jehoahaz is said ( Kings 23:30) to have received at Jerusalem the royal anointing — a sceremony not usually deemed necessary, in circumstances of regular and undisputed succession. But, in the case of Jehoahaz, it seems to have been resorted to in order to impart greater validity to the act of popular election; and, it may be, to render it less likely to be disturbed by Necho, who, like all Egyptians, would associate the idea of sanctity with the regal anointing. He was the youngest son of Josiah, but the popular favorite, probably on account of his martial spirit (\*\*Ezekiel 19:3) and determined opposition to the aggressive views of Egypt. At his accession the land was free from idolatry; but this prince, instead of following the footsteps of his excellent father, adopted the criminal policy of his apostatizing predecessors. Through his influence, directly or indirectly used, idolatry rapidly increased (see 23:32).
- **2.** he reigned three months in Jerusalem His possession of sovereign power was of but very brief duration; for Necho determined to follow up the advantage he had gained in Judah; and, deeming it expedient to have a king of his own nomination on the throne of that country, he deposed the popularly elected monarch and placed his brother Eliakim or Jehoiakim on the throne, whom he anticipated to be a mere obsequious vassal. The course of events seems to have been this: on receiving intelligence after the battle of the accession of Jehoahaz to the throne, and perhaps also in consequence of the complaint which Eliakim brought before him in regard to this matter, Necho set out with a part of his forces to Jerusalem, while the remainder of his troops pursued their way at leisure towards Riblah,

laid a tribute on the country, raised Eliakim (Jehoiakim) as his vassal to the throne, and on his departure brought Jehoahaz captive with him to Riblah. The old expositors mostly assumed that Necho, after the battle of Megiddo, marched directly against Carchemish, and then on his return came to Jerusalem. The improbability, indeed the impossibility, of his doing so appears from this: Carchemish was from four hundred to five hundred miles from Megiddo, so that within "three months" an army could not possibly make its way thither, conquer the fenced city of Carchemish, and then march back a still greater distance to Jerusalem, and take that city [Keil].

3. an hundred talents of silver — about \$170,000.

*and a talent of gold* — about \$25,000; total amount of tribute, about \$195,000.

**4.** *carried him* — Jehoahaz.

to Egypt — There he died (2000 Jeremiah 22:10-12).

#### QUANTO CHRONICLES 36:5-8.

#### JEHOIAKIM, REIGNING ILL, IS CARRIED INTO BABYLON.

- 5. Jehoiakim ... did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord He followed the course of his idolatrous predecessors; and the people, to a great extent, disinclined to the reforming policy of his father, eagerly availed themselves of the vicious license which his lax administration restored. His character is portrayed with a masterly hand in the prophecy of Jeremiah (<sup>2023</sup>Jeremiah 22:13-19). As the deputy of the king of Egypt, he departed further than his predecessor from the principles of Josiah's government; and, in trying to meet the insatiable cupidity of his master by grinding exactions from his subjects, he recklessly plunged into all evil.
- **6.** Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon This refers to the first expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Palestine, in the lifetime of his father Nabopolassar, who, being old and infirm, adopted his son as joint sovereign and despatched him, with the command of his army,

against the Egyptian invaders of his empire. Nebuchadnezzar defeated them at Carchemish, drove them out of Asia, and reduced all the provinces west of the Euphrates to obedience — among the rest the kingdom of Jehoiakim, who became a vassal of the Assyrian empire ( Kings 24:1). Jehoiakim at the end of three years threw off the voke, being probably instigated to revolt by the solicitations of the king of Egypt, who planned a new expedition against Carchemish. But he was completely vanquished by the Babylonian king, who stripped him of all his possessions between the Euphrates and the Nile ( Kings 24:7). Then marching against the Egyptian's ally in Judah, he took Jerusalem, carried away a portion of the sacred vessels of the temple, perhaps in lieu of the unpaid tribute, and deposited them in the temple of his god, Belus, at Babylon (Daniel 1:2 5:2). Though Jehoiakim had been taken prisoner (and it was designed at first to transport him in chains to Babylon), he was allowed to remain in his tributary kingdom. But having given not long after some new offense, Jerusalem was besieged by a host of Assyrian dependents. In a sally against them Jehoiakim was killed (see on 424:2-7; also Jeremiah 22:18,19 36:30).

9, 10. Jehoiachin was eight years old — called also Jeconiah or Coniah (\*\*Deremiah 22:24) — "eight" should have been "eighteen," as appears from \*\*21:82 Kings 24:8, and also from the full development of his ungodly principles and habits (see \*\*Dezekiel 19:5-7). His reign being of so short duration cannot be considered at variance with the prophetic denunciation against his father (\*\*\*Deremiah 36:30). But his appointment by the people gave umbrage to Nebuchadnezzar, who, "when the year was expired" (\*\*\*\*Deremiah 36:10) — that is, in the spring when campaigns usually began — came in person against Jerusalem, captured the city, and sent Jehoiachin in chains to Babylon, removing at the same time all the nobles and most skillful artisans, and pillaging all the remaining treasures both of the temple and palace (see on \*\*\*\*December 24:8-17).

#### 4812 CHRONICLES 36:11-21.

#### ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN.

- **11.** Zedekiah Nebuchadnezzar appointed him. His name, originally Mattaniah, was, according to the custom of Oriental conquerors, changed into Zedekiah. Though the son of Josiah (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 3:15 \*\*\* Jeremiah 1:2,3 37:1), he is called the brother of Jehoiachin (\*\*\*\* Chronicles 36:10), that is, according to the latitude of Hebrew style in words expressing affinity, his relative or kinsman (see \*\*\* Kings 24:18 \*\*\* 25:1-21).
- 13. who had made him swear by God Zedekiah received his crown on the express condition of taking a solemn oath of fealty to the king of Babylon (\*\*Ezekiel 17:13); so that his revolt by joining in a league with Pharaoh-hophra, king of Egypt, involved the crime of perjury. His own pride and obdurate impiety, the incurable idolatry of the nation, and their reckless disregard of prophetic warnings, brought down on his already sadly reduced kingdom the long threatened judgments of God.

  Nebuchadnezzar, the executioner of the divine vengeance, commenced a third siege of Jerusalem, which, after holding out for a year and a half, was taken in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. It resulted in the burning of the temple, with, most probably, the ark, and in the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah (see on \*\*Ezekiel 17:16).
- 21. until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths The return of every seventh was to be held as a sabbatic year, a season of rest to all classes, even to the land itself, which was to be fallow. This divine institution, however, was neglected how soon and how long, appears from the prophecy of Moses (see on Leviticus 26:34), and of Jeremiah in this passage (see Jeremiah 25:9-12), which told that for divine retribution it was now to remain desolate seventy years. As the Assyrian conquerors usually colonized their conquered provinces, so remarkable a deviation in Palestine from their customary policy must be ascribed to the overruling providence of God.

# 48222 CHRONICLES 36:22,23.

#### CYRUS' PROCLAMATION.

**22.** the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus — (See on Ezra 1:1-3).

#### THE BOOK OF

# **EZRA**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

\*\*\*\*EZRA 1:1-6.

#### PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

**1.** *in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia* — The Persian empire, including Persia, Media, Babylonia, and Chaldea, with many smaller dependencies, was founded by Cyrus, 536 B.C. [HALES].

that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled — (See \*\*Deremiah 25:12 29:10). This reference is a parenthetic statement of the historian, and did not form part of the proclamation.

2. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth

— Though this is in the Oriental style of hyperbole (see also Daniel 4:1), it was literally true that the Persian empire was the greatest ruling power in the world at that time.

were gifts bestowed on him by "the Lord God of heaven," and prompted him to fulfill the duty which had been laid upon him long before his birth. This was the source and origin of the great favor he showed to the Jews. The proclamation, though issued "in the first year of Cyrus" [\*\*\*Ezra 1:1], did not take effect till the year following.

- **3.** Who is there among you of all his people The purport of the edict was to grant full permission to those Jewish exiles, in every part of his kingdom, who chose, to return to their own country, as well as to recommend those of their countrymen who remained to aid the poor and feeble on their way, and contribute liberally towards the rebuilding of the temple.
- **5, 6.** Then rose up the chief of the fathers, etc. The paternal and ecclesiastical chiefs of the later captivity, those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with some also from other tribes (Thronicles 9:3), who retained their attachment to the pure worship of God, naturally took the lead in this movement. Their example was followed by all whose piety and patriotism were strong enough to brave the various discouragements attending the enterprise. They were liberally assisted by multitudes of their captive countrymen, who, born in Babylonia or comfortably established in it by family connections or the possession of property, chose to remain. It seems that their Assyrian friends and neighbors, too, either from a favorable disposition toward the Jewish faith, or from imitation of the court policy, displayed hearty good will and great liberality in aiding and promoting the views of the emigrants.

#### EZRA 1:7-11.

#### CYRUS RESTORES THE VESSELS.

7. Cyrus ... brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord — Though it is said (12212) Kings 24:13) that these were cut in pieces, that would not be done to the large and magnificent vases; and, if they had been divided, the parts could be reunited. But it may be doubted whether the Hebrew word rendered cut in pieces, does not signify merely cut off, that is, from further use in the temple.

- **8.** Shesh-bazzar, the prince of Judah that is, Zerubbabel, son of Salathiel (compare Ezra 3:8 5:16). He was born in Babylon, and called by his family Zerubbabel, that is, stranger or exile in Babylon. Shesh-bazzar, signifying "fire-worshipper," was the name given him at court, as other names were given to Daniel and his friends. He was recognized among the exiles as hereditary prince of Judah.
- 11. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred The vessels here specified amount only to the number of 2499. Hence it is probable that the larger vases only are mentioned, while the inventory of the whole, including great and small, came to the gross sum stated in the text.

# them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem — All the Jewish exiles did not embrace the privilege which the Persian king granted them. The great proportion, born in Babylon, preferred continuing in their comfortable homes to undertaking a distant, expensive, and hazardous journey to a desolate land. Nor did the returning exiles all go at once. The first band went with Zerubbabel, others afterwards with Ezra, and a large number with Nehemiah at a still later period.

EZRA 2:1-70.

#### NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE THAT TURNED.

**1.** *children of the province* — that is, Judea (\*\*Ezra 5:8), so called as being now reduced from an illustrious, independent, and powerful kingdom to an obscure, servile, tributary province of the Persian empire. This name is applied by the sacred historian to intimate that the Jewish exiles, though now released from captivity and allowed to return into their own land, were still the subjects of Cyrus, inhabiting a province dependent upon Persia.

came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city — either the city that had been occupied by his ancestors, or, as most parts of Judea were then either desolate or possessed by others, the city that was rebuilt and allotted to him now.

- **2.** Which came with Zerubbabel He was the chief or leader of the first band of returning exiles. The names of other influential persons who were associated in the conducting of the caravans are also mentioned, being extracted probably from the Persian archives, in which the register was preserved: conspicuous in the number are Jeshua, the high priest, and Nehemiah.
- **3.** *The children* This word, as used throughout this catalogue, means "posterity" or "descendants."
- **5.** children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five The number is stated in Nehemiah 7:10 to have been only six hundred fifty-two. It is probable that all mentioned as belonging to this family repaired to the general place of rendezvous, or had enrolled their names at first as intending to go; but in the interval of preparation, some died, others were prevented by sickness or insurmountable obstacles, so that ultimately no more than six hundred fifty-two came to Jerusalem.

- 23. The men of Anathoth It is pleasant to see so many of this Jewish town returning. It was a city of the Levites; but the people spurned Jeremiah's warning and called forth against themselves one of his severest predictions (\*\*\* Jeremiah 32:27-35). This prophecy was fulfilled in the Assyrian conquest. Anathoth was laid waste and continued a heap of ruins. But the people, having been brought during the captivity to a better state of mind, returned, and their city was rebuilt.
- **36-39.** *The priests* Each of their families was ranged under its prince or head, like those of the other tribes. It will be remembered that the whole body was divided into twenty-four courses, one of which, in rotation, discharged the sacerdotal duties every week, and each division was called after the name of its first prince or chief. It appears from this passage that only four of the courses of the priests returned from the Babylonish captivity; but these four courses were afterwards, as the families increased, divided into twenty-four, which were distinguished by the names of the original courses appointed by David [4000] Chronicles 23:6-13]. Hence we find the course of Abijah or Abia (4000) Chronicles 24:10) subsisting at the commencement of the Christian era (4000) Luke 1:5).
- **55.** *The children of Solomon's servants* either the strangers that monarch enlisted in the building of the temple, or those who lived in his palace, which was deemed a high honor.
- **61, 62.** *the children of Barzillai* He preferred that name to that of his own family, deeming it a greater distinction to be connected with so noble a family, than to be of the house of Levi. But by this worldly ambition he forfeited the dignity and advantages of the priesthood.
- **63.** *Tirshatha* a title borne by the Persian governors of Judea (see also Nehemiah 7:65-70 \*\*8:9 \*\*10:1). It is derived from the Persian *torsh* ("severe"), and is equivalent to "your severity," "your awfulness."
- **64.** The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore This gross amount is twelve thousand more than the particular numbers given in the catalogue, when added together, come to. Reckoning up the smaller numbers, we shall find that they amount to 29,818 in this chapter, and to 31,089 in the parallel chapter of Nehemiah [see \*\*\*\*Nehemiah 7:66-69]. Ezra also mentions four hundred

ninety-four persons omitted by Nehemiah, and Nehemiah mentions 1765 not noticed by Ezra. If, therefore, Ezra's surplus be added to the sum in Nehemiah, and Nehemiah's surplus to the number in Ezra, they will both become 31,583. Subtracting this from 42,360, there will be a deficiency of 10,777. These are omitted because they did not belong to Judah and Benjamin, or to the priests, but to the other tribes. The servants and singers, male and female, are reckoned separately (\*\*Ezra 2:65), so that putting all these items together, the number of all who went with Zerubbabel amounted to fifty thousand, with eight thousand beasts of burden [Alting, quoted in Davidson's *Hermeneutics*].

**68.** some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord offered freely for the house of God, etc. — The sight of a place hallowed by the most endearing and sacred associations, but now lying in desolation and ruins, made the wellsprings of their piety and patriotism gush out afresh. Before taking any active measures for providing accommodation to themselves and their families, the chief among them raised a large sum by voluntary contributions towards the restoration of the temple.

**69.** *drams of gold* — rather, "darics," a Persian coin (see on Chronicles 29:7).

priests' garments — (compare \*\*\*Nehemiah 7:70). This — in the circumstances — was a very appropriate gift. In general, it may be remarked that presents of garments, or of any other usable commodities, however singular it may seem to us, is in harmony with the established notions and customs of the East.

EZRA 3:1-13.

#### THE ALTAR SET UP.

- **1.** when the seventh month was come The departure of the returning exiles from Babylon took place in the spring. For some time after their arrival they were occupied in the necessary work of rearing habitations to themselves amid the ruins of Jerusalem and its neighborhood. This preliminary work being completed, they addressed themselves to rebuild the altar of burnt offering. As the seventh month of the sacred year was at hand corresponding to the latter end of our September when the feast of tabernacles (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 23:34) fell to be observed, they resolved to celebrate that religious festival, just as if the temple had been fully restored.
- **2.** *Jeshua* the grandson of Seraiah, the high priest, put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (\*\*\* Kings 25:18-21). His father, Josedech, had been carried captive to Babylon, and died there, some time before this.

**Zerubbabel** — was, according to the order of nature, son of Pedaiah (\*\*\*TRD\*\*17-19); but having been brought up by Salathiel, he was called his son.

builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon— This was of urgent and immediate necessity, in order, first, to make atonement for their sins; secondly, to obtain the divine blessing on their preparations for the temple, as well as animate their feelings of piety and patriotism for the prosecution of that national work.

**3.** *they set the altar upon his bases* — They reared it upon its old foundation, so that it occupied as nearly as possible the site on which it had formerly stood.

they offered burnt offerings ... morning and evening — Deeming it their duty to perform the public rites of religion, they did not wait till the temple should be rebuilt and dedicated; but, at the outset, they resumed the daily service prescribed by the law (\*Exodus 29:38,39 \*Eviticus 6:9,11), as well as observed the annual seasons of solemn observance.

#### **€EZRA** 3:4-7.

#### OFFERINGS RENEWED.

- **4, 6.** They kept also the feast of tabernacles ... From the first day of the seventh month They revived at that time the daily oblation, and it was on the fifteenth day of that month the feast of tabernacles was held.
- 7. They gave ... meat ... drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon They opened negotiations with the Tyrians for workmen, as well as for timber, on the same terms and with the same views as Solomon had done (\*\*ITH) Kings 5:11 \*\*CE\*\* Chronicles 2:15,16).

#### EZRA 3:8-13.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE LAID.

- **8.** appointed the Levites ... to set forward the work that is, to act as overseers of the workmen, and to direct and animate the laborers in the various departments.
- **9.** *Jeshua with his sons* not the high priest, but a Levite (\*Ezra 2:40). To these, as probably distinguished for their mechanical skill and taste, the duty of acting as overseers was particularly committed.
- 12. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers ... wept with a loud voice Those painful emotions were excited by the sad contrast between the prosperous circumstances in which the foundations of the first temple had been laid and the desolate, reduced state of the country and city when the second was begun; between the inferior size and less costliness of the stones used in the foundations of the second

(\*\*\*The Haggai 7:9,10), and the much smaller extent of the foundation itself, including all the appurtenances of the building (\*\*\*The Haggai 2:3); between the comparative smallness of their present means and the immense resources of David and Solomon. Perhaps, however, the chief cause of grief was that the second temple would be destitute of those things which formed the great and distinguishing glory of the first; namely, the ark, the shekinah, the Urim and Thummim, etc. Not that this second temple was not a very grand and beautiful structure. But no matter how great its material splendor was, it was inferior in this respect to that of Solomon. Yet the glory of the second far outshone that of the first temple in another and more important point of view, namely, the receiving within its walls the incarnate Savior (\*\*\*The Haggai 2:9).

**13.** the people could not discern the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people — Among Eastern people, expressions of sorrow are always very loud and vehement. It is indicated by wailing, the howl of which is sometimes not easily distinguishable from joyful acclamations.

#### **€5001**EZRA 4:1-6.

#### THE BUILDING HINDERED.

- **1.** *the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin* that is, strangers settled in the land of Israel.
- 2. we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon ... which brought us up hither A very interesting explanation of this passage has been recently obtained from the Assyrian sculptures. On a large cylinder, deposited in the British Museum, there is inscribed a long and perfect copy of the annals of Esar-haddon, in which the details are given of a large deportation of Israelites from Palestine, and a consequent settlement of Babylonian colonists in their place. It is a striking confirmation of the statement made in this passage. Those Assyrian settlers intermarried with the remnant of Israelite women, and their descendants, a mongrel race, went under the name of Samaritans. Though originally idolaters, they were instructed in the knowledge of God, so that they could say, "We seek your God"; but they served Him in a superstitious way of their own (see on Time 2 Kings 17:26-34,41).
- 3. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua ... said ... Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God This refusal to co-operate with the Samaritans, from whatever motives it sprang, was overruled by Providence for ultimate good; for, had the two peoples worked together, familiar acquaintanceship and intermarriage would have ensued, and the result might have been a relapse of the Jews into idolatry. Most certainly, confusion and obscurity in the genealogical evidence that proved the descent of the Messiah would have followed; whereas, in their hostile and separate condition, they were jealous observers of each other's proceedings, watching with mutual care over the preservation and integrity of the sacred books, guarding the purity and honor of the Mosaic worship, and thus contributing to the maintenance of religious knowledge and truth.

**4, 5.** Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, etc. — Exasperated by this repulse, the Samaritans endeavored by every means to molest the workmen as well as obstruct the progress of the building; and, though they could not alter the decree which Cyrus had issued regarding it, yet by bribes and clandestine arts indefatigably plied at court, they labored to frustrate the effects of the edict. Their success in those underhand dealings was great; for Cyrus, being frequently absent and much absorbed in his warlike expeditions, left the government in the hands of his son Cambyses, a wicked prince, and extremely hostile to the Jews and their religion. The same arts were assiduously practiced during the reign of his successor, Smerdis, down to the time of Darius Hystaspes. In consequence of the difficulties and obstacles thus interposed, for a period of twenty years, the progress of the work was very slow.

**6.** in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they ... an accusation — Ahasuerus was a regal title, and the king referred to was successor of Darius, the famous Xerxes.

#### \*\*EZRA 4:7-24.

#### LETTER TO ARTAXERXES.

7. in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, etc. — The three officers named are supposed to have been deputy governors appointed by the king of Persia over all the provinces subject to his empire west of the Euphrates.

the Syrian tongue — or Aramaean language, called sometimes in our version, Chaldee. This was made use of by the Persians in their decrees and communications relative to the Jews (compare Kings 18:26 Kings 18:11). The object of their letter was to press upon the royal notice the inexpediency and danger of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They labored hard to prejudice the king's mind against that measure.

**9.** *the Dinaites* — The people named were the colonists sent by the Babylonian monarch to occupy the territory of the ten tribes. "The great and noble Asnappar" was Esar-haddon. Immediately after the murder of

Sennacherib, the Babylonians, Medes, Armenians, and other tributary people seized the opportunity of throwing off the Assyrian yoke. But Esar-haddon having, in the thirtieth year of his reign, recovered Babylon and subdued the other rebellious dependents, transported numbers of them into the waste cities of Samaria, most probably as a punishment of their revolt [HALES].

- **12.** *the Jews which came up from thee to us* The name "Jews" was generally used after the return from the captivity, because the returning exiles belonged chiefly to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Although the edict of Cyrus permitted all who chose to return, a permission of which some of the Israelites availed themselves, the great body who went to settle in Judea were the men of Judah.
- **13.** *toll*, *tribute*, *and custom* The first was a poll tax; the second was a property tax; the third the excise dues on articles of trade and merchandise. Their letter, and the edict that followed, commanding an immediate cessation of the work at the city walls, form the exclusive subject of narrative at <sup>4500</sup>Ezra 4:7-23. And now from this digression [the historian] returns at <sup>4500</sup>Ezra 4:24 to resume the thread of his narrative concerning the building of the temple.
- **14.** we have maintenance from the king's palace literally, "we are salted with the salt of the palace." "Eating a prince's salt" is an Oriental phrase, equivalent to "receiving maintenance from him."
- **24.** Then ceased the work of the house of God It was this occurrence that first gave rise to the strong religious antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans, which was afterwards greatly aggravated by the erection of a rival temple on Mount Gerizim.

EZRA 5:1-17.

## ZERUBBABEL AND JESHUA SET FORWARD THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN THE REIGN OF DARIUS.

1. Then the prophets ... prophesied ... in the name of the God of Israel — From the recorded writings of Haggai and Zechariah, it appears that the difficulties experienced and the many obstacles thrown in the way had first cooled the zeal of the Jews in the building of the temple, and then led to an abandonment of the work, under a pretended belief that the time for rebuilding it had not yet come (\*\*THAGGAI 1:2-11\*). For fifteen years the work was completely suspended. These two prophets upbraided them with severe reproaches for their sloth, negligence, and worldly selfishness (\*\*THAGGAI 1:4\*), threatened them with severe judgments if they continued backward, and promised that they would be blessed with great national prosperity if they resumed and prosecuted the work with alacrity and vigor.

**Zechariah the son of Iddo** — that is, grandson (\*\*\*Zechariah 1:1).

- 2. Then rose up Zerubbabel ... and Jeshua ... began to build the house of God The strong appeals and animating exhortations of these prophets gave a new impulse to the building of the temple. It was in the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes that the work, after a long interruption, was resumed.
- **3, 4.** At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river

   The Persian empire west of the Euphrates included at this time Syria,
  Arabia, Egypt, Phoenicia, and other provinces subject to Darius. The
  empire was divided into twenty provinces, called satrapies. Syria formed
  one satrapy, inclusive of Palestine, Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and furnished
  an annual revenue of three hundred fifty talents. It was presided over by a
  satrap or viceroy, who at this time resided at Damascus. Though superior
  to the native governors of the Jews appointed by the Persian king, he

never interfered with their internal government except when there was a threatened disturbance of order and tranquillity. Tatnai, the governor (whether this was a personal name or an official title is unknown), had probably been incited by the complaints and turbulent outrages of the Samaritans against the Jews; but he suspended his judgment, and he prudently resolved to repair to Jerusalem, that he might ascertain the real state of matters by personal inspection and enquiry, in company with another dignified officer and his provincial council.

5-17. But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, etc. — The unusual presence, the imposing suite, the authoritative enquiries of the satrap appeared formidable, and might have produced a paralyzing influence or led to disastrous consequences, if he had been a partial and corrupt judge or actuated by unfriendly feelings towards the Jewish cause. The historian, therefore, with characteristic piety, throws in this parenthetical verse to intimate that God averted the threatening cloud and procured favor for the elders or leaders of the Jews, that they were not interrupted in their proceedings till communications with the court should be made and received. Not a word was uttered to dispirit the Jews or afford cause of triumph to their opponents. Matters were to go on till contrary orders arrived from Babylon. After surveying the work in progress, he inquired: first, by what authority this national temple was undertaken; and, secondly, the names of the principal promoters and directors of the undertaking. To these two heads of enquiry the Jews returned ready and distinct replies. Then having learned that it originated in a decree of Cyrus, who had not only released the Jewish exiles from captivity and permitted them to return to their own land for the express purpose of rebuilding the house of God, but, by an act of royal grace, had restored to them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried off as trophies from the former temple, Tatnai transmitted all this information in an official report to his imperial master, accompanying it with a recommendatory suggestion that search should be made among the national archives at Babylon for the original decree of Cyrus, that the truth of the Jews' statement might be verified. The whole conduct of Tatnai, as well as the general tone of his despatch, is marked by a sound discretion and prudent moderation, free from any party bias, and evincing a desire only

to do his duty. In all respects he appears in favorable contrast with his predecessor, Rehum (\*\*DEZra 4:9).

- **8.** the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones literally, "stones of rolling"; that is, stones of such extraordinary size that they could not be carried they had to be rolled or dragged along the ground.
- **13.** *Cyrus the king ... made a decree* The Jews were perfectly warranted according to the principles of the Persian government to proceed with the building in virtue of Cyrus' edict. For everywhere a public decree is considered as remaining in force until it is revoked but the "laws of the Medes and Persians changed not" [\*\*Daniel 6:8,12,15].
- **16.** Then came ... Shesh-bazzar ... since that time even until now hath it been in building This was not a part of the Jews' answer they could not have said this, knowing the building had long ceased. But Tatnai used these expressions in his report, either looking on the stoppage as a temporary interruption, or supposing that the Jews were always working a little, as they had means and opportunities.

#### EZRA 6:1-12.

#### DARIUS' DECREE FOR ADVANCING THE BUILDING.

**1.** *Darius the king* — This was Darius Hystaspes. Great and interesting light has been thrown on the history of this monarch and the transaction of his reign, by the decipherment of the cuneatic inscriptions on the rocks at Behistun.

in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon — An idea of the form of this Babylonian register house, as well as the manner of preserving public records within its repositories, can be obtained from the discoveries at Nineveh. Two small chambers were discovered in the palace of Koyunjik, which, from the fragments found in them, MR. LAYARD considers "as a house of the rolls." After reminding his readers that the historical records and public documents of the Assyrians were kept on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, many specimens of which have been found, he goes on to say, "The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor they were entirely filled with them; some entire, but the greater part broken into many fragments, probably by the falling in of the upper part of the building. They were of different sizes; the largest tablets were flat, and measured about nine inches by six and a half inches; the smaller were slightly convex, and some were not more than an inch long, with but one or two lines of writing. The cuneiform characters on most of them were singularly sharp and well-defined, but so minute in some instances as to be almost illegible without a magnifying glass. These documents appear to be of various kinds. The documents that have thus been discovered in the house of rolls' at Nineveh probably exceed all that have yet been afforded by the monuments of Egypt, and when the innumerable fragments are put together and transcribed, the publication of these records will be of the

greatest importance to the history of the ancient world" [Nineveh and Babylon].

- **2.** Achmetha long supposed to be the capital of Greater Media (the Ecbatana of classical, the Hamadan of modern times), [is] at the foot of the Elwund range of hills, where, for its coolness and salubrity, Cyrus and his successors on the Persian throne established their summer residence. There was another city, however, of this name, the Ecbatana of Atropatene, and the most ancient capital of northern Media, and recently identified by COLONEL RAWLINSON in the remarkable ruins of *Takht-i-Soleiman*. Yet as everything tends to show the attachment of Cyrus to his native city, the Atropatenian Ecbatana, rather than to the stronger capital of Greater Media, COLONEL RAWLINSON is inclined to think that he deposited there, in his fortress, the famous decree relating to the Jews, along with the other records and treasures of his empire [Nineveh and Persepolis].
- **8-10.** of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river ... expenses be given unto these men The decree granted them the privilege of drawing from his provincial treasury of Syria, to the amount of whatever they required for the furthering of the work and providing sacrifice for the service of the temple, that the priests might daily pray for the health of the king and the prosperity of the empire.
- 11, 12. whosoever shall alter this word The warning was specially directed against the turbulent and fanatical Samaritans. The extremely favorable purport of this edict was no doubt owing in some measure to the influence of Cyrus, of whom Darius entertained a high admiration, and whose two daughters he had married. But it proceeded still more from the deep impressions made even on the idolatrous people of that country and that age, as to the being and providence of the God of Israel.

\*\*\*\*EZRA 6:13-15.

#### THE TEMPLE FINISHED.

**13-15.** *Then Tatnai* ... *did speedily* — A concurrence of favorable events is mentioned as accelerating the restoration of the temple and infusing a

new spirit and energy into the workmen, who now labored with unabating assiduity till it was brought to a completion. Its foundation was laid in April, 536 B.C. (\*\*Ezra 3:8-10), and it was completed on February 21, 515 B.C., being twenty-one years after it was begun [LIGHTFOOT].

#### EZRA 6:16-18.

#### FEASTS OF THE DEDICATION.

- **16.** the children of Israel ... kept the dedication ... with joy The ceremonial was gone through with demonstrations of the liveliest joy. The aged who had wept at the laying of the foundation (\*\*Ezra 3:12) were most, if not all of them, now dead; and all rejoiced at the completion of this national undertaking.
- **17.** *twelve he-goats* as at the dedication of the tabernacle (\*\*Numbers 7:87 8:17).
- **18.** they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses ... as it is written in the book of Moses Although David arranged the priests and Levites in courses according to their families, it was Moses who assigned to the priests and Levites their rights and privileges, their stations and several duties.

#### EZRA 6:19-22.

#### AND OF THE PASSOVER.

- **21.** all such as had separated themselves ... from the filthiness of the heathen of the land that is, who had given satisfactory evidence of being true proselytes by not only renouncing the impure worship of idolatry, but by undergoing the rite of circumcision, a condition indispensable to a participation of the passover.
- 22. kept the feast ... with joy: for the Lord ... turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them that is, king of the Persian empire, which now included the possessions, and had surpassed the glory, of Assyria. The

favorable disposition which Darius had evinced towards the Jews secured them peace and prosperity and the privileges of their own religion during the rest of his reign. The religious joy that so remarkably characterized the celebration of this feast, was testified by expressions of lively gratitude to God, whose overruling power and converting grace had produced so marvellous a change in the hearts of the mighty potentates, and disposed them, pagans though they were, to aid the cause and provide for the worship of the true God.

EZRA 7:1-10.

#### EZRA GOES UP TO JERUSALEM.

**1, 2.** in the reign of Artaxerxes — the Ahasuerus of Esther.

Ezra the son of Seraiah — that is, grandson or great-grandson. Seraiah was the high priest put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (\*\*282 Kings 25:18). A period of one hundred thirty years had elapsed between that catastrophe and the journey of Ezra to Jerusalem. As a grandson of Seraiah, namely, Jeshua, who held the office of high priest, had accompanied Zerubbabel in the first caravan of returning exiles, Ezra must have been in all probability a grandson, descended, too, from a younger son, the older branch being in possession of the pontificate.

**6.** This Ezra ... was a ready scribe in the law of Moses — The term "scribe" does not mean merely a penman, nor even an attorney well versed in forms of law and skilled in the method of preparing public or private deeds. He was a rabbi, or doctor, learned in the Mosaic law, and in all that related to the civil and ecclesiastical polity and customs of the Hebrew people. Scribes of this description possessed great authority and influence (compare Matthew 23:25 Mark 12:28).

the king granted him all his request — left Babylon entrusted with an important commission to be executed in Jerusalem. The manner in which he obtained this office is minutely related in a subsequent passage. Here it is noticed, but with a pious acknowledgment of the divine grace and goodness which disposed the royal mind in favor of Ezra's patriotic objects. The Levites, etc., did not go at that time, but are mentioned here by anticipation.

**8.** he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month — that is, corresponding to the end of our July or beginning of our August. As he left Babylon on the Jewish New Year's Day (\*\*\*\*Ezra 7:9), the journey must have occupied not

less than four months (a long period), but it was necessary to move at a slow pace and by short, easy stages, as he had to conduct a large caravan of poor people, including women, children, and all their household gear (see on Ezra 8:24).

**10.** Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, etc. — His reigning desire had been to study the divine law — its principles, institutions, privileges, and requirements; and now from love and zeal, he devoted himself, as the business of his life, to the work of instructing, reforming, and edifying others.

#### ◆5071 EZRA 7:11-26.

#### GRACIOUS COMMISSION OF ARTAXERXES.

- 11. this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave The measure which this document authorized, and the remarkable interest in the Jews displayed in it, were most probably owing to the influence of Esther, who is thought to have been raised to the high position of queen a few months previous to the departure of Ezra [HALES]. According to others, who adopt a different chronology, it was more probably pressed upon the attention of the Persian court by Ezra, who, like Daniel, showed the prophecies to the king; or by some leading Jews on his accession, who, seeing the unsettled and disordered state of the colony after the deaths of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah, recommended the appointment of a commission to reform abuses, suppress disorder, and enforce the observance of the law.
- **12.** Artaxerxes, king of kings That title might have been assumed as, with literal truth, applicable to him, since many of the tributary princes of his empire still retained the name and authority of kings. But it was a probably a mere Orientalism, denoting a great and powerful prince, as the heaven of heavens signified the highest heaven, and vanity of vanities, the greatest vanity. This vainglorious title was assumed by the kings of Assyria, from whom it passed to the sovereigns of Persia.

unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven — The appointment of Ezra to this influential mission was of the highest importance to the Hebrew people, as a large proportion of them were become, in a great measure, strangers both to the language and the institutions of their forefathers.

**14.** sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors — This was the fixed number of the privy council of the kings of Persia (\*\*Esther 1:10,14). The document describes, with great clearness and precision, the nature of Ezra's commission and the extent of power and prerogatives with which he was invested. It gave him authority, in the first place, to organize the colony in Judea and institute a regular government, according to the laws of the Hebrew people, and by magistrates and rulers of their own nation Ezra 7:25,26), with power to punish offenders by fines, imprisonment, exile, or death, according to the degree of their criminality. Secondly, he was empowered to carry a large donation in money, partly from the royal treasury and partly raised by voluntary contributions among his countrymen, to create a fund out of which to make suitable provision for maintaining the regular worship of God in Jerusalem (\*Ezra 7:16,17). Thirdly, the Persian officers in Syria were commanded to afford him every assistance by gifts of money within a certain specified limit, in carrying out the objects of his patriotic mission (\*Ezra 7:21).

22-24. an hundred talents of silver — about \$110,000, according to the rate of the silver talent of Babylon. Fourthly, Artaxerxes gave his royal sanction in the establishment of the divine law, which exempted priests and Levites from taxation or tribute and confirmed to them the exclusive right to officiate in the sacred services of the sanctuary. And, finally, in the expression of the king's desire for the divine blessing upon the king and his government (\*\*\*Ezra 7:23), we see the strong persuasion which pervaded the Persian court, and had been produced by the captivity of the Hebrew people, as to the being and directing providence of the God they worshipped. It will be observed, however, that the commission related exclusively to the rebuilding of the temple — not of the walls. The Samaritans (\*\*\*Ezra 4:20-22) had succeeded in alarming the Persian court by their representations of the danger to the empire of fortifying a city notorious for the turbulent character of its inhabitants and the prowess of its kings.

### EZRA 7:27,28.

#### EZRA BLESSES GOD FOR THIS FAVOR.

**27.** *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers* — This devout thanksgiving is in unison with the whole character of Ezra, who discerns the hand of God in every event, and is always ready to express a pious acknowledgment for the divine goodness.

EZRA 8:1-14.

#### EZRA'S COMPANIONS FROM BABYLON.

**1.** this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon — The number given here amounts to 1754. But this is the register of adult males only, and as there were women and children also (\*\*Ezra 8:21), the whole caravan may be considered as comprising between six thousand and seven thousand.

\*\*\*EZRA 8:15-20.

## HE SENDS TO IDDO FOR MINISTERS FOR THE TEMPLE SERVICE.

**15.** I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava — This river has not been ascertained. It is probable that the Ahava was one of the streams or numerous canals of Mesopotamia communicating with the Euphrates [Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature]. But it was certainly in Babylonia on the banks of that stream; and perhaps the place appointed for general rendezvous was in the neighborhood of a town of the same name. The emigrants encamped there for three days, according to Oriental custom, while the preparations for the departure were being completed and Ezra was arranging the order of the caravan.

*I ... found there none of the sons of Levi* — that is, the ordinary Levites. Notwithstanding the privilege of exemption from all taxes granted to persons engaged in the temple service, none of the Levitical tribes were induced to join the settlement in Jerusalem; and it was even not without difficulty Ezra persuaded some of the priestly families to accompany him.

16-20. then sent I for Eliezer ... with commandment unto Iddo the chief

— Ezra sent this deputation, either by virtue of authority which by his priestly character he had over the Levites, or of the royal commission with which he was invested. The deputation was despatched to Iddo, who was a prince or chief of the Nethinims — for the Persian government allowed the Hebrews during their exile to retain their ecclesiastical government by their own chiefs, as well as to enjoy the privilege of free worship. Iddo's influence procured and brought to the camp at Ahava thirty-eight Levites, and two hundred twenty Nethinims, the descendants of the Gibeonites, who performed the servile duties of the temple.

**™EZRA 8:21-36.** 

#### A FAST PROCLAIMED.

- 21. Then I proclaimed a fast there The dangers to travelling caravans from the Bedouin Arabs that prowl through the desert were in ancient times as great as they still are; and it seems that travelers usually sought the protection of a military escort. But Ezra had spoken so much to the king of the sufficiency of the divine care of His people that he would have blushed to apply for a guard of soldiers. Therefore he resolved that his followers should, by a solemn act of fasting and prayer, commit themselves to the Keeper of Israel. Their faith, considering the many and constant perils of a journey across the Bedouin regions, must have been great, and it was rewarded by the enjoyment of perfect safety during the whole way.
- **24-32.** Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests ... and weighed unto them the silver, etc. The custody of the contributions and of the sacred vessels was, during the journey, committed to twelve of the chief priests, who, with the assistance of ten of their brethren, were to watch closely over them by the way, and deliver them into the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. The treasures in silver and gold, according to the value of the Babylonian talent, amounted to over \$3,000,000.
- **27.** *two vessels of fine copper*, *precious as gold* Almost all commentators agree in maintaining that the vessels referred to were not

made of copper, but of an alloy capable of taking on a bright polish, which we think highly probable, as copper was then in common use among the Babylonians, and would not be as precious as gold. This alloy, much esteemed among the Jews, was composed of gold and other metals, which took on a high polish and was not subject to tarnish [NOYES].

31. we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month — Computing from the time of their setting out to the period of their arrival, they occupied about four months on the way. Their health and security were marvellous during so long a journey. The pilgrimcaravans of the present day perform long journeys through the wildest deserts of the East under the protection of a firman from the Porte, and an escort of soldiers. But for a large body, composed as that of Ezra — of some thousands of men, women, and children, unaccustomed to travel, undisciplined to order, and without military strength, and with so large an amount of treasure tempting the cupidity of the marauding, plundering tribes of the desert — to accomplish a journey so long and so arduous in perfect safety, is one of the most astonishing events recorded in history. Nothing but the vigilant care of a superintending Providence could have brought them securely to their destination.

33-36. Now on the fourth day was the silver ... weighed in the house of our God — The first three days after their arrival in Jerusalem were undoubtedly given to repose; on the next, the treasures were weighed and handed over to the custody of the officiating priests of the temple. The returned exiles offered burnt offerings, and Ezra delivered the royal commission to the satraps and inferior magistrates; while the Levitical portion of them lent all the assistance they could in performing the additional work which the arrival of so many new worshippers occasioned.

#### EZRA 9:1-4.

## EZRA MOURNS FOR THE AFFINITY OF THE PEOPLE WITH STRANGERS.

1, 2. Now when these things were done — The first days after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem were occupied in executing the different trusts committed to him. The nature and design of the office with which the royal authority had invested him was publicly made known to his own people by the formal delivery of the contribution and the sacred vessels brought from Babylon to the priests to be deposited in the temple. Then his credentials were privately presented to the provincial governors; and by this prudent, orderly proceeding he put himself in the best position to avail himself of all the advantages guaranteed him by the king. On a superficial view everything contributed to gratify his patriotic feelings in the apparently flourishing state of the church and country. But a further acquaintance discovered the existence of great corruptions, which demanded immediate correction. One was particularly brought under his notice as being the source and origin of all others; namely, a serious abuse that was practiced respecting the law of marriage.

the princes came to me, saying — The information they lodged with Ezra was to the effect that numbers of the people, in violation of the divine law (TDeuteronomy 7:2,3), had contracted marriages with Gentile women, and that the guilt of the disorderly practice, far from being confined to the lower classes, was shared in by several of the priests and Levites, as well as of the leading men in the country. This great irregularity would inevitably bring many evils in its train; it would encourage and increase idolatry, as well as break down the barriers of distinction which, for important purposes, God had raised between the Israelites and all other people. Ezra foresaw these dangerous consequences, but was overwhelmed with a sense of the difficulty of correcting the evil, when

matrimonial alliances had been formed, families had been reared, affections engaged, and important interests established.

3. when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle — the outer and inner garment, which was a token not only of great grief, but of dread at the same time of the divine wrath;

*plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard* — which was a still more significant sign of overpowering grief.

**4.** Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, etc. — All the pious people who reverenced God's word and dreaded its threatenings and judgments joined with Ezra in bewailing the public sin, and devising the means of redressing it.

I sat astonied until the evening sacrifice — The intelligence of so gross a violation of God's law by those who had been carried into captivity on account of their sins, and who, though restored, were yet unreformed, produced such a stunning effect on the mind of Ezra that he remained for a while incapable either of speech or of action. The hour of the evening sacrifice was the usual time of the people assembling; and at that season, having again rent his hair and garments, he made public prayer and confession of sin.

EZRA 9:5-15.

#### PRAYS TO GOD.

5-15. I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God — The burden of his prayer, which was dictated by a deep sense of the emergency, was that he was overwhelmed at the flagrant enormity of this sin, and the bold impiety of continuing in it after having, as a people, so recently experienced the heavy marks of the divine displeasure. God had begun to show returning favor to Israel by the restoration of some. But this only aggravated their sin, that, so soon after their re-establishment in their native land, they openly violated the express and repeated precepts which commanded them to extirpate the Canaanites. Such conduct, he exclaimed, could issue only in drawing down some great

punishment from offended Heaven and ensuring the destruction of the small remnant of us that is left, unless, by the help of divine grace, we repent and bring forth the fruits of repentance in an immediate and thorough reformation.

◆5000 EZRA 10:1-17.

#### EZRA REFORMS THE STRANGE MARRIAGES.

1. Now when Ezra had prayed — As this prayer was uttered in public, while there was a general concourse of the people at the time of the evening sacrifice and as it was accompanied with all the demonstrations of poignant sorrow and anguish, it is not surprising that the spectacle of a man so respected, a priest so holy, a governor so dignified as Ezra, appearing distressed and filled with fear at the sad state of things, should produce a deep sensation; and the report of his passionate grief and expressions in the court of the temple having rapidly spread through the city, a great multitude flocked to the spot.

**2-4.** Shechaniah ... answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed — This was one of the leading men, who was not himself a delinquent in the matter, for his name does not occur in the following. He spoke in the general name of the people, and his conduct evinced a tender conscience, as well as no small fortitude in making such a proposal; for as his father and five paternal uncles (\*\*Ezra 10:26) were involved in the guilt of unlawful marriages, he showed, by the measure he recommended, that he deemed it better to obey God than to please his nearest relatives.

yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing — This hope, however, depended on timely measures of reformation, and therefore, instead of surrendering themselves to despair or despondency, he counselled them to amend their error without delay, relying on God's mercy for the past. Though the proposal may seem harsh and cruel, yet in the peculiar circumstances of the Jews it was just as well as necessary; and he urged the duty of seeing it executed on Ezra, as the only person competent to carry it into effect, being possessed of skill and address for so delicate and difficult a work, and invested by God, and under Him by

the Persian king (Ezra 7:23-28), with the requisite authority to enforce it.

- **5-8.** Then Ezra ... went into the chamber of Johanan At a private council of the princes and elders held there, under the presidency of Ezra, it was resolved to enter into a general covenant to put away their foreign wives and children; that a proclamation should be made for all who had returned from Babylon to repair within three days to Jerusalem, under pain of excommunication and confiscation of their property.
- **9-11.** Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin The returned captives belonged chiefly to these tribes; but other Israelites are also included under these names, as they all were then occupying the territory formerly assigned to those two tribes.

*It was the ninth month* — that is, between the end of December and the beginning of January, which is the coldest and most rainy season of the year in Palestine.

all the people sat in the street — that is, the court.

**10-17.** Ezra the priest stood up, and said — Having fully represented the enormity of their sin and urged them to dissolve their unlawful connections, he was gratified by receiving a prompt acknowledgment of the justice of his reproof and a promise of compliance with his recommendation. But as the weather was ungenial and the defaulters were too numerous to be passed in review at one time, it was resolved that a commission should be appointed to examine into the whole matter. These commissioners, assisted by the judges and elders of the respective cities, made a minute investigation into every case, and after three months' labor completely removed all traces of the abuse. Doubtless, an adequate provision was made for the repudiated wives and children, according to the means and circumstances of the husbands.

### **SONS**EZRA 10:18-44.

#### THOSE THAT HAD TAKEN STRANGE WIVES.

- **18.** *among the sons of the priests* From the names of so many men of rank appearing in the following list, some idea may be formed of the great and complicated difficulties attending the reformatory work.
- **19.** they gave their hands that is, came under a solemn engagement, which was usually ratified by pledging the right hand (\*\*Proverbs 6:1\*\*Ezekiel 17:18). The delinquents of the priestly order bound themselves to do like the common Israelites (\*\*Ezra 10:25), and sought to expiate their sin by sacrificing a ram as a trespass offering.

#### THE BOOK OF

## **NEHEMIAH**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

## CHAPTER 1

### **№ NEHEMIAH 1:1-3**

## NEHEMIAH, UNDERSTANDING BY HANANI THE AFFLICTED STATE OF JERUSALEM, MOURNS, FASTS, AND PRAYS.

1. Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah — This eminently pious and patriotic Jew is to be carefully distinguished from two other persons of the same name — one of whom is mentioned as helping to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (\*\*Nehemiah 3:16), and the other is noticed in the list of those who accompanied Zerubbabel in the first detachment of returning exiles (\*\*Ezra 2:2\*\*Nehemiah 7:7). Though little is known of his genealogy, it is highly probable that he was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and the royal family of David.

*in the month Chisleu* — answering to the close of November and the larger part of December.

**Shushan the palace** — the capital of ancient Susiana, east of the Tigris, a province of Persia. From the time of Cyrus it was the favorite winter residence of the Persian kings.

**2, 3.** *Hanani*, *one of my brethren*, *came*, *he and certain men of Judah* — Hanani is called his brother (\*\*\*\*Nehemiah 7:2). But as that term was used loosely by Jews as well as other Orientals, it is probable that no more is meant than that he was of the same family. According to JOSEPHUS,

Nehemiah, while walking around the palace walls, overheard some persons conversing in the Hebrew language. Having ascertained that they had lately returned from Judea, he was informed by them, in answer to his eager enquiries, of the unfinished and desolate condition of Jerusalem, as well as the defenseless state of the returned exiles. The commissions previously given to Zerubbabel and Ezra extending only to the repair of the temple and private dwellings, the walls and gates of the city had been allowed to remain a mass of shattered ruins, as they had been laid by the Chaldean siege.

#### **™NEHEMIAH 1:4-11.**

#### HIS PRAYER.

- **4.** when I heard these words, that I sat down ... and mourned ... and fasted, and prayed The recital deeply affected the patriotic feelings of this good man, and no comfort could he find but in earnest and protracted prayer, that God would favor the purpose, which he seems to have secretly formed, of asking the royal permission to go to Jerusalem.
- **11.** *I was the king's cupbearer* This officer, in the ancient Oriental courts, was always a person of rank and importance; and, from the confidential nature of his duties and his frequent access to the royal presence, he possessed great influence.

#### NEHEMIAH 2:1-20.

# ARTAXERXES, UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE OF NEHEMIAH'S SADNESS, SENDS HIM WITH LETTERS AND A COMMISSION TO BUILD AGAIN THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

**1.** it came to pass in the month Nisan — This was nearly four months after he had learned the desolate and ruinous state of Jerusalem (\*\*\*\*Nehemiah 1:1). The reasons for so long a delay cannot be ascertained.

I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king — XENOPHON has particularly remarked about the polished and graceful manner in which the cupbearers of the Median, and consequently the Persian, monarchs performed their duty of presenting the wine to their royal master. Having washed the cup in the king's presence and poured into their left hand a little of the wine, which they drank in his presence, they then handed the cup to him, not grasped, but lightly held with the tips of their thumb and fingers. This description has received some curious illustrations from the monuments of Assyria and Persia, on which the cupbearers are frequently represented in the act of handing wine to the king.

**2-5.** the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad? — It was deemed highly unbecoming to appear in the royal presence with any weeds or signs of sorrow (\*\*Esther 4:2); and hence it was no wonder that the king was struck with the dejected air of his cupbearer, while that attendant, on his part, felt his agitation increased by his deep anxiety about the issue of the conversation so abruptly begun. But the piety and intense earnestness of the man immediately restored [Nehemiah] to calm self-possession and enabled him to communicate, first, the cause of his sadness (\*\*Nehemiah 2:3), and next, the patriotic wish of his heart to be the honored instrument of reviving the ancient glory of the city of his fathers.

**6-9.** *the queen also sitting by him* — As the Persian monarchs did not admit their wives to be present at their state festivals, this must have been a private occasion. The queen referred to was probably Esther, whose presence would tend greatly to embolden Nehemiah in stating his request; and through her influence, powerfully exerted it may be supposed, also by her sympathy with the patriotic design, his petition was granted, to go as deputy governor of Judea, accompanied by a military guard, and invested with full powers to obtain materials for the building in Jerusalem, as well as to get all requisite aid in promoting his enterprise.

I set him a time — Considering the great despatch made in raising the walls, it is probable that this leave of absence was limited at first to a year or six months, after which he returned to his duties in Shushan. The circumstance of fixing a set time for his return, as well as entrusting so important a work as the refortification of Jerusalem to his care, proves the high favor and confidence Nehemiah enjoyed at the Persian court, and the great estimation in which his services were held. At a later period he received a new commission for the better settlement of the affairs of Judea and remained governor of that province for twelve years (\*\*Nehemiah 5:14).

- **7.** *letters be given me to the governors beyond the river* The Persian empire at this time was of vast extent, reaching from the Indus to the Mediterranean. The Euphrates was considered as naturally dividing it into two parts, eastern and western (see on Ezra 5:3).
- **8.** according to the good hand of my God upon me The piety of Nehemiah appears in every circumstance. The conception of his patriotic design, the favorable disposition of the king, and the success of the undertaking are all ascribed to God.
- **10.** *Sanballat the Horonite* Horonaim being a town in Moab, this person, it is probable, was a Moabite.

**Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite** — The term used indicates him to have been a freed slave, elevated to some official dignity. These were district magistrates under the government of the satrap of Syria; and they seem to have been leaders of the Samaritan faction.

- **11, 12.** *So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days* Deeply affected with the desolations of Jerusalem, and uncertain what course to follow, he remained three days before informing any one of the object of his mission [\*\*\*Nehemiah 2:17,18]. At the end of the third day, accompanied with a few attendants, he made, under covert of night, a secret survey of the walls and gates [\*\*\*Nehemiah 2:13-15].
- **13-15.** *I went out by night by the gate of the valley* that is, the Jaffa gate, near the tower of Hippicus.

even before the dragon well — that is, fountain on the opposite side of the valley.

*and to the dung port* — the gate on the east of the city, through which there ran a common sewer to the brook Kedron and the valley of Hinnom.

**14.** *Then* — that is, after having passed through the gate of the Essenes.

*I went on to the gate of the fountain* — that is, Siloah, from which turning round the fount of Ophel.

to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass — that is, by the sides of this pool (Solomon's) there being water in the pool, and too much rubbish about it to permit the passage of the beast.

**15.** *Then went I up ... by the brook* — that is, Kedron.

and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned — the gate leading to the valley of Jehoshaphat, east of the city. He went out by this gate, and having made the circuit of the city, went in by it again [BARCLAY, City of the Great King].

**16-18.** *the rulers knew not* — The following day, having assembled the elders, Nehemiah produced his commission and exhorted them to assist in the work. The sight of his credentials, and the animating strain of his address and example, so revived their drooping spirits that they resolved immediately to commence the building, which they did, despite the bitter taunts and scoffing ridicule of some influential men.

#### **№ NEHEMIAH** 3:1-32.

## THE NAMES AND ORDER OF THEM THAT BUILDED THE WALL OF JERUSALEM.

**1.** *Then Eliashib the high priest* — the grandson of Jeshua, and the first high priest after the return from Babylon.

*rose up with his brethren the priests* — that is, set an example by commencing the work, their labors being confined to the sacred localities.

and they builded the sheep gate — close to the temple. Its name arose either from the sheep market, or from the pool of Bethesda, which was there (\*\*TD\*John 5:2). There the sheep were washed and then taken to the temple for sacrifice.

they sanctified it, and set up the doors — Being the common entrance into the temple, and the first part of the building repaired, it is probable that some religious ceremonies were observed in gratitude for its completion. "It was the first-fruits, and therefore, in the sanctification of it, the whole lump and building was sanctified" [POOLE].

**the tower of Meah** — This word is improperly considered, in our version, as the name of a tower; it is the *Hebrew* word for "a hundred," so that the meaning is: they not only rebuilt the sheep gate, but also a hundred cubits of the wall, which extended as far as the tower of Hananeel.

**2.** *next unto him builded the men of Jericho*, etc. — The wall was divided into portions, one of which was assigned respectively to each of the great families which had returned from the captivity. This distribution, by which the building was carried on in all parts simultaneously with great energy, was eminently favorable to despatch. "The villages where the restorers resided being mostly mentioned, it will be seen that this circumstance affords a general indication of the part of the wall upon

which they labored, such places being on that side of the city nearest their place of abode; the only apparent exception being, perhaps, where they repaired more than their piece. Having completed their first undertaking (if they worked any more), there being no more work to be done on the side next their residence, or having arrived after the repairs on that part of the city nearest them under operation were completed, they would go wherever their services would be required" [BARCLAY, *City of the Great King*].

- **8.** they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall or, "double wall," extending from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits in length, formerly broken down by Joash, king of Israel [4002] Chronicles 25:23], but afterwards rebuilt by Uzziah [4002] Chronicles 26:9], who made it so strong that the Chaldeans, finding it difficult to demolish, had left it standing.
- **12.** Shallum ... he and his daughters who were either heiresses or rich widows. They undertook to defray the expenses of a part of the wall next them.
- **13.** *the inhabitants of Zanoah* There were two towns so called in the territory of Judah ( diss Joshua 15:34,56).
- **14.** *Beth-haccerem* a city of Judah, supposed to be now occupied by Bethulia, on a hill of the same name, which is sometimes called also the mountain of the Franks, between Jerusalem and Tekoa.
- **16.** the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty that is, along the precipitous cliffs of Zion [BARCLAY].
- **19.** *at the turning of the wall* that is, the wall across the Tyropoeon, being a continuation of the first wall, connecting Mount Zion with the temple wall [BARCLAY].
- **25.** the tower which lieth out from the king's high house that is, watchtower by the royal palace [BARCLAY].
- **26.** *the Nethinims* Not only the priests and the Levites, but the common persons that belonged to the house of God, contributed to the

work. The names of those who repaired the walls of Jerusalem are commemorated because it was a work of piety and patriotism to repair the holy city. It was an instance of religion and courage to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve Him in quietness and safety, and, in the midst of so many enemies, go on with this work, piously confiding in the power of God to support them [BISHOP PATRICK].

### **№NEHEMIAH 4:1-6.**

# WHILE THE ENEMIES SCOFF, NEHEMIAH PRAYS TO GOD, AND CONTINUES THE WORK.

- 1. when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth The Samaritan faction showed their bitter animosity to the Jews on discovering the systematic design of refortifying Jerusalem. Their opposition was confined at first to scoffs and insults, in heaping which the governors made themselves conspicuous, and circulated all sorts of disparaging reflections that might increase the feelings of hatred and contempt for them in their own party. The weakness of the Jews in respect of wealth and numbers, the absurdity of their purpose apparently to reconstruct the walls and celebrate the feast of dedication in one day, the idea of raising the walls on their old foundations, as well as using the charred and mouldering debris of the ruins as the materials for the restored buildings, and the hope of such a parapet as they could raise being capable of serving as a fortress of defense these all afforded fertile subjects of hostile ridicule.
- **3.** if a fox go up The foxes were mentioned because they were known to infest in great numbers the ruined and desolate places in the mount and city of Zion ( Lamentations 5:18).
- **4, 5.** *Hear, O our God*; *for we are despised* The imprecations invoked here may seem harsh, cruel, and vindictive; but it must be remembered that Nehemiah and his friends regarded those Samaritan leaders as enemies to the cause of God and His people, and therefore as deserving to be visited with heavy judgments. The prayer, therefore, is to be considered as emanating from hearts in which neither hatred, revenge, nor any inferior passion, but a pious and patriotic zeal for the glory of God and the success of His cause, held the ascendant sway.

**6.** all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof — The whole circuit of the wall had been distributed in sections to various companies of the people, and was completed to the half of the intended height.

## **№ NEHEMIAH 4:7-23.**

#### HE SETS A WATCH.

7-21. But ... when Sanballat ... heard that the walls ... were made up, and ... the breaches ... stopped — The rapid progress of the fortifications, despite all their predictions to the contrary, goaded the Samaritans to frenzy. So they, dreading danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, formed a conspiracy to surprise them, demolish their works, and disperse or intimidate the builders. The plot being discovered, Nehemiah adopted the most energetic measures for ensuring the common safety, as well as the uninterrupted building of the walls. Hitherto the governor, for the sake of despatch, had set all his attendants and guards on the work — now half of them were withdrawn to be constantly in arms. The workmen labored with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other; and as, in so large a circuit, they were far removed from each other, Nehemiah (who was night and day on the spot, and, by his pious exhortations and example, animated the minds of his people) kept a trumpeter by his side, so that, on any intelligence of a surprise being brought to him, an alarm might be immediately sounded, and assistance rendered to the most distant detachment of their brethren. By these vigilant precautions, the counsels of the enemy were defeated, and the work was carried on apace. God, when He has important public work to do, never fails to raise up instruments for accomplishing it, and in the person of Nehemiah, who, to great natural acuteness and energy added fervent piety and heroic devotion, He provided a leader, whose high qualities fitted him for the demands of the crisis. Nehemiah's vigilance anticipated every difficulty, his prudent measures defeated every obstruction, and with astonishing rapidity this Jerusalem was made again "a city fortified."

## NEHEMIAH 5:1-5.

# THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN OF THEIR DEBT, MORTGAGE, AND BONDAGE.

1-5. there was a great cry of the people ... against their brethren — Such a crisis in the condition of the Jews in Jerusalem — fatigued with hard labor and harassed by the machinations of restless enemies, the majority of them poor, and the bright visions which hope had painted of pure happiness on their return to the land of their fathers being unrealized — must have been very trying to their faith and patience. But, in addition to these vexatious oppressions, many began to sink under a new and more grievous evil. The poor made loud complaints against the rich for taking advantage of their necessities, and grinding them by usurious exactions. Many of them had, in consequence of these oppressions, been driven to such extremities that they had to mortgage their lands and houses to enable them to pay the taxes to the Persian government, and ultimately even to sell their children for slaves to procure the means of subsistence. The condition of the poorer inhabitants was indeed deplorable; for, besides the deficient harvests caused by the great rains (\*\*Ezra 10:9; also \*\*\*Haggai 1:6-11), a dearth was now threatened by the enemy keeping such a multitude pent up in the city, and preventing the country people bringing in provisions.

**№ NEHEMIAH 5:6-19.** 

#### THE USURERS REBUKED.

**6-12.** *I* was very angry when *I* heard their cry and these words — When such disorders came to the knowledge of the governor, his honest indignation was roused against the perpetrators of the evil. Having summoned a public assembly, he denounced their conduct in terms of just

severity. He contrasted it with his own in redeeming with his money some of the Jewish exiles who, through debt or otherwise, had lost their personal liberty in Babylon. He urged the rich creditors not only to abandon their illegal and oppressive system of usury, but to restore the fields and vineyards of the poor, so that a remedy might be put to an evil the introduction of which had led to much actual disorder, and the continuance of which would inevitably prove ruinous to the newly restored colony, by violating the fundamental principles of the Hebrew constitution. The remonstrance was effectual. The conscience of the usurious oppressors could not resist the touching and powerful appeal. With mingled emotions of shame, contrition, and fear, they with one voice expressed their readiness to comply with the governor's recommendation. The proceedings were closed by the parties binding themselves by a solemn oath, administered by the priests, that they would redeem their pledge, as well as by the governor invoking, by the solemn and significant gesture of shaking a corner of his garment, a malediction on those who should violate it. The historian has taken care to record that the people did according to this promise.

- **14.** Moreover from the time that I was appointed ... I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor We have a remarkable proof both of the opulence and the disinterestedness of Nehemiah. As he declined, on conscientious grounds, to accept the lawful emoluments attached to his government, and yet maintained a style of princely hospitality for twelve years out of his own resources, it is evident that his office of cup-bearer at the court of Shushan must have been very lucrative.
- **15.** the former governors ... had taken ... bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver The income of Eastern governors is paid partly in produce, partly in money. "Bread" means all sorts of provision. The forty shekels of silver per day would amount to a yearly salary of about \$9,000.
- 17. Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews—
  In the East it has been always customary to calculate the expense of a king's or grandee's establishment, not by the amount of money disbursed, but by the quantity of provisions consumed (see 410021 Kings 4:22 4118918:19 21511 Ecclesiastes 5:11).

### **№ NEHEMIAH** 6:1-19.

### SANBALLAT PRACTISES AGAINST NEHEMIAH BY INSIDIOUS ATTEMPTS.

2-4. Then Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me— The Samaritan leaders, convinced that they could not overcome Nehemiah by open arms, resolved to gain advantage over him by deceit and stratagem. With this in view, under pretext of terminating their differences in an amicable manner, they invited him to a conference. The place of rendezvous was fixed "in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono." "In the villages" is, Hebrew, "in Cephirim," or "Chephirah," the name of a town in the territory of Benjamin (\*\*\*Toshua 9:17\*\*\*18:26\*\*). Nehemiah, however, apprehensive of some intended mischief, prudently declined the invitation. Though it was repeated four times, [Nehemiah's] uniform answer was that his presence could not be dispensed with from the important work in which he was engaged. This was one, though not the only, reason. The principal ground of his refusal was that his seizure or death at their hands would certainly put a stop to the further progress of the fortifications.

5-9. Then sent Sanballat his servant ... the fifth time with an open letter in his hand — In Western Asia, letters, after being rolled up like a map, are flattened to the breadth of an inch; and instead of being sealed, they are pasted at the ends. In Eastern Asia, the Persians make up their letters in the form of a roll about six inches long, and a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink, which resembles our printers' ink, but it is not so thick. Letters were, and are still, sent to persons of distinction in a bag or purse, and even to equals they are enclosed — the tie being made with a colored ribbon. But to inferiors, or persons who are to be treated contemptuously, the letters were sent open — that is, not enclosed in a bag. Nehemiah, accustomed to the punctillious ceremonial of the Persian court, would at once notice the want of the usual formality and know that it was from designed disrespect. The strain of the

letter was equally insolent. It was to this effect: The fortifications with which he was so busy were intended to strengthen his position in the view of a meditated revolt: he had engaged prophets to incite the people to enter into his design and support his claim to be their native king; and, to stop the circulation of such reports, which would soon reach the court, he was earnestly besought to come to the wished-for conference. Nehemiah, strong in the consciousness of his own integrity, and penetrating the purpose of this shallow artifice, replied that there were no rumors of the kind described, that the idea of a revolt and the stimulating addresses of hired demagogues were stories of the writer's own invention, and that he declined now, as formerly, to leave his work.

**10-14.** Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah, etc. — This man was the son of a priest, who was an intimate and confidential friend of Nehemiah. The young man claimed to be endowed with the gift of prophecy. Having been secretly bribed by Sanballat, he, in his pretended capacity of prophet, told Nehemiah that his enemies were that night to make an attempt upon his life. He advised him, at the same time, to consult his safety by concealing himself in the sanctuary, a crypt which, from its sanctity, was strong and secure. But the noble-minded governor determined at all hazards to remain at his post, and not bring discredit on the cause of God and religion by his unworthy cowardice in leaving the temple and city unprotected. This plot, together with a secret collusion between the enemy and the nobles of Judah who were favorably disposed towards the bad Samaritan in consequence of his Jewish connections Nehemiah 6:18), the undaunted courage and vigilance of Nehemiah were enabled, with the blessing of God, to defeat, and the erection of the walls thus built in troublous times (\*\*Daniel 9:25) was happily completed Nehemiah 6:15) in the brief space of fifty-two days. So rapid execution, even supposing some parts of the old wall standing, cannot be sufficiently accounted for, except by the consideration that the builders labored with the ardor of religious zeal, as men employed in the work of God.

## **№NEHEMIAH** 7:1-4.

# NEHEMIAH COMMITS THE CHARGE OF JERUSALEM TO HANANI AND HANANIAH.

- 2. I gave my brother Hanani ... charge over Jerusalem If, as is commonly supposed, Nehemiah was now contemplating a return to Shushan according to his promise, it was natural that he should wish to entrust the custody of Jerusalem and the management of its civic affairs to men on whose ability, experience, and fidelity, he could confide. Hanani, a near relative (\*\*\*Nehemiah 1:2), was one, and with him was associated, as colleague, Hananiah, "the ruler of the palace" — that is, the marshal or chamberlain of the viceregal court, which Nehemiah had maintained in Jerusalem. The high religious principle, as well as the patriotic spirit of those two men, recommended them as pre-eminently qualified for being invested with an official trust of such peculiar importance. The piety of Hananiah is especially mentioned as the ground of his eminent fidelity in the discharge of all his duties and, consequently, the reason of the confidence which Nehemiah reposed in him; for he was fully persuaded that Hananiah's fear of God would preserve him from those temptations to treachery and unfaithfulness which he was likely to encounter on the governor's departure from Jerusalem.
- 3. Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot, etc. In the East it is customary to open the gates of a city at sunrise, and to bar them at sunset a rule which is very rarely, and not except to persons of authority, infringed upon. Nehemiah recommended that the gates of Jerusalem should not be opened so early; a precaution necessary at a time when the enemy was practising all sorts of dangerous stratagems, to ensure that the inhabitants were all astir and enjoyed the benefit of clear broad daylight for observing the suspicious movements of any enemy. The propriety of regularly barring the gates at sunset was, in this instance,

accompanied with the appointment of a number of the people to act as sentinels, each mounting guard in front of his own house.

**4.** Now the city was large and great — The walls being evidently built on the old foundations, the city covered a large extent of surface, as all Oriental towns do, the houses standing apart with gardens and orchards intervening. This extent, in the then state of Jerusalem, was the more observable as the population was comparatively small, and the habitations of the most rude and simple construction — mere wooden sheds or coverings of loose, unmortared stones.

#### **№ NEHEMIAH** 7:5-38.

# GENEALOGY OF THOSE WHO CAME AT THE FIRST OUT OF BABYLON.

5. my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, etc. — The arrangement about to be described, though dictated by mere common prudence, is, in accordance with the pious feelings of Nehemiah, ascribed not to his own prudence or reflection, but to the grace of God prompting and directing him. He resolved to prepare a register of the returned exiles, containing an exact record of the family and ancestral abode of every individual. While thus directing his attention, he discovered a register of the first detachment who had come under the care of Zerubbabel. It is transcribed in the following verses, and differs in some few particulars from that given in Ezra 2:1-61. But the discrepancy is sufficiently accounted for from the different circumstances in which the two registers were taken; that of Ezra having been made up at Babylon, while that of Nehemiah was drawn out in Judea, after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. The lapse of so many years might well be expected to make a difference appear in the catalogue, through death or other causes; in particular, one person being, according to Jewish custom, called by different names. Thus Hariph (\*\*Nehemiah 7:24) is the same as Jorah Ezra 2:18), Sia (Nehemiah 7:47) the same as Siaha (Ezra 2:44), etc. Besides other purposes to which this genealogy of the nobles, rulers, and people was subservient, one leading object contemplated by it was to

ascertain with accuracy the parties to whom the duty legally belonged of ministering at the altar and conducting the various services of the temple. For guiding to exact information in this important point of enquiry, the possession of the old register of Zerubbabel was invaluable.

#### **№**NEHEMIAH 7:39-73.

#### OF THE PRIESTS.

- **39.** The priests It appears that only four of the courses of the priests returned from the captivity; and that the course of Abia (\*\*Luke 1:5) is not in the list. But it must be noticed that these four courses were afterwards divided into twenty-four, which retained the names of the original courses which David appointed.
- **70.** And some of the chief of the fathers, etc. With Nehemiah 7:69 the register ends, and the thread of Nehemiah's history is resumed. He was the *tirshatha*, or governor, and the liberality displayed by him and some of the leading men for the suitable equipment of the ministers of religion, forms the subject of the remaining portion of the chapter. Their donations consisted principally in garments. This would appear a singular description of gifts to be made by any one among us; but, in the East, a present of garments, or of any article of use, is conformable to the prevailing sentiments and customs of society.

**drams of gold** — that is, "darics." A daric was a gold coin of ancient Persia.

- **71.** *pound of silver* that is, *mina* (sixty shekels, or about \$45).
- **73.** So ... all Israel, dwelt in their cities The utility of these genealogical registers was thus found in guiding to a knowledge of the cities and localities in each tribe to which every family anciently belonged.

#### NEHEMIAH 8:1-8.

#### RELIGIOUS MANNER OF READING AND HEARING THE LAW.

1. all the people gathered themselves together as one man — The occasion was the celebration of the feast of the seventh month (\*\*\*Nehemiah 7:73). The beginning of every month was ushered in as a sacred festival; but this, the commencement of the seventh month, was kept with distinguished honor as "the feast of trumpets," which extended over two days. It was the first day of the seventh ecclesiastical year, and the new year's day of the Jewish civil year, on which account it was held as "a great day." The place where the general concourse of people was held was "at the water gate," on the south rampart. Through that gate the Nethinims or Gibeonites brought water into the temple, and there was a spacious area in front of it.

they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses — He had come to Jerusalem twelve or thirteen years previous to Nehemiah. He either remained there or had returned to Babylon in obedience to the royal order, and for the discharge of important duties. He had returned along with Nehemiah, but in a subordinate capacity. From the time of Nehemiah's appointment to the dignity of tirshatha, Ezra had retired into private life. Although cordially and zealously co-operating with the former patriot in his important measures of reform, the pious priest had devoted his time and attention principally toward producing a complete edition of the canonical Scriptures. The public reading of the Scriptures was required by the law to be made every seventh year; but during the long period of the captivity this excellent practice, with many others, had fallen into neglect, till revived, on this occasion. That there was a strong and general desire among the returned exiles in Jerusalem to hear the word of God read to them indicates a greatly improved tone of religious feeling.

- **4.** *Ezra* ... *stood upon a pulpit of wood* Not made in the form known to us, but only a raised scaffold or platform, broad enough to allow fourteen persons to stand with ease upon it. Ezra's duty was very laborious, as he continued reading aloud from morning until midday, but his labor was lightened by the aid of the other priests present. Their presence was of importance, partly to show their cordial agreement with Ezra's declaration of divine truth; and partly to take their share with him in the important duty of publicly reading and expounding the Scripture.
- **5.** when he opened it, all the people stood up This attitude they assumed either from respect to God's word, or, rather, because the reading was prefaced by a solemn prayer, which was concluded by a general expression of "Amen, Amen."
- **7, 8.** caused the people to understand the law ... gave the sense Commentators are divided in opinion as to the import of this statement. Some think that Ezra read the law in pure *Hebrew*, while the Levites, who assisted him, translated it sentence by sentence into Chaldee, the vernacular dialect which the exiles spoke in Babylon. Others maintain that the duty of these Levites consisted in explaining to the people, many of whom had become very ignorant, what Ezra had read.

### NEHEMIAH 8:9-15.

#### THE PEOPLE COMFORTED.

9, 10. This day is holy unto the Lord ... mourn not, nor weep — A deep sense of their national sins, impressively brought to their remembrance by the reading of the law and its denunciations, affected the hearts of the people with penitential sorrow. But notwithstanding the painful remembrances of their national sins which the reading of the law awakened, the people were exhorted to cherish the feelings of joy and thankfulness associated with a sacred festival (see on Leviticus 23:24). By sending portions of it to their poorer brethren (Deuteronomy 16:11,14 Deuteronomy 16:11,14 Deuteronomy 16:10), they would also enable them to participate in the public rejoicings.

## **№** NEHEMIAH 8:16-18.

#### THEY KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

**16.** the people went forth, and brought ... and made themselves booths, etc. — (See on \*\*EE\*Leviticus 23:34; see on \*\*Deuteronomy 16:13).

This national feast had not been neglected for so protracted a period. Besides that it is impossible that such a flagrant disregard of the law could have been tolerated by Samuel, David, and other pious rulers, its observance is sufficiently indicated (4002) Kings 8:2,65 4002 Chronicles 7:9) and expressly recorded (4002) Ezra 3:4). But the meaning is, that the popular feelings had never been raised to such a height of enthusiastic joy since the time of their entrance into Canaan, as now on their return after a long and painful captivity.

**18.** Also day by day ... he read in the book of the law of God — This was more than was enjoined (\*\*Deuteronomy 31:10-12), and arose from the exuberant zeal of the time.

on the eighth day was a solemn assembly — This was the last and great day of the feast (see on Numbers 29:35). In later times, other ceremonies which increased the rejoicing were added (\*\*\*\*John 7:37).

## **№ NEHEMIAH** 9:1-3.

#### A SOLEMN FAST AND REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE.

- 1. Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month that is, on the second day after the close of the feast of tabernacles, which commenced on the fourteenth and terminated on the twenty-second (\*\*\*Leviticus 23:34-37). The day immediately after that feast, the twenty-third, had been occupied in separating the delinquents from their unlawful wives, as well, perhaps, as in taking steps for keeping aloof in future from unnecessary intercourse with the heathen around them. For although this necessary measure of reformation had been begun formerly by Ezra ( Ezra 10:1-17), and satisfactorily accomplished at that time (in so far as he had information of the existing abuses, or possessed the power of correcting them) yet it appears that this reformatory work of Ezra had been only partial and imperfect. Many cases of delinquency had escaped, or new defaulters had appeared who had contracted those forbidden alliances; and there was an urgent necessity for Nehemiah again to take vigorous measures for the removal of a social evil which threatened the most disastrous consequences to the character and prosperity of the chosen people. A solemn fast was now observed for the expression of those penitential and sorrowful feelings which the reading of the law had produced, but which had been suppressed during the celebration of the feast; and the sincerity of their repentance was evinced by the decisive steps taken for the correction of existing abuses in the matter of marriage.
- **2.** confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers Not only did they read in their recent sufferings a punishment of the national apostasy and guilt, but they had made themselves partakers of their fathers' sins by following the same evil ways.
- **3.** they ... read in the book of the law Their extraordinary zeal led them to continue this as before.

one fourth part of the day — that is, for three hours, twelve hours being the acknowledged length of the Jewish day (\*\*John 11:9). This solemn diet of worship, which probably commenced at the morning sacrifice, was continued for six hours, that is, till the time of the evening sacrifice. The worship which they gave to the Lord their God, at this season of solemn national humiliation, consisted in acknowledging and adoring His great mercy in the forgiveness of their great and multiplied offenses, in delivering them from the merited judgments which they had already experienced or which they had reason to apprehend, in continuing amongst them the light and blessings of His word and worship, and in supplicating the extension of His grace and protection.

### **\*\*\*NEHEMIAH 9:4-38.**

# THE LEVITES CONFESS GOD'S MANIFOLD GOODNESS, AND THEIR OWN WICKEDNESS.

**4.** Then stood up upon the stairs — the scaffolds or pulpits, whence the Levites usually addressed the people. There were probably several placed at convenient distances, to prevent confusion and the voice of one drowning those of the others.

cried with a loud voice unto the Lord — Such an exertion, of course, was indispensably necessary, in order that the speakers might be heard by the vast multitude congregated in the open air. But these speakers were then engaged in expressing their deep sense of sin, as well as fervently imploring the forgiving mercy of God; and "crying with a loud voice" was a natural accompaniment of this extraordinary prayer meeting, as violent gestures and vehement tones are always the way in which the Jews, and other people in the East, have been accustomed to give utterance to deep and earnest feelings.

**5.** Then the Levites ... said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God — If this prayer was uttered by all these Levites in common, it must have been prepared and adopted beforehand, perhaps, by Ezra; but it may only embody the substance of the confession and thanksgiving.

**6-38.** Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, etc. — In this solemn and impressive prayer, in which they make public confession of their sins, and deprecate the judgments due to the transgressions of their fathers, they begin with a profound adoration of God, whose supreme majesty and omnipotence is acknowledged in the creation, preservation, and government of all. Then they proceed to enumerate His mercies and distinguished favors to them as a nation, from the period of the call of their great ancestor and the gracious promise intimated to him in the divinely bestowed name of Abraham, a promise which implied that he was to be the Father of the faithful, the ancestor of the Messiah, and the honored individual in whose seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. Tracing in full and minute detail the signal instances of divine interposition for their deliverance and their interest — in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage — their miraculous passage through the Red Sea — the promulgation of His law — the forbearance and long-suffering shown them amid their frequent rebellions — the signal triumphs given them over their enemies — their happy settlement in the promised land — and all the extraordinary blessings, both in the form of temporal prosperity and of religious privilege, with which His paternal goodness had favored them above all other people, they charge themselves with making a miserable requital. They confess their numerous and determined acts of disobedience. They read, in the loss of their national independence and their long captivity, the severe punishment of their sins. They acknowledge that, in all heavy and continued judgments upon their nation, God had done right, but they had done wickedly. And in throwing themselves on His mercy, they express their purpose of entering into a national covenant, by which they pledge themselves to dutiful obedience in future

**22.** *Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations* — that is, put them in possession of a rich country, of an extensive territory, which had been once occupied by a variety of princes and people.

and didst divide them into corners — that is, into tribes. The propriety of the expression arose from the various districts touching at points or angles on each other.

- the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon Heshbon being the capital city, the passage should run thus: "the land of Sihon or the land of the king of Heshbon."
- **32.** Now therefore, our God ... who keepest covenant and mercy God's fidelity to His covenant is prominently acknowledged, and well it might; for their whole national history bore testimony to it. But as this could afford them little ground of comfort or of hope while they were so painfully conscious of having violated it, they were driven to seek refuge in the riches of divine grace; and hence the peculiar style of invocation here adopted: "Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy."
- **36.** *Behold*, *we are servants this day* Notwithstanding their happy restoration to their native land, they were still tributaries of a foreign prince whose officers ruled them. They were not, like their fathers, free tenants of the land which God gave them.
- **37.** it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins Our agricultural labors have been resumed in the land we plough, and sow, and till, and Thou blessest the work of our hands with a plentiful return; but this increase is not for ourselves, as once it was, but for our foreign masters, to whom we have to pay large and oppressive tribute.
- *they have dominion over our bodies* Their persons were liable to be pressed, at the mandate of their Assyrian conqueror, into the service of his empire, either in war or in public works. And our beasts are taken to do their pleasure.
- **38.** we make a sure covenant, and write that is, subscribe or sign it. This written document would exercise a wholesome influence in restraining their backslidings or in animating them to duty, by being a witness against them if in the future they were unfaithful to their engagements.

## **№ NEHEMIAH 10:1-27.**

#### THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO SEALED THE COVENANT.

**1.** Nehemiah, the Tirshatha — His name was placed first in the roll on account of his high official rank, as deputy of the Persian monarch. All classes were included in the subscription; but the people were represented by their elders (\*\*Nehemiah 10:14), as it would have been impossible for every one in the country to have been admitted to the sealing.

#### **№NEHEMIAH 10:28.**

# THE REST OF THE PEOPLE BOUND THEMSELVES TO OBSERVE IT.

Those who were not present at the sealing ratified the covenant by giving their assent, either in words or by lifting up their hands, and bound themselves, by a solemn oath, to walk in God's law, imprecating a curse upon themselves in the event of their violating it.

#### NEHEMIAH 10:29-39.

#### POINTS OF THE COVENANT.

**29-37.** *to observe and do all the commandments*, etc. — This national covenant, besides containing a solemn pledge of obedience to the divine law generally, specified their engagement to some particular duties, which the character and exigency of the times stamped with great urgency and importance, and which may be summed up under the following heads: that they abstain from contracting matrimonial alliances with the heathen; that they would rigidly observe the sabbath; that they would let the land enjoy

rest and remit debts every seventh year; that they would contribute to the maintenance of the temple service, the necessary expenses of which had formerly been defrayed out of the treasury of the temple ( 1 Chronicles 26:20), and when it was drained, given out from the king's privy purse ( 1 Chronicles 31:3); and that they would make an orderly payment of the priests' dues. A minute and particular enumeration of the first-fruits was made, that all might be made fully aware of their obligations, and that none might excuse themselves on pretext of ignorance from withholding taxes which the poverty of many, and the irreligion of others, had made them exceedingly prone to evade.

- **32.** the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God The law required every individual above twenty years of age to pay half a shekel to the sanctuary. But in consequence of the general poverty of the people, occasioned by war and captivity, this tribute was reduced to a third part of a shekel.
- **34.** we cast the lots ... for the wood offering The carrying of the wood had formerly been the work of the Nethinims. But few of them having returned, the duty was assigned as stated in the text. The practice afterwards rose into great importance, and Josephus speaks [*The Wars of the Jews*, 2.17, sect. 6] of the Xylophoria, or certain stated and solemn times at which the people brought up wood to the temple.
- 38. the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes This was a prudential arrangement. The presence of a dignified priest would ensure the peaceful delivery of the tithes; at least his superintendence and influence would tend to prevent the commission of any wrong in the transaction, by the people deceiving the Levites, or the Levites defrauding the priests.
- *the tithe of the tithes* The Levites, having received a tenth of all land produce, were required to give a tenth of this to the priests. The Levites were charged with the additional obligation to carry the tithes when received, and deposit them in the temple stores, for the use of the priests.
- **39.** and we will not forsake the house of our God This solemn pledge was repeated at the close of the covenant as an expression of the intense zeal by which the people at this time were animated for the glory and the

worship of God. Under the pungent feelings of sorrow and repentance for their national sins, of which apostasy from the service of the true God was the chief, and under the yet fresh and painful remembrance of their protracted captivity, they vowed, and (feeling the impulse of ardent devotion as well as of gratitude for their restoration) flattered themselves they would never forget their vow, to be the Lord's.

## NEHEMIAH 11:1,2.

# THE RULERS, VOLUNTARY MEN, AND EVERY TENTH MAN CHOSEN BY LOT, DWELL AT JERUSALEM.

1. the rulers ... dwelt at Jerusalem — That city being the metropolis of the country, it was right and proper that the seat of government should be there. But the exigency of the times required that special measures should be taken to insure the residence of an adequate population for the custody of the buildings and the defense of the city. From the annoyances of restless and malignant enemies, who tried every means to demolish the rising fortifications, there was some danger attending a settlement in Jerusalem. Hence the greater part of the returned exiles, in order to earn as well as secure the rewards of their duty, preferred to remain in the country or the provincial towns. To remedy this state of things, it was resolved to select every tenth man of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin by lot, to become a permanent inhabitant of the capital. The necessity of such an expedient commended it to the general approval. It was the more readily submitted to because the lot was resorted to on all the most critical conjunctures of the Jewish history, and regarded by the people as a divine decision (Proverbs 18:18). This awakened strongly the national spirit; and patriotic volunteers came forward readily to meet the wishes of the authorities, a service which, implying great self-denial as well as courage, was reckoned in the circumstances of so much importance as entitled them to the public gratitude. No wonder that the conduct of these volunteers drew forth the tribute of public admiration; for they sacrificed their personal safety and comfort for the interests of the community because Jerusalem was at that time a place against which the enemies of the Jews were directing a thousand plots. Therefore, residence in it at such a juncture was attended with expense and various annoyances from which a country life was entirely free.

### **№NEHEMIAH** 11:3-36.

#### THEIR NAMES.

**3.** *the chief of the province* — that is, Judea. Nehemiah speaks of it, as it then was, a small appendix of the Persian empire.

in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities — The returned exiles, who had come from Babylon, repaired generally, and by a natural impulse, to the lands and cities throughout the country which had been anciently assigned them.

Israel — This general name, which designated the descendants of Jacob before the unhappy division of the two kingdoms under Rehoboam, was restored after the captivity, the Israelites being then united with the Jews, and all traces of their former separation being obliterated. Although the majority of the returned exiles belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they are here called Israel because a large number out of all the tribes were now intermingled, and these were principally the occupiers of the rural villages, while none but those of Judah and Benjamin resided in Jerusalem.

*the Levites* — These took possession of the cities allotted to them according as they had opportunity.

*the Nethinims* — A certain order of men, either Gibeonites or persons joined with them, who were devoted to the service of God.

**4.** at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah — The discrepancy that is apparent between this (\*\*\*Nehemiah 11:4-36) and the list formerly given in \*\*\*The Chronicles 9:1-9, arose not only from the Jewish and Oriental practice of changing or modifying the names of persons from a change of circumstances, but from the alterations that must have been produced in the course of time. The catalogue in Chronicles contains those who came with the first detachment of returned exiles, while the list in this passage probably included also those who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah; or it was most probably made out afterwards, when several had died, or some, who had been inserted as going on the journey, remained, and others came in their stead.

- 9. overseer that is, "captain" or "chief."
- **11.** *the ruler of the house of God* assistant of the high priest (\*\*MED\*\*Numbers 3:32 \*\*MED\*\*1 Chronicles 9:11 \*\*MED\*\*2 Chronicles 19:11).
- **16.** the oversight of the outward business of the house of God that is, those things which were done outside, or in the country, such as the collecting of the provisions ( Chronicles 26:29).
- **17.** the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer that is, the leader of the choir which chanted the public praise at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice. That service was always accompanied by some appropriate psalm, the sacred music being selected and guided by the person named.
- **22.** the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God They were selected to take charge of providing those things which were required for the interior of the temple and its service, while to others was committed the care of the "outward business of the house of God" (\*\*IIIO\*Nehemiah 11:16). This duty was very properly assigned to the sons of Asaph; for, though they were Levites, they did not repair in rotation to Jerusalem, as the other ministers of religion. Being permanent residents, and employed in duties which were comparatively light and easy, they were very competent to undertake this charge.
- **23.** it was the king's commandment It was the will of the Persian monarch in issuing his edict that the temple service should be revived in all its religious fullness and solemnity. As this special provision for the singers is said to have been by the king's commandment, the order was probably given at the request or suggestion of Ezra or Nehemiah.
- **24.** Pethahiah ... was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people This person was entrusted with judicial power, either for the interest, or by the appointment, of the Persian monarch, and his duty consisted either in adjusting cases of civil dispute, or in regulating fiscal concerns.
- **25.** *some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba* The whole region in which the villages here mentioned were situated had been completely devastated by the Chaldean invasion; and, therefore, it must be

assumed, that these villages had been rebuilt before "the children dwelt in them."

**36.** And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin — Rather, there were divisions for the Levites; that is, those who were not resident in Jerusalem were distributed in settlements throughout the provinces of Judah and Benjamin.

#### **№ NEHEMIAH 12:1-9.**

#### PRIESTS AND LEVITES WHO CAME UP WITH ZERUBBABEL.

1. these are the priests — according to Nehemiah 12:7, "the chief of the priests," the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided (Thronicles 24:1-20). Only four of the courses returned from the captivity (Nehemiah 7:39-42 Ezra 2:36-39). But these were divided by Zerubbabel, or Jeshua, into the original number of twenty-four. Twenty-two only are enumerated here, and no more than twenty in Nehemiah 12:12-21. The discrepancy is due to the extremely probable circumstance that two of the twenty-four courses had become extinct in Babylon; for none belonging to them are reported as having returned (Nehemiah 12:2-5). Hattush and Maadiah may be omitted in the account of those persons' families (Nehemiah 12:12), for these had no sons.

#### **Shealtiel** — or Salathiel.

**Ezra** — This was most likely a different person from the pious and patriotic leader. If he were the same person, he would now have reached a very patriarchal age — and this longevity would doubtless be due to his eminent piety and temperance, which are greatly conducive to the prolongation of life, but, above all, to the special blessing of God, who had preserved and strengthened him for the accomplishment of the important work he was called upon to undertake in that critical period of the Church's history.

- **4.** *Abijah* one of the ancestors of John the Baptist (\*\*\*Luke 1:5).
- **9.** their brethren, were over against them in the watches that is, according to some, their stations the places where they stood when officiating "ward over against ward" (\*\*\*\*Nehemiah 12:24); or, according to others, in alternate watches, in course of rotation.

## NEHEMIAH 12:10-47.

#### SUCCESSION OF THE HIGH PRIESTS.

- **10.** *Jeshua begat Joiakim*, etc. This enumeration was of great importance, not only as establishing their individual purity of descent, but because the chronology of the Jews was henceforth to be reckoned, not as formerly by the reigns of their kings, but by the successions of their high priests.
- 11. Jaddua It is an opinion entertained by many commentators that this person was the high priest whose dignified appearance, solemn manner, and splendid costume overawed and interested so strongly the proud mind of Alexander the Great; and if he were not this person (as some object that this Jaddua was not in office till a considerable period after the death of Nehemiah), it might probably be his father, called by the same name.
- **12.** *in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers* As there had been priests in the days of Jeshua, so in the time of Joiakim, the son and successor of Jeshua, the sons of those persons filled the priestly office in the place of their fathers, some of whom were still alive, though many were dead.
- **23.** The sons of Levi ... were written in the book of the chronicles that is, the public registers in which the genealogies were kept with great regularity and exactness.
- 27-43. at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem This ceremony of consecrating the wall and gates of the city was an act of piety on the part of Nehemiah, not merely to thank God in a general way for having been enabled to bring the building to a happy completion, but especially because that city was the place which He had chosen. It also contained the temple which was hallowed by the manifestation of His presence, and anew set apart to His service. It was on these accounts that Jerusalem was called "the holy city," and by this public and solemn act of religious observance, after a long period of neglect and desecration, it was, as it were, restored to its rightful proprietor. The dedication consisted in a

solemn ceremonial, in which the leading authorities, accompanied by the Levitical singers, summoned from all parts of the country, and by a vast concourse of people, marched in imposing procession round the city walls, and, pausing at intervals to engage in united praises, prayer, and sacrifices, supplicated the continued presence, favor, and blessing on "the holy city." "The assembly convened near Jaffa Gate, where the procession commences. Then (Nehemiah 12:31) I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall (near the Valley Gate), and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall towards the dung gate (through Bethzo). And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah. And (Nehemiah 12:37) at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they (descending by the Tower of Siloam on the interior, and then reascending) went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward (by the staircase of the rampart, having descended to dedicate the fountain structures). And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them (both parties having started from the junction of the first and second walls), and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall (beyond the corner gate). And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate (and the gate of Benjamin), and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate; and they stood still in the prison gate (or high gate, at the east end of the bridge). So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and half of the rulers with me (having thus performed the circuit of the investing walls), and arrived in the courts of the temple" [BARCLAY, City of the Great King].

**43.** *the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off* — The events of the day, viewed in connection with the now repaired and beautified state of the city, raised the popular feeling to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and the fame of their rejoicings was spread far and near.

**44.** portions of the law — that is, "prescribed by the law."

for Judah rejoiced for the priests and ... Levites that waited — The cause of this general satisfaction was either the full restoration of the temple

service and the reorganized provision for the permanent support of the ministry, or it was the pious character and eminent gifts of the guardians of religion.

- 45. the singers and the porters kept ... the ward of the purification that is, took care that no unclean person was allowed to enter within the precincts of the sacred building. This was the official duty of the porters (423) 2 Chronicles 23:19), with whom, owing to the pressure of circumstances, it was deemed expedient that the singers should be associated as assistants.
- **47.** *all Israel* ... *sanctified holy things unto the Levites* The people, selecting the tithes and first-fruits, devoted them to the use of the Levites, to whom they belonged by appointment of the law. The Levites acted in the same way with the tithes due from them to the priests. Thus all classes of the people displayed a conscientious fidelity in paying the dues to the temple and the servants of God who were appointed to minister in it.

#### **№ NEHEMIAH 13:1-9.**

# UPON THE READING OF THE LAW SEPARATION IS MADE FROM THE MIXED MULTITUDE.

1. On that day — This was not immediately consequent on the dedication of the city wall and gates, but after Nehemiah's return from the Persian court to Jerusalem, his absence having extended over a considerable period. The transaction here described probably took place on one of the periodical occasions for the public readings of the law, when the people's attention was particularly directed to some violations of it which called for immediate correction. There is another instance afforded, in addition to those which have already fallen under our notice, of the great advantages resulting from the public and periodical reading of the divine law. It was an established provision for the religious instruction of the people, for diffusing a knowledge and a reverence for the sacred volume, as well as for removing those errors and corruptions which might, in the course of time, have crept in.

the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever — that is, not be incorporated into the Israelitish kingdom, nor united in marriage relations with that people (Deuteronomy 23:3,4). This appeal to the authority of the divine law led to a dissolution of all heathen alliances (Nehemiah 9:2

**4, 5.** *before this* — The practice of these mixed marriages, in open neglect or violation of the law, had become so common, that even the pontifical house, which ought to have set a better example, was polluted by such an impure mixture.

Eliashib the priest ... was allied unto Tobiah — This person was the high priest (\*\*Nehemiah 13:28; also \*\*Nehemiah 3:1), who, by virtue of his dignified office, had the superintendence and control of the apartments attached to the temple. The laxity of his principles, as well as of his

practice, is sufficiently apparent from his contracting a family connection with so notorious an enemy of Israel as Tobiah. But his obsequious attentions had carried him much farther; for to accommodate so important a person as Tobiah on his occasional visits to Jerusalem, Eliashib had provided him a splendid apartment in the temple. The introduction of so gross an impropriety can be accounted for in no other way than by supposing that in the absence of the priests and the cessation of the services, the temple was regarded as a common public building, which might, in the circumstances, be appropriated as a palatial residence.

**6-9.** But in all this was not I at Jerusalem — Eliashib (concluding that, as Nehemiah had departed from Jerusalem, and, on the expiry of his allotted term of absence, had resigned his government, he had gone not to return) began to use great liberties, and, there being none left whose authority or frown he dreaded, allowed himself to do things most unworthy of his sacred office, and which, though in unison with his own irreligious character, he would not have dared to attempt during the residence of the pious governor. Nehemiah resided twelve years as governor of Jerusalem, and having succeeded in repairing and refortifying the city, he at the end of that period returned to his duties in Shushan. How long [Nehemiah] remained there is not expressly said, but "after certain days," which is a Scripture phraseology for a year or a number of years, he obtained leave to resume the government of Jerusalem; to his deep mortification and regret, he found matters in the neglected and disorderly state here described. Such gross irregularities as were practiced, such extraordinary corruptions as had crept in, evidently imply the lapse of a considerable time. Besides, they exhibit the character of Eliashib, the high priest, in a most unfavorable light; for while he ought, by his office, to have preserved the inviolable sanctity of the temple and its furniture, his influence had been directly exercised for evil; especially he had given permission and countenance to a most indecent outrage — the appropriation of the best apartments in the sacred building to a heathen governor, one of the worst and most determined enemies of the people and the worship of God. The very first reform Nehemiah on his second visit resolved upon, was the stopping of this gross profanation [by Eliashib]. The chamber which had been polluted by the residence of the idolatrous Ammonite was, after undergoing the

process of ritual purification (\*\*Numbers 15:9), restored to its proper use — a storehouse for the sacred vessels.

## 10310NEHEMIAH 13:10-14.

#### NEHEMIAH REFORMS THE OFFICERS IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

10-13. And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given **them** — The people, disgusted with the malversations of Eliashib, or the lax and irregular performance of the sacred rites, withheld the tithes, so that the ministers of religion were compelled for their livelihood to withdraw to their patrimonial possessions in the country. The temple services had ceased; all religious duties had fallen into neglect. The money put into the sacred treasury had been squandered in the entertainment of an Ammonite heathen, an open and contemptuous enemy of God and His people. The return of the governor put an end to these disgraceful and profane proceedings. He administered a sharp rebuke to those priests to whom the management of the temple and its services was committed, for the total neglect of their duties, and the violation of the solemn promises which they had made to him at his departure. He upbraided them with the serious charge of having not only withheld from men their dues, but of having robbed God, by neglecting the care of His house and service. And thus having roused them to a sense of duty and incited them to testify their godly sorrow for their criminal negligence by renewed devotedness to their sacred work, Nehemiah restored the temple services. He recalled the dispersed Levites to the regular discharge of their duties; while the people at large, perceiving that their contributions would be no longer perverted to improper uses, willingly brought in their tithes as formerly. Men of integrity and good report were appointed to act as trustees of the sacred treasures, and thus order, regularity, and active service were re-established in the temple.

## **№ 13:15-31.**

#### THE VIOLATION OF THE SABBATH.

15-22. In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath — The cessation of the temple services had been necessarily followed by a public profanation of the Sabbath, and this had gone so far that labor was carried on in the fields, and fish brought to the markets on the sacred day. Nehemiah took the decisive step of ordering the city gates to be shut, and not to be opened, till the Sabbath was past; and in order to ensure the faithful execution of this order, he stationed some of his own servants as guards, to prevent the introduction of any commodities on that day. On the merchants and various dealers finding admission denied them, they set up booths outside the walls, in hopes of still driving a traffic with the peasantry; but the governor threatened, if they continued, to adopt violent measures for their removal. For this purpose a body of Levites was stationed as sentinels at the gate, with discretionary powers to protect the sanctification of the Sabbath.

**24.** could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people — a mongrel dialect imbibed from their mothers, together with foreign principles and habits.

**25.** *cursed them* — that is, pronounced on them an anathema which entailed excommunication.

**smote** ... and plucked off their hair — To cut off the hair of offenders seems to be a punishment rather disgraceful than severe; yet it is supposed that pain was added to disgrace, and that they tore off the hair with violence as if they were plucking a bird alive.

#### THE BOOK OF

# **ESTHER**

Commentary by Robert Jamieson

# CHAPTER 1

**™ESTHER** 1:1-22.

#### AHASUERUS MAKES ROYAL FEASTS.

- **1.** *Ahasuerus* It is now generally agreed among learned men that the Ahasuerus mentioned in this episode is the Xerxes who figures in Grecian history.
- 3. made a feast unto all his princes and his servants Banquets on so grand a scale, and extending over so great a period, have been frequently provided by the luxurious monarchs of Eastern countries, both in ancient and modern times. The early portion of this festive season, however, seems to have been dedicated to amusement, particularly an exhibition of the magnificence and treasures of the court, and it was closed by a special feast of seven days' continuance, given within the gardens of the royal palace. The ancient palace of Susa has been recently disinterred from an incumbent mass of earth and ruins; and in that palace, which is, beyond all doubt, the actual edifice referred to in this passage, there is a great hall of marble pillars. "The position of the great colonnade corresponds with the account here given. It stands on an elevation in the center of the mound, the remainder of which we may well imagine to have been occupied, after the Persian fashion, with a garden and fountains. Thus the colonnade would represent the 'court of the garden of the king's palace' with its 'pillars of marble.' I am even inclined to believe the expression, 'Shushan

the palace,' applies especially to this portion of the existing ruins, in contradistinction to the citadel and the city of Shushan' [Loftus, *Chaldaea and Susiana*].

**6.** Where were white, green, and blue hangings, etc. — The fashion, in the houses of the great, on festive occasions, was to decorate the chambers from the middle of the wall downward with damask or velvet hangings of variegated colors suspended on hooks, or taken down at pleasure.

*the beds were of gold and silver* — that is, the couches on which, according to Oriental fashion, the guests reclined, and which were either formed entirely of gold and silver or inlaid with ornaments of those costly metals, stood on an elevated floor of parti-colored marble.

- 7. they gave them drink in vessels of gold There is reason to believe from this account, as well as from Esther 5:6 TESTHER 5:6, where the drinking of wine occupies by far the most prominent place in the description, that this was a banquet rather than a feast.
- **9.** Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women The celebration was double; for, as according to the Oriental fashion, the sexes do not intermingle in society, the court ladies were entertained in a separate apartment by the queen.
- **10-12.** On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine As the feast days advanced, the drinking was more freely indulged in, so that the close was usually marked by great excesses of revelry.

he commanded ... the seven chamberlains — These were the eunuchs who had charge of the royal harem. The refusal of Vashti to obey an order which required her to make an indecent exposure of herself before a company of drunken revellers, was becoming both the modesty of her sex and her rank as queen; for, according to Persian customs, the queen, even more than the wives of other men, was secluded from the public gaze. Had not the king's blood been heated with wine, or his reason overpowered by force of offended pride, he would have perceived that his own honor, as well as hers, was consulted by her dignified conduct.

**13-19.** *Then the king said to the wise men* — These were probably the magi, without whose advice as to the proper time of doing a thing the

Persian kings never did take any step whatever; and the persons named in Esther 1:14 were the "seven counsellors" (compare Ezra 7:14) who formed the state ministry. The combined wisdom of all, it seems, was enlisted to consult with the king what course should be taken after so unprecedented an occurrence as Vashti's disobedience of the royal summons. It is scarcely possible for us to imagine the astonishment produced by such a refusal in a country and a court where the will of the sovereign was absolute. The assembled grandees were petrified with horror at the daring affront. Alarm for the consequences that might ensue to each of them in his own household next seized on their minds; and the sounds of bacchanalian revelry were hushed into deep and anxious consultation what punishment to inflict on the refractory queen. But a purpose was to be served by the flattery of the king and the enslavement of all women. The counsellors were too intoxicated or obsequious to oppose the courtly advice of Memucan was unanimously resolved, with a wise regard to the public interests of the nation, that the punishment of Vashti could be nothing short of degradation from her royal dignity. The doom was accordingly pronounced and made known in all parts of the empire.

**▼730** ESTHER 2:1-20.

#### ESTHER CHOSEN TO BE QUEEN.

## 1-3. After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased

- On recovering from the violent excitement of his revelry and rage, the king was pierced with poignant regret for the unmerited treatment he had given to his beautiful and dignified queen. But, according to the law, which made the word of a Persian king irrevocable, she could not be restored. His counsellors, for their own sake, were solicitous to remove his disquietude, and hastened to recommend the adoption of all suitable means for gratifying their royal master with another consort of equal or superior attractions to those of his divorced queen. In the despotic countries of the East the custom obtains that when an order is sent to a family for a young damsel to repair to the royal palace, the parents, however unwilling, dare not refuse the honor for their daughter; and although they know that when she is once in the royal harem, they will never see her again, they are obliged to yield a silent and passive compliance. On the occasion referred to, a general search was commanded to be made for the greatest beauties throughout the empire, in the hope that, from their ranks, the disconsolate monarch might select one for the honor of succeeding to the royal honors of Vashti. The damsels, on arrival at the palace, were placed under the custody of "Hege, the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women," that is, the chief eunuch, usually a repulsive old man, on whom the court ladies are very dependent, and whose favor they are always desirous to secure.
- 5. Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew Mordecai held some office about the court. But his "sitting at the king's gate" (TEE) Esther 2:21) does not necessarily imply that he was in the humble condition of a porter; for, according to an institute of Cyrus, all state officers were required to wait in the outer courts till they were summoned into the presence chamber. He might, therefore, have been a person of some official dignity. This man had an orphan cousin, born during the exile, under his

care, who being distinguished by great personal beauty, was one of the young damsels taken into the royal harem on this occasion. She had the good fortune at once to gain the good will of the chief eunuch (\*\*Esther 2:9). Her sweet and amiable appearance made her a favorite with all who looked upon her (\*\*Esther 2:15, last clause). Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, that is, "myrtle," which, on her introduction into the royal harem, was changed to Esther, that is, the star Venus, indicating beauty and good fortune [Gesenius].

- **11.** *Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house* The harem is an inviolable sanctuary, and what is transacted within its walls is as much a secret to those without as if they were thousands of miles away. But hints were given him through the eunuchs.
- 12. Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus A whole year was spent in preparation for the intended honor. Considering that this took place in a palace, the long period prescribed, together with the profusion of costly and fragrant cosmetics employed, was probably required by state etiquette.
- **17.** *the king loved Esther above all the women* The choice fell on Esther, who found favor in the eyes of Ahasuerus. He elevated her to the dignity of chief wife, or queen. The other competitors had apartments assigned them in the royal harem, and were retained in the rank of secondary wives, of whom Oriental princes have a great number.

he set the royal crown upon her head — This consisted only of a purple ribbon, streaked with white, bound round the forehead. The nuptials were celebrated by a magnificent entertainment, and, in honor of the auspicious occasion, "he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king." The dotation of Persian queens consisted in consigning to them the revenue of certain cities, in various parts of the kingdom, for defraying their personal and domestic expenditure. Some of these imposts the king remitted or lessened at this time.

### **▼723**ESTHER 2:21-23.

# MORDECAI, DISCOVERING A TREASON, IS RECORDED IN THE CHRONICLES.

21. In those days ... two of the king's chamberlains ... were wroth and sought to lay hand on the king, etc. — This secret conspiracy against the king's life probably arose out of revenge for the divorce of Vashti, in whose interest, and at whose instigation, these eunuchs may have acted. Through the vigilance of Mordecai, whose fidelity, however, passed unnoticed, the design was frustrated, while the conspirators were condemned to be executed and as the matter was recorded in the court annals, it became the occasion afterwards of Mordecai's preferment to the place of power and influence for which, in furtherance of the national interests of the Jews, divine providence intended him.

#### **▼7780 ESTHER** 3:1-15.

# HAMAN, ADVANCED BY THE KING, AND DESPISED BY MORDECAI, SEEKS REVENGE ON ALL THE JEWS.

- **1.** After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman ... set his seat above all the princes that is, raised him to the rank of vizier, or prime confidential minister, whose pre-eminence in office and power appeared in the elevated state chair appropriated to that supreme functionary. Such a distinction in seats was counted of vast importance in the formal court of Persia.
- 2. all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and reverenced Haman Large mansions in the East are entered by a spacious vestibule, or gateway, along the sides of which visitors sit, and are received by the master of the house; for none, except the nearest relatives or special friends, are admitted farther. There the officers of the ancient king of Persia waited till they were called, and did obeisance to the all-powerful minister of the day.

But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence — The obsequious homage of prostration not entirely foreign to the manners of the East, had not been claimed by former viziers; but this minion required that all subordinate officers of the court should bow before him with their faces to the earth. But to Mordecai, it seemed that such an attitude of profound reverence was due only to God. Haman being an Amalekite, one of a doomed and accursed race, was, doubtless, another element in the refusal; and on learning that the recusant was a Jew, whose nonconformity was grounded on religious scruples, the magnitude of the affront appeared so much the greater, as the example of Mordecai would be imitated by all his compatriots. Had the homage been a simple token of civil respect, Mordecai would not have refused it; but the Persian kings demanded a sort of adoration, which, it is well known, even the Greeks reckoned it

degradation to express. As Xerxes, in the height of his favoritism, had commanded the same honors to be given to the minister as to himself, this was the ground of Mordecai's refusal.

- 7. In the first month ... they cast Pur, that is, the lot In resorting to this method of ascertaining the most auspicious day for putting his atrocious scheme into execution, Haman acted as the kings and nobles of Persia have always done, never engaging in any enterprise without consulting the astrologers, and being satisfied as to the lucky hour. Vowing revenge but scorning to lay hands on a single victim, he meditated the extirpation of the whole Jewish race, who, he knew, were sworn enemies of his countrymen; and by artfully representing them as a people who were aliens in manners and habits, and enemies to the rest of his subjects, he procured the king's sanction of the intended massacre. One motive which he used in urging his point was addressed to the king's cupidity. Fearing lest his master might object that the extermination of a numerous body of his subjects would seriously depress the public revenue, Haman promised to make up the loss.
- **9.** *I* will pay ten thousand talents of silver ... into the king's treasuries This sum, reckoning by the Babylonish talent, will be about \$10,000,000 in our money; but estimated according to the Jewish talent, it will considerably exceed \$15,000,000 an immense contribution to be made out of a private fortune. But classic history makes mention of several persons whose resources seem almost incredible.
- **10.** the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman—
  There was a seal or signet in the ring. The bestowment of the ring, with the king's name and that of his kingdom engraven on it, was given with much ceremony, and it was equivalent to putting the sign manual to a royal edict.
- 12-15. Then were the king's scribes called ... and there was written The government secretaries were employed in making out the proclamation authorizing a universal massacre of the Jews on one day. It was translated into the dialects of all the people throughout the vast empire, and swift messengers were sent to carry it into all the provinces. On the day appointed, all Jews were to be put to death and their property confiscated; doubtless, the means by which Human hoped to pay his

stipulated tribute into the royal treasury. To us it appears unaccountable how any sane monarch could have given his consent to the extirpation of a numerous class of his subjects. But such acts of frenzied barbarity have, alas! been not rarely authorized by careless and voluptuous despots, who have allowed their ears to be engrossed and their policy directed by haughty and selfish minions, who had their own passions to gratify, their own ends to serve.

**15.** the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed — The completeness of the word-painting in this verse is exquisite. The historian, by a simple stroke, has drawn a graphic picture of an Oriental despot, wallowing with his favorite in sensual enjoyments, while his tyrannical cruelties were rending the hearts and homes of thousands of his subjects.

### **▼™ESTHER 4:1-14.**

#### MORDECAI AND THE JEWS MOURN.

- 1, 2. When Mordecai perceived all that was done Relying on the irrevocable nature of a Persian monarch's decree (Daniel 6:15), Hamman made it known as soon as the royal sanction had been obtained; and Mordecai was, doubtless, among the first to hear of it. On his own account, as well as on that of his countrymen, this astounding decree must have been indescribably distressing. The acts described in this passage are, according to the Oriental fashion, expressive of the most poignant sorrow; and his approach to the gate of the palace, under the impulse of irrepressible emotions, was to make an earnest though vain appeal to the royal mercy. Access, however, to the king's presence was, to a person in his disfigured state, impossible: "for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth." But he found means of conveying intelligence of the horrid plot to Queen Esther.
- **4.** Then was the queen ... grieved; and ... sent raiment to ... Mordecai Her object in doing so was either to qualify him for resuming his former office, or else, perhaps, of fitting him to come near enough to the palace to inform her of the cause of such sudden and extreme distress.
- **5.** Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her Communication with the women in the harem is very difficult to be obtained, and only through the medium of the keepers. The chief eunuch receives the message from the lips of the queen, conveys it to some inferior office of the seraglio. When the commission is executed, the subaltern communicates it to the superintendent, by whom it is delivered to the queen. This chief eunuch, usually an old man who has recommended himself by a long course of faithful service, is always appointed by the king; but it is his interest, as well as his duty, to ingratiate himself with the queen also. Accordingly, we

find Hatach rendering himself very serviceable in carrying on those private communications with Mordecai who was thereby enabled to enlist Esther's powerful influence.

- **8.** charge her that she should go in unto the king This language is exceedingly strong. As it can scarcely be supposed that Mordecai was still using authority over Esther as his adopted daughter, he must be considered as imploring rather than commanding her, in the name of her brethren and in the name of her God, to make a direct appeal to the feelings of her royal husband.
- 11. whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called The Persian kings surrounded themselves with an almost impassable circle of forms. The law alluded to was first enacted by Deioces, king of Media, and afterwards, when the empires were united, adopted by the Persians, that all business should be transacted and petitions transmitted to the king through his ministers. Although the restriction was not intended, of course, to apply to the queen, yet from the strict and inflexible character of the Persian laws and the extreme desire to exalt the majesty of the sovereign, even his favorite wife had not the privilege of entree, except by special favor and indulgence. Esther was suffering from the severity of this law; and as, from not being admitted for a whole month to the king's presence, she had reason to fear that the royal affections had become alienated from her, she had little hope of serving her country's cause in this awful emergency.
- 13, 14. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther His answer was to this effect, that Esther need not indulge the vain hope she would, from her royal connection, escape the general doom of her race that he (Mordecai) confidently believed God would interpose, and, if not through her, by some other deliverer, save His people; but that the duty evidently devolved on her, as there was great reason to believe that this was the design of Providence in her elevation to the dignity of queen, and therefore that she should go with a courageous heart, not doubting of success.
- **16.** so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law—
  The appeal of Mordecai was irresistible. Having appointed a solemn fast of three days, she expressed her firm resolution to make an appeal to the king, though she should perish in the attempt.

*I ... and my maidens* — It is probable that she had surrounded herself with Jewish maidens, or women who were proselytes to that religion.

#### **▼7700**ESTHER 5:1-14.

#### ESTHER INVITES THE KING AND HAMAN TO A BANQUET.

1. Esther put on her royal apparel — It was not only natural, but, on such occasions, highly proper and expedient, that the queen should decorate herself in a style becoming her exalted station. On ordinary occasions she might reasonably set off her charms to as much advantage as possible; but, on the present occasion, as she was desirous to secure the favor of one who sustained the twofold character of her husband and her sovereign, public as well as private considerations — a regard to her personal safety, no less than the preservation of her doomed countrymen — urged upon her the propriety of using every legitimate means of recommending herself to the favorable notice of Ahasuerus.

the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house — The palace of this Persian king seems to have been built, like many more of the same quality and description, with an advanced cloister, over against the gate, made in the fashion of a large penthouse, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the center. In such open structures as these, in the midst of their guards and counsellors, are the bashaws, kadis, and other great officers, accustomed to distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of the provinces [SHAW, Travels]. In such a situation the Persian king was seated. The seat he occupied was not a throne, according to our ideas of one, but simply a chair, and so high that it required a footstool. It was made of gold, or, at least, inlaid with that metal, and covered with splendid tapestry, and no one save the king might sit down on it under pain of death. It is often found pictured on the Persepolitan monuments, and always of the same fashion.

**2.** the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand — This golden scepter receives an interesting illustration from the sculptured

monuments of Persia and Assyria. In the bas-reliefs of Persepolis, copied by Sir Robert Ker Porter, we see King Darius enthroned in the midst of his court, and walking abroad in equal state; in either case he carries in his right hand a slender rod or wand, about equal in length to his own height, ornamented with a small knob at the summit. In the Assyrian alabasters, those found at Nimroud as well as those from Khorsabad, "the great king" is furnished with the same appendage of royalty, a slender rod, but destitute of any knob or ornament. On the Khorsabad reliefs the rod is painted red, doubtless to represent gold; proving that "the golden scepter" was a simple wand of that precious metal, commonly held in the right hand, with one end resting on the ground, and that whether the king was sitting or walking. "The gold scepter" has received little alteration or modification since ancient times [GOSS]. It was extended to Esther as a token not only that her intrusion was pardoned, but that her visit was welcome, and a favorable reception given to the suit she had come to prefer.

*touched the top of the scepter* — This was the usual way of acknowledging the royal condescension, and at the same time expressing reverence and submission to the august majesty of the king.

- **3.** it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom This mode of speaking originated in the Persian custom of appropriating for the maintenance of great men, or royal favorites, one city for his bread, another for his wine, a third for his clothes, etc., so that the phrase denoted great liberality.
- **4.** Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him There was great address in this procedure of Esther's; for, by showing such high respect to the king's favorite, she would the better insinuate herself into the royal affections; and gain a more suitable opportunity of making known her request.
- **8.** *let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare* The king ate alone, and his guests in an adjoining hall; but they were admitted to sit with him at wine. Haman being the only invited guest with the king and queen, it was natural that he should have been elated with the honor.

#### **₹ 5.1-14.**

#### AHASUERUS REWARDS MORDECAI FOR FORMER SERVICE.

1. the king ... commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles

— In Eastern courts, there are scribes or officers whose duty it is to keep a journal of every occurrence worthy of notice. A book of this kind, abounding with anecdotes, is full of interest. It has been a custom with Eastern kings, in all ages, frequently to cause the annals of the kingdom to be read to them. It is resorted to, not merely as a pastime to while away the tedium of an hour, but as a source of instruction to the monarch, by reviewing the important incidents of his own life, as well as those of his ancestors. There was, therefore, nothing uncommon in this Persian

monarch calling for the court journal. But, in his being unable to sleep at that particular juncture, in his ordering the book then to be read to him, and in his attention having been specially directed to the important and as yet unrewarded services of Mordecai, the immediate interposition of

Providence is distinctly visible.

- **4.** Now Haman was come into the outward court This was early in the morning. It is the invariable custom for kings in Eastern countries to transact business before the sun is hot, often in the open air, and so Haman was in all probability come officially to attend on his master.
- 6. What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?
- In bestowing tokens of their favor, the kings of Persia do not at once, and as it were by their own will, determine the kind of honor that shall be awarded; but they turn to the courtier standing next in rank to themselves, and ask him what shall be done to the individual who has rendered the service specified; and according to the answer received, the royal mandate is issued.

**8.** *the royal apparel* ... *which the king useth to wear* — A coat which has been on the back of a king or prince is reckoned a most honorable gift, and is given with great ceremony.

*the horse that the king rideth upon* — Persia was a country of horses, and the highbred charger that the king rode upon acquired, in the eyes of his venal subjects, a sort of sacredness from that circumstance.

and the crown royal which is set upon his head — either the royal turban, or it may be a tiara, with which, on state processions, the horse's head was adorned.

- **9.** delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes ... array the man On grand and public occasions, the royal steed is led by the highest subject through the principal streets of the city, a ceremony which may occupy several hours.
- **11.** *Then Haman took*, etc. This sudden reverse, however painful to Haman as an individual, is particularly characteristic of the Persian manners.
- **14.** came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared Besides the invitation given to an entertainment, a message is always sent to the guests, immediately at the day and hour appointed, to announce that all things are ready.

### **™ESTHER** 7:1-6.

# ESTHER PLEADS FOR HER OWN LIFE AND THE LIFE OF HER PEOPLE.

**4.** we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed — that is, by the cruel and perfidious scheme of that man, who offered an immense sum of money to purchase our extermination. Esther dwelt on his contemplated atrocity, in a variety of expressions, which both evinced the depth of her own emotions, and were intended to awaken similar feelings in the king's breast.

But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue — Though a great calamity to the Jews, the enslavement of that people might have enriched the national treasury; and, at all events, the policy, if found from experience to be bad, could be altered. But the destruction of such a body of people would be an irreparable evil, and all the talents Haman might pour into the treasury could not compensate for the loss of their services.

#### **₹500 ESTHER** 7:7-10.

# THE KING CAUSES HAMAN TO BE HANGED ON HIS OWN GALLOWS.

**7.** he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king — When the king of Persia orders an offender to be executed, and then rises and goes into the women's apartment, it is a sign that no mercy is to be hoped for. Even the sudden rising of the king in anger was the same as if he had pronounced sentence.

**8.** Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was — We do not know the precise form of the couches on which the Persians reclined at table. But it is probable that they were not very different from those used by the Greeks and Romans. Haman, perhaps, at first stood up to beg pardon of Esther; but driven in his extremity to resort to an attitude of the most earnest supplication, he fell prostrate on the couch where the queen was recumbent. The king returning that instant was fired at what seemed an outrage on female modesty.

*they covered Haman's face* — The import of this striking action is, that a criminal is unworthy any longer to look on the face of the king, and hence, when malefactors are consigned to their doom in Persia, the first thing is to cover the face with a veil or napkin.

- **9.** Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows This eunuch had probably been the messenger sent with the invitation to Haman, and on that occasion had seen the gallows. The information he now volunteered, as well it may be from abhorrence of Haman's cold-blooded conspiracy as from sympathy with his amiable mistress, involved with her people in imminent peril.
- **10.** So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for **Mordecai** He has not been the only plotter of mischief whose feet have been taken in the net which they hid (\*\*905\*Psalm 9:15). But never was condemnation more just, and retribution more merited, than the execution of that gigantic criminal.

#### **™ESTHER 8:1-6.**

#### MORDECAI ADVANCED.

1. On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman ... unto Esther — His property was confiscated, and everything belonging to him, as some compensation for the peril to which she had been exposed.

*Mordecai came before the king* — that is, was introduced at court and appointed one of the seven counsellors. Esther displayed great prudence and address in acknowledging Mordecai's relation to her at the moment most fitted to be of eminent service to him.

**2.** the king took off his ring, ... and gave it unto Mordecai — By that act transferring to him all the power and authority which the ring symbolized, and promoting him to the high dignity which Haman had formerly filled.

**Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman** — as her steward or factor, to manage that large and opulent estate which had been assigned to her.

3. Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet—
The king was then not reclining at table, but sitting on a divan, most probably in the Persian attitude, leaning back against the cushions, and one foot under him.

besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman — that is, to repeal the sanguinary edict which, at the secret instigation of Haman, had been recently passed (\*\*Esther 3:12).

- **4.** Then the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther in token that her request was accepted, and that she needed no longer to maintain the humble attitude of a suppliant.
- **5, 6.** reverse the letters devised by Haman ... to destroy the Jews The whole conduct of Esther in this matter is characterized by great tact, and

the variety of expressions by which she describes her willing submission to her royal husband, the address with which she rolls the whole infamy of the meditated massacre on Haman, and the argument she draws from the king's sanction being surreptitiously obtained, that the decree should be immediately reversed — all indicate the queen's wisdom and skill, and she succeeded in this point also.

#### **™ESTHER 8:7-14.**

# AHASUERUS GRANTS TO THE JEWS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

**8.** Write ... in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring — Hence it is evident that the royal ring had a seal in it, which, being affixed to any document, authenticated it with the stamp of royal authority.

which ... may no man reverse — This is added as the reason why he could not comply with the queen's request for a direct reversal of recall of Haman's letters; namely, that the laws of the Medes and Persians, once passed, were irrevocable.

10. sent ... by posts ... and riders on ... camels, and young dromedaries — The business being very urgent, the swiftest kind of camel would be employed, and so the word in the original denotes the wind-camel. Young dromedaries also are used to carry expresses, being remarkable for the nimbleness and ease of their movements. Animals of this description could convey the new rescript of Ahasuerus over the length and breadth of the Persian empire in time to relieve the unhappy Jews from the ban under which they lay.

11-13. the king granted the Jews ... to stand for their life ... to slay ... all ... that would assault them — The fixed and unalterable character claimed for Persian edicts often placed the king in a very awkward dilemma; for, however bitterly he might regret things done in a moment of haste and thoughtlessness, it was beyond even his power to prevent the consequences. This was the reason on account of which the king was laid under a necessity not to reverse, but to issue a contradictory edict;

according to which it was enacted that if, pursuant to the first decree, the Jews were assaulted, they might, by virtue of the second, defend themselves and even slay their enemies. However strange and even ridiculous this mode of procedure may appear, it was the only one which, from the peculiarities of court etiquette in Persia, could be adopted. Instances occur in sacred (Daniel 6:14), no less than profane, history. Many passages of the Bible attest the truth of this, particularly the well-known incident of Daniel's being cast into the den of lions, in conformity with the rash decree of Darius, though, as it afterwards appeared, contrary to the personal desire of that monarch. That the law of Persia has undergone no change in this respect, and the power of the monarch not less immutable, appear from many anecdotes related in the books of modern travelers through that country.

#### **™ESTHER 8:15-17.**

#### MORDECAI'S HONORS, AND THE JEWS' JOY.

**15.** *Mordecai went out ... in royal apparel* — He was invested with the khelaat of official honor. A dress of blue and white was held in great estimation among the Persians; so that Mordecai, whom the king delighted to honor, was in fact arrayed in the royal dress and insignia. The variety and the kind of insignia worn by a favorite at once makes known to the people the particular dignity to which he has been raised.

**▼790 ESTHER** 9:1-19.

# THE JEWS SLAY THEIR ENEMIES WITH THE TEN SONS OF HAMAN.

- **1.** in the twelfth month, ... on the thirteenth day of the same This was the day which Haman's superstitious advisers had led him to select as the most fortunate for the execution of his exterminating scheme against the Jews [\*\*REsther 3:7].
- **2.** The Jews gathered themselves ... no man could withstand them The tables were now turned in their favor; and though their enemies made their long meditated attack, the Jews were not only at liberty to act on the defensive, but through the powerful influence enlisted on their side at court together with the blessing of God, they were everywhere victorious.
- *the fear of them fell upon all people* This impression arose not alone from the consciousness of the all-powerful vizier being their countryman, but from the hand of God appearing so visibly interposed to effect their strange and unexpected deliverance.
- **5-16.** Thus the Jews smote all their enemies The effect of the two antagonistic decrees was, in the meantime, to raise a fierce and bloody war between the Jews and their enemies throughout the Persian empire; but through the dread of Esther and Mordecai, the provincial governors universally favored their cause, so that their enemies fell in great numbers.
- 13. let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree Their enemies adroitly concealing themselves for the first day might have returned on the next, when they imagined that the privilege of the Jews was expired; so that that people would have been surprised and slain. The extension of the decree to another day at the queen's special desire has exposed her to the charge of being actuated by a cruel and vindictive disposition. But her conduct in

making this request is capable of full vindication, on the ground (1) that Haman's sons having taken a prominent part in avenging their father's fall, and having been previously slain in the *melee*, the order for the exposure of their dead bodies on the gallows was only intended to brand them with public infamy for their malice and hatred to the Jews; and (2) the anti-Jewish party having, in all probability, been instigated through the arts or influence of Haman to acts of spiteful and wanton oppression, the existing state of feeling among the natives required some vigorous and decisive measure to prevent the outbreak of future aggressions. To order an extension, therefore, of the permissive edict to the Jews to defend themselves, was perhaps no more than affording an opportunity for their enemies to be publicly known. Though it led to so awful a slaughter of seventy-five thousand of their enemies, there is reason to believe that these were chiefly Amalekites, in the fall of whom on this occasion, the prophecies (Exodus 17:14,16 Deuteronomy 25:19) against that doomed race were accomplished.

**19.** a day of ... feasting ... of sending portions one to another — The princes and people of the East not only invite their friends to feasts, but it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to those who cannot well come to it, especially their relations, and those who are detained at home in a state of sorrow or distress.

**ESTHER 9:20-32.** 

#### THE TWO DAYS OF PURIM MADE FESTIVAL.

- **20.** *Mordecai wrote these things* Commentators are not agreed what is particularly meant by "these things"; whether the letters following, or an account of these marvellous events to be preserved in the families of the Jewish people, and transmitted from one generation to another.
- **26.** they called these days Purim after the name of Pur "Pur," in the Persian language, signifies "lot"; and the feast of Purim, or lots, has a reference to the time having been pitched upon by Haman through the decision of the lot. In consequence of the signal national deliverance which divine providence gave them from the infamous machinations of Haman,

Mordecai ordered the Jews to commemorate that event by an anniversary festival, which was to last for two days, in accordance with the two days' war of defense they had to maintain. There was a slight difference in the time of this festival; for the Jews in the provinces, having defended themselves against their enemies on the thirteenth, devoted the fourteenth to festivity; whereas their brethren in Shushan, having extended that work over two days, did not observe their thanksgiving feast till the fifteenth. But this was remedied by authority, which fixed the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar. It became a season of sunny memories to the universal body of the Jews; and, by the letters of Mordecai, dispersed through all parts of the Persian empire, it was established as an annual feast, the celebration of which is kept up still. On both days of the feast, the modern Jews read over the Megillah or Book of Esther in their synagogues. The copy read must not be printed, but written on vellum in the form of a roll; and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it a peculiar manner, being ranged, they say, like so many bodies on a gibbet. The reader must pronounce all these names in one breath. Whenever Haman's name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagogue. Some drum with their feet on the floor, and the boys have mallets with which they knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in imitation of Esther's; but they have mostly reduced it to one day [JENNING, Jewish Antiquities].

#### **▼790 ESTHER** 10:1-3.

#### AHASUERUS' GREATNESS. MORDECAI'S ADVANCEMENT.

- **1.** Ahasuerus laid a tribute This passage being an appendix to the history, and improperly separated from the preceding chapter, it might be that the occasion of levying this new impost arose out of the commotions raised by Haman's conspiracy. Neither the nature nor the amount of the tax has been recorded; only it was not a local tribute, but one exacted from all parts of his vast empire.
- 2. the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai The experience of this pious and excellent Jew verified the statement, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" [ADEC] Matthew 23:12 ADEC Luke 14:11 ADEC 18:14]. From sitting contentedly at the king's gate, he was raised to the dignity of highest subject, the powerful ruler of the kingdom. Acting uniformly on the great principles of truth and righteousness, his greatness rested on a firm foundation. His faith was openly avowed, and his influence as a professor of the true religion was of the greatest usefulness for promoting the welfare of the Jewish people, as well as for advancing the glory of God.
- 3. For Mordecai ... was next unto King Ahasuerus ... great among the Jews, etc. The elevation of this pious and patriotic Jew to the possession of the highest official power was of very great importance to the suffering church at that period; for it enabled him, who all along possessed the disposition, now to direct the royal influence and authority in promoting the interests and extending the privileges of his exiled countrymen. Viewed in this light, the providence of God is plainly traceable in all the steps that led to his unexpected advancement. This providential interposition is all the more remarkable, that, as in the analogous case of Joseph, it was displayed in making the ordinary and natural course of things lead to the most marvellous results. To use the pious words of an eminent prelate, "though in the whole of this episode

there was no extraordinary manifestation of God's power, no particular cause or agent that was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature, yet the contrivance, and suiting these ordinary agents appointed by God, is in itself more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means that were truly miraculous." The sudden advancement of individuals from obscurity and neglect to the highest stations of power and influence is, in Eastern courts, no extraordinary nor infrequent occurrence. The caprice, the weak partiality of the reigning sovereign, or, it may be, his penetrating discernment in discovering latent energy and talent, has often "raised the beggar from the dunghill, and set him among princes" [""] Samuel 2:8]. Some of the all-powerful viziers in modern Persia, and not a few of the beys in Egypt, have been elevated to their respective dignities in this manner. And, therefore, the advancement of "Mordecai, who was next unto Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews," was in perfect accordance with the rapid revolution of "the wheel of fortune" in that part of the world. But, considering all the circumstances of Mordecai's advancement, not only his gaining the favor of the king, but his being "accepted of the multitude of his brethren, it was beyond all controversy the doing of the Lord, and was truly marvellous in his people's eyes."

*accepted of the multitude of his brethren* — Far from being envious of his grandeur, they blessed God for the elevation to official power of so good a man.

*speaking peace to all his seed* — While his administration was conducted with a mild and impartial hand, he showed a peculiarly warm and friendly feeling to all his countrymen when asked his counsel or his aid.

#### THE BOOK OF

## **JOB**

Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT

### INTRODUCTION

JOB A REAL PERSON. — It has been supposed by some that the book of Job is an allegory, not a real narrative, on account of the artificial character of many of its statements. Thus the sacred numbers, *three* and *seven*, often occur. He had *seven* thousand sheep, *seven* sons, both before and after his trials; his *three* friends sit down with him *seven* days and *seven* nights; both before and after his trials he had *three* daughters. So also the number and form of the speeches of the several speakers seem to be artificial. The name of Job, too, is derived from an Arabic word signifying *repentance*.

But Ezekiel 14:14 (compare Ezekiel 14:16,20) speaks of "Job" in conjunction with "Noah and Daniel," real persons. St. James ("James") 5:11) also refers to Job as an example of "patience," which he would not have been likely to do had Job been only a fictitious person. Also the names of persons and places are specified with a particularity not to be looked for in an allegory. As to the exact doubling of his possessions after his restoration, no doubt the round number is given for the exact number, as the latter approached near the former; this is often done in undoubtedly historical books. As to the studied number and form of the speeches, it seems likely that the arguments were *substantially* those which appear in the book, but that the studied and poetic form was given by Job himself, guided by the Holy Spirit. He lived one hundred and forty years after his trials, and nothing would be more natural than that he should, at his leisure, mould into a perfect form the arguments used in the momentous debate, for the instruction of the Church in all ages. Probably, too, the debate itself occupied several sittings; and the number of speeches

assigned to each was arranged by preconcerted agreement, and each was allowed the interval of a day or more to prepare carefully his speech and replies; this will account for the speakers bringing forward their arguments in regular series, no one speaking out of his turn. As to the name Job — repentance (supposing the derivation correct) — it was common in old times to give a name from circumstances which occurred at an advanced period of life, and this is no argument against the reality of the person.

Where Job Lived. — "Uz," according to GESENIUS, means a light, sandy soil, and was in the north of Arabia-Deserta, between Palestine and the Euphrates, called by PTOLEMY (Geography, 19) Ausitai or Aisitai. In Genesis 10:23 (22:21 (33) 36:28 (31) Chronicles 1:17,42, it is the name of a man. In Termiah 25:20 Lamentations 4:21 and Job 1:1, it is a country. Uz, in Genesis 22:21, is said to be the son of Nahor, brother of Abraham — a different person from the one mentioned ( Genesis 10:23), a grandson of Shem. The probability is that the country took its name from the latter of the two; for this one was the son of Aram, from whom the Arameans take their name, and these dwelt in Mesopotamia, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Compare as to the dwelling of the sons of Shem in defenesis 10:30, "a mount of the East," answering to "men of the East' (\*\*\*Job 1:3). RAWLINSON, in his deciphering of the Assyrian inscriptions, states that "Uz is the prevailing name of the country at the mouth of the Euphrates." It is probable that Eliphaz the Temanite and the Sabeans dwelt in that quarter; and we know that the Chaldeans resided there, and not near Idumea, which some identify with Uz. The tornado from "the wilderness" ( Job 1:19) agrees with the view of it being Arabia-Deserta. Job (\*\*\*Job 1:3) is called "the greatest of the men of the East"; but Idumea was not east, but south of Palestine: therefore in Scripture language, the phrase cannot apply to that country, but probably refers to the north of Arabia-Deserta, between Palestine, Idumea, and the Euphrates. So the Arabs still show in the Houran a place called Uz as the residence of Job.

The Age When Job Lived. — EUSEBIUS fixes it two ages before Moses, that is, about the time of Isaac: eighteen hundred years before Christ, and six hundred after the Deluge. Agreeing with this are the following considerations:

- **1.** Job's length of life is patriarchal, two hundred years.
- **2.** He alludes only to the earliest form of idolatry, namely, the worship of the sun, moon, and heavenly hosts (called *Saba*, whence arises the title "Lord of *Sabaoth*," as opposed to Sabeanism) (\*\*\*Job 31:26-28).
- **3.** The number of oxen and rams sacrificed, *seven*, as in the case of Balaam. God would not have sanctioned this *after* the giving of the Mosaic law, though He might graciously accommodate Himself to existing customs *before* the law.
- **4.** The language of Job is Hebrew, interspersed occasionally with Syriac and Arabic expressions, implying a time when all the Shemitic tribes spoke one common tongue and had not branched into different dialects, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic.
- **5.** He speaks of the most ancient kind of writing, namely, sculpture. Riches also are reckoned by cattle. The Hebrew word, translated "a piece of money," ought rather be rendered "a lamb."
- 6. There is no allusion to the exodus from Egypt and to the miracles that accompanied it; nor to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (PATRICK, however, thinks there is); though there is to the Flood (Job 22:17); and these events, happening in Job's vicinity, would have been striking illustrations of the argument for God's interposition in destroying the wicked and vindicating the righteous, had Job and his friends known of them. Nor is there any *undoubted* reference to the Jewish law, ritual, and priesthood.
- **7.** The religion of Job is that which prevailed among the patriarchs previous to the law; sacrifices performed by the head of the family; no officiating priesthood, temple, or consecrated altar.

The Writer. — All the foregoing facts accord with Job himself having been the author. The style of thought, imagery, and manners, are such as we should look for in the work of an Arabian emir. There is precisely that degree of knowledge of primitive tradition (see Job 31:33, as to Adam) which was universally spread abroad in the days of Noah and Abraham, and which was subsequently embodied in the early chapters of Genesis. Job, in his speeches, shows that he was much more competent to compose

the work than Elihu, to whom LIGHTFOOT attributes it. The style forbids its being attributed to Moses, to whom its composition is by some attributed, "whilst he was among the Midianites, about 1520 B.C." But the fact, that it, though not a Jewish book, appears among the Hebrew sacred writings, makes it likely that it came to the knowledge of Moses during the forty years which he passed in parts of Arabia, chiefly near Horeb; and that he, by divine guidance, introduced it as a sacred writing to the Israelites, to whom, in their affliction, the patience and restoration of Job were calculated to be a lesson of especial utility. That it is inspired appears from the fact that Paul (\*\*\*\*\* Compare also\*\*\* Junes 4:10 and \*\*\*\*\* The probably the formula, "It is written." Compare also \*\*\* Junes 4:10 and \*\*\*\*\* The probably the oldest book in the world. It stands among the Hagiographa in the threefold division of Scripture into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa ("Psalms," \*\*\*\* Luke 24:44).

**Design Of The Book**. — It is a public debate in poetic form on an important question concerning the divine government; moreover the prologue and epilogue, which are in prose, shed the interest of a living history over the debate, which would otherwise be but a contest of abstract reasonings. To each speaker of the three friends *three* speeches are assigned. Job having no one to stand by him is allowed to reply to each speech of each of the three. Eliphaz, as the oldest, leads the way. Zophar, at his *third* turn, failed to speak, thus virtually owning himself overcome (\*\*\*Job 27:1-23). Therefore Job continued his reply, which forms *three* speeches (\*\*\*Job 26:1-14 \*\*\*\*127:1-23 \*\*\*\*128:1-28 \*\*\*\*129:1-31:40). Elihu (\*\*\*\*Job 32:1-22) is allowed *four* speeches. Jehovah makes *three* addresses (\*\*\*\*Job 38:1-41:34). Thus, throughout there is a tripartite division. The whole is divided into *three* parts — the prologue, poem proper, and epilogue. The *poem*, into three —

- (1) The dispute of Job and his three friends;
- (2) The address of Elihu;
- (3) The address of God.

There are *three* series in the controversy, and in the same order. The epilogue (\*\*\*Job 42:1-17) also is threefold; Job's justification,

reconciliation with his friends, restoration. The speakers also in their successive speeches *regularly advance from less to greater vehemence*. With all this artificial composition, everything seems easy and natural.

The question to be solved, as exemplified in the case of Job, is, Why are the righteous afflicted consistently with God's justice? The doctrine of retribution after death, no doubt, is the great solution of the difficulty. And to it Job plainly refers in Job 14:14, and Job 19:25. The objection to this, that the explicitness of the language on the resurrection in Job is inconsistent with the obscurity on the subject in the early books of the Old Testament, is answered by the fact that Job enjoyed the divine vision (\*\*\*Job 38:1 42:5), and therefore, by inspiration, foretold these truths. Next, the revelations made outside of Israel being few needed to be the more explicit; thus Balaam's prophecy (\*\*Numbers 24:17) was clear enough to lead the wise men of the East by the star ( Matthew 2:2); and in the age before the written law, it was the more needful for God not to leave Himself without witness of the truth. Still Job evidently did not fully realize the significance designed by the Spirit in his own words (compare "I" Peter 1:11,12). The doctrine, though existing, was not plainly revealed or at least understood. Hence he does not mainly refer to this solution. Yes, and even now, we need something in addition to this solution. David, who firmly believed in a future retribution (\*\*Psalm 16:10 497517:15), still felt the difficulty not *entirely* solved thereby (\*\*Psalm 83:1-18). The solution is not in Job's or in his three friends' speeches. It must, therefore, be in Elihu's. God will hold a final judgment, no doubt, to clear up all that seems dark in His present dealings; but He also now providentially and morally governs the world and all the events of human life. Even the comparatively righteous are not without sin which needs to be corrected. The justice and love of God administer the altogether deserved and merciful correction. Affliction to the godly is thus mercy and justice in disguise. The afflicted believer on repentance sees this. "Via crucis, via salutis" ["The way of the cross, the way of deliverance"]. Though afflicted, the godly are happier even now than the ungodly, and when affliction has attained its end, it is removed by the Lord. In the Old Testament the consolations are more temporal and outward; in the New Testament, more spiritual; but in neither to the entire exclusion of the other. "Prosperity," says BACON, "is the blessing of the

Old Testament; adversity that of the New Testament, which is the mark of God's more especial favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost has labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes." This solution of Elihu is seconded by the addresses of God, in which it is shown God *must* be just (because He *is* God), as Elihu had shown *how* God can be just, and yet the righteous be afflicted. It is also acquiesced in by Job, who makes no reply. God reprimands the "three" friends, but not Elihu. Job's general course is approved; he is directed to intercede for his friends, and is restored to double his former prosperity.

**Poetry**. — In all countries poetry is the earliest form of composition as being best retained in the memory. In the East especially it was customary for sentiments to be preserved in a terse, proverbial, and poetic form (called *maschal*). Hebrew poetry is not constituted by the rhythm or meter, but in a form peculiar to itself:

- **1.** In an alphabetical arrangement somewhat like our acrostic. For instance, Lamentations 1:1-22.
- 2. The same verse repeated at intervals; as in Psalm 42:1-11 107:1-43.
- **3.** Rhythm of gradation. *Psalms of degrees*, \*\*\*Psalm 120:1-134:3, in which the expression of the previous verse is resumed and carried forward in the next (\*\*C\*\*Psalm 121:1-8).
- **4.** The chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry is *parallelism*, or the correspondence of the same ideas in the parallel clauses. The earliest instance is Enoch's prophecy (\*\*\*Jude 1:14), and Lamech's parody of it (\*\*\*Genesis 4:23). Three kinds occur:
  - (1) The synonymous parallelism, in which the second is a repetition of the first, with or without increase of force (\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:27 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 15:1); sometimes with double parallelism (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 1:15).

(3) The synthetic, where there is a correspondence between different propositions, noun answering to noun, verb to verb, member to member, the sentiment, moreover, being not merely echoed, or put in contrast, but enforced by accessory ideas (\*\*RBB\*Job 3:3-9).

Also *alternate* (\*\*\*Isaiah 51:19). "Desolation and destruction, famine and sword," that is, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword. *Introverted;* where the fourth answers to the first, and the third to the second (\*\*\*Matthew 7:6). Parallelism thus often affords a key to the interpretation. For fuller information, see Lowth (*Introduction to Isaiah*, and *Lecture on Hebrew Poetry*) and HERDER (*Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, translated by Marsh). The simpler and less artificial forms of parallelism prevail in Job — a mark of its early age.

#### PART 1

# PROLOGUE OR HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION IN PROSE — (\*\*\*\*\*JOB 1:1-2:13)

**№**101 JOB 1:1-5.

#### THE HOLINESS OF JOB, HIS WEALTH, ETC.

1. *Uz* — north of Arabia-Deserta, lying towards the Euphrates. It was in this neighborhood, and not in that of Idumea, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans who plundered him dwell. The Arabs divide their country into the north, called Sham, or "the left"; and the south, called Yemen, or "the right"; for they faced east; and so the west was on their left, and the south on their right. Arabia-Deserta was on the east, Arabia-Petræa on the west, and Arabia-Felix on the south.

**Job** — The name comes from an *Arabic* word meaning "to return," namely, to God, "to repent," referring to his end [EICHORN]; or rather from a *Hebrew* word signifying one to whom enmity was shown, "greatly tried" [GESENIUS]. Significant names were often given among the Hebrews, from some event of later life (compare "Genesis 4:2, Abel — a "feeder" of sheep). So the emir of Uz was by general consent called Job, on account of his "trials." The only other person so called was a son of Issachar ("Genesis 46:13).

perfect — not absolute or faultless perfection (compare \*\*\*\*Job 9:20 \*\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 7:20), but *integrity, sincerity, and consistency* on the whole, in all relations of life (\*\*\*\*Genesis 6:9 17:1 \*\*\*\*Proverbs 10:9 \*\*\*\*Matthew 5:48). It was the fear of God that kept Job from evil (\*\*\*\*\*Proverbs 8:13).

**3.** *she-asses* — prized on account of their milk, and for riding (\*\*\*Judges 5:10). Houses and lands are not mentioned among the emir's wealth, as nomadic tribes dwell in movable tents and live chiefly by pasture, the right to the soil not being appropriated by individuals. The "five hundred yoke of oxen" imply, however, that Job tilled the soil. He seems also to have had a dwelling in a town, in which respect he differed from the patriarchs. Camels are well called "ships of the desert," especially valuable for caravans, as being able to lay in a store of water that suffices them for days, and to sustain life on a very few thistles or thorns.

**household** — (\*\*Genesis 26:14). The other rendering which the *Hebrew* admits, "husbandry," is not so probable.

- **4.** every one his day namely, the birthday (\*\*\*\*Job 3:1). Implying the love and harmony of the members of the family, as contrasted with the ruin which soon broke up such a scene of happiness. The *sisters* are specified, as these feasts were not for revelry, which would be inconsistent with the presence of sisters. These latter were invited by the brothers, though they gave no invitations in return.
- **5.** when the days of their feasting were gone about that is, at the end of all the birthdays collectively, when the banquets had gone round through all the families.

Job ... sanctified — by offering up as many expiatory burnt offerings as he had sons (\*\*\*Deviticus 1:4). This was done "in the morning" (\*\*\*Deviticus 6:12). Jesus also began devotions early (\*\*\*Mark 1:35). The holocaust, or burnt offering, in patriarchal times, was offered (literally, "caused to ascend," referring to the smoke ascending to heaven) by each father of a family officiating as priest in behalf of his household.

cursed God — The same Hebrew word means to "curse," and to "bless"; GESENIUS says, the original sense is to "kneel," and thus it came to mean bending the knee in order to invoke either a blessing or a curse. Cursing is a perversion of blessing, as all sin is of goodness. Sin is a degeneracy, not a generation. It is not, however, likely that Job should fear the possibility of

his sons *cursing* God. The sense "bid farewell to," derived from the *blessing* customary at parting, seems sufficient ("Genesis 47:10). Thus UMBREIT translates "may have dismissed God from their hearts"; namely, amid the intoxication of pleasure ("Proverbs 20:1). This act illustrates Job's "fear of God" ("Job 1:1).

#### **№**10B 1:6-12.

### SATAN, APPEARING BEFORE GOD, FALSELY ACCUSES JOB.

**6.** sons of God — angels (\*\*\*\*Job 38:7 \*12591 Kings 22:19). They present themselves to render account of their "ministry" in other parts of the universe (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 1:14).

the Lord — Hebrew, JEHOVAH, the self-existing God, faithful to His promises. God says (\*\*DEXOGUS 6:3) that He was not known to the patriarchs by this name. But, as the name occurs previously in \*\*Genesis 2:7-9, etc., what must be meant is, not until the time of delivering Israel by Moses was He known peculiarly and publicly in the *character* which the name means; namely, "making things to be," fulfilling the promises made to their forefathers. This name, therefore, here, is no objection against the antiquity of the Book of Job.

Satan — The tradition was widely spread that he had been the agent in Adam's temptation. Hence his name is given without comment. The feeling with which he looks on Job is similar to that with which he looked on Adam in Paradise: emboldened by his success in the case of one not yet fallen, he is confident that the piety of Job, one of a fallen race, will not stand the test. He had fallen himself (\*\*\*\*Job 4:19 \*\*\*\*S\$15:15 \*\*\*\*Jude 1:6). In the Book of Job, Satan is first designated by name: "Satan," Hebrew, "one who lies in wait"; an "adversary" in a court of justice (\*\*\*\*Perew, "one who lies in wait"; an "adversary" in a court of justice (\*\*\*\*\*Perew, "one lies in wait"; an "adversary" in a court of justice (\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Perew, "one he law of God on his side by man's sin, and against man. But Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law for us; justice is once more on man's side against Satan (\*\*\*\*Perew, "Devil" is the Greek name — the "slanderer," or "accuser." He is subject to God, who uses his ministry for chastising man. In Arabic,

Satan is often applied to a serpent (\*\*\*Genesis 3:1). He is called prince of this world (\*\*\*John 12:31); the god of this world (\*\*\*Dephesians 4:4); prince of the power of the air (\*\*\*Ephesians 2:2). God here questions him, in order to vindicate His own ways before angels.

- 7. going to and fro rather, "hurrying rapidly to and fro." The original idea in *Arabic* is the heat of haste (\*\*Matthew 12:43 \*\*\*Matthew 12:43 \*\*\*I Peter 5:8). Satan seems to have had some peculiar connection with this earth. Perhaps he was formerly its ruler under God. Man succeeded to the vice royalty (\*\*\*OGenesis 1:26 \*\*\*OP\*Psalm 8:6). Man then lost it and Satan became prince of this world. The Son of man (\*\*\*OP\*Psalm 8:4) the representative man, regains the forfeited inheritance (\*\*\*OP\*Psalm 8:4). Satan's replies are characteristically curt and short. When the angels appear before God, Satan is among them, even as there was a Judas among the apostles.
- **8.** *considered Margin*, "set thine heart on"; that is, considered attentively. No true servant of God escapes the eye of the adversary of God.
- **9.** fear God for naught It is a mark of the children of Satan to sneer and not give credit to any for disinterested piety. Not so much God's gifts, as God Himself is "the reward" of His people (\*\*Genesis 15:1).
- **10.** *his substance is increased* literally, "spread out like a flood"; Job's herds covered the face of the country.
- **11.** curse thee to thy face in antithesis to God's praise of him (\*\*\*Job 1:8), "one that feareth God." Satan's words are too true of many. Take away their prosperity and you take away their religion (\*\*\*Malachi 3:14).
- **12.** *in thy power* Satan has no power against man till God gives it. God would not touch Job with His own hand, though Satan asks this (\*\*\*Job 1:11, "thine"), but He allows the enemy to do so.

### **№**13-0B 1:13-22.

#### JOB, IN AFFLICTION, BLESSES GOD, ETC.

- **13.** *wine* not specified in \*\*\*\*\*Dob 1:4. The mirth inspired by the "wine" here contrasts the more sadly with the alarm which interrupted it.
- **14.** *the asses feeding beside them Hebrew*, "she asses." A graphic picture of rural repose and peace; the more dreadful, therefore, by contrast is the sudden attack of the plundering Arabs.
- **15.** *Sabeans* not those of Arabia-Felix, but those of Arabia-Deserta, descending from Sheba, grandson of Abraham and Keturah (\*\*Genesis 25:3). The Bedouin Arabs of the present day resemble, in marauding habits, these Sabeans (compare \*\*Genesis 16:12).
- *I alone am escaped* cunningly contrived by Satan. One in each case escapes (\*\*\*Job 1:16,17,19), and brings the same kind of message. This was to overwhelm Job, and leave him no time to recover from the rapid succession of calamities "misfortunes seldom come single."
- **16. fire of God** Hebraism for "a mighty fire"; as "cedars of God" "lofty cedars" (\*\*\*Psalm 80:10). Not lightning, which would not consume *all* the sheep and servants. UMBREIT understands it of *the burning wind* of Arabia, called by the Turks "wind of poison." "The prince of the power of the air" [\*\*\*Ephesians 2:2] is permitted to have control over such destructive agents.
- **17.** *Chaldeans* not merely robbers as the Sabeans; but experienced in war, as is implied by "they *set in array* three bands" (\*\*\*\*Habakkuk 1:6-8). RAWLINSON distinguishes three periods:
  - **1.** When their seat of empire was in the south, towards the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. The Chaldean period, from 2300 B.C. to 1500 B.C. In this period was Chedorlaomer (decompose) decomposed in the Assyrian inscriptions, and the conqueror of Syria.
  - **2.** From 1500 to 625 B.C., the Assyrian period. 3. From 625 to 538 B.C. (when Cyrus the Persian took Babylon), the Babylonian period.

- "Chaldees" in *Hebrew Chasaim*. They were akin, perhaps, to the Hebrews, as Abraham's sojourn in Ur, and the name "Chesed," a nephew of Abraham, imply. The *three* bands were probably in order to attack the three separate thousands of Job's camels (\*\*\*\*Job 1:3).
- **19.** *a great wind from the wilderness* south of Job's house. The tornado came the more violently over the desert, being uninterrupted (\*\*\*\*Hosea 13:15).
- **the young men** rather, "the young people"; including the daughters (so in \*\*Ruth 2:21).
- **20.** *Job arose* not necessarily from sitting. Inward excitement is implied, and the beginning to do anything. He had heard the other messages calmly, but on hearing of the death of his children, *then* he arose; or, as Eichorn translates, he *started up* ( Samuel 13:31). The rending of the mantle was the conventional mark of deep grief ( Genesis 37:34). Orientals wear a tunic or shirt, and loose pantaloons; and over these a flowing mantle (especially great persons and women). Shaving the head was also usual in grief ( Fermiah 41:5 Micah 1:16).
- **21.** Naked (\*\*\*\*\*1 Timothy 6:7). "Mother's womb" is poetically the earth, the universal mother (\*\*\*\*\*15:5 Ecclesiastes 5:15 \*\*\*12:7 \*\*\*\*17:5 Psalm 139:15). Job herein realizes God's assertion (\*\*\*\*\*Job 1:8) against Satan's (\*\*\*\*\*\*10b 1:11). Instead of cursing, he blesses the name of Jehovah (Hebrew). The name of Jehovah, is Jehovah Himself, as manifested to us in His attributes (\*\*\*\*\*\*15:5 Psalm 139:15).
- **22.** *nor charged God foolishly* rather, "allowed himself to commit no folly against God" [UMBREIT]. "Dob 2:10 proves that this is the meaning. Not as *Margin* "attributed no folly to God." Hasty words against God, though natural in the bitterness of grief, are *folly;* literally, an "insipid, unsavory" thing ("Tob 6:6" Jeremiah 23:13, *Margin*). Folly in Scripture is continually equivalent to wickedness. For when man sins, it is himself, not God, whom he injures ("Proverbs 8:36). We are to submit to trials, not because we see the reasons for them, nor yet as though they were matters of chance, but because *God wills* them, and has a right to send them, and has His own good reasons in sending them.

**★★★**JOB 2:1-8.

#### SATAN FURTHER TEMPTS JOB.

- **1.** *a day* appointed for the angels giving an account of their ministry to God. The words "to present himself before the Lord" occur here, though not in \*\* Job 1:6, as Satan has now a special report to make as to Job.
- **3.** *integrity* literally, "completeness"; so "perfect," another form of the same Hebrew word, "SUDJob 11:7.

**movedst** ... **against** — Song of Solomon Samuel 26:19; compare Chronicles 21:1 with Samuel 24:1.

- **4.** Skin for skin a proverb. Supply, "He will give." The "skin" is figurative for any outward good. Nothing outward is so dear that a man will not exchange it for some other outward good; "but" (not "yea") "life," the inward good, cannot be replaced; a man will sacrifice everything else for its sake. Satan sneers bitterly at man's egotism and says that Job bears the loss of property and children because these are mere *outward and exchangeable goods*, but he will give up all things, even his religion, in order to save his life, if you touch his bones and flesh. "Skin" and "life" are in antithesis [UMBREIT]. The martyrs prove Satan's sneer false.

  ROSENMULLER explains it not so well. A man willingly gives up *another's* skin (life) for his own skin (life). So Job might bear the loss of his children, etc., with equanimity, so long as he remained unhurt himself; but when touched in his own person, he would renounce God. Thus the first "skin" means the other's skin, that is, body; the second "skin," one's own, as in "Exodus 21:28.
- **6.** *but save* rather, "only spare his life." Satan shows his ingenuity in inflicting pain, and also his knowledge of what man's body can bear without vital injury.

- 7. sore boils malignant boils; rather, as it is singular in the *Hebrew*, a "burning sore." Job was covered with one universal inflammation. The use of the potsherd (\*\*\*BJob 2:8) agrees with this view. It was that form of leprosy called *black* (to distinguish it from the *white*), or *elephantiasis*, because the feet swell like those of the elephant. The *Arabic judham* (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 28:35), where "sore botch" is rather the black burning boil (\*\*\*\*Tsaiah 1:6).
- **8.** *a potsherd* not a piece of a broken earthen vessel, but an instrument made for scratching (the root of the *Hebrew* word is "scratch"); the sore was too disgusting to touch. "To sit in the ashes" marks the deepest mourning (Jon 3:6); also humility, as if the mourner were nothing but dust and ashes; so Abraham (\*\*Genesis 18:27).

### **™JOB 2:9-13.**

#### JOB REPROVES HIS WIFE.

**9.** *curse God* — rather, "renounce" God. (See on "Job 1:5) [UMBREIT]. However, it was usual among the heathens, when disappointed in their prayers accompanied with offerings to their gods, to reproach and *curse* them.

and die — that is, take thy farewell of God and so die. For no good is to be got out of religion, either here or hereafter; or, at least, not in this life [GILL]; Nothing makes the ungodly so angry as to see the godly under trial not angry.

**10.** *the foolish women* — Sin and folly are allied in Scripture (\*\*\*\*\*1 Samuel 25:25 \*\*\*\*2 Samuel 13:13 \*\*\*\*\*1 Psalm 14:1).

**receive evil** — bear willingly (\*\*Lamentations 3:39).

**11.** *Eliphaz* — The view of RAWLINSON that "the names of Job's three friends represent the Chaldean times, about 700 B.C.," cannot be accepted. Eliphaz is an Idumean name, Esau's oldest son ("Genesis 36:4); and Teman, son of Eliphaz ("Genesis 36:15), called "duke." Eusebius places Teman in Arabia-Petraea (but see on "Modo 6:19). Teman means "at the

right hand"; and then the south, namely, part of Idumea; capital of Edom (\*\*\*OTA\*\*Amos 1:12). Hebrew geographers faced the east, not the north as we do; hence with them "the right hand" was the south. Temanites were famed for wisdom (\*\*\*OTA\*\*\*Jeremiah 49:7). BARUCH mentions them as "authors of fables" (namely, proverbs embodying the results of observation), and "searchers out of understanding."

**Bildad the Shuhite** — Shuah ("a pit"), son of Abraham and Keturah (\*\*Genesis 25:2). PTOLEMY mentions the region Syccea, in Arabia-Deserta, east of Batanea.

**Zophar the Naamathite** — not of the Naamans in Judah ( disal Joshua 15:41), which was too distant; but some region in Arabia-Deserta. Fretelius says there was a Naamath in Uz.

- **12.** *toward heaven* They threw ashes violently upwards, that they might fall on their heads and cover them the deepest mourning (\*\*\*\*\* Acts 22:23).
- 13. seven days ... nights They did not remain in the same posture and without food, etc., all this time, but for most of this period daily and nightly. Sitting on the earth marked mourning (\*\*\*Lamentations 2:10). Seven days was the usual length of it (\*\*\*Genesis 50:10 \*\*\* Samuel 31:13). This silence may have been due to a rising suspicion of evil in Job; but chiefly because it is only ordinary griefs that find vent in language; extraordinary griefs are too great for utterance.

The Poem Or Debate Itself (\*\*\*Job 3:2-42:6).

First Series In It (\*\*\*Job 3:1-14:22).

**Job First** ( **Job** 3:1-26).

**™JOB** 3:1-19.

# JOB CURSES THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH AND WISHES FOR DEATH.

- **1.** *opened his mouth* The Orientals speak seldom, and then sententiously; hence this formula expressing deliberation and gravity (\*\*\*Psalm 78:2). He formally began.
- cursed his day the strict Hebrew word for "cursing:" not the same as in Tob 1:5. Job cursed his birthday, but not his God.
- **2.** *spake Hebrew*, "answered," that is, not to any actual question that preceded, but to the question virtually involved in the case. His outburst is singularly wild and bold ("Termiah 20:14). To desire to die so as to be free from sin is a mark of grace; to desire to die so as to escape troubles is a mark of corruption. He was ill-fitted to die who was so unwilling to live. But his trials were greater, and his light less, than ours.
- **3.** the night in which rather "the night which said." The words in italics are not in the *Hebrew*. Night is personified and poetically made to speak. So in "\*\*\*Job 3:7, and in "\*\*\*Psalm 19:2. The birth of a male in the East is a matter of joy; often not so of a female.
- **4.** *let not God regard it* rather, more poetically, "seek it out." "Let not God stoop from His bright throne to raise it up from its dark hiding-place." The curse on the *day* in \*\*\*\*Job 3:3, is amplified in \*\*\*\*Job 3:4,5; that on the *night*, in \*\*\*\*Job 3:6-10.
- **5.** Let ... the shadow of death ("deepest darkness," Zana Isaiah 9:2).

stain it — This is a later sense of the verb [GESENIUS]; better the old and more poetic idea, "Let darkness (the ancient night of chaotic gloom) resume its rights over light (\*\*Genesis 1:2), and claim that day as its own."

*a cloud* — collectively, a gathered mass of dark clouds.

the blackness of the day terrify it — literally, "the obscurations"; whatever darkens the day [GESENIUS]. The verb in *Hebrew* expresses sudden terrifying. May it be suddenly affrighted at its own darkness. Umbreit explains it as "magical incantations that darken the day," forming the climax to the previous clauses; "BJob 3:8 speaks of "cursers of the day" similarly. But the former view is simpler. Others refer it to the poisonous simoom wind.

**6.** seize upon it — as its prey, that is, utterly dissolve it.

*joined unto the days of the year* — rather, by poetic personification, "Let it not *rejoice* in the circle of days and nights and months, which form the circle of years."

**7.** *solitary* — rather, "unfruitful." "Would that it had not *given birth* to me."

8. them ... curse the day — If "mourning" be the right rendering in the latter clause of this verse, these words refer to the hired mourners of the dead (2007] Jeremiah 9:17). But the Hebrew for "mourning" elsewhere always denotes an animal, whether it be the crocodile or some huge serpent (2017] Isaiah 27:1), such as is meant by "leviathan." Therefore, the expression, "cursers of day," refers to magicians, who were believed to be able by charms to make a day one of evil omen. (So Balaam, 4027) Numbers 22:5). This accords with UMBREIT'S view (4887) Job 3:7); or to the Ethiopians and Atlantes, who "used to curse the sun at his rising for burning up them and their country" [HERODOTUS]. Necromancers claimed power to control or rouse wild beasts at will, as do the Indian serpent-charmers of our day (4887) Psalm 58:5). Job does not say they had the power they claimed; but, supposing they had, may they curse the day. SCHUTTENS renders it by supplying words as follows: — Let those that are ready for anything, call it (the day) the raiser up of leviathan, that is, of a host of evils.

- **9.** dawning of the day literally, "eyelashes of morning." The Arab poets call the sun the eye of day. His early rays, therefore, breaking forth before sunrise, are the opening eyelids or eyelashes of morning.
- **12.** Why did the knees prevent me? Old English for "anticipate my wants." The reference is to the solemn recognition of a new-born child by the father, who used to place it on his knees as his own, whom he was bound to rear ("Genesis 30:3" 50:23 2002 Isaiah 66:12).
- **13.** *lain* ... *quiet* ... *slept* a gradation. I should not only have *lain*, but been *quiet*, and not only *been quiet*, but *slept*. Death in Scripture is called "sleep" (\*\*Psalm 13:3); especially in the New Testament, where the resurrection-awakening is more clearly set forth (\*\*\*\*) Corinthians 15:51 Thessalonians 4:14 \*\*\*\* Thessalonians 4:10.
- 14. With kings ... which built desolate places for themselves who built up for themselves what proved to be (not palaces, but) ruins! The wounded spirit of Job, once a great emir himself, sick of the vain struggles of mortal great men, after grandeur, contemplates the palaces of kings, now desolate heaps of ruins. His regarding the repose of death the most desirable end of the great ones of earth, wearied with heaping up perishable treasures, marks the irony that breaks out from the black clouds of melancholy [UMBREIT]. The "for themselves" marks their selfishness. MICHAELIS explains it weakly of mausoleums, such as are found still, of stupendous proportions, in the ruins of Petra of Idumea.
- **15.** *filled their houses with silver* Some take this to refer to the treasures which the ancients used to bury with their dead. But see 

  \*\*\*Job 3:26.
- **16.** *untimely birth* (\*\*\*Psalm 58:8); preferable to the life of the restless miser (\*\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 6:3-5).
- **17.** *the wicked* the original meaning, "those ever restless," "full of desires" (ASTO Isaiah 57:20,21).
- **the weary** literally, "those whose strength is wearied out" (\*\*\*Revelation 14:13).
- **18.** There the prisoners rest from their chains.

**19.** *servant* — The slave is there manumitted from slavery.

### **™**JOB 3:20-26.

#### HE COMPLAINS OF LIFE BECAUSE OF HIS ANGUISH.

- **20.** Wherefore giveth he light namely, God; often omitted reverentially (\*\*\* Job 24:23 \*\*\* Ecclesiastes 9:9). Light, that is, life. The joyful light ill suits the mourners. The grave is most in unison with their feelings.
- **23.** whose way is hid The picture of Job is drawn from a wanderer who has lost his way, and who is hedged in, so as to have no exit of escape (\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:7,9).
- **24.** my sighing cometh before I eat that is, prevents my eating [UMBREIT]; or, conscious that the effort to eat brought on the disease, Job must sigh before eating [ROSENMULLER]; or, sighing takes the place of good (\*Psalm 42:3) [GOOD]. But the first explanation accords best with the text.

*my roarings are poured out like the waters* — an image from the rushing sound of water streaming.

**25.** the thing which I ... feared is come upon me — In the beginning of his trials, when he heard of the loss of one blessing, he feared the loss of another; and when he heard of the loss of that, he feared the loss of a third.

*that which I was afraid of is come unto me* — namely, the ill opinion of his friends, as though he were a hypocrite on account of his trials.

**26.** *I* was not in safety ... yet trouble came — referring, not to his former state, but to the *beginning* of his troubles. From that time I had no rest, there was no intermission of sorrows. "And" (not, "yet") a fresh trouble is coming, namely, my friends' suspicion of my being a hypocrite. This gives the starting-point to the whole ensuing controversy.

**SOUTO B** 4:1-21.

### FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

- **1.** *Eliphaz* the mildest of Job's three accusers. The greatness of Job's calamities, his complaints against God, and the opinion that calamities are proofs of guilt, led the three to doubt Job's integrity.
- **2.** *If we assay to commune* Rather, two questions, "May we attempt a word with thee? Wilt thou be grieved at it?" Even pious friends often count that only a touch which we feel as a wound.
- 3. weak hands Tsaiah 35:3 Tsaiah 35:3 Samuel 4:1.
- **5.** *thou art troubled* rather, "unhinged," hast lost thy self-command (Thessalonians 3:3).
- **6.** Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, etc. Does thy fear, thy confidence, come to nothing? Does it come only to this, that thou faintest now? Rather, by transposition, "Is not thy fear (of God) thy hope? and the uprightness of thy ways thy confidence? If so, bethink thee, who ever perished being innocent?" [UMBREIT]. But \*\*Luke 13:2,3 shows that, though there is a retributive divine government even in this life, yet we cannot judge by the mere outward appearance. "One event is outwardly to the righteous and to the wicked" (\*\*Ecclesiastes 9:2); but yet we must take it on trust, that God deals righteously even now (\*\*\*Psalm 37:25 Isaiah 33:16). Judge not by a part, but by the whole of a godly man's life, and by his end, even here ( James 5:11). The one and the same outward event is altogether a different thing in its inward bearings on the godly and on the ungodly even here. Even prosperity, much more calamity, is a punishment to the wicked (Proverbs 1:32). Trials are chastisements for their good (to the righteous) (\*\*Psalm 119:67,71,75). See Preface on the DESIGN of this book (see *Introduction*).

- 9. breath of his nostrils God's anger; a figure from the fiery winds of the East (\*\*IIG\*Job 1:16 \*\*IIG\*Isaiah 5:25 \*\*\*Psalm 18:8,15).
- 10, 11. lion that is, wicked men, upon whom Eliphaz wished to show that calamities come in spite of their various resources, just as destruction comes on the lion in spite of his strength (\*\*Psalm 58:6 \*\*\*2 Timothy 4:17). Five different Hebrew terms here occur for "lion." The raging of the lion (the tearer), and the roaring of the bellowing lion and the teeth of the young lions, not whelps, but grown up enough to hunt for prey. The strong lion, the whelps of the lioness (not the stout lion, as in English Version) [Barnes and Umbreit]. The various phases of wickedness are expressed by this variety of terms: obliquely, Job, his wife, and children, may be hinted at by the lion, lioness, and whelps. The one verb, "are broken," does not suit both subjects; therefore, supply "the roaring of the bellowing lion is silenced." The strong lion dies of want at last, and the whelps, torn from the mother, are scattered, and the race becomes extinct.
- **12.** *a thing Hebrew*, a "word." Eliphaz confirms his view by a divine declaration which was secretly and unexpectedly imparted to him.
- a little literally, "a whisper"; implying the still silence around, and that more was conveyed than articulate words could utter (\*\*\*\*Job 26:14 \*\*\*\*\*2 Corinthians 12:4).
- **13.** In thoughts from the visions of the night [So WINER]. While revolving night visions previously made to him (Daniel 2:29). Rather, "In my manifold (Hebrew, divided) thoughts, before the visions of the night commenced"; therefore not a delusive dream (DAN) [UMBREIT].
- **16.** It stood still At first the apparition glides before Eliphaz, then stands still, but with that shadowy indistinctness of form which creates such an impression of awe; a gentle murmur: not (*English Version*): there was silence; for in Silence; the voice, as opposed to the previous storm, denotes a gentle, still murmur.

**17.** *mortal man* ... *a man* — Two *Hebrew* words for "man" are used; the first implying his feebleness; the second his strength. Whether feeble or strong, man is not righteous before God.

*more just than God ... more pure than his maker* — But this would be self-evident without an oracle.

- **18.** *folly* or, "nor in his angels, in whom he put light." Imperfection is to be attributed to the angels, in comparison with Him. The holiness of some of them had given way (\*\*\* Peter 2:4), and at best is but the holiness of a creature. Folly is the want of *moral* consideration [UMBREIT].
- **19.** *houses of clay* (\*\*\*2 Corinthians 5:1). Houses made of sun-dried clay bricks are common in the East; they are easily washed away (\*\*\*\*27). Man's foundation is this dust (\*\*\*\*Genesis 3:19).

before the moth — rather, "as before the moth," which devours a garment (\*\*\*\*Job 13:28 \*\*\*\*Psalm 39:11 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 50:9). Man, who cannot, in a physical point of view, stand before the very moth, surely cannot, in a moral, stand before God.

**20.** *from morning to evening* — unceasingly; or, better, between the morning and evening of one short day (so Exodus 18:14 Reainh 38:12).

They are destroyed — better, "they would be destroyed," if God withdrew His loving protection. Therefore man must not think to be holy before God, but to draw holiness and all things else from God (\*\*\*Tob 4:17).

**21.** their excellency — (\*\*Psalm 39:11 146:4 \*\*\* Corinthians 13:8). But UMBREIT, by an Oriental image from a bow, useless because unstrung: "Their nerve, or string would be torn away." MICHAELIS, better in accordance with \*\*SIPJob 4:19, makes the allusion be to the cords of a tabernacle taken down (\*\*\*Isaiah 33:20).

they die, even without wisdom — rather, "They would perish, yet not according to wisdom," but according to arbitrary choice, if God were not infinitely wise and holy. The design of the spirit is to show that the continued existence of weak man proves the inconceivable wisdom and holiness of God, which alone save man from ruin [UMBREIT]. BENGEL shows from Scripture that God's holiness (Hebrew, kadosh) comprehends

all His excellencies and attributes. DE WETTE loses the scope, in explaining it, of the shortness of man's life, contrasted with the angels "before they have attained to wisdom."

**™**JOB 5:1-27.

### ELIPHAZ' CONCLUSION FROM THE VISION.

- **1.** *if there be any*, etc. Rather, "will He (God) reply to thee?" Job, after the revelation just given, cannot be so presumptuous as to think God or any of the holy ones (Daniel 4:17, "angels") round His throne, will vouchsafe a *reply* (a judicial expression) to his rebellious complaint.
- **2.** wrath ... envy fretful and passionate complaints, such as Eliphaz charged Job with (\*\*\*Tob 4:5; so \*\*\*\*Proverbs 14:30). Not, the wrath of God killeth the foolish, and *His* envy, etc.
- **3.** *the foolish* the wicked. I have seen the sinner spread his "root" wide in prosperity, yet circumstances "suddenly" occurred which gave occasion for his once prosperous dwelling being "cursed" as desolate (\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:35,36 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:8).
- **4.** His children ... crushed in the gate A judicial formula. The gate was the place of judgment and of other public proceedings (\*\*Psalm 127:5\*\*Proverbs 22:22 \*\*Genesis 23:10 \*\*Deuteronomy 21:19). Such propylaea have been found in the Assyrian remains. Eliphaz obliquely alludes to the calamity which cut off Job's children.
- **5.** even out of the thorns Even when part of the grain remains hanging on the thorn bushes (or, "is growing among thorns," Matthew 13:7), the hungry gleaner does not grudge the trouble of even taking it away, so clean swept away is the harvest of the wicked.

*the robber* — as the Sabeans, who robbed Job. Rather, translate "the thirsty," as the antithesis in the parallelism, "the hungry," proves.

**6.** *Although* — rather, "for truly" [UMBREIT].

*affliction cometh not forth of the dust* — like a weed, of its own accord. Eliphaz hints that the cause of it lay with Job himself.

- 7. Yet rather, "Truly," or, But affliction does not come from chance, but is the appointment of God for sin; that is, the original birth-sin of man. Eliphaz passes from the particular sin and consequent suffering of Job to the universal sin and suffering of mankind. Troubles spring from man's common sin by as necessary a law of natural consequences as sparks (Hebrew, "sons of coal") fly upward. Troubles are many and fiery, as sparks (Teta 4:12 Tsaiah 43:2). UMBREIT for "sparks" has "birds of prey."
- **8.** Therefore (as affliction is ordered by God, on account of sin), "I would" have you to "seek unto God" ("Isaiah 8:19" Amos 5:8 "Isaiah 5:24).
- **11.** Connected with 

  Stop Job 5:9. His "unsearchable" dealings are with a view to raise the humble and abase the proud (
  Luke 1:52). Therefore Job ought to turn humbly to Him.
- **12.** *enterprise* literally, "realization." The *Hebrew* combines in the one word the two ideas, wisdom and happiness, "enduring existence" being the etymological and philosophical root of the combined notion [UMBREIT].
- **13.** Paul (\*\*\*\* Corinthians 3:19) quoted this clause with the formula establishing its inspiration, "it is written." He cites the exact *Hebrew* words, not as he usually does the *Septuagint*, *Greek* version (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:15). Haman was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai (\*\*\*\*Esther 5:14 7:10).

the wise — that is, "the cunning."

*is carried headlong* — Their scheme is precipitated before it is ripe.

- **14.** Judicial blindness often is sent upon keen men of the world (Deuteronomy 28:29 Isaiah 59:10 John 9:39).
- **15.** "From the sword" which proceedeth "from their mouth" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 59:7 57:4).
- **16.** *the poor hath hope* of the interposition of God.

- iniquity stoppeth her mouth (\*\*\*Psalm 107:42 \*\*\*Micah 7:9,10 \*\*\*Isaiah 52:15). Especially at the last day, through shame (\*\*\*Iude 1:15 \*\*\*Matthew 22:12). The "mouth" was the offender (\*\*\*IbJob 5:15), and the mouth shall then be stopped (\*\*\*Isaiah 25:8) at the end.
- 17. happy not that the actual suffering is joyous; but the consideration of the *righteousness* of Him who sends it, and the *end* for which it is sent, make it a cause for thankfulness, not for complaints, such as Job had uttered (\*\*Pebrews 12:11). Eliphaz implies that the end in this case is to call back Job from the particular sin of which he takes for granted that Job is guilty. Paul seems to allude to this passage in \*\*Pebrews 12:5; so \*\*James 1:12 \*\*Proverbs 3:12. Eliphaz does not give due prominence to this truth, but rather to *Job's sin*. It is Elihu alone (\*\*\*Job 32:1-37:24) who fully dwells upon the truth, that affliction is mercy and justice in disguise, for the good of the sufferer.
- **18.** *he maketh sore, and bindeth up* (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:39 \*\*\*Hosea 6:1 \*\* Deuteronomy 32:39 \*\* Hosea 6:1 \*\* Deuteronomy 32:39 \*\* Hosea 6:1 \*\* Deuteronomy 32:39 \*\* Deuteronom
- **19.** *in six* ... *yea*, *in seven* (\*\*Proverbs 6:16 Amos 1:3). The *Hebrew* idiom fixes on a certain number (here "six"), in order to call attention as to a thing of importance; then increases the force by adding, with a "yea, nay seven," the next higher number; here "seven," the sacred and perfect number. In *all* possible troubles; not merely in the precise number "seven."
- **20.** power Hebrew, "hands" (Ezekiel 35:5, Margin).
- of the sword (\*\*\*\*Deremiah 5:12). Hands are given to the sword personified as a living agent.
- **21.** (\*\*\*Psalm 31:20 \*\*\*\* Jeremiah 18:18).
- **22.** *famine thou shalt laugh* Not, in spite of destruction and famine, which is true (\*\*\*\*Habakkuk 3:17,18), though not *the* truth meant by Eliphaz, but because those calamities shall not come upon thee. A different *Hebrew* word from that in \*\*\*\*Job 5:20; there, famine *in general;* here, *the languid state* of those wanting proper nutriment [BARNES].

- **23.** in league with the stones of the field They shall not hurt the fertility of thy soil; nor the wild beasts thy fruits; spoken in Arabia-Deserta, where stones abounded. Arabia, derived from Arabah a desert plain. The first clause of this verse answers to the first clause of 5:22; and the last of this verse to the last of that verse. The full realization of this is yet future (2002) Isaiah 65:23,25 ADD Hosea 2:18).
- **24.** *know* "Thou shalt rest in the assurance, that thine habitation is the abode of peace; and (if) thou numberest thine herd, thine expectations prove not fallacious" [UMBREIT]. "Sin" does not agree with the context. The *Hebrew* word "to miss" a mark, said of archers ("Tudges 20:16). The *Hebrew* for "habitation" primarily means "the fold for cattle"; and for "visit," often to "take an account of, to number." "Peace" is the common Eastern salutation; including inward and outward prosperity.
- **25.** as the grass (\*\*Page Psalm 72:16). Properly, "herb-bearing seed" (\*\*Genesis 1:11,12).
- **26.** in a full age So "full of days" (\*\*\* Job 42:17 Genesis 35:29). Not mere length of years, but ripeness for death, one's inward and outward full development not being prematurely cut short, is denoted (\*\* Isaiah 65:22).

Thou shalt come — not literally, but expressing willingness to die. Eliphaz speaks from the Old Testament point of view, which made full years a reward of the righteous (\*\*\*Psalm 91:16 \*\*\*Exodus 20:12), and premature death the lot of the wicked (\*\*\*Psalm 55:23). The righteous are immortal till their work is done. To keep them longer would be to render them less fit to die. God takes them at their best (\*\*\*Isaiah 57:1). The good are compared to wheat (\*\*\*Matthew 13:30).

**cometh in** — literally, "ascends." The corn is lifted up off the earth and carried home; so the good man "is raised into the heap of sheaves" [UMBREIT].

**27.** searched it ... for thy good — literally, "for thyself" (\*\*\*Psalm 111:2\*\*\*Proverbs 2:4 \*\*\*\*\*P:12).

#### FIRST SERIES CONTINUED.

**™**JOB 6:1-30.

#### REPLY OF JOB TO ELIPHAZ.

- **2.** *throughly weighed* Oh, that instead of censuring my complaints when thou oughtest rather to have sympathized with me, thou wouldst accurately compare my sorrow, and my misfortunes; these latter "outweigh in the balance" the former.
- **3.** *the sand* ( Proverbs 27:3).
- are swallowed up See Margin [that is, "I want words to express my grief"]. But Job plainly is apologizing, not for not having had words enough, but for having spoken too much and too boldly; and the Hebrew is, "to speak rashly" [UMBREIT, GESENIUS, ROSENMULLER]. "Therefore were my words so rash."
- **4.** arrows ... within me have pierced me. A poetic image representing the avenging Almighty armed with bow and arrows (\*\*Psalm 38:2,3). Here the arrows are poisoned. Peculiarly appropriate, in reference to the burning pains which penetrated, like poison, into the inmost parts ("spirit"; as contrasted with mere surface flesh wounds) of Job's body.
- set themselves in array a military image ( Judges 20:33). All the terrors which the divine wrath can muster are set in array against me ( Isaiah 42:13).
- **5.** Neither wild animals, as the wild ass, nor tame, as the ox, are dissatisfied when well-supplied with food. The braying of the one and the lowing of the other prove distress and want of palatable food. So, Job argues, if he complains, it is not without cause; namely, his pains, which are, as it were, disgusting food, which God feeds him with (end of Soft) Job

- 6:7). But he should have remembered a rational being should evince a better spirit than the brute.
- **6.** *unsavoury* tasteless, insipid. Salt is a chief necessary of life to an Easterner, whose food is mostly vegetable.
- *the white* literally, "spittle" (\*\*\* Samuel 21:13), which the white of an egg resembles.
- **8.** To desire death is no necessary proof of fitness for death. The ungodly sometimes desire it, so as to escape troubles, without thought of the hereafter. The godly desire it, in order to be with the Lord; but they patiently wait God's will.
- **9.** *destroy* literally, "grind" or "crush" (\*\* Isaiah 3:15).
- **let loose his hand** God had put forth His hand only so far as to wound the *surface* of Job's flesh (\*\*\*Dob 1:12 2:6); he wishes that hand to be *let loose*, so as to wound *deeply and vitally*.
- *cut me off* metaphor from a weaver cutting off the web, when finished, from the thrum fastening it to the loom (\*\*\*Isaiah 38:12).
- **10.** *I* would harden myself in sorrow rather, "I would exult in the pain," if I knew that that pain would hasten my death [GESENIUS]. UMBREIT translates the *Hebrew* of "Let Him not spare," as "unsparing"; and joins it with "pain."
- **concealed** I have not disowned, in word or deed, the commands of the Holy One (\*\*PSP Psalm 119:46 \*\*Acts 20:20). He says this in answer to Eliphaz' insinuation that he is a hypocrite. God is here called "the Holy One," to imply man's reciprocal obligation to be holy, as He is holy (\*\*SPP Leviticus 19:2).

- 11. What strength have I, so as to warrant the hope of restoration to health? a hope which Eliphaz had suggested. "And what" but a miserable "end" of life is before me, "that I should" desire to "prolong life"? [UMBREIT]. UMBREIT and ROSENMULLER not so well translate the last words "to be patient."
- **12.** Disease had so attacked him that his strength would need to be hard as a stone, and his flesh like brass, not to sink under it. But he has only flesh, like other men. It must, therefore, give way; so that the hope of restoration suggested by Eliphaz is vain (see on \*\*\*SIJ\*\* Job 5:11).
- **13.** *Is not my help in me*? The interrogation is better omitted. "There is no help in me!" For "wisdom," "deliverance" is a better rendering. "And deliverance is driven quite from me."
- 14. pity a proverb. Charity is the love which judges indulgently of our fellow men: it is put on a par with truth in \*\*Proverbs 3:3, for they together form the essence of moral perfection [UMBREIT]. It is the spirit of Christianity (\*\*\*Proverbs 10:12\*\*\* Proverbs 10:12\*\*\* Proverbs 10:12\*\*\* Proverbs 10:12\*\* Pro
- **15.** Those whom I regarded as "my brethren," from whom I looked for faithfulness in my adversity, have disappointed me, as the streams failing from drought wadies of Arabia, filled in the winter, but dry in the summer, which disappoint the caravans expecting to find water there. The fullness and noise of these temporary streams answer to the past large and loud professions of my friends; their dryness in summer, to the failure of the friendship when needed. The Arab proverb says of a treacherous friend, "I trust not in thy torrent" (ARABITSAIAN 58:11, Margin).
- stream of brooks rather, "the brook in the ravines which passes away." It has no perpetual spring of water to renew it (unlike "the fountain of living waters," Jeremiah 2:13 Tsaiah 33:16, at the end); and thus it passes away as rapidly as it arose.
- **16.** *blackish* literally, "Go as a mourner in black clothing" (\*\*\*Psalm 34:14). A vivid and poetic image to picture the stream turbid and black

with melted ice and snow, descending from the mountains into the valley. In the [second] clause, the snow dissolved is, in the poet's view, "hid" in the flood [UMBREIT].

17. wax warm — rather, "At the time when." ("But they soon wax") [UMBREIT]. "they become narrower (flow in a narrower bed), they are silent (cease to flow noisily); in the heat (of the sun) they are consumed or vanish out of their place. First the stream flows more narrowly — then it becomes silent and still; at length every trace of water disappears by evaporation under the hot sun" [UMBREIT].

**18.** *turned aside* — rather, "caravans" (*Hebrew*, "travelers") turn aside from their way, by circuitous routes, to obtain water. They had seen the brook in spring full of water: and now in the summer heat, on their weary journey, they turn off their road by a devious route to reach the living waters, which they remembered with such pleasure. But, when "they go," it is "into a desert" [Noyes and Umbreit]. Not as *English Version*, "They go *to nothing*," which would be a tame repetition of the drying up of the waters in "Moyes" instead of waters, they find an "empty wilderness"; and, not having strength to regain their road, bitterly disappointed, they "perish." The terse brevity is most expressive.

19. the troops — that is, "caravans."

**Tema** — north of Arabia-Deserta, near the Syrian desert; called from Tema son of Ishmael (\*\*Genesis 25:15 \*\*\*Isaiah 21:14 \*\*\*Isaiah 25:23), still so called by the Arabs. \*\*\*Job 6:19,20 give another picture of the mortification of disappointed hopes, namely, those of the caravans on the direct road, anxiously awaiting the return of their companions from the distant valley. The mention of the locality whence the caravans came gives living reality to the picture.

Sheba — refers here not to the marauders in North Arabia-Deserta (\*\*\*IJob 1:15), but to the merchants (\*\*\*Ezekiel 27:22) in the south, in Arabia-Felix or Yemen, "afar off" (\*\*\*IJeremiah 6:20 \*\*\*Matthew 12:42 \*\*\*Genesis 10:28). Caravans are first mentioned in \*\*\*Genesis 37:25; men needed to travel thus in companies across the desert, for defense against the roving robbers and for mutual accommodation.

**The companies ... waited for them** — cannot refer to the caravans who had gone in quest of the waters; for Sob 6:18 describes their utter destruction.

**20.** literally, "each had hoped"; namely, that their companions would find water. The greater had been their hopes the more bitter now their disappointment;

they came thither — to the place.

and were ashamed — literally, "their countenances burn," an Oriental phrase for the shame and consternation of deceived expectation; so "ashamed" as to disappointment (\*\*TR\*)Romans 5:5).

**21.** As the dried-up brook is to the caravan, so are ye to me, namely, a nothing; ye might as well not be in existence [UMBREIT]. The *Margin* "like to them," or "to it" (namely, the waters of the brook), is not so good a reading.

*ye see*, *and are afraid* — Ye are struck aghast at the sight of my misery, and ye lose presence of mind. Job puts this mild construction on their failing to relieve him with affectionate consolation.

- **22.** And yet I did not ask you to "bring me" a gift; or to "pay for me out of your substance a reward" (to the Judge, to redeem me from my punishment); all I asked from you was affectionate treatment.
- **23.** *the mighty* the oppressor, or creditor, in whose power the debtor was [UMBREIT].
- **24, 25.** Irony. If you can "teach me" the right view, I am willing to be set right, and "hold my tongue"; and to be made to see my error. But then if your words be really the right words, how is it that they are so feeble? "Yet how feeble are the words of what you call the right view." So the *Hebrew* is used (in "Micah 2:10 1:9). The *English Version*, "How powerful," etc., does not agree so well with the last clause of the verse.
- **25.** And what will your arguings reprove? literally, "the reproofs which proceed from you"; the emphasis is on you; you may find fault, who are not in my situation [UMBREIT].

**26.** Do you imagine — or, "mean."

to reprove words and (to reprove) the speeches of one desperate, (which are) as wind? — mere nothings, not to be so narrowly taken to task? UMBREIT not so well takes the *Hebrew* for "as wind," as "sentiments"; making formal "sentiments" antithetical to mere "speeches," and supplying, not the word "reprove," but "would you regard," from the first clause.

**27.** literally, "ye cause" (supply, "your anger") [UMBREIT], a net, namely, of sophistry [NOYES and SCHUTTENS], to fall upon the desolate (one bereft of help, like the fatherless orphan);

and ye dig (a pit) for your friend — that is, try to ensnare him, to catch him in the use of unguarded language [Noyes]. (\*\*\*Psalm 57:6); metaphor from hunters catching wild beasts in a pit covered with brushwood to conceal it. UMBREIT from the *Syriac*, and answering to his interpretation of the first clause, has, "Would you be *indignant* against your friend?" The *Hebrew* in \*\*\*Job 41:6, means to "feast upon." As the first clause asks, "Would you catch him in a net?" so this follows up the image, "And would you next feast upon him, and his miseries?" So the Septuagint.

- **28.** *be content* rather, "be pleased to" look. Since you have so falsely judged my words, look upon me, that is, upon my countenance: for (it is evident before your faces) if I lie; my countenance will betray me, if I be the hypocrite that you suppose.
- **29.** *Return* rather, "retract" your charges:

*let it not be iniquity* — that is, (retract) that injustice may not be done me. Yea retract, "my righteousness is in it"; that is, my right is involved in this matter.

**30.** Will you say that my guilt lies in the organ of speech, and will you call it to account? or, Is it that my taste (palate) or discernment is not capable to form a judgment of perverse things? Is it thus you will explain the fact of my having no consciousness of guilt? [UMBREIT].

**№** 7:1-21.

### JOB EXCUSES HIS DESIRE FOR DEATH.

- 1. appointed time better, "a warfare," hard conflict with evil (so in Isaiah 40:2 Daniel 10:1). Translate it "appointed time" (Isaiah 40:14). Job reverts to the sad picture of man, however great, which he had drawn (Isaiah 3:14), and details in this chapter the miseries which his friends will see, if, according to his request (Isaiah 6:28), they will look on him. Even the Christian soldier, "warring a good warfare," rejoices when it is completed (Isaiah 7:18).
- **2.** earnestly desireth Hebrew, "pants for the [evening] shadow." Easterners measure time by the length of their shadow. If the servant longs for the evening when his wages are paid, why may not Job long for the close of his hard service, when he shall enter on his "reward?" This proves that Job did not, as many maintain, regard the grave as a mere sleep.
- **3.** Months of comfortless misfortune.

*I am made to possess* — literally, "to be heir to." Irony. "To be heir to," is usually a matter of joy; but here it is the entail of an involuntary and dismal inheritance.

*Months* — for days, to express its long duration.

**Appointed** — literally, "they have numbered to me"; marking well the unavoidable doom assigned to him.

- **4.** Literally, "When shall be the flight of the night?" [GESENIUS]. UMBREIT, not so well, "The night is long extended"; literally, "measured out" (so *Margin*).
- **5.** In elephantiasis maggots are bred in the sores (\*\*\*Acts 12:23 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 14:11).

**clods of dust** — rather, a crust of dried filth and accumulated corruption (\*\*\*\*\*Job 2:7,8).

my skin is broken and ... loathsome — rather, comes together so as to heal up, and again breaks out with running matter [Gesenius]. More simply the *Hebrew* is, "My skin rests (for a time) and (again) melts away" (\*\*\*Psalm 58:7).

**6.** (\*\*Isaiah 38:12). Every day like the weaver's shuttle leaves a thread behind; and each shall wear, as he weaves. But Job's thought is that his days must swiftly be cut off as a web;

without hope — namely, of a recovery and renewal of life (\*\*\*\*\*Job 14:19 Chronicles 29:15).

**7.** Address to God.

*Wind* — a picture of evanescence (<sup>◆FRS</sup>Psalm 78:39).

shall no more see — rather, "shall no more return to see good." This change from the different wish in "STO 3:17, etc., is most true to nature. He is now in a softer mood; a beam from former days of prosperity falling upon memory and the thought of the unseen world, where one is seen no more ("TJO 7:8), drew from him an expression of regret at leaving this world of light ("Ecclesiastes 11:7); so Hezekiah ("TST Isaiah 38:11). Grace rises above nature ("TST 2 Corinthians 5:8).

**8.** The eye of him who beholds me (present, not past), that is, in the very act of beholding me, seeth me no more.

Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not — He disappears, even while God is looking upon him. Job cannot survive the gaze of Jehovah (\*\*Psalm 104:32 \*\*Revelation 20:11). Not, "Thine eyes seek me and I am not to be found"; for God's eye penetrates even to the unseen world (\*\*Psalm 139:8). UMBREIT unnaturally takes "thine" to refer to one of the three friends.

**9.** ( Samuel 12:23).

- *the grave* the Sheol, or place of departed spirits, not disproving Job's belief in the resurrection. It merely means, "He shall come up no more" in the present order of things.
- **10.** (Psalm 103:16). The Oriental keenly loves his dwelling. In Arabian elegies the desertion of abodes by their occupants is often a theme of sorrow. Grace overcomes this also (Luke 18:29 Acts 4:34).
- **11.** Therefore, as such is my hard lot, I will at least have the melancholy satisfaction of venting my sorrow in words. The *Hebrew* opening words, "Therefore I, at all events," express self-elevation [UMBREIT].
- **12.** Why dost thou deny me the comfort of care-assuaging sleep? Why scarest thou me with frightful dreams?

**Amos I a sea** — regarded in Old Testament poetry as a violent rebel against God, the Lord of nature, who therefore curbs his violence (\*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 5:22).

- *or a whale* or some other sea monster ( Isaiah 27:1), that Thou needest thus to watch and curb me? The Egyptians watched the crocodile most carefully to prevent its doing mischief.
- **14.** The frightful dreams resulting from elephantiasis he attributes to God; the common belief assigned all night visions to God.
- **15.** UMBREIT translates, "So that I could wish to strangle myself dead by my own hands." He softens this idea of Job's harboring the thought of suicide, by representing it as entertained only in agonizing dreams, and immediately repudiated with horror in "Tob 7:16, "Yet that (self-strangling) I loathe." This is forcible and graphic. Perhaps the meaning is simply, "My soul chooses (even) strangling (or any violent death) rather than my life," literally, "my bones" ("Psalm 35:10); that is, rather than the wasted and diseased skeleton, left to him. In this view, "I loathe it" ("Tob 7:16) refers to his life.
- **16.** *Let me alone* that is, cease to afflict me for the few and vain days still left to me.
- 17. (\*\*\*Psalm 8:4 \*\*\*\*\*144:3). Job means, "What is man that thou shouldst make him [of so much importance], and that thou shouldst expend such

attention [or, heart-thought] upon him" as to make him the subject of so severe trials? Job ought rather to have reasoned from God's condescending so far to notice man as to try him, that there must be a wise and loving purpose in trial. David uses the same words, in their right application, to express wonder that God should do so much as He does for insignificant man. Christians who know God manifest in the man Christ Jesus may use them still more.

- **18.** With each new day (\*\*Psalm 73:14). It is rather God's mercies, not our trials, that are new every morning (\*\*Lamentations 3:23). The idea is that of a shepherd taking count of his flock every morning, to see if all are there [Cocceius].
- **19.** How long (like a jealous keeper) wilt thou never take thine eyes off (so the *Hebrew* for "depart from") me? Nor let me alone for a brief respite (literally, "so long as I take to swallow my spittle"), an Arabic proverb, like our, "till I draw my breath."
- **20.** *I have sinned* Yet what sin can I do against ("to," "Tob 35:6) thee (of such a nature that thou shouldst jealously watch and deprive me of all strength, as if thou didst fear me)? Yet thou art one who hast men ever in view, ever watchest them O thou *Watcher* (\*\*\*Dob 7:12 \*\*Daniel 9:14) of men. Job had borne with patience his trials, as sent by God (\*\*\*Dob 1:21 \*\*Dob 1:21); only his reason cannot reconcile the ceaseless continuance of his mental and bodily pains with his ideas of the divine nature.

set me as a mark — Wherefore dost thou make me thy point of attack? that is, ever assail me with new pains? [UMBREIT] (\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:12).

**21.** *for now* — very soon.

*in the morning* — not the resurrection; for then Job will be found. It is a figure, from one seeking a sick man in the morning, and finding he has died in the night. So Job implies that, if God does not help him at once, it will be too late, for he will be gone. The reason why God does not give an immediate sense of pardon to awakened sinners is that they think they have a claim on God for it.

# FIRST SERIES — FIRST SPEECH OF BILDAD, MORE SEVERE AND COARSE THAN THAT OF ELIPHAZ.

**™**JOB 8:1-22.

### THE ADDRESS OF BILDAD.

- 2. like a ... wind? disregarding restraints, and daring against God.
- **3.** The repetition of "pervert" gives an emphasis galling to Job (\*\*\*Job 34:12). "Wouldst thou have God," as thy words imply, "pervert judgment," by letting thy sins go unpunished? He assumes Job's guilt from his sufferings.
- **4.** If Rather, "Since thy children have sinned against Him, and (since) He has cast them away (Hebrew, by the hand of) for their transgressions, (yet) if thou wouldst seek unto God, etc., if thou wert pure, etc., surely [even] now He would awake for thee." UMBREIT makes the apodosis to, "since thy children," etc., begin at "He has cast them away." Also, instead of "for," "He gave them up to (literally, into the hand of) their own guilt." Bildad expresses the justice of God, which Job had arraigned. Thy children have sinned; God leaves them to the consequence of their sin; most cutting to the heart of the bereaved father.
- **5.** seek unto God betimes early. Make it the first and chief anxiety (\*\*\*\*Psalm 78:34 \*\*\*\*\*Hosea 5:15 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 26:9 \*\*\*\*\*Proverbs 8:17 \*\*\*\*13:24).
- **6.** He would awake for thee that is, arise to thy help. God seemed to be asleep toward the sufferer (Psalm 35:23 7:6 Isaiah 51:9).
- *make ... prosperous* restore to prosperity thy (their) righteous habitation. Bildad assumes it to have been heretofore the habitation of guilt.
- 7. thy beginning the beginning of thy new happiness after restoration.

*latter end* — ( Job 42:12 Proverbs 23:18).

- **8, 9.** The sages of the olden time reached an age beyond those of Job's time (see on \*\*\*Job 42:16), and therefore could give the testimony of a fuller experience.
- **9.** of yesterday that is, a recent race. We know nothing as compared with them because of the brevity of our lives; so even Jacob (\*\*Genesis 47:9). Knowledge consisted then in the results of observation, embodied in poetical proverbs, and handed down by tradition. Longevity gave the opportunity of wider observation.

a shadow — (\*\*Psalm 144:4 \*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 29:15).

**10.** *teach thee* — \*\*\*\*Job 6:24 had said, "Teach me." Bildad, therefore, says, "Since you want *teaching*, inquire of the fathers. They will teach thee."

*utter words* — more than mere speaking; "put forth well-considered words."

out of their heart — from observation and reflection; not merely, from their mouth: such, as Bildad insinuates, were Job's words. \*\*Tob 8:11-13 embody in poetic and sententious form (probably the fragment of an old poem) the observation of the elders. The double point of comparison between the ungodly and the paper-reed is: 1. the luxuriant prosperity at first; and, 2. the sudden destruction.

- **11.** *rush* rather, "paper-reed": The papyrus of Egypt, which was used to make garments, shoes, baskets, boats, and paper (a word derived from it). It and the flag, or bulrush, grow only in marshy places (such as are along the Nile). So the godless thrives only in external prosperity; there is in the hypocrite no inward stability; his prosperity is like the rapid growth of water plants.
- **12.** *not cut down* Before it has ripened for the scythe, it withers more suddenly than any herb, having no self-sustaining power, once that the moisture is gone, which other herbs do not need in the same degree. So ruin seizes on the godless in the zenith of prosperity, more suddenly than on

- others who appear less firmly seated in their possessions [UMBREIT] (\*\*Psalm 112:10).
- **13.** *paths* so "ways" (\*\*\*Proverbs 1:19).
- **all that forget God** the distinguishing trait of the godless (\*\*\*Psalm 9:17 50:22).
- **14.** *cut off* so GESENIUS; or, to accord with the metaphor of the spider's "house," "The confidence (on which he builds) shall be laid in ruins" (\*\*\*Isaiah 59:5,6).
- **15.** *he shall hold it fast* implying his eager grasp, when the storm of trial comes: as the spider "holds fast" by its web; but with this difference: the light spider is sustained by that on which it rests; the godless is not by the thin web on which he rests. The expression, "Hold fast," properly applies to the spider holding his web, but is transferred to the man. Hypocrisy, like the spider's web, is fine-spun, flimsy, and woven out of its own inventions, as the spider's web out of its own bowels. An Arab proverb says, "Time destroys the well-built house, as well as the spider's web."
- **16.** before the sun that is, he (the godless) is green only before the sun rises; but he cannot bear its heat, and withers. So succulent plants like the gourd (Jon 4:7,8). But the widespreading in the garden does not quite accord with this. Better, "in sunshine"; the sun representing the smiling fortune of the hypocrite, during which he wondrously progresses [UMBREIT]. The image is that of weeds growing in rank luxuriance and spreading over even heaps of stones and walls, and then being speedily torn away.
- **17.** *seeth the place of stones Hebrew*, "the house of stones"; that is, the wall surrounding the garden. The parasite plant, in creeping towards and over the wall the utmost bound of the garden is said figuratively to "see" or regard it.
- **18.** If He (God) tear him away (properly, "to tear away rapidly and violently") from his place, "then it [the place personified] shall deny him" (\*\*PS\*P\*salm 103:16). The very soil is ashamed of the weeds lying withered

on its surface, as though it never had been connected with them. So, when the godless falls from prosperity, his nearest friends disown him.

**19.** Bitter irony. The hypocrite boasts of joy. This then is his "joy" at the last.

and out of the earth — others immediately, who take the place of the man thus punished; not *godly men* (\*\*\*Matthew 3:9). For the place of the weeds is among stones, where the gardener wishes no plants. But, *ungodly*; a fresh crop of weeds always springs up in the place of those torn up: there is no end of hypocrites on earth [UMBREIT].

**20.** Bildad regards Job as a righteous man, who has fallen into sin.

God will not cast away a perfect man — (or godly man, such as Job was), if he will only repent. Those alone who persevere in sin God will not help (*Hebrew*, "take by the hand," Psalm 73:23 Salah 41:13 42:6) when fallen.

- **21.** *Till* literally, "to the point that"; God's blessing on thee, when repentant, will go on increasing to the point that, or until, etc.
- **22.** The haters of Job are the wicked. They shall be clothed with shame (\*\*\* Jeremiah 3:25 \*\*\* Psalm 35:26 \*\*\* 109:29), at the failure of their hope that Job would utterly perish, and because they, instead of him, come to naught.

#### FIRST SERIES.

**™**JOB 9:1-35.

#### REPLY OF JOB TO BILDAD.

- **2.** I know it is so of a truth that God does not "pervert justice" (\*\*\*\*Job 8:3). But (even though I be sure of being in the right) how can a mere man assert his right (be just) with God. The Gospel answers (\*\*\*\*Romans 3:26).
- **3.** *If he* God

will contend with him — literally, "deign to enter into judgment."

*he cannot answer*, etc. — He (man) would not dare, even if he had a thousand answers in readiness to one question of God's, to utter one of them, from awe of His Majesty.

**4.** wise in heart — in understanding! — and mighty in power! God confounds the ablest arguer by His wisdom, and the mightiest by His power.

**hardened himself** — or his neck (\*\*Proverbs 29:1); that is, defied God. To prosper, one must fall in with God's arrangements of providence and grace.

- **5.** and they know not Hebrew for "suddenly, unexpectedly, before they are aware of it" (\*\*\*Psalm 35:8); "at unawares"; Hebrew, which "he knoweth not of" (\*\*\*\*Polling\*\*) Tool 2:14 \*\*\*\*Proverbs 5:6).
- **6.** The earth is regarded, poetically, as resting on pillars, which tremble in an earthquake (\*\*\*\*Psalm 75:3 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 24:20). The literal truth as to the earth is given (\*\*\*\*\*Job 26:7).

**7.** The sun, at His command, does not rise; namely, in an eclipse, or the darkness that accompanies earthquakes (\*\*\*\*Job 9:6).

*sealeth up the stars* — that is, totally covers as one would seal up a room, that its contents may not be seen.

- 8. spreadeth out (\*\*\*Tsaiah 40:22 \*\*\*Psalm 104:2). But throughout it is not so much God's creating, as His governing, power over nature that is set forth. A storm seems a struggle between Nature and her Lord! Better, therefore, "Who boweth the heavens alone," without help of any other. God descends from the bowed-down heaven to the earth (\*\*\*Psalm 18:9). The storm, wherein the clouds descend, suggests this image. In the descent of the vault of heaven, God has come down from His high throne and walks majestically over the mountain waves (Hebrew, "heights"), as a conqueror taming their violence. So "tread upon" (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 33:29\*\*Amos 4:13 \*\*\*Matthew 14:26). The Egyptian hieroglyphic for impossibility is a man walking on waves.
- **9.** *maketh* rather, from the *Arabic*, "covereth up." This accords better with the context, which describes His boundless power as controller rather than as creator [UMBREIT].

Arcturus — the great bear, which always revolves about the pole, and never sets. The Chaldeans and Arabs, early named the stars and grouped them in constellations; often travelling and tending flocks by night, they would naturally do so, especially as the rise and setting of some stars mark the distinction of seasons. BRINKLEY, presuming the stars here mentioned to be those of Taurus and Scorpio, and that these were the cardinal constellations of spring and autumn in Job's time, calculates, by the precession of equinoxes, the time of Job to be eight hundred eighteen years after the deluge, and one hundred eighty-four before Abraham.

*Orion* — *Hebrew*, "the fool"; in "Job 38:31 he appears fettered with "bands." The old legend represented this star as a hero, who presumptuously rebelled against God, and was therefore a fool, and was chained in the sky as a punishment; for its rising is at the stormy period of the year. He is Nimrod (the exceedingly impious rebel) among the Assyrians; Orion among the Greeks. Sabaism (worship of the heavenly hosts) and hero-worship were blended in his person. He first subverted

the patriarchal order of society by substituting a chieftainship based on conquest (\*\*\*Genesis 10:9,10).

**Pleiades** — literally, "the heap of stars"; *Arabic*, "knot of stars." The various names of this constellation in the East express the close union of the stars in it (\*\*\*Amos 5:8).

**chambers of the south** — the unseen regions of the southern hemisphere, with its own set of stars, as distinguished from those just mentioned of the northern. The true structure of the earth is here implied.

- **10.** Repeated from Eliphaz ( Job 5:9).
- **11.** *I see him not: he passeth on* The image is that of a howling wind (Example 12:1). Like it when it bursts invisibly upon man, so God is felt in the awful *effects* of His wrath, but is not *seen* (Example 13:8). Therefore, reasons Job, it is impossible to contend with Him.
- **12.** If "He taketh away," as in my case all that was dear to me, still a mortal cannot call Him to account. He only takes His own. He is an absolute King (\*\*Ecclesiastes 8:4\*\*Daniel 4:35).
- **13.** *If God* rather, "God will not withdraw His anger," that is, so long as a mortal obstinately resists [UMBREIT].

*the proud helpers* — The arrogant, who would help one contending with the Almighty, are of no avail against Him.

- **14.** How much less shall I? etc. who am weak, seeing that the mighty have to stoop before Him. Choose words (use a well-chosen speech, in order to reason) with Him.
- **15.** (\*\*\*\*Job 10:15). Though I were conscious of no sin, yet I would not dare to say so, but leave it to His judgment and mercy to justify me (\*\*\*\*\*)1 Corinthians 4:4).
- **16, 17.** would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice who breaketh me (as a tree stripped of its leaves) with a tempest.
- **19.** UMBREIT takes these as the words of God, translating, "What availeth the might of the strong?" "Here (saith he) behold! what availeth justice? Who will appoint me a time to plead?" (So \*\*Jeremiah 49:19). The last

words certainly apply better to God than to Job. The sense is substantially the same if we make "me" apply to Job. The "lo!" expresses God's swift readiness for battle when challenged.

- **20.** it ( Tob 15:6 Luke 19:22); or "He," God.
- **21.** Literally, here (and in Job 9:20), "I perfect! I should not know my soul! I would despise," [that is], "disown my life"; that is, Though conscious of innocence, I should be compelled, in contending with the infinite God, to ignore my own soul and despise my past life as if it were guilty [ROSENMULLER].
- **22.** *one thing* "It is all one; whether perfect or wicked He destroyeth." This was the point Job maintained against his friends, that the righteous and wicked alike are afflicted, and that great sufferings *here* do not prove great guilt (\*\*\*\*Luke 13:1-5\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 9:2).
- **23.** *If* Rather, "While (His) scourge slays suddenly (the wicked, <sup>302</sup>Job 9:22), He laughs at (disregards; not derides) the pining away of the innocent." The only difference, says Job, between the innocent and guilty is, the latter are slain by a *sudden* stroke, the former pine away *gradually*. The translation, "trial," does not express the antithesis to "slay suddenly," as "pining away" does [UMBREIT].
- **24.** Referring to righteous "judges," in antithesis to "the wicked" in the parallel first clause, whereas the wicked oppressor often has the earth given into his hand, the righteous judges are led to execution culprits had their faces covered preparatory to execution (\*\*Esther 7:8). Thus the contrast of the wicked and righteous here answers to that in \*\*SP\*Job 9:23.
- *if not*, *where and who?* If God be *not* the cause of these anomalies, *where* is the cause to be found, and *who* is *he?*
- **25.** *a post* a courier. In the wide Persian empire such couriers, on dromedaries or on foot, were employed to carry the royal commands to the distant provinces (\*\*\*Esther 3:13,15 \*\*\*\*14). "My days" are not like the slow caravan, but the fleet post. The "days" are themselves poetically said to "see no good," instead of Job in them (\*\*\*\*\*\*10).

- **26.** *swift ships* rather, canoes of reeds or papyrus skiffs, used on the Nile, swift from their lightness (\*\*\*Isaiah 18:2).
- **28.** The apodosis to "Job 9:27 "I still am afraid of all my sorrows (returning), for I know that thou wilt (dost) (by removing my sufferings) not hold or declare me innocent. How then can *I leave off my heaviness?*"
- **29.** The "if" is better omitted; I (am treated by God as) wicked; why then labor I in vain (to disprove His charge)? Job submits, not so much because he is *convinced* that God is *right*, as because God is *powerful* and he *weak* [Barnes].
- **30.** *snow water* thought to be more cleansing than common water, owing to the whiteness of snow (\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:7\*\*Isaiah 1:18).
- **32.** (\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 6:10 \*\*\*Isaiah 45:9).
- 33. daysman "mediator," or "umpire"; the imposition of whose hand expresses power to adjudicate between the persons. There might be one on a level with Job, the one party; but Job knew of none on a level with the Almighty, the other party (\*\*925\*1 Samuel 2:25). We Christians know of such a Mediator (not, however, in the sense of umpire on a level with both) the God-man, Christ Jesus (\*\*925\*1 Timothy 2:5).
- **34.** *rod* not here the symbol of punishment, but of *power*. Job cannot meet God on fair terms so long as God deals with him on the footing of His almighty power.
- **35.** *it is not so with me* As it now is, God not taking His rod away, I am not on such a footing of equality as to be able to vindicate myself.

### **№** 10:1-22.

#### JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD CONTINUED.

- **1.** *leave my complaint upon myself* rather, "I will *give loose* to my complaint" (\*\*\*\*Job 7:11).
- **2.** *show me*, etc. Do not, by virtue of Thy mere sovereignty, treat me as guilty without showing me the reasons.
- **3.** Job is unwilling to think God can have pleasure in using His power to "oppress" the weak, and to treat man, the work of His own hands, as of no value (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 138:8).

*shine upon* — favor with prosperity (\*\*\*Psalm 50:2).

- **4-6.** Dost Thou see as feebly as man? that is, with the same uncharitable eye, as, for instance, Job's friends? Is Thy time as short? Impossible! Yet one might think, from the rapid succession of Thy strokes, that Thou hadst no time to spare in overwhelming me.
- 7. "Although Thou (the Omniscient) knowest," etc. (connected with Job 10:6), "Thou searchest after my sin."
- and ... that none that can deliver out of thine hand Therefore Thou hast no need to deal with me with the rapid violence which man would use (see SUBJO 10:6).
- **8.** *Made* with pains; implying a work of difficulty and art; applying to God language applicable only to man.

*together round about* — implying that the human body is a *complete unity*, the parts of which *on all sides* will bear the closest scrutiny.

- **9.** *clay* \*\*\*\*Job 10:10 proves that the reference here is, not so much to the *perishable* nature of the materials, as to their *wonderful fashioning* by the divine potter.
- **10.** In the organization of the body from its rude commencements, the original liquid gradually assumes a more solid consistency, like milk curdling into cheese (\*\*Psalm 139:15,16). Science reveals that the chyle circulated by the lacteal vessels is the supply to every organ.
- **11.** *fenced* or "inlaid" (\*\*\*Psalm 139:15); "curiously wrought" [UMBREIT]. In the foetus the skin appears first, then the flesh, then the harder parts.
- **12.** *visitation* Thy watchful Providence.

spirit — breath.

- **13.** *is with thee* was Thy purpose. All God's dealings with Job in his creation, preservation, and present afflictions were part of His secret counsel (\*\*PSP) Psalm 139:16 \*\*\* Acts 15:18 \*\*\* Ecclesiastes 3:11).
- **14, 15.** Job is perplexed because God "marks" every sin of his with such ceaseless rigor. Whether "wicked" (godless and a hypocrite) or "righteous" (comparatively sincere), God condemns and punishes alike.
- **15.** *lift up my head* in conscious innocence (\*\*\*Psalm 3:3).

**see thou** — rather, "and seeing I see (I too well see) mine affliction," (which seems to prove me guilty) [UMBREIT].

**16.** *increaseth* — rather, "(if) I *lift* up (my head) Thou wouldest hunt me," etc. [UMBREIT].

*and again* — as if a lion should not kill his prey at once, but come back and torture it again.

**17.** *witnesses* — His accumulated trials were like a succession of witnesses brought up in proof of his guilt, to wear out the accused.

*changes and war* — rather, "(thou settest in array) against me host after host" (literally, "changes and a host," that is, a succession of hosts); namely, his afflictions, and then reproach upon reproach from his friends.

- **20.** But, since I was destined from my birth to these ills, at least give me a little breathing time during the few days left me (\*\*\*\*Job 9:34 \*\*\*\*]13:21 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:13).
- **22.** The ideas of order and light, disorder and darkness, harmonize (\*\*\*Genesis 1:2). Three *Hebrew* words are used for darkness; in \*\*\*\*Job 10:21
  - (1) the common word "darkness"; here
  - (2) "a land of gloom" (from a *Hebrew* root, "to cover up");
  - (3) as "thick darkness" or blackness (from a root, expressing sunset).

"Where the light thereof is like blackness." Its only sunshine is thick darkness. A bold figure of poetry. Job in a better frame has brighter thoughts of the unseen world. But his views at best wanted the definite clearness of the Christian's. Compare with his words here Revelation 21:23 "22:5 "Imothy 1:10.

#### FIRST SERIES.

**№**10JOB 11:1-20.

#### FIRST SPEECH OF ZOPHAR.

- **2.** Zophar assails Job for his empty words, and indirectly, the two friends, for their weak reply. Taciturnity is highly prized among Orientals (\*\*\*Proverbs 10:8,19).
- 3. *lies* rather, "vain boasting" ("Isaiah 16:6" Jeremiah 48:30). The "men" is emphatic; men of sense; in antithesis to "vain boasting."
- *mockest* upbraidest God by complaints, "shall no man make thee ashamed?"
- **4. doctrine** purposely used of Job's speeches, which sounded like lessons of doctrine (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:2 \*\*\*Proverbs 4:2).
- *thine* addressed to God. Job had maintained his *sincerity* against his friends suspicions, not *faultlessness*.
- **6.** to that which is! Rather, "they are double to [man's] wisdom" [MICHAELIS]. So the *Hebrew* is rendered (\*\*\*Proverbs 2:7). God's ways, which you arraign, if you were shown their secret wisdom, would be seen vastly to exceed that of men, including yours (\*\*\*\*\*\*125).
- **exacteth** Rather, "God consigns to oblivion in thy favor much of thy guilt."
- **7.** Rather, "Penetrate to the perfections of the Almighty" (\*\*\*\*Job 9:10 \*\*\*Psalm 139:6).
- 8. It the "wisdom" of God (\*\*\*Job 11:6). The abruptness of the *Hebrew* is forcible: "The heights of heaven! What canst thou do" (as to attaining to them with thy gaze, \*\*Psalm 139:8)?

**know** — namely, of His perfections.

**10.** *cut off* — Rather, as in "Blob 9:11, "pass over," as a storm; namely, rush upon in anger.

**shut up** — in prison, with a view to trial.

*gather together* — the parties for judgment: hold a judicial assembly; to pass sentence on the prisoners.

**11.** ( Psalm 94:11).

**consider** — so as to punish it. Rather, from the connection, "Sulfob 11:6, "He seeth wickedness also, which man does not *perceive*"; literally, "But no (other, save He) perceiveth it" [UMBREIT]. God's "wisdom" ("Sulfob 11:6), detects sin where Job's human eye cannot reach ("Sulfob 11:8), so as to see any.

**12.** *vain* — hollow.

would be — "wants to consider himself wise"; opposed to God's "wisdom" (see on "Job 11:11); refuses to see sin, where God sees it ("Romans 1:22).

wild ass's colt — a proverb for untamed wildness (\*\*\*Job 39:5,8 \*\*Job 39:5,8 Genesis 16:12; *Hebrew*, "a wild-ass man"). Man wishes to appear wisely obedient to his Lord, whereas he is, from his birth, unsubdued in spirit.

- **13.** The apodosis to the "If" is at "\*IJob 11:15. The preparation of the heart is to be obtained ("\*IPProverbs 16:1) by stretching out the hands in prayer for it (\*\*IPPsalm 10:17 \*\*IPPsalm 10:17 \*\*IPPsalm
- **14.** Rather, "if thou wilt put far away the iniquity in thine hand" (as Zaccheus did, "Luke 19:8). The apodosis or conclusion is at "Job 11:15, "then shalt thou," etc.
- **15.** Zophar refers to Job's own words (\*\*\*Job 10:15), "yet will I not lift up my head," even though righteous. Zophar declares, if Job will follow his advice, he may "lift up his face."

**spot** — (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:5).

*steadfast* — literally, "run fast together," like metals which become firm and hard by fusion. The sinner on the contrary is wavering.

**16.** Just as when the stream runs dry (\*\*\*\*Job 6:17), the danger threatened by its wild waves is forgotten (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 65:16) [UMBREIT].

**17.** age — days of life.

**the noon-day** — namely, of thy former prosperity; which, in the poet's image, had gone on increasing, until it reached its height, as the sun rises higher and higher until it reaches the meridian (\*\*Proverbs 4:18).

**shine forth** — rather, "though now in darkness, thou shall be as the morning"; or, "thy darkness (if any dark shade should arise on thee, it) shall be as the morning" (only the dullness of morning twilight, not nocturnal darkness) [UMBREIT].

**18.** The experience of thy life will teach thee there is hope for man in every trial.

**dig** — namely, wells; the chief necessity in the East. Better, "though now ashamed (\*\*Romans 5:5, opposed to the previous 'hope'), thou shalt then rest safely" [GESENIUS];

**19.** (\*\*\*Psalm 4:8 \*\*\*\*Proverbs 3:24 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 14:30); oriental images of prosperity.

*make suit* — literally, "stroke thy face," "caress thee" ( Proverbs 19:6).

20. A warning to Job, if he would not turn to God.

**The wicked** — that is, obdurate sinners.

eyes ... fail — that is, in vain look for relief (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 28:65). Zophar implies Job's only hope of relief is in a change of heart.

they shall not escape — literally, "every refuge shall vanish from them."

**giving up of the ghost** — Their hope shall leave them as the breath does the body (\*\*Proverbs 11:7).

#### FIRST SERIES.

**№** JOB 12:1-14:22.

#### JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR

- **2.** wisdom shall die with you Ironical, as if all the wisdom in the world was concentrated in them and would expire when they expired. Wisdom makes "a people:" a foolish nation is "not a people" (\*\*Romans 10:19).
- **3.** *not inferior* not vanquished in argument and "wisdom" (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 13:2). *such things as these* such commonplace maxims as you so pompously adduce.
- *neighbor*, *who calleth*, etc. rather, "I who *call* upon God *that he may answer* me favorably" [UMBREIT].
- **5.** Rather, "a torch" (lamp) is an object of contempt in the thoughts of him who rests securely (is at ease), though it was prepared for the falterings of the feet [UMBREIT] ("Proverbs 25:19). "Thoughts" and "feet" are in contrast; also rests "securely," and "falterings." The wanderer, arrived at his night-quarters, contemptuously throws aside the torch which had guided his uncertain steps through the darkness. As the torch is to the wanderer, so Job to his friends. Once they gladly used his aid in their need; now they in prosperity mock him in his need.
- **6.** Job shows that the matter of *fact* opposes Zophar's *theory* (\*\*\*Job 11:14,19,20) that wickedness causes insecurity in men's "tabernacles." On the contrary, they who rob the "tabernacles" ("dwellings") of others "prosper securely" in their own.

- *into whose hand*, etc. rather, "who make a god of their own hand," that is, who regard their might as their only ruling principle [UMBREIT].
- **7, 8.** Beasts, birds, fishes, and plants, reasons Job, teach that the violent live the most securely (\*\*\*Job 12:6). The vulture lives more securely than the dove, the lion than the ox, the shark than the dolphin, the rose than the thorn which tears it.
- **8.** *speak to the earth* rather, "the *shrubs* of the earth" [UMBREIT].
- 9. In all these cases, says Job, the agency must be referred to Jehovah, though they may seem to man to imply imperfection (\*\*\*Job 12:6\*\*\*9:24). This is the only undisputed passage of the poetical part in which the name "Jehovah" occurs; in the historical parts it occurs frequently.
- **10.** *the soul* that is, the animal life. Man, reasons Job, is subjected to the same laws as the lower animals.
- 11. As the mouth by tasting meats selects what pleases it, so the ear tries the words of others and retains what is convincing. Each chooses according to his taste. The connection with \*\*DD\*\*Job 12:12 is in reference to Bildad's appeal to the "ancients" (\*\*BD\*\*Job 8:8). You are right in appealing to them, since "with them was wisdom," etc. But you select such proverbs of theirs as suit your views; so I may borrow from the same such as suit mine.
- **12.** *ancient* aged ( Job 15:10).
- 13. In contrast to, "with the ancient is wisdom" (\*\*Dob 12:12), Job quotes a saying of the ancients which suits his argument, "with Him (God) is (the true) wisdom" (\*\*Proverbs 8:14); and by that "wisdom and strength" "He breaketh down," etc., as an absolute Sovereign, not allowing man to penetrate His mysteries; man's part is to bow to His unchangeable decrees (\*\*\*Dob 1:21). The Mohammedan saying is, "if God will, and how God will."
- **14.** *shutteth up* (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 22:22). Job refers to Zophar's "shut up" (\*\*\*III) to 11:10).
- **15.** Probably alluding to the flood.

- **16.** (\*\*Ezekiel 14:9).
- **18.** He looseth the bond of kings He looseth the authority of kings the "bond" with which they bind their subjects (\*\*\*Tsaiah 45:1\*\*\*Genesis 14:4\*\*\*Daniel 2:21).
- a girdle the cord, with which they are bound as captives, instead of the royal "girdle" they once wore ("Isaiah 22:21), and the bond they once bound others with. So "gird" put on one the bonds of a prisoner instead of the ordinary girdle ("Isaiah 21:18).
- **19.** *princes* rather, "priests," as the *Hebrew* is rendered (\*\*\*\*Psalm 99:6). Even the sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity.
- **the mighty** rather, "the firm-rooted in power"; the *Arabic* root expresses ever-flowing *water* [UMBREIT].
- **20.** *the trusty* rather, "those secure in their eloquence"; for example, the speakers in the gate (\*\*\*Tsaiah 3:3) [Beza].
- understanding literally, "taste," that is, insight or spiritual discernment, which experience gives the aged. The same *Hebrew* word is applied to Daniel's wisdom in interpretation (\*\*Daniel 2:14).
- **21.** Psalm 107:40 quotes, in its first clause, this verse and, in its second, by 12:24.
- weakeneth the strength literally, "looseth the girdle"; Orientals wear flowing garments; when active strength is to be put forth, they gird up their garments with a girdle. Hence here "He destroyeth their power" in the eyes of the people.
- **22.** ( Daniel 2:22).
- 23. Saiah 9:3 Sa
- straiteneth literally, "leadeth in," that is, "reduces."
- **24.** *heart* intelligence.

wander in a wilderness — figurative; not referring to any actual fact. This cannot be quoted to prove Job lived after Israel's wanderings in the desert.

Psalm 107:4,40 quotes this passage.

**25.** Deuteronomy 28:29 Psalm 107:27 again quote Job, but in a different connection.

### **№** JOB 13:1-28.

#### JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR CONTINUED.

- **1.** *all this* as to the dealings of Providence (\*\*\*Bob 12:3).
- **3.** Job wishes to plead his cause before God (\*\*\*\*Job 9:34,35), as he is more and more convinced of the valueless character of his would-be "physicians" (\*\*\*\*Job 16:2).
- **4.** forgers of lies literally, "artful twisters of vain speeches" [UMBREIT].
- **5.** (\*\*\*Proverbs 17:28). The Arabs say, "The wise are dumb; silence is wisdom."
- **7.** *deceitfully* use fallacies to vindicate God in His dealings; as if the end justified the means. Their "deceitfulness" for God, against Job, was that they asserted he was a sinner, because he was a sufferer.
- **8.** *accept his person* God's; that is, be partial for Him, as when a judge favors one party in a trial, because of personal considerations.
- **contend for God** namely, with fallacies and prepossessions against Job before judgment (\*\*\*Judges 6:31). Partiality can never please the impartial God, nor the goodness of the cause excuse the unfairness of the arguments.
- **9.** Will the issue to you be good, when He searches out you and your arguments? Will you be regarded by Him as pure and disinterested?
- **mock** (\*\*\*\*Galatians 6:7). Rather, "Can you deceive Him as one man?" etc.
- **10.** If ye do, though secretly, act partially. (See on Start Job 13:8; Psalm 82:1,2). God can successfully vindicate His acts, and needs no fallacious argument of man.

- **11.** *make you afraid*? namely, of employing sophisms in His name (\*\*\* [2400] Jeremiah 10:7,10).
- **12.** *remembrances* "proverbial maxims," so called because well remembered.

*like unto ashes* — or, "parables of ashes"; the image of lightness and nothingness (2340) Isaiah 44:20).

**bodies** — rather, "entrenchments"; those of clay, as opposed to those of stone, are easy to be destroyed; so the proverbs, behind which they entrench themselves, will not shelter them when God shall appear to reprove them for their injustice to Job.

- 13. Job would wish to be spared their speeches, so as to speak out all his mind as to his wretchedness (\*\*\*\*Job 13:14), happen what will.
- **14.** A proverb for, "Why should I anxiously desire to save my life?" [EICHORN]. The image in the first clause is that of a wild beast, which in order to preserve his prey, carries it in his teeth. That in the second refers to men who hold in the hand what they want to keep secure.
- **15.** *in him* So the *margin* or *keri*, reads. But the textual reading or *chetib* is "not," which agrees best with the context, and other passages wherein he says he has no hope (\*\*\*IJob 6:11 \*\*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*\*ID:20 \*\*\*
- **16.** *He* rather, "*This* also already speaks in my behalf (literally, 'for my saving acquittal') for an hypocrite would not wish to come before Him" (as I do) [UMBREIT]. (See last clause of \*\*\*\*Job 13:15).
- **17.** *my declaration* namely, that I wish to be permitted to justify myself immediately before God.

with your ears — that is, attentively.

**18.** *ordered* — implying a constant preparation for defense in his confidence of innocence.

- **19.** *if*, etc. Rather, "*Then* would I hold my tongue and give up the ghost"; that is, if any one can contend with me and prove me false, I have no more to say. "I will be silent and die." Like our "I would stake my life on it" [UMBREIT].
- 20. Address to God.

*not hide* — stand forth boldly to maintain my cause.

- **21.** (See on 9:34 and see Psalm 39:10).
- **22.** *call* a challenge to the defendant to answer to the charges.

*answer* — the defense begun.

**speak** — as plaintiff.

*answer* — to the plea of the plaintiff. Expressions from a trial.

- **23.** The catalogue of my sins ought to be great, to judge from the severity with which God ever anew crushes one already bowed down. Would that He would reckon them up! He then would see how much my calamities outnumber them.
- **sin?** singular, "I am unconscious of a *single* particular sin, much less many" [UMBREIT].
- **24.** *hidest* ... *face* a figure from the gloomy impression caused by the sudden clouding over of the sun.
- enemy God treated Job as an enemy who must be robbed of power by ceaseless sufferings (ANT) Job 7:17,21).
- **25.** (\*\*Eviticus 26:36 \*\*\*Psalm 1:4). Job compares himself to a leaf already fallen, which the storm still chases hither and thither.
- **break** literally, "shake with (Thy) terrors." Jesus Christ does not "break the bruised reed" (2011) Isaiah 42:3, 2018).
- **26.** writest a judicial phrase, to note down the determined punishment. The sentence of the condemned used to be written down (\*\*Isaiah 10:1\*\* Jeremiah 22:30 \*\*\* Psalm 149:9) [UMBREIT].

bitter things — bitter punishments.

makest me to possess — or "inherit." In old age he receives possession of the inheritance of sin thoughtlessly acquired in youth. "To inherit sins" is to inherit the *punishments* inseparably connected with them in *Hebrew* ideas (\*\*\*\*Psalm 25:7).

**27.** *stocks* — in which the prisoner's feet were made fast until the time of execution (\*\* Jeremiah 20:2).

*lookest narrowly* — as an overseer would watch a prisoner.

print — Either the stocks, or his disease, marked his soles (Hebrew, "roots") as the bastinado would. Better, thou drawest (or diggest)
[GESENIUS] a line (or trench) [GESENIUS] round my soles, beyond which I must not move [UMBREIT].

**28.** Job speaks of himself in the third person, thus forming the transition to the *general* lot of man (\*\*\*\*\*Job 14:1 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:11 \*\*\*\*\*\*Hosea 5:12).

### **№**1OB 14:1-22.

# JOB PASSES FROM HIS OWN TO THE COMMON MISERY OF MANKIND.

**1.** woman — feeble, and in the East looked down upon (\*\*Genesis 2:21). Man being born of one so frail must be frail himself (\*\*Matthew 11:11).

**few days** — (\*\*\*\*Genesis 47:9 \*\*\*\*Psalm 90:10). Literally, "short of days." Man is the reverse of full of days and short of trouble.

- **3.** open ... eyes upon Not in graciousness; but, "Dost Thou sharply fix Thine eyes upon?" (See on "ND Job 7:20; also see on "ND Job 1:7). Is one so frail as man worthy of such constant watching on the part of God? ("ND Zechariah 12:4).

*me* — so frail.

*thee* — so almighty.

- **4.** A plea in mitigation. The doctrine of original sin was held from the first. "Man is unclean from his birth, how then can God expect perfect cleanness from such a one and deal so severely with me?"
- **6.** *Turn* namely, Thine eyes from watching him so jealously (\*\*\*Job 14:3).

*hireling* — (\*\*\*Tob 7:1).

*accomplish* — rather, "enjoy." That he may at least enjoy the measure of rest of the hireling who though hard worked reconciles himself to his lot by the hope of his rest and reward [UMBREIT].

- 7. Man may the more claim a peaceful life, since, when separated from it by death, he never returns to it. This does not deny a future life, but a return to the *present condition* of life. Job plainly hopes for a future state (\*\*\*Job 14:13 \*\*\*Job 7:2). Still, it is but vague and trembling *hope*, not *assurance*; excepting the one bright glimpse in \*\*\*Job 19:25. The Gospel revelation was needed to change fears, hopes, and glimpses into clear and definite certainties.
- **9.** *scent* exhalation, which, rather than the humidity of water, causes the tree to germinate. In the antithesis to *man* the *tree* is personified, and volition is poetically ascribed to it.

*like a plant* — "as if newly planted" [UMBREIT]; not as if trees and plants were a different species.

**10.** *man* ... *man* — Two distinct *Hebrew* words are here used; *Geber*, a *mighty* man: though mighty, he dies. *Adam*, a man of earth: because earthly, he gives up the ghost.

wasteth — is reduced to nothing: he cannot revive in the present state, as the tree does. The cypress and pine, which when cut down do not revive, were the symbols of death among the Romans.

- **11.** *sea* that is, a lake, or pool formed from the outspreading of a river. Job lived near the Euphrates: and "sea" is applied to it ("Figure 136 and 51:36" Isaiah 27:1). So of the Nile ("Figure 136).
- *fail* utterly disappeared by drying up. The rugged channel of the once flowing water answers to the outstretched corpse ("lieth down," <sup>-|S412</sup>Job 14:12) of the once living man.
- **12.** heavens be no more This only implies that Job had no hope of living again in the present order of the world, not that he had no hope of life again in a new order of things. Psalm 102:26 proves that early under the Old Testament the dissolution of the present earth and heavens was expected (compare Cenesis 8:22). Enoch before Job had implied that the "saints shall live again" (CHUJude 1:14 CHUPHebrews 11:13-16). Even if, by this phrase, Job meant "never" (CHUPHebrews 11:13-16) in his gloomier state of feelings, yet the Holy Ghost has made him unconsciously (CHUPHEBRE 1:11,12) use language expressing the truth, that the resurrection is to be

preceded by the dissolution of the heavens. In <sup>4848</sup>Job 14:13-15 he plainly passes to brighter hopes of a world to come.

**13.** Job wishes to be kept hidden in the grave until God's wrath against him shall have passed away. So while God's wrath is visiting the earth for the abounding apostasy which is to precede the second coming, God's people shall be hidden against the resurrection glory (\*\*Tsaiah 26:19-21).

set time — a decreed time (\*\*Acts 1:7).

**14.** *shall he live*? — The answer implied is, *There is a hope that he shall, though not in the present order of life*, as is shown by the words following. Job had denied (\*\*\*\*Job 14:10-12) that man shall live again in this present world. But hoping for a "set time," when God shall remember and raise him out of the hiding-place of the grave (\*\*\*Job 14:13), he declares himself willing to "wait all the days of his appointed time" of continuance in the grave, however long and hard that may be.

appointed time — literally, "warfare, hard service"; imlying the *hardship* of being shut out from the realms of life, light, and God for the time he shall be in the grave (\*\*\*Job 7:1).

**change** — my release, as a soldier at his post released from duty by the relieving guard (see on '500 10:17) [UMBREIT and GESENIUS], but elsewhere GESENIUS explains it, "renovation," as of plants in spring ('500 14:7), but this does not accord so well with the metaphor in "appointed time" or "warfare."

**15.** namely, at the resurrection (\*\*\*John 5:28 \*\*\*Psalm 17:15).

have a desire to — literally, "become pale with anxious desire:" the same word is translated "sore longedst after" ("Genesis 31:30 "Psalm 84:2), implying the utter unlikelihood that God would leave in oblivion the "creature of His own hands so fearfully and wonderfully made." It is objected that if Job knew of a future retribution, he would make it the *leading* topic in solving the problem of the permitted afflictions of the righteous. But,

(1) He did not intend to exceed the limits of what was *clearly revealed;* the doctrine was then in a vague form only;

- (2) The doctrine of God's moral government in *this* life, even *independently of the future*, needed vindication.
- **16.** Rather, "Yea, thou wilt number my steps, and wilt not (as now) jealously watch over my sin." Thenceforward, instead of severe watching for every sin of Job, God will guard him against every sin.

**17.** *sealed up* — (\*\*\*\*Job 9:7). Is shut up in eternal oblivion, that is, God thenceforth will think no more of my former sins. *To cover* sins is to *completely forgive* them (\*\*\*\*Psalm 32:1\*\*\*85:2). Purses of money in the East are usually sealed.

**sewest up** — rather, "coverest"; akin to an *Arabic* word, "to color over," to forget wholly.

**18.** *cometh to naught* — literally, "fadeth"; a poetical image from a leaf ("Saiah 34:4). Here Job falls back into his gloomy bodings as to the grave. Instead of "and surely," translate "yet"; marking the transition from his brighter hopes. Even the solid mountain falls and crumbles away; man therefore cannot "hope" to escape decay or to live again in the present world ("Saignos) 14:19).

out of his place — so man (\*\*Psalm 103:16).

**19.** The *Hebrew* order is more forcible: "Stones themselves are worn away by water."

things which grow out of — rather, "floods wash away the dust of the earth." There is a gradation from "mountains" to "rocks" (\*\*\*\*Job 14:18), then "stones," then last "dust of the earth"; thus the solid mountain at last disappears utterly.

**20.** *prevailest* — dost overpower by superior strength.

passeth — dieth.

**changest countenance** — the change in the visage at death. Differently (\*\*TB\*\*)Daniel 5:9).

- **21.** One striking trait is selected from the sad picture of the severance of the dead from all that passes in the world (\*\*Ecclesiastes 9:5), namely, the utter separation of parents and children.
- **22.** "Flesh" and "soul" describe the whole man. Scripture rests the hope of a future life, not on the inherent immortality of the soul, but on the restoration of the *body* with the soul. In the unseen world, Job in a gloomy frame anticipates, man shall be limited to the thought of his own misery. "Pain is by personification, from *our* feelings while *alive*, attributed to the flesh and soul, as if the man could feel in his body when dead. It is the dead in general, not the wicked, who are meant here."

#### SECOND SERIES.

**№0**JOB 15:1-35.

#### SECOND SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

**2.** a wise man — which Job claims to be.

vain knowledge — Hebrew, "windy knowledge"; literally, "of wind" (SND Job 8:2). In Ecclesiastes 1:14, Hebrew, "to catch wind," expresses to strive for what is vain.

east wind — stronger than the previous "wind," for in that region the east wind is the most destructive of winds (\*\*\*Isaiah 27:8). Thus here, — empty violence.

**belly** — the inward parts, the breast (\*\*Proverbs 18:8).

4. fear — reverence for God (\*\*\*\*Job 4:6 \*\*\*Psalm 2:11).

**prayer** — meditation, in \*\*Psalm 104:34; so *devotion*. If thy views were right, reasons Eliphaz, that God disregards the afflictions of the righteous and makes the wicked to prosper, all devotion would be at an end.

- **5.** The sophistry of thine own speeches proves thy guilt.
- **6.** No *pious* man would utter such sentiments.
- 7. That is, Art thou wisdom personified? Wisdom existed before the hills; that is, the eternal Son of God (\*\*Proverbs 8:25 \*\*\*Psalm 90:2). Wast thou in existence before Adam? The farther back one existed, the nearer he was to the Eternal Wisdom.
- **8.** *secret* rather, "Wast thou a listener *in the secret council* of God?" The *Hebrew* means properly the *cushions* of a divan on which counsellors in

the East usually sit. God's servants are admitted to God's secrets (\*\*Psalm 25:14 \*\*Genesis 18:17 \*\*SJohn 15:15).

**restrain** — Rather, didst thou take away, or *borrow*, thence (namely, from the divine secret council) thy wisdom? Eliphaz in this (\*\*\*\*Job 15:8,9) retorts Job's words upon himself (\*\*\*\*Job 12:2,3 \*\*\*\*\*]13:2).

- 9. in us or, "with us," Hebraism for "we are aware of."
- **10.** On our side, thinking with us are the aged. Job had admitted that wisdom is with them (\*\*\*Dob 12:12). Eliphaz seems to have been himself older than Job; perhaps the other two were also (\*\*\*\*Job 32:6). Job, in Job 30:1, does not refer to his three friends; it therefore forms no objection. The Arabs are proud of fullness of years.
- **11.** *consolations* namely, the revelation which Eliphaz had stated as a consolatory reproof to Job, and which he repeats in 4854 Job 15:14.

**secret** — Hast thou some *secret* wisdom and source of consolation, which makes thee disregard those suggested by me? (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 15:8). Rather, from a different *Hebrew* root, Is the word of *kindness* or *gentleness* addressed by me treated by thee as valueless? [UMBREIT].

- **12.** *wink* that is, why do thy eyes *evince pride?* (\*\*\*Proverbs 6:13\*\* Psalm 35:19).
- **13.** That is, frettest against God and lettest fall rash words.
- **14.** Eliphaz repeats the revelation (\*\*\*Job 4:17) in substance, but using Job's own words (see on \*\*\*Job 14:1, on "born of a woman") to strike him with his own weapons.
- **15.** Repeated from <sup>4008</sup>Job 4:18; "servants" there are "saints" here; namely, holy angels.

**heavens** — literally, or else answering to "angels" (see on \*\*\*Job 4:18, and \*\*\*Job 25:5).

**16.** *filthy* — in *Arabic* "sour" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 14:3 53:3), corrupted from his original purity.

*drinketh* — (\*\*Proverbs 19:28).

- **17.** In direct contradiction of Job's position (\*\*\*Job 12:6, etc.), that the lot of the wicked was the most prosperous here, Eliphaz appeals
  - (1) to his own experience,
  - (2) to the wisdom of the ancients.
- **18.** Rather, "and which as handed down from their fathers, they have not concealed."
- 19. Eliphaz speaks like a genuine Arab when he boasts that his ancestors had ever possessed the land unmixed with foreigners [UMBREIT]. His words are intended to oppose Job's (\*\*\*Job 9:24); "the earth" in their case was *not* "given into the hand of the wicked." He refers to the division of the earth by divine appointment (\*\*\*Genesis 10:5\*\*25:32). Also he may insinuate that Job's sentiments had been corrupted from original purity by his vicinity to the Sabeans and Chaldeans [ROSENMULLER].
- **20.** *travaileth* rather, "trembleth of himself," though there is no real danger [UMBREIT].
- and the number of his years, etc. This gives the reason why the wicked man trembles continually; namely, because he knows not the moment when his life must end.
- **21.** An evil conscience conceives alarm at every sudden sound, though it be in a time of peace ("prosperity"), when there is no real danger ("Eviticus 26:36 and Proverbs 28:1 and Kings 7:6).
- **22.** *darkness* namely, danger or calamity. Glancing at Job, who despaired of restoration: in contrast to good men when in darkness (\*\*Micah 7:8,9).
- waited for of that is, He is destined for the sword [GESENIUS]. Rather (in the night of danger), "he looks anxiously towards the sword," as if every sword was drawn against him [UMBREIT].
- **23.** Wandereth *in anxious search* for bread. Famine in Old Testament depicts sore need ( Saiah 5:13). Contrast the pious man's lot ( Si20-22).

**knoweth** — has the firm conviction. Contrast the same word applied to the pious (\*\*\*\*Job 5:24,25).

**ready at his hand** — an Arabic phrase to denote a thing's complete readiness and full presence, as if in the hand.

- **24.** *prevail* break upon him suddenly and terribly, as a king, etc. (and Proverbs 6:11).
- **25.** *stretcheth* ... *hand* wielding the spear, as a bold rebel against God (\*\*\*\*Job 9:4 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 27:4).
- **26.** *on his neck* rather, "with outstretched neck," namely, that of the rebel [UMBREIT] (\*\*\*\*Psalm 75:5).

**upon** ... **bucklers** — rather, "with — his (the rebel's, not God's) bucklers." The rebel and his fellows are depicted as joining shields together, to form a compact covering over their heads against the weapons hurled on them from a fortress [UMBREIT and GESENIUS].

- **27.** The well-nourished body of the rebel is the sign of his prosperity.
- **collops** masses of fat. He pampers and fattens himself with sensual indulgences; hence his rebellion against God (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:15 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:15 \*\*\*Samuel 2:29).
- **28.** The class of wicked here described is that of robbers who plunder "cities," and seize on the houses of the banished citizens (\*\*\*\*Tsaiah 13:20). Eliphaz chooses this class because Job had chosen the same (\*\*\*\*Tob 12:6).

heaps — of ruins.

**29.** Rather, he shall not *increase* his riches; he has reached his highest point; his prosperity shall not continue.

*perfection* — rather, "His *acquired* wealth — what he possesses — shall not *be extended*," etc.

**30.** *depart* — that is, escape (\*\*\*\*Job 15:22,23).

branches — namely, his offspring (\*\* Job 1:18,19 \*\* Psalm 37:35).

*dry up* — The "flame" is the sultry wind in the East by which plants most full of sap are suddenly shrivelled.

**his mouth** — that is, God's wrath (Sin Isaiah 11:4).

31. Rather, "let him not trust in vanity or he will be deceived," etc.

**32.** Literally, "it (*the tree* to which he is compared, ""Job 15:30, or else *his life*) shall not be filled up in its time"; that is, "he shall be ended before his time."

**shall not be green** — image from a withered tree; the childless extinction of the wicked.

- **33.** Images of incompleteness. The loss of the unripe grapes is poetically made the vine tree's own act, in order to express more pointedly that the sinner's ruin is the fruit of his own conduct (\*\*\*Isaiah 3:11\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 6:19).
- **34.** Rather, The binding together of the hypocrites (wicked) shall be *fruitless* [UMBREIT].

tabernacles of bribery — namely, dwellings of unjust judges, often reprobated in the Old Testament (\*\*III\*] Isaiah 1:23). The "fire of God" that consumed Job's possessions (\*\*III\*] Tob 1:16) Eliphaz insinuates may have been on account of Job's bribery as an Arab sheik or emir.

**35.** Bitter irony, illustrating the "unfruitfulness" (\*\*\*Job 15:34) of the wicked. Their conceptions and birthgivings consist solely in mischief, etc. (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 33:11).

*prepareth* — hatcheth.

#### SECOND SERIES.

**№0**JOB 16:1-22.

#### JOB'S REPLY.

- **2.** (\*\*\*Job 13:4).
- **3.** "Words of wind," *Hebrew*. He retorts upon Eliphaz his reproach (\*\*\*Job 15:2).

**emboldeneth** — literally, "What wearies you so that ye contradict?" that is, What have I said to *provoke* you? etc. [SCHUTTENS]. Or, as better accords with the first clause, "Wherefore do ye weary yourselves contradicting?" [UMBREIT].

- **4.** *heap up* rather, "marshal together (an army of) words against you."
- **shake ... head** in mockery; it means *nodding*, rather than *shaking*; nodding is not with us, as in the East, a gesture of scorn (\*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 37:22\*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 18:16\*\*\*\*Matthew 27:39).
- **5.** strengthen ... with ... mouth bitter irony. In allusion to Eliphaz' boasted "consolations" (\*\*Silfob 15:11). Opposed to strengthening with the heart, that is, with real consolation. Translate, "I also (like you) could strengthen with the mouth," that is, with heartless talk: "And the moving of my lips (mere lip comfort) could console (in the same fashion as you do)" [UMBREIT]. "Hearty counsel" (\*\*\*Proverbs 27:9) is the opposite.
- **6.** eased literally, "What (portion of my sufferings) goes from me?"
- 7. But now rather, "ah!"

*he* — God.

**company** — rather, "band of *witnesses*," namely, those who could attest his innocence (his children, servants, etc.). So the same *Hebrew* is translated in \*\*\*\*Job 16:8. UMBREIT makes his "band of witnesses," *himself*, for, alas! he had no other witness for him. But this is too recondite.

**8. filled ... with wrinkles** — Rather (as also the same *Hebrew* word in Job 22:16; *English Version*, "cut down"), "thou hast *fettered* me, thy witness" (*besides* cutting off my "band of witnesses," Job 16:7), that is, hast disabled me by pains from properly attesting my innocence. But another "witness" arises against him, namely, his "leanness" or wretched state of body, construed by his friends into a proof of his guilt. The radical meaning of the *Hebrew* is "to draw together," whence flow the double meaning "to bind" or "fetter," and in *Syriac*, "to wrinkle."

*leanness* — meaning also "lie"; implying it was a "false witness."

**9.** Image from a wild beast. So God is represented (\*\*\*Job 10:16).

who hateth me — rather, "and pursues me hard." Job would not ascrible "hatred" to God (\*\*\*Psalm 50:22).

mine enemy — rather, "he sharpens, etc., as an enemy" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:12). Darts wrathful glances at me, like a foe (\*\*\*\*\*Job 13:24).

**10.** *gaped* — not in order to devour, but to mock him. To fill his cup of misery, the mockery of his friends (\*\*\*Job 16:10) is added to the hostile treatment from God (\*\*\*Job 16:9).

**smitten ... cheek** — figurative for contemptuous abuse (\*\*\*Lamentations 3:30 \*\*\*Matthew 5:39).

gathered themselves — "conspired unanimously" [SCHUTTENS].

**11.** *the ungodly* — namely, his professed friends, who persecuted him with unkind speeches.

*turned me over* — literally, "cast me headlong into the hands of the wicked."

**12.** *I* was at ease — in past times (\*\*\*\*Job 1:1-3).

by my neck — as an animal does its prey (so \*\*\*\*Job 10:16).

**shaken** — violently; in contrast to his former "ease" (\*\*\*Psalm 102:10). Set me up (*again*).

*mark* — (\*\*\*\*Job 7:20 \*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:12). God lets me always recover strength, so as to torment me ceaselessly.

**13.** *his archers* — The image of \*\*\*\*Job 16:12 is continued. God, in making me His "mark," is accompanied by the three friends, whose words wound like sharp arrows.

**gall** — put for a vital part; so the liver ( Lamentations 2:11).

**14.** The image is from storming a fortress by making breaches in the walls (2422 Kings 14:13).

*a giant* — a mighty warrior.

**15.** *sewed* — denoting the tight fit of the mourning garment; it was a sack with armholes closely sewed to the body.

**horn** — image from horned cattle, which when excited tear the earth with their horns. The horn was the emblem of power (\*1221) Kings 22:11). Here, it is

*in the dust* — which as applied to Job denotes *his humiliation* from former greatness. To throw one's self in the dust was a sign of mourning; this idea is here joined with that of excited despair, depicted by the fury of a horned beast. The Druses of Lebanon still wear horns as an ornament.

**16.** *foul* — rather, "is red," that is, flushed and heated [UMBREIT and NOYES].

shadow of death — that is, darkening through many tears (\*\*\*Lamentations 5:17). Job here refers to Zophar's implied charge (\*\*\*Job 11:14). Nearly the same words occur as to Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Jsaiah 53:9). So \*\*\*Job 16:10 above answers to the description of Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:13 \*\*\*\*Jsaiah 50:6, and \*\*\*\*Job 16:4 to \*\*\*\*Psalm 22:7). He alone realized what Job aspired after, namely, outward *righteousness* of acts and inward *purity* of devotion. Jesus Christ as the representative man is typified in some degree in every servant of God in the Old Testament.

- **18.** *my blood* that is, my undeserved suffering. He compares himself to one murdered, whose blood the earth refuses to drink up until he is avenged (\*\*Genesis 4:10,11 \*\*Ezekiel 24:1,8 \*\*Isaiah 26:21). The Arabs say that the dew of heaven will not descend on a spot watered with innocent blood (compare \*\*TEZ Samuel 1:21).
- **no place** no resting-place. "May my cry never stop!" May it go abroad! "Earth" in this verse in antithesis to "heaven" (\*\*\*\*Job 16:19). May my innocence be as well-known to *man* as it is even now to God!
- **19.** *Also now* Even now, when I am so greatly misunderstood on earth, God in *heaven* is sensible of my innocence.
- **record** Hebrew, "in the high places"; Hebrew, "my witness." Amidst all his impatience, Job still trusts in God.
- **20.** *Hebrew*, "are my scorners"; more forcibly, "my mockers my friends!" A heart-cutting paradox [UMBREIT]. God alone remains to whom he can look for attestation of his innocence; plaintively with tearful eye, he supplicates for this.
- as a man—literally, "the Son of man." A prefiguring of the advocacy of Jesus Christ—a boon longed for by Job (\*\*Dob 9:33), though the spiritual pregnancy of his own words, designed for all ages, was but little understood by him (\*\*\*Psalm 80:17).
- for his neighbor Hebrew, "friend." Job himself (\*\*\*Job 42:8) pleaded as intercessor for his "friends," though "his scorners" (\*\*\*\*Job 16:20); so Jesus Christ the Son of man (\*\*\*\*Luke 23:34); "for friends" (\*\*\*\*John 15:13-15).
- **22.** *few* literally, "years *of number*," that is, few, opposed to *numberless* (\*\*Genesis 34:30).

### **™**JOB 17:1-16.

#### JOB'S ANSWER CONTINUED.

**1.** breath ... corrupt — result of elephantiasis. But UMBREIT, "my strength (spirit) is spent."

*extinct* — Life is compared to an expiring light. "The light of my day is extinguished."

graves — plural, to heighten the force.

- **2.** UMBREIT, more emphatically, "had I only not to endure *mockery*, in the midst of their *contentions* I (mine eye) would remain quiet."
- eye continue Hebrew, "tarry all night"; a figure taken from sleep at night, to express undisturbed rest; opposed to (\*\*\*\*\*Job 16:20), when the eye of Job is represented as pouring out tears to God without rest.
- **3.** Lay down now namely, a pledge or security; that is, be my surety; do Thou attest my innocence, since my friends only mock me (\*\*TD) Job 17:2). Both litigating parties had to lay down a sum as security before the trial.
- strike hands "who else (save God Himself) could strike hands with me?" that is, be my security (\*\*\*PPS Psalm 119:122). The *Hebrew* strikes the hand of him for whom he goes security (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 6:1).
- **4.** *their heart* The *intellect* of his friends.
- **shalt** ... **exalt** Rather imperative, "exalt them not"; allow them not to conquer [UMBREIT], (2000) Isaiah 6:9,10).

- 5. The *Hebrew* for "flattery" is "smoothness"; then it came to mean a *prey* divided by *lot*, because a smooth stone was used in casting the lots (Deuteronomy 18:8), "a portion" (Deuteronomy 18:24). Therefore translate, "He that delivers up his friend as a prey (which the conduct of my friends implies that they would do), even the eyes," etc. [NOYES] (Dob 11:20). Job says this as to the sinner's *children*, retorting upon their reproach as to the cutting off of his (Dob 5:4 Dob 5
- **6.** *He* God. The poet reverentially suppresses the name of God when speaking of calamities inflicted.
- **by-word** (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 28:37 \*\*\*\*Psalm 69:11). My awful punishment makes my name execrated everywhere, as if I must have been superlatively bad to have earned it.
- **aforetime ... tabret** as David was honored (\*\*\*I Samuel 18:6). Rather from a different *Hebrew* root, "I am treated to my face as an object of disgust," literally, "an object to be spit upon in the face" (\*\*Numbers 12:14). So *Raca* means (\*\*\*Matthew 5:22) [UMBREIT].
- **7.** (\*\*\*\*Psalm 6:7 \*\*\*\*31:9 \*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 34:7).
- *members* literally, "figures"; all the individual members being peculiar *forms* of the body; opposed to "shadow," which looks like a figure without solidity.
- **8.** *astonied* at my unmerited sufferings.
- *against the hypocrite* The upright shall feel their sense of justice wounded ("will be indignant") because of the prosperity of the wicked. By "hypocrite" or "ungodly," he perhaps glances at his false friends.
- **9.** The strength of religious principle is heightened by misfortune. The pious shall take fresh courage to persevere from the example of suffering Job. The image is from a warrior acquiring new courage in action (\*\*\*Isaiah 40:30,31\*\*\*Philippians 1:14).

- **10.** *return* If you have anything to advance really wise, though I doubt it, recommence your speech. For as yet I cannot find one wise man among you all.
- **11.** Only do not vainly speak of the restoration of health to me; for "my days are past."

**broken off** — as the threads of the web cut off from the loom (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 38:12).

**thoughts** — literally, "possessions," that is, all the feelings and fair hopes which my heart once nourished. These belong to the *heart*, as "purposes" to the *understanding*; the two together here describe the entire inner man.

12. They — namely, "my friends."

change the night into day — that is, would try to persuade me of the change of my misery into joy, which is impossible [UMBREIT] (\*\*\*Job 11:17); (but) the light of prosperity (could it be enjoyed) would be short because of the darkness of adversity. Or better for "short," the *Hebrew* "near"; "and the light of new prosperity should be near in the face of (before) the darkness of death"; that is, they would persuade me that light is near, even though darkness approaches.

- **13.** Rather, "if I wait for this grave (Sheol, or the unseen world) as my house, and make my bed in the darkness (\*\*\*\*Job 17:14), and say to corruption," rather, "to the pit" or "grave," etc. (\*\*\*\*\*Job 17:15). Where then is my hope? [UMBREIT]. The apodosis is at \*\*\*\*Job 17:15.
- **14.** *Thou art my father*, etc. expressing most intimate connection (\*\*TPProverbs 7:4). His diseased state made him closely akin to the grave and worm.
- **15.** Who shall see it fulfilled? namely, the "hope" (\*\*\*Job 11:18) which they held out to him of restoration.
- **16.** *They* namely, my hopes shall be buried with me.

**bars** — (\*\*\*Isaiah 38:10). Rather, the wastes or solitudes of the pit (sheol, the unseen world).

*rest together* — the rest of me and my hope is in, etc. Both expire together. The word "rest" implies that man's ceaseless hopes only rob him of rest.

#### SECOND SERIES.

**™**JOB 18:1-21.

#### REPLY OF BILDAD.

- **2.** *ye* the other two friends of Job, whom Bildad charges with having spoken mere "words," that is, empty speeches; opposed to "mark," that is, come to *reason*, consider the question *intelligently*; and then let us speak.
- 3. beasts alluding to what Job said ( Job 12:7; so Isaiah 1:3).
- **vile** rather from a *Hebrew* root, "to stop up." "Stubborn," answering to the stupidity implied in the parallel first clause [UMBREIT]. Why should we give occasion by your empty speeches for our being mutually reputed, in the sight of Job and one another, as unintelligent? (\*\*\*Tob 17:4,10).
- **4.** Rather, turning to Job, "thou that tearest thyself in anger" (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 5:2).
- be forsaken? become desolate. He alludes here to Job's words as to the "rock," crumbling away (\*\*\*Job 14:18,19); but in a different application. He says bitterly "for thee." Wert thou not punished as thou art, and as thou art unwilling to bear, the eternal order of the universe would be disturbed and the earth become desolate through unavenged wickedness [UMBREIT]. Bildad takes it for granted Job is a great sinner (\*\*\*\*Job 8:3-6\*\*\*Job 8:3-6\*\*\*J
- **5.** That ( SSO) Tob 18:4) cannot be. The decree of God is unalterable, the light (prosperity) of the wicked shall at length be put out.
- *his fire* alluding to Arabian hospitality, which prided itself on welcoming the stranger to the fire in the tent, and even lit fires to direct

him to it. The ungodly shall be deprived of the means to show hospitality. His dwelling shall be dark and desolate!

- **6.** *candle* the lamp which in the East is usually fastened to the ceiling. Oil abounds in those regions, and the lamp was kept burning all night, as now in Egypt, where the poorest would rather dispense with food than the night lamp (\*\*\*\*Psalm 18:28). To put out the lamp was an image of utter desolation.
- 7. *steps of his strength Hebrew*, for "His strong steps." A firm step marks health. To be straitened in steps is to be no longer able to move about at will (\*\*Proverbs 4:12).

*his own counsel* — Plans shall be the means of his fall (\*\*\*Job 5:13).

- **8.** he walketh upon rather, "he lets himself go into the net" [UMBREIT]. If the English Version be retained, then understand "snare" to be the pitfall, covered over with branches and earth, which when walked upon give way (\*\*PSalm 9:15, \*\*\*S35:8).
- **9.** *robber* rather answering to "gin" in the parallel clause, "the *noose* shall hold him fast" [UMBREIT].
- **11.** *Terrors* often mentioned in this book (\*\*\*Job 18:14 \*\*\*24:17; etc.). The terrors excited through an evil conscience are here personified. "Magor-missabib" (\*\*\*Jeremiah 20:3).

**drive ... to his feet** — rather, "shall pursue" (literally, "scatter," Habakkuk 3:14) him close "at his heels" (literally, "immediately after his feet," Habakkuk 3:5 \*\* Samuel 25:42; *Hebrew*). The image is that of a pursuing conqueror who scatters the enemy [UMBREIT].

**12.** The *Hebrew* is brief and bold, "his strength is hungry."

**destruction** — that is, a great calamity (\*\*Proverbs 1:27).

**ready at his side** — close at hand to destroy him (\*\*Proverbs 19:29).

**13.** UMBREIT has "he" for "it," that is, "in the rage of hunger he shall devour his own body"; or, "his own children" (\*\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 4:10). Rather, "destruction" from \*\*\*\*Job 18:12 is nominative to "devour."

**strength** — rather, "members" (literally, the "branches" of a tree).

the first-born of death — a personification full of poetical horror. The first-born son held the chief place (\*\*Genesis 49:3); so here the chiefest (most deadly) disease that death has ever engendered (\*\*Isaiah 14:30; "first-born of the poor" — the poorest). The Arabs call fever, "daughter of death."

**14.** *confidence* — all that the father trusted in for domestic happiness, children, fortune, etc., referring to Job's losses.

**rooted out** — suddenly torn away, it shall bring — that is, he shall be brought; or, as UMBREIT better has, "Thou (God) shalt bring him slowly." The Hebrew expresses, "to stride slowly and solemnly." The godless has a fearful death for long before his eyes, and is at last taken by it. Alluding to Job's case. The King of terrors, not like the heathen Pluto, the tabled ruler of the dead, but Death, with all its terrors to the ungodly, personified.

**15.** *It* — "Terror" shall haunt, etc., and not as UMBREIT, "another," which the last clause of the verse disproves.

*none of his* — It is his no longer.

**brimstone** — probably comparing the calamity of Job by the "fire of God" (\*\*\*III\*) to the destruction of guilty Sodom by fire and brimstone (\*\*\*Genesis 19:24).

16. Roots — himself.

**branch** — his children (\*\*\*\*\*Job 8:12 \*\*\*\*\*15:30 \*\*\*\*\*Malachi 4:1).

- **17.** *street* Men shall not speak of him in meeting in the highways; rather, "in the field" or "meadow"; the shepherds shall no more mention his name a picture from nomadic life [UMBREIT].
- **18.** *light* ... *darkness* existence nonexistence.
- **19.** *nephew* (so "Saiah 14:22). But it is translated "grandson" ("Genesis 21:23); translate "kinsman."
- **20.** *after* ... *before* rather, "those in the West those in the East"; that is, all people; literally, "those behind those before"; for Orientals in

geography turn with their faces to the east (not to the north as we), and back to the west; so that *before* — east; *behind* — north (so \*\*Zechariah 14:8).

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day — of ruin (****Obadiah 1:12).

affrighted — seized with terror (*****Job 21:6 ****Isaiah 13:8).

21. (*****ZJob 8:22, Margin).
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#### SECOND SERIES.

**™**JOB 19:1-29.

#### JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

- **2.** *How long*, etc. retorting Bildad's words (\*\*\*Job 18:2). Admitting the punishment to be deserved, is it kind thus ever to be harping on this to the sufferer? And yet even this they have not yet proved.
- **3.** *These* prefixed emphatically to numbers (Genesis 27:36).

ten — that is, often (Genesis 31:7).

*make yourselves strange* — rather, "*stun* me" [GESENIUS]. (See *Margin* for a different meaning [that is, "harden yourselves against me"]).

**4.erred** — The *Hebrew* expresses *unconscious error*. Job was unconscious of wilful sin.

**remaineth** — literally, "passeth the night." An image from harboring an unpleasant guest for the night. I bear the consequences.

**5.** *magnify*, etc. — Speak proudly (\*\*\*Obadiah 1:12 \*\*\*Ezekiel 35:13).

*against me* — emphatically repeated (\*\*\*Psalm 38:16).

plead ... reproach — English Version makes this part of the protasis, "if" being understood, and the apodosis beginning at "Job 19:6. Better with UMBREIT, If ye would become great heroes against me in truth, ye must prove (evince) against me my guilt, or shame, which you assert. In the English Version "reproach" will mean Job's calamities, which they "pleaded" against him as a "reproach," or proof of guilt.

- **6.** compassed ... net alluding to Bildad's words (\*\*\*Job 18:8). Know, that it is not that I as a wicked man have been caught in my "own net"; it is God who has compassed me in His why, I know not.
- **7.** *wrong* violence: brought on him by God.
- *no judgment* God will not remove my calamities, and so vindicate my just cause; and my friends will not do *justice* to my past character.
- **8.** Image from a benighted traveler.
- **9.** *stripped* ... *crown* image from a deposed king, deprived of his robes and crown; appropriate to Job, once an emir with all but royal dignity (AMA) Lamentations 5:16 \*\*\*Psalm 89:39).
- **10.** *destroyed* ... *on every side* "Shaken all round, so that I fall in the dust"; image from a tree uprooted by violent shaking from every side [UMBREIT]. The last clause accords with this (\*\*\* [Umbreit]\*)

*mine hope* — as to this life (in opposition to Zophar, SIBJob 11:18); not as to the world to come (SIBJob 19:25 SIBJob 14:15).

*removed* — uprooted.

- 11. enemies ( Job 13:24 Zun Lamentations 2:5).
- **12.** *troops* Calamities advance together like hostile troops (\*\*\*\*Job 10:17).

**raise up ... way** — An army must *cast up a way* of access before it, in marching against a city (2300 Isaiah 40:3).

**13.** *brethren* — nearest kinsmen, as distinguished from "acquaintance." So "kinsfolk" and "familiar friends" (\*\*\*Job 19:14) correspond in parallelism. The Arabic proverb is, "The brother, that is, the true friend, is only known in time of need."

**estranged** — literally, "turn away with disgust." Job again unconsciously uses language prefiguring the desertion of Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*\*Job 16:10\*\*\*\*Luke 23:49 \*\*\*\*Psalm 38:11).

- **15.** *They that dwell*, etc. rather, "sojourn": male servants, sojourning in his house. Mark the contrast. The stranger admitted to sojourn as a dependent treats the master as a stranger in his own house.
- **16.** *servant* born in my house (as distinguished from those sojourning in it), and so altogether belonging to the family. Yet even he disobeys my call.
- **mouth** that is, "calling aloud"; formerly a *nod* was enough. Now I no longer look for *obedience*, I try *entreaty*.
- **17.** *strange* His breath by elephantiasis had become so strongly altered and offensive, that his wife turned away as estranged from him (\*\*\*Job 19:13 \*\*\*Job 17:1).
- children's ... of mine own body literally, "belly." But "loins" is what we should expect, not "belly" (womb), which applies to the woman. The "mine" forbids it being taken of his wife. Besides their children were dead. In \*\*\*STOD 3:10 the same words "my womb" mean, my mother's womb: therefore translate, "and I must entreat (as a suppliant) the children of my mother's womb"; that is, my own brothers a heightening of force, as compared with last clause of \*\*\*STOD 19:16 [UMBREIT]. Not only must I entreat suppliantly my servant, but my own brothers (\*\*\*STOD Psalm 69:8). Here too, he unconsciously foreshadows Jesus Christ (\*\*\*TD John 7:5).
- **18.** *young children* So the *Hebrew* means (\*\*Oll\*Job 21:11). Reverence for age is a chief duty in the East. The word means "wicked" (\*\*Oll\*Job 16:11). So UMBREIT has it here, not so well.
- *I arose* Rather, supply "if," as Job was no more in a state to stand up. "If I stood up (arose), they would speak against (abuse) me" [UMBREIT].
- **19.** *inward* confidential; literally, "men of my secret" to whom I entrusted my most intimate confidence.
- **20.** Extreme meagerness. The bone seemed to stick in the skin, being seen through it, owing to the flesh drying up and falling away from the bone. The *Margin*, "as to my flesh," makes this sense clearer. The *English Version*, however, expresses the same: "And to my flesh," namely, which has fallen away from the bone, instead of firmly covering it.

- **skin of my teeth** proverbial. I have *escaped with* bare life; I am whole *only with the skin of my teeth;* that is, my gums alone are whole, the rest of the skin of my body is broken with sores (\*\*\*\*\*Job 7:5 \*\*\*Psalm 102:5). Satan left Job his speech, in hope that he might therewith curse God.
- **21.** When God had made him such a piteous spectacle, his friends should spare him the additional persecution of their cruel speeches.
- **22.** *as God* as God has persecuted me. Prefiguring Jesus Christ (\*\*\*Psalm 69:26). That God afflicts is no reason that man is to add to a sufferer's affliction (\*\*\*Zechariah 1:15).
- satisfied with my flesh It is not enough that God afflicts my flesh literally (\*\*\*\*Job 19:20), but you must "eat my flesh" metaphorically (\*\*\*\*Psalm 27:2); that is, utter the worst calumnies, as the phrase often means in *Arabic*.
- **23.** Despairing of justice from his friends in his lifetime, he wishes his words could be preserved imperishably to posterity, attesting his hope of vindication at the resurrection.

*printed* — not our modern printing, but engraven.

**24.** *pen* — graver.

**lead** — poured into the engraven characters, to make them better seen [UMBREIT]. Not on leaden plates; for it was "in the rock" that they were engraved. Perhaps it was the hammer that was of "lead," as sculptors find more delicate incisions are made by it, than by a harder hammer. FOSTER (*One Primeval Language*) has shown that the inscriptions on the rocks in Wady-Mokatta, along Israel's route through the desert, record the journeys of that people, as Cosmas Indicopleustes asserted, A.D. 535.

for ever — as long as the rock lasts.

**25.** *redeemer* — UMBREIT and others understand this and God appearing as Job's avenger *before his death*, when his body would be wasted to a skeleton. But Job uniformly despairs of restoration and vindication of his cause in this life (GOD) 17:15,16). One hope alone was left, which the Spirit revealed — a vindication in a future life: it would be no full vindication if his soul alone were to be happy *without the body*, as

some explain (\*\*\*Job 19:26) "out of the flesh." It was his body that had chiefly suffered: the resurrection of his body, therefore, alone could vindicate his cause: to see God with his own eyes, and in a renovated body ( Job 19:27), would disprove the imputation of guilt cast on him because of the sufferings of his present body. That this truth is not further dwelt on by Job, or noticed by his friends, only shows that it was with him a bright passing glimpse of *Old Testament* hope, rather than the steady light of Gospel assurance; with us this passage has a definite clearness, which it had not in his mind (see on Tob 21:30). The idea in "redeemer" with Job is Vindicator ( Numbers 35:27), redressing his wrongs; also including at least with us, and probably with him, the idea of the predicted Bruiser of the serpent's head. Tradition would inform him of the prediction. FOSTER shows that the fall by the serpent is represented perfectly on the temple of Osiris at Philæ; and the resurrection on the tomb of the Egyptian Mycerinus, dating four thousand years back. Job's sacrifices imply sense of sin and need of atonement. Satan was the injurer of Job's body; Jesus Christ his Vindicator, the Living One who giveth life (\*\*\*John 5:21,26).

at the latter day — Rather, "the Last," the peculiar title of Jesus Christ, though Job may not have known the pregnancy of his own inspired words, and may have understood merely one that comes after (\*\*\*\*\*1 Corinthians 15:45 \*\*\*\*Revelation 1:17). Jesus Christ is the last. The day of Jesus Christ the last day (\*\*\*\*John 6:39).

**stand** — rather, "arise": as God is said to "raise up" the Messiah (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 18:15).

earth — rather, "dust": often associated with the body crumbling away in it (\*\*\*Tob 7:21 \*\*\*Tob 7:21 \*

to be our kinsman. Man lost life by Satan the "murderer" (\*\*\*John 8:44), here Job's persecutor (\*\*\*Hebrews 2:14). Compare also as to *redemption* of the inheritance by the kinsman of the dead (\*\*\*Ruth 4:3-5 \*\*\*Ephesians 1:14).

**26.** Rather, though after my skin (is no more) this (body) is destroyed ("body" being omitted, because it was so wasted as not to deserve the name), yet *from* my flesh (*from my renewed body*, as the starting-point of vision, "Song of Solomon 2:9, "looking out *from* the windows") "shall I see God." Next clause ("Job 19:27) proves *bodily* vision is meant, for it specifies "mine eyes" [Rosenmuller, 2d ed.]. The *Hebrew* opposes "*in* my flesh." The "skin" was the first destroyed by elephantiasis, then the "body."

**27.** for myself — for my advantage, as my friend.

**not another** — Mine eyes shall behold Him, but **no longer** as one **estranged** from me, as now [BENGEL].

*though* — better omitted.

my reins — inward recesses of the heart.

be consumed within me— that is, pine with longing desire for that day (\*\*\*\*Psalm 84:2\*\*\*\*119:81). The Gentiles had but few revealed promises: how gracious that the few should have been so explicit (compare \*\*Numbers 24:17 \*\*\*Matthew 2:2).

28. Rather, "ye will then (when the Vindicator cometh) say, Why," etc.

**root** ... in me — The root of pious integrity, which was the matter at issue, whether it could be in one so afflicted, is found in me. UMBREIT, with many manuscripts and versions, reads "in him." "Or how found we in him ground of contention."

**29.** *wrath* — the passionate violence with which the friends persecuted Job.

*bringeth*, etc. — literally, "is sin of the of the sword"

that ye may know — Supply, "I say this."

**judgment** — inseparably connected with the coming of the Vindicator. The "wrath" of God at His appearing for the temporal vindication of Job against the friends ("Job 42:7) is a pledge of the eternal wrath at the final coming to glorify the saints and judge their enemies ("Thessalonians 1:6-10" Isaiah 25:8).

### SECOND SERIES.

**™**JOB 20:1-29.

#### REPLY OF ZOPHAR.

- **2.** *Therefore* Rather, the more excited I feel by Job's speech, the more *for that very reason* shall my reply be supplied by my calm consideration. Literally, "Notwithstanding; my calm thoughts (as in \*\*Tob 4:13) shall furnish my answer, because of the excitement (haste) within me" [UMBREIT].
- **3.** *check of my reproach* that is, the castigation intended as a reproach (literally, "shame") to me.
- **spirit of ... understanding** my rational spirit; answering to "calm thoughts" (\*\*\*Job 20:2). In spite of thy reproach urging me to "hastiness." I will answer in calm reason.
- **5.** *the hypocrite* literally, "the ungodly" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:35,36).
- **6.** (<sup>2343</sup>Isaiah 14:13 <sup>3008</sup>Obadiah 1:3,4).
- 7. **dung** in contrast to the haughtiness of the sinner (\*\*\*\*\*Tob 20:6); this strong term expresses disgust and the lowest degradation (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 83:10 Kings 14:10).
- **8.** (\*\*Psalm 73:20).
- **9.** Rather "the eye followeth him, but can *discern* him no more." A *sharp-looking* is meant (ST) Job 28:7 ST) Job 7:10).
- **10.** *seek to please* "Atone to the poor" (by restoring the property of which they had been robbed by the father) [DE WETTE]. Better than *English Version*, "The children" are reduced to the humiliating condition of

"seeking the favor of those very poor," whom the father had oppressed. But Umbreit translates as *Margin*.

*his hands* — rather, "their (the children's) hands."

*their goods* — the goods of the poor. Righteous retribution! (\*\*Exodus 20:5).

11. (\*\*\*Psalm 25:7), so *Vulgate*. GESENIUS has "full of youth"; namely, *in the fullness of his youthful strength* he shall be laid in the dust. But "bones" plainly alludes to Job's disease, probably to Job's own words (\*\*\*Job 19:20). Umbreit translates, "full of his *secret* sins," as in \*\*\*Psalm 90:8; his secret guilt in his time of seeming righteousness, like secret poison, at last lays him in the dust. The *English Version* is best. Zophar alludes to Job's own words (\*\*\*Job 17:16).

with him — His sin had so pervaded his nature that it accompanies him to the grave: for eternity the sinner cannot get rid of it (\*\*Revelation 22:11).

**12. be** — "taste sweet." Sin's fascination is like poison sweet to the taste, but at last deadly to the vital organs (\*\*\*\*\*\*Proverbs 20:17 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 9:17,18).

*hide* ... *tongue* — seek to prolong the enjoyment by keeping the sweet morsel long in the mouth (so \*\*\*Job 20:13).

**14.** *turned* — *Hebrew* denotes a total change into a disagreeable contrary ( Termiah 2:21; compare Revelation 10:9,10).

**gall** — in which the poison of the asp was thought to lie. It rather is contained in a sack in the mouth. Scripture uses popular language, where no moral truth is thereby endangered.

- **15.** He is forced to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth.
- **16.** shall suck It shall turn out that he has sucked the poison, etc.
- **17.** *floods* literally, "stream of floods," plentiful streams flowing with milk, etc. (\*\*SUBJO 29:6 \*\*Exodus 3:17). Honey and butter are more fluid in the East than with us and are poured out from jars. These "rivers" or water brooks are in the sultry East emblems of prosperity.

**18.** Image from food which is taken away from one before he can swallow it.

**restitution** — (So Proverbs 6:31). The parallelism favors the *English Version* rather than the translation of GESENIUS, "As a possession to be restored in which he rejoices not."

he shall not rejoice — His enjoyment of his ill-gotten gains shall then be at an end (\*\*\*\*Job 20:5).

**19.** *oppressed* — whereas he ought to have espoused their cause (4002 Chronicles 16:10).

*forsaken* — left helpless.

**house** — thus leaving the poor without shelter (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 5:8 \*\*\*\*\*\*Micah 2:2).

**20.** UMBREIT translates, "His inward parts know no rest" from desires.

*his belly* — that is, peace *inwardly*.

**not** save — literally, "not escape with that which," etc., alluding to Job's having been stripped of his all.

- **21.** *look for* rather, "because his goods," that is, prosperity shall have no endurance.
- **22.** *shall be* rather, "he is (feeleth) straitened." The next clause explains in what respect.

wicked — Rather, "the whole hand of the miserable (whom he had oppressed) cometh upon him"; namely, the sense of his having oppressed the poor, now in turn comes with all its power (hand) on him. This caused his "straitened" feeling even in prosperity.

**23.** Rather, "God shall cast (may God send) [UMBREIT] upon him the fury of His wrath *to fill his belly!*"

while ... eating — rather, "shall rain it upon him for his food!" Fiery rain, that is, lightning (\*\*\*Psalm 11:6; alluding to Job's misfortune, \*\*\*\*IfJob 1:16). The force of the image is felt by picturing to one's self the opposite nature of a refreshing rain in the desert (\*\*\*\*Exodus 16:4\*\*\*Psalm 68:9).

- **24.** *steel* rather, "brass." While the wicked flees from one danger, he falls into a greater one from an opposite quarter [UMBREIT].
- **25.** It is drawn Rather, "He (God) draweth (the sword, "Boshua 5:13) and (no sooner has He done so, than) it cometh out of (that is, passes right through) the (sinner's) body" ("Bouteronomy 32:41,42" Ezekiel 21:9,10). The glittering sword is a happy image for lightning.
- **gall** that is, his life ( Job 16:13). "Inflicts a deadly wound."
- **terrors** Zophar repeats Bildad's words (\*\*\*\*Job 17:11 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 88:16 \*\*\*\*55:4).
- **26.** *All darkness* that is, every calamity that befalls the wicked shall be *hid* (in store for him) *in His* (God's) *secret places*, or treasures (\*\*\*\*\*\*Jude 1:13 \*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:34).
- **not blown** not kindled by man's hands, but by God's (\*\*Isaiah 30:33; the *Septuagint* in the Alexandrian Manuscript reads "unquenchable fire," Matthew 3:12). Tact is shown by the friends in not expressly mentioning, but alluding under color of general cases, to Job's calamities; here (\*\*IIIG\*Job 1:16) UMBREIT explains it, *wickedness*, is a "self-igniting fire"; in it lie the principles of destruction.
- *ill* ... *tabernacle* Every trace of the sinner must be obliterated (\*\*\*Job 18:15).
- **27.** All creation is at enmity with him, and proclaims his guilt, which he would fain conceal.
- **28.** *increase* prosperity. Ill got ill gone.
- **flow away** like waters that run dry in summer; using Job's own metaphor against himself (\*\*\*\*\*Job 6:15-17 \*\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 14:14 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*Micah 1:4).
- his wrath God's.
- **29.** *appointed* not as a matter of chance, but by the divine "decree" (*Margin*) and settled principle.

### SECOND SERIES.

**№** JOB 21:1-34.

### JOB'S ANSWER.

- **2.** consolations If you will listen calmly to me, this will be regarded as "consolations"; alluding to Eliphaz' boasted "consolations" (\*\*\*\*Job 15:11), which Job felt more as aggravations ("mockings," \*\*\*\*Job 21:3) than consolations (\*\*\*\*Job 16:2).
- **3.** literally, "Begin your mockings" (\*\*\*Job 17:2).
- **4.** Job's difficulty was not as to *man*, but as to *God*, why He so afflicted him, as if he were the guilty hypocrite which the friends alleged him to be. *Vulgate* translates it, "my disputation."
- if it were rather, "since this is the case."
- **5.** *lay* ... *hand upon* ... *mouth* (\*\*\*Proverbs 30:32 \*\*\*\* Judges 18:19). So the heathen god of silence was pictured with his hand on his mouth. There was enough in Job's case to awe them into silence (\*\*\*\* Job 17:8).
- **6.** *remember* Think on it. Can you wonder that I broke out into complaints, when the struggle was not with men, but with the Almighty? Reconcile, if you can, the ceaseless woes of the innocent with the divine justice! Is it not enough to make one tremble? [UMBREIT].
- 7. The answer is Romans 2:4 Timothy 1:16 Psalm 73:18 Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 Luke 2:35-end; Proverbs 16:4 Romans 9:22.
- **old** in opposition to the friends who asserted that sinners are "cut off" early (\*\*\*\*Job 8:12,14).
- **8.** In opposition to 

  Job 18:19,5:4.

- **9.** Literally, "peace from fear"; with poetic force. Their house is *peace itself*, far removed from fear. Opposed to the friends' assertion, as to the bad (\*\*\*Job 15:21-24 \*\*\*\*20:26-28), and conversely, the good (\*\*\*Job 5:23,24).
- **10.** Rather, "their cattle conceive." The first clause of the verse describes an *easy conception*, the second, a happy *birth* [UMBREIT].
- **11.** *send forth* namely, out of doors, to their happy sports under the skies, like a joyful flock sent to the pastures.

*little ones* — like lambkins.

**children** — somewhat older than the former.

*dance* — not formal dances; but skip, like lambs, in joyous and healthful play.

**12.** *take* — rather, "lift up the voice" (sing) to the note of [UMBREIT].

timbrel — rather, "tambourine."

*organ* — not the modern "organ," but the "pipe" (\*\*\*Genesis 4:21). The first clause refers to stringed, the latter, to wind instruments; thus, with "the voice" all kinds of music are enumerated.

**13.** wealth — Old English Version for "prosperity."

*in a moment* — not by a lingering disease. Great blessings! Lengthened life with prosperity, and a sudden painless death (\*\*\*Psalm 73:4).

**14.** *Therefore* — rather, "*And yet* they are such as say," etc., that is, say, not in so many words, but virtually, by their conduct (so the Gergesenes, Matthew 8:34). How differently the godly (\*\*Isaiah 2:3).

ways — The course of action, which God points out; as in \*\*Psalm 50:23, Margin.

**15.** (Compare Teremiah 2:20 Proverbs 30:9, *Margin*, Exodus 5:2).

what profit — (\*\*\*\*Job 35:3 \*\*\*Malachi 3:14 \*\*\*Psalm 73:13). Sinners ask, not what is *right*, but what is for the *profit of self*. They forget, "If religion cost self something, the want of it will cost self infinitely more."

- **16.** *not in their hand* but in the hand of God. This is Job's difficulty, that God who has sinners prosperity (good) in His hand should allow them to have it.
- *is* rather, "may the counsel of the wicked be far from me!" [UMBREIT]. This naturally follows the sentiment of the first clause: Let me not hereby be thought to regard with aught but horror the ways of the wicked, however prosperous.
- 17. Job in this whole passage down to Dob 21:21 quotes the assertion of the friends, as to the short continuance of the sinner's prosperity, not his own sentiments. In Dob 21:22 he proceeds to refute them. "How oft is the candle" (lamp), etc., quoting Bildad's sentiment (Dob 18:5,6), in order to question its truth (compare Dob Matthew 25:8).

**how oft** — "God distributeth," etc. (alluding to Tob 20:23,29).

**sorrows** — UMBREIT translates "snares," literally, "cords," which lightning in its twining motion resembles (\*\*\*\*Psalm 11:6).

- **18.** Job alludes to a like sentiment of Bildad (\*\*\*Job 18:18), using his own previous words (\*\*\*Job 13:25).
- **19.** Equally questionable is the friends' assertion that if the godless himself is not punished, the children are (\*\*\*\*Job 18:19 \*\*\*20:10); and that *God rewardeth him* here for his iniquity, and that *he shall know* it to his cost. So "know" (\*\*\*\*\*Hosea 9:7).
- **20.** Another questionable assertion of the friends, that the sinner sees his own and his children's destruction in his lifetime.
- drink (\*\*Psalm 11:6 \*\*\* Isaiah 51:17 \*\*\* Lamentations 4:21).
- **21.** The argument of the friends, in proof of \*\*D\*Job 21:20, What pleasure can he have from his house (children) when he is dead ("after him," Ecclesiastes 3:22).

when the number, etc. — Or, rather, "What hath he to do with his children?" etc. (so the *Hebrew* in Ecclesiastes 3:1 8:6). It is therefore necessary that "his eyes should see his and their destruction" (see 492 Job 14:21).

- cut off rather, when the number of his allotted months is fulfilled (\*\*Job 14:5). From an Arabic word, "arrow," which was used to draw lots with. Hence "arrow" inevitable destiny [UMBREIT].
- **22.** Reply of Job, "In all these assertions you try to teach God how He *ought* to deal with men, rather than prove that He does *in fact* so deal with them. Experience is against you. God gives prosperity and adversity as it pleases Him, not as man's wisdom would have it, on principles inscrutable to us" ("Isaiah 40:13" Romans 11:34).
- **those ... high** the high ones, not only angels, but men (\*\*TESaiah 2:12-17).
- **23.** Literally, "in the bone of his perfection," that is, the full strength of unimpaired prosperity [UMBREIT].
- **24.** *breasts* rather, "skins," or "vessels" for fluids [Lee]. But [UMBREIT] "stations or resting-places of his herds near water"; in opposition to Zophar (\*\*Tob 20:17); the first clause refers to his abundant substance, the second to his vigorous health.
- **moistened** comparing man's body to a well-watered field (\*\*\*Proverbs 3:8 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 58:11).
- **26.** ( Ecclesiastes 9:2).
- **27.** Their wrongful thoughts against Job are stated by him in <sup>105</sup>Job 21:28. They do not honestly *name* Job, but *insinuate* his *guilt*.
- **28.** *ye say* referring to Zophar (\*\*Job 20:7).
- **the house** referring to the fall of the *house* of Job's oldest son (\*\*"Job 1:19) and the destruction of his *family*.
- **prince** The parallel "wicked" in the second clause requires this to be taken in a bad sense, *tyrant*, *oppressor* (\*\*Tsaiah 13:2), the same *Hebrew*, "nobles" oppressors.
- *dwelling-places* rather, "pavilions," a tent containing many dwellings, such as a great emir, like Job, with many dependents, would have.

**29.** Job, seeing that the friends will not admit him as an impartial judge, as they consider his calamities prove his guilt, begs them to ask the opinion of travelers (\*\*Lamentations 1:12), who have the experience drawn from observation, and who are no way connected with him. Job opposes this to Bildad (\*\*SOS) Job 8:8) and Zophar (\*\*SOS) Job 20:4).

**tokens** — rather, "intimations" (for example, inscriptions, proverbs, signifying the results of their observation), testimony. Literally, "signs" or proofs in confirmation of the word spoken (\*\*Tsaiah 7:11).

**30.** Their testimony (referring perhaps to those who had visited the region where Abraham who enjoyed a revelation then lived) is that "the wicked is (now) spared (reserved) against the day of destruction (hereafter)." The Hebrew does not so well agree with [UMBREIT] "in the day of destruction." Job does not deny sinners' future punishment, but their punishment in this life. They have their "good things" now. Hereafter, their lot, and that of the godly, shall be reversed (Luke 16:25). Job, by the Spirit, often utters truths which solve the difficulty under which he labored. His afflictions mostly clouded his faith, else he would have seen the solution furnished by his own words. This answers the objection, that if he knew of the resurrection in \*\*\*Job 19:25, and future retribution Job 21:30), why did he not draw his reasonings elsewhere from them, which he did not? God's righteous government, however, needs to be vindicated as to this life also, and therefore the Holy Ghost has caused the argument mainly to turn on it at the same time giving glimpses of a future fuller vindication of God's ways.

**brought forth** — not "carried away safe" or "escape" (referring to *this life*), as UMBREIT has it.

wrath — literally, "wraths," that is, multiplied and fierce wrath.

- **31.** That is, who dares to charge him openly with his bad ways? namely, in this present life. He shall, I grant (\*\*\*\*\*Job 21:30), be "repaid" hereafter.
- **32.** *Yet* rather, "and."

**brought** — with solemn pomp (\*\*Psalm 45:15).

**grave** — literally, "graves"; that is, the place where the graves are.

**remain in** — rather, watch on the tomb, or sepulchral mound. Even after death he seems still to live and watch (that is, have his "remembrance" preserved) by means of the monument over the grave. In opposition to Bildad (\*\*\*\*Job 18:17).

**33.** As the classis saying has it, "The earth is light upon him." His repose shall be "sweet."

**draw** — follow. He shall share the common lot of mortals; no worse off than they (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 9:27). UMBREIT not so well (for it is not true of "every man"). "Most men follow in his bad steps, as countless such preceded him."

**34.** *falsehood* — literally, "transgression." Your boasted "consolations" (\*\*SIJ) b 15:11) are contradicted by facts ("vain"); they therefore only betray your *evil intent* ("wickedness") against me.

### THIRD SERIES.

**™**JOB 22:1-30.

### AS BEFORE, ELIPHAZ BEGINS.

- 1. Eliphaz shows that man's goodness does not add to, or man's badness take from, the happiness of God; therefore it cannot be that God sends prosperity to some and calamities on others for His own advantage; the cause of the goods and ills sent must lie in the men themselves (\*\*Psalm 16:2 \*\*Luke 17:10 \*\*Acts 17:25 \*\*\* Chronicles 29:14). So Job's calamities must arise from guilt. Eliphaz, instead of meeting the *facts*, tries to show that it *could not* be so.
- **2.** as he that is wise rather, yea the pious man profiteth himself. So "understanding" or "wise" pious (\*\*Daniel 12:3,10 \*\*Psalm 14:2) [MICHAELIS].
- **3.** *pleasure* accession of happiness; God has pleasure in man's righteousness (\*\*Psalm 45:7), but He is not dependent on man's character for His happiness.
- **4.** Is the punishment inflicted on thee from fear of thee, in order to disarm thee? as Job had implied (see on \*\*\*\*Job 7:12; \*\*\*\*Job 7:20; and \*\*\*\*Job 10:17).
- will he enter ... into judgment? Job had desired this (\*\*\*Job 13:3,21). He ought rather to have spoken as in \*\*\*\*Psalm 143:2.
- **5.** Heretofore Eliphaz had only insinuated, now he plainly asserts Job's guilt, merely on the ground of his sufferings.
- **6.** The crimes alleged, on a harsh inference, by Eliphaz against Job are such as he would think likely to be committed by a rich man. The Mosaic law (\*\*Exodus 22:26 \*\*Deuteronomy 24:10) subsequently embodied the

feeling that existed among the godly in Job's time against oppression of debtors as to their pledges. Here the case is not quite the same; Job is charged with taking a pledge where he had *no just claim to it;* and in the second clause, that pledge (the outer garment which served the poor as a covering by day and a bed by night) is represented as taken from one who had not "changes of raiment" (a common constituent of wealth in the East), but was poorly clad — "naked" (\*\*\*Matthew 25:36 \*\*\*James 2:15); a sin the more heinous in a rich man like Job.

- 7. Hospitality to the weary traveler is regarded in the East as a primary duty ( Isaiah 21:14).
- 8. *mighty Hebrew*, "man of arm" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:15; namely, Job).

honorable — Hebrew, "eminent, or, accepted for countenance" ("Isaiah 3:3 "IN") Kings 5:1); that is, possessing authority. Eliphaz repeats his charge ("ISSI Job 15:28; so Zophar, "ID" Job 20:19), that it was by violence Job wrung houses and lands from the poor, to whom now he refused relief ("ID" Job 22:7,9) [MICHAELIS].

**9.** *empty* — without their wants being relieved (\*\*\*Genesis 31:42). The Mosaic law especially protected the widow and fatherless (\*\*\*\*Exodus 22:22); the violation of it in their case by the great is a complaint of the prophets (\*\*\*Isaiah 1:17).

arms — supports, helps, on which one leans (\*\*\*Hosea 7:15). Thou hast robbed them of their only stay. Job replies in \*\*\*\*Job 29:11-16.

- **10.** *snares* alluding to Job's admission (\*\*\*Job 19:6; compare \*\*\*Job 18:10 \*\*\*Proverbs 22:5).
- **11.** *that* so that thou.

**abundance** — floods. Danger by floods is a less frequent image in this book than in the rest of the Old Testament (\*\*Job 11:16 \*\*27:20).

**12.** Eliphaz says this to prove that God can from His height behold all things; gratuitously *inferring* that Job denied it, because he denied that the wicked are punished here.

**height** — Hebrew, "head of the stars"; that is, "elevation" (\*\*\*Job 11:8).

- **13.** Rather, *And yet* thou sayest, God does not *concern Himself with* ("know") human affairs (\*\*\*Psalm 73:11).
- **14.** in the circuit of heaven only, not taking any part in earthly affairs. Job is alleged as holding this Epicurean sentiment (\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:44\*\*\*\*\*
  Isaiah 29:15 \*\*\*\*\*40:27 \*\*\*\*\* Jeremiah 23:24 \*\*\*\*\*\* Ezekiel 8:12 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 139:12).
- **15.** *marked* Rather, Dost thou *keep to?* that is, wish to follow (so *Hebrew*, <sup>4)222</sup> Samuel 22:22). If so, beware of sharing their end.

*the old way* — the degenerate ways of the world before the flood (\*\*Genesis 6:5).

**16.** *cut down* — rather, "fettered," as in <sup>™</sup>Job 16:8; that is, arrested by death.

**out of time** — prematurely, suddenly (\*\*\*\*Job 15:32 \*\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 7:17); literally, "whose foundation was poured out (so as to become) a stream or flood." The solid earth passed from beneath their feet into a flood (\*\*\*Genesis 7:11).

**17.** Eliphaz designedly uses Job's own words (<sup>™</sup>Job 21:14,15).

*do for them* — They think they can do everything for themselves.

**18.** "Yet" you say (see on "Bob 21:16) that it is "He who filled their houses with good" — "their good is not in their hand," but comes from God

but the counsel ... is — rather, "may the counsel be," etc. Eliphaz sarcastically quotes in continuation Job's words (\*\*Dib\*Job 21:16). Yet, after uttering this godless sentiment, thou dost hypocritically add, "May the counsel," etc.

**19.** Triumph of the pious at the fall of the recent followers of the antediluvian sinners. While in the act of denying that God can do them any good or harm, they are cut off by Him. Eliphaz hereby justifies himself and the friends for their conduct to Job: not derision of the wretched, but joy at the vindication of God's ways (\*\*Psalm 107:42 \*\*\*Revelation 15:3\*\*\*16:7 \*\*\*\*19:1,2).

**20.** The triumphant speech of the pious. If "substance" be retained, translate, rather as the *Septuagint*, "Has not their substance been taken away, and...?" But the *Hebrew* is rather, "Truly our *adversary* is cut down" [GESENIUS]. The same opposition exists between the godly and ungodly seed as between the unfallen and restored Adam and Satan (*adversary*); this forms the groundwork of the book (\*\*\*\*Job 1:1-2:13\*\*\*Genesis 3:15).

**remnant** — all that "is left" of the sinner; repeated from "Dob 20:26, which makes UMBREIT's rendering "glory" (*Margin*), "excellency," less probable.

**fire** — alluding to Job (\*\*\*IfJob 1:16 \*\*\*\*15:34 \*\*\*\*18:15). First is mentioned destruction by *water* (\*\*\*\*25]ob 22:16); here, by *fire* (\*\*\*\*12\*\*2 Peter 3:5-7).

**21.** Eliphaz takes it for granted, Job is not yet "acquainted" with God; literally, "become a *companion* of God." Turn with familiar confidence to God.

**peace** — prosperity and restoration to *Job*; true spiritually also to *us* (\*\*Romans 5:1 \*\*Colossians 1:20).

**good** — (\*\*1181 Timothy 4:8).

- **22.** *lay up* (\*\*\*Psalm 119:11).
- 23. Built up anew, as a restored house.

thou shalt put away — rather, "If thou put away" [MICHAELIS].

**24.** Rather, containing the protasis from the last clause of Job 22:23, "If thou regard the glittering metal *as dust*"; literally, "lay it on on the dust"; to regard it of as little value as the dust on which it lies. The apodosis is at Job 22:25, *Then* shall the Almighty be, etc. God will take the place of the wealth, in which thou didst formerly trust.

**gold** — rather, "precious" or "glittering metal," parallel to "(gold) of Ophir," in the second clause [UMBREIT and MAURER].

*Ophir* — derived from a *Hebrew* word "dust," namely, gold dust. HEEREN thinks it a general name for the rich countries of the South, on the African, Indian, and especially the Arabian coast (where was the port Aphar. El Ophir, too, a city of Oman, was formerly the center of Arabian commerce). It is curious that the natives of Malacca still call their mines *Ophirs*.

*stones of the brooks* — If thou dost let the gold of Ophir remain in its native valley among the stones of the brooks; that is, regard it as of little worth as the stones, etc. The gold was washed down by mountain torrents and lodged among the stones and sand of the valley.

25. Apodosis.

**Yea** — rather, *Then* shall the Almighty be, etc.

**defense** — rather, as the same *Hebrew* means in Job 22:24 (see on Job 22:24) — Thy *precious metals;* God will be to thee in the place of riches.

plenty of silver — rather, "And shall be to thee in the place of laboriously-obtained treasures of silver" [GESENIUS]. Elegantly implying, it is less labor to find God than the hidden metals; at least to the humble seeker (\*\*\*Job 28:12-28). But [MAURER] "the shining silver."

**26.** *lift up ... face*, etc. — repeated from Zophar ( Job 11:15).

**27.** (\*\*\*Isaiah 58:9,14).

*pay thy vows* — which thou hast promised to God in the event of thy prayers being heard: God will give thee occasion to pay the former, by hearing the latter.

**28.** *light* — success.

**29.** Rather, When (thy ways; from Job 22:28) are cast down (for a time), thou shalt (soon again have joyful cause to) say, There is lifting up (prosperity returns back to me) [MAURER].

*he* — God.

humble — Hebrew, "him that is of low eyes." Eliphaz implies that Job is not so now in his affliction; therefore it continues: with this he contrasts the blessed effect of being humble under it (\*\*\*James 4:6\*\*\* Peter 5:5 probably quote this passage). Therefore it is better, I think, to take the first clause as referred to by "God resisteth the *proud*." When (men) are cast down, thou shalt say (behold the effects of) *pride*. Eliphaz hereby justifies himself for attributing Job's calamities to his *pride*. "Giveth grace to the humble," answers to the second clause.

**30.** *island* — that is, "dwelling." But the *Hebrew* expresses the *negative* (and 1 Samuel 4:21); translate "Thus He (God) shall deliver him who was *not* guiltless," namely, one, who like Job himself on conversion shall be saved, but not because he was, as Job so constantly affirms of himself, guiltless, but because he *humbles* himself (and 22:29); an oblique attack on Job, even to the last.

and it — Rather, "he (the one not heretofore guiltless) shall be delivered through the purity (acquired since conversion) of thy hands"; by thy intercession (as "Genesis 18:26, etc.). [MAURER]. The irony is strikingly exhibited in Eliphaz unconsciously uttering words which exactly answer to what happened at last: he and the other two were "delivered" by God accepting the intercession of Job for them (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 42:7,8).

### THIRD SERIES.

**№** JOB 23:1-17.

#### JOB'S ANSWER.

**2.** *to-day* — implying, perhaps, that the debate was carried on through more days than one (see *Introduction*).

my stroke — the hand of God on me (Margin, See Job 19:21 See Psalm 32:4).

**heavier than** — is so heavy that I cannot relieve myself adequately by groaning.

- **3.** The same wish as in Job 13:3 (compare Hebrews 10:19-22).
- **Seat** The idea in the *Hebrew* is a well-prepared throne ( Psalm 9:7).
- **4.** order state methodically ( Job 13:18 Isaiah 43:26).
- *fill*, etc. I would have abundance of arguments to adduce.
- **5. he** emphatic: it little matters what *man* may say of me, if only I know what *God* judges of me.
- **6.** An objection suggests itself, while he utters the wish (\*\*\*Job 23:5). Do I hereby wish that He should plead against me with His omnipotence? Far from it! (\*\*\*\*Job 9:19,34 \*\*\*\*\*30:18).
- **strength** so as to prevail with Him: as in Jacob's case (\*\*\*Hosea 12:3,4). UMBREIT and MAURER better translate as in \*\*\*Source Job 4:20 (I only wish that He) "would *attend* to me," that is, give me a patient hearing as an ordinary judge, not using His omnipotence, but only His divine knowledge of my innocence.

7. *There* — rather, "Then": if God would "attend" to me ( Job 23:6).

*righteous* — that is, the result of my *dispute* would be, He would acknowledge me as *righteous*.

**delivered** — from suspicion of guilt on the part of my Judge.

8. But I wish in vain. For "behold," etc.

forward ... backward — rather, "to the east — to the west." The Hebrew geographers faced the east, that is, sunrise: not the north, as we do. So "before" means east: "behind," west (so the Hindus). Para, "before" — east: Apara, "behind" — west: Daschina, "the right hand" — south: Bama, "left" — north. A similar reference to sunrise appears in the name Asia, "sunrise," Europe, "sunset"; pure Babylonian names, as RAWLINSON shows.

9. Rather, "To the north."

work — God's glorious works are especially seen towards the north region of the sky by one in the northern hemisphere. The antithesis is between God working and yet not being beheld: as in \*\*\*Job 9:11, between "He goeth by," and "I see Him not." If the Hebrew bears it, the parallelism to the second clause is better suited by translating, as UMBREIT, "doth hide himself"; but then the antithesis to "behold" would be lost.

right hand — "in the south."

**hideth** — appropriately, of the unexplored south, then regarded as uninhabitable because of its heat (see 332 Job 34:29).

**10. But** — correcting himself for the wish that his cause should be known before God. The omniscient One already *knoweth the way in me* (my *inward* principles: His *outward* way or course of acts is mentioned in double 23:11. So *in me*, double 4:21); though for some inscrutable cause He as yet hides Himself (double 23:8,9).

**when** — let Him only but try my cause, I shall, etc.

**11.** *held* — fast by *His steps*. The law is in Old Testament poetry regarded as *a way*, God going before us as our guide, in whose footsteps we must tread (\*\*TPsalm 17:5).

declined — (\*\*Stalm 125:5).

**12.** esteemed — rather, "laid up," namely, as a treasure found (\*\*Matthew 13:44 \*\*\*IPsalm 119:11); alluding to the words of Eliphaz (\*\*\*\*Job 22:22). There was no need to tell me so; I have done so already (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 15:16).

**necessary** — "Appointed portion" (of food; as in Proverbs 30:8). UMBREIT and MAURER translate, "More than my *law*," my own will, in antithesis to "the words of His mouth" (\*\*\*John 6:38). Probably under the general term, "what is *appointed* to me" (the same *Hebrew* is in \*\*\*Job 23:14), all that ministers to the appetites of the body and carnal will is included.

- **13.** *in one mind* notwithstanding my innocence. He is *unaltered* in His purpose of proving me guilty (\*\*\*\*SDD\*\*Job 9:12).
- **soul** His will (\*\*Psalm 115:3). God's sovereignty. He has one great purpose; nothing is haphazard; everything has its proper place with a view to His purpose.
- **14.** *many such* He has yet many more such ills in store for me, though hidden in His breast (\*\*\*\*Job 10:13).
- **15.** God's decrees, impossible to be resisted, and leaving us in the dark as to what may come next, are calculated to fill the mind with holy awe [BARNES].
- **16.** *soft* faint; hath melted my courage. Here again Job's language is that of Jesus Christ (\*\*Plantage\*) Psalm 22:14).
- 17. Because I was not taken away by death from the evil to come (literally, "from before the face of the darkness," \*\* Isaiah 57:1). Alluding to the words of Eliphaz (\*\* Job 22:11), "darkness," that is, calamity.
- **cut off** rather, in the *Arabic* sense, *brought to* the land of *silence*; my sad complaint hushed in death [UMBREIT]. "Darkness" in the second clause, not the same *Hebrew* wor as in the first, "cloud," "obscurity." Instead of "covering the cloud (of evil) from my face," He "covers" me with it ("Dob 22:11).

### **№**1JOB 24:1-25.

- 1. Why is it that, seeing that the times of punishment (\*\*Ezekiel 30:3; "time" in the same sense) are not hidden from the Almighty, they who know Him (His true worshippers, \*\*S\*Job 18:21) do not see His days (of vengeance \*\*Joel 1:15 \*\*ONO\*2 Peter 3:10)? Or, with UMBREIT less simply, making the parallel clauses more nicely balanced, Why are not times of punishment hoarded up ("laid up" \*\*ONO\*Job 21:19; \*appointed\*) by the Almighty? that is, Why are they not so appointed as that man may now see them? as the second clause shows. Job does not doubt that they are appointed: nay, he asserts it (\*\*ONO\*\*Job 21:30); what he wishes is that God would let all now \*see\* that it is so.
- **2-24.** Instances of the wicked doing the worst deeds with seeming impunity (\*\*\*\*Dob 24:2-24).

**Some** — the wicked.

*landmarks* — boundaries between different pastures (\*\*Deuteronomy 19:14 \*\*Proverbs 22:28).

- **3.** *pledge* alluding to \*\*\*Tob 22:6. Others really do, and with impunity, that which Eliphaz falsely charges the afflicted Job with.
- **4.** Literally, they push the poor out of their road in meeting them. Figuratively, they take advantage of them by force and injustice (alluding to the charge of Eliphaz, \*\*\*\*\*Job 22:8 \*\*\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 8:3).

**poor** — in spirit and in circumstances (\*\*Matthew 5:3).

**hide** — from the injustice of their oppressors, who have robbed them of their all and driven them into unfrequented places (\*\*\*Job 20:19 \*\*\*30:3-6\*\*Proverbs 28:28).

**5.** wild asses — (\*\*\*\*Job 11:12). So Ishmael is called a "wild ass-man"; *Hebrew* (\*\*\*\*Genesis 16:12). These Bedouin robbers, with the unbridled

wildness of the ass of the desert, go forth thither. Robbery is their lawless "work." The desert, which yields no food to other men, yields food for the robber and his children by the plunder of caravans.

*rising betimes* — In the East travelling is begun very early, before the heat comes on.

**6.** Like the wild asses (\*\*\*\*Job 24:5) reap (metaphorically) their various grain (so the *Hebrew* for "corn" means). The wild ass does not let man pile his mixed provender up in a stable (\*\*\*Tsaiah 30:24); so these robbers find their food in the open air, at one time in the desert (\*\*\*Job 24:5), at another in the fields.

the vintage of the wicked — Hebrew, "the wicked gather the vintage"; the vintage of robbery, not of honest industry. If we translate "belonging to the wicked," then it will imply that the wicked alone have vineyards, the "pious poor" (\*\*\*\*Job 24:4) have none. "Gather" in Hebrew, is "gather late." As the first clause refers to the early harvest of corn, so the second to the vintage late in autumn.

- 7. UMBREIT understands it of the Bedouin robbers, who are quite regardless of the comforts of life, "They pass the night naked, and uncovered," etc. But the allusion to "Tob 22:6, makes the *English Version* preferable (see on "Bud Job 24:10). Frost is not uncommon at night in those regions ("Genesis 31:40).
- **8.** *They* the plundered travelers.

embrace the rock — take refuge under it (2005 Lamentations 4:5).

**9.** *from the breast* — of the widowed mother. Kidnapping children for slaves. Here Job passes from wrongs in the desert to those done among the habitations of men.

**pledge** — namely, the garment of the poor debtor, as Job 24:10 shows.

**10.** (See on Dob 22:6). In Dob 24:7 a like sin is alluded to: but *there* he implies open robbery of garments in the desert; *here*, the more refined robbery in civilized life, under the name of a "pledge." Having stripped the poor, they make them besides labor in their harvest-fields and do not allow them to satisfy their hunger with any of the very corn which they carry to

the heap. Worse treatment than that of the ox, according to Deuteronomy 25:4. Translate: "they (the poor laborers) hungering carry the sheaves" [UMBREIT].

- 11. Which "They," the poor, "press the oil within their wall"; namely, not only in the open fields ("Job 24:10), but also in the wall-enclosed vineyards and olive gardens of the oppressor ("Isaiah 5:5). Yet they are not allowed to quench their "thirst" with the grapes and olives. Here, thirsty; "Soll Job 24:10, hungry.
- **12.** *Men* rather, "mortals" (not the common *Hebrew* for "men"); so the Masoretic vowel points read as *English Version*. But the vowel points are modern. The true reading is, "The dying," answering to "the wounded" in the next clause, so *Syriac*. Not merely in the country (\*\*Job 24:11), but also in the city there are oppressed sufferers, who cry for help in vain. "*From out* of the city"; that is, they long to get forth and be free outside of it (\*\*TITE\*\*LEXAGUS 1:11\*\*22:23).

wounded — by the oppressor (\*\*Ezekiel 30:24).

layeth not folly — takes no account of (by punishing) their sin ("folly" in Scripture; "Job 1:22). This is the gist of the whole previous list of sins ("TACTS 17:30). UMBREIT with Syriac reads by changing a vowel point, "Regards not their supplication."

**13.** So far as to openly committed sins; now, those done in the dark. Translate: "There are those among them (the wicked) who rebel," etc.

*light* — both literal and figurative ( Tohn 3:19,20 Proverbs 2:13).

*paths thereof* — places where the light shines.

**14.** with the light — at early dawn, while still dark, when the traveler in the East usually sets out, and the poor laborer to his work; the murderous robber lies in wait then (\*\*Psalm 10:8).

*is as a thief* — *Thieves* in the East steal while men sleep at night; *robbers* murder at early dawn. The same man who steals at night, when light dawns not only robs, but murders to escape detection.

**15.** (\*\*\*Proverbs 7:9 \*\*\*Psalm 10:11).

disguiseth — puts a veil on.

**16.** *dig through* — Houses in the East are generally built of sun-dried mud bricks (so "Matthew 6:19). "Thieves break through," literally, "dig through" ("Ezekiel 12:7).

**had marked** — Rather, as in \*\*\*Job 9:7, "They shut themselves up" (in their houses); literally, "they seal up."

*for themselves* — for their own ends, namely, to escape detection.

**know not** — shun.

**17.** They shrink from the "morning" light, as much as other men do from *the blackest darkness* ("the shadow of *death*").

*if one know* — that is, recognize them. Rather, "They know well (are familiar with) the terrors of," etc. [UMBREIT]. Or, as MAURER, "They know the terrors of (this) darkness," namely, of morning, the light, which is as terrible to them as darkness ("the shadow of death") is to other men.

**18-21.** In these verses Job quotes the opinions of his adversaries ironically; he quoted them so before. In Job 24:22-24, he states his own observation as the opposite. You say, "The sinner is swift, that is, swiftly passes away (as a thing floating) on the surface of the waters" (June Ecclesiastes 11:1 June Hosea 10:7).

is cursed — by those who witness their "swift" destruction.

beholdeth not — "turneth not to"; figuratively, for He cannot enjoy his pleasant possessions (\*\*\*Tob 20:17\*\*\*15:33).

*the way of the vineyards* — including his fields, fertile as vineyards; opposite to "the way of the desert."

- **19.** Arabian image; melted snow, as contrasted with the living fountain, quickly dries up in the sunburnt sand, not leaving a trace behind (\*\*\*Job 6:16-18). The *Hebrew* is terse and elliptical to express the swift and utter destruction of the godless; (so) "the grave they have sinned!"
- **20.** *The womb* The very mother that bare him, and who is the last to "forget" the child that *sucked* her (Spin Isaiah 49:15), shall dismiss him from

her memory (\*\*\*Job 18:17 \*\*Proverbs 10:7). The worm shall *suck*, that is, "feed sweetly" on him as a delicate morsel (\*\*\*\*Job 21:33).

wickedness — that is, the wicked; abstract for concrete (as Tob 5:16).

as a tree — utterly (\*\*\*Job 19:10); UMBREIT better, "as a staff." A broken staff is the emblem of irreparable ruin (\*\*\*Isaiah 14:5 \*\*\*\*Hosea 4:12).

**21.** The reason given by the friends why the sinner deserves such a fate.

**barren** — without sons, who might have protected her.

widow — without a husband to support her.

- **22-25.** Reply of Job to the opinion of the friends. Experience proves the contrary. Translate: "But He (God) prolongeth the life of (literally, draweth out at length; "Psalm 36:10, *Margin*) the mighty with His (God's) power. He (the wicked) riseth up (from his sick bed) although he had given up hope of (literally, when he no longer believed in) life" ("Deuteronomy 28:66).
- **23.** Literally, "He (God omitted, as often; "Ecclesiastes 9:9; reverentially) giveth to him (the wicked, to be) in safety, or security."

**yet** — Job means, How strange that God should so favor them, and yet have His eyes all the time open to their wicked ways (\*\*\*Proverbs 15:3\*\*\*\*Psalm 73:4)!

**24.** Job repeats what he said (\*\*Dob 21:13), that sinners die in exalted positions, not the painful and lingering death we might expect, but a *quick and easy death*. Join "for a while" with "are gone," not as *English Version*. Translate: "A moment — and they are no more! They are brought low, as all (others) gather up their feet to die." A natural death (\*\*Genesis 49:33).

ears of corn — in a ripe and full age, not prematurely \ (\*\*\*\*\*Job 5:26).

**25.** (So \*\*\*Job 9:24).

### THIRD SERIES.

**™**JOB 25:1-6.

#### BILDAD'S REPLY.

He tries to show Job's rashness (\*\*\*\*Job 23:3), by arguments borrowed from Eliphaz (\*\*\*\*Job 15:15), with which compare \*\*\*\*Job 11:17.

**2.** Power and terror, that is, terror-inspiring power.

peace in his high places — implying that His power is such on high as to quell all opposition, not merely there, but on earth also. The Holy Ghost here shadowed forth Gospel truths (\*\*Colossians 1:20 \*\*Ephesians 1:10).

**3.** armies — angels and stars (\*\*\*Isaiah 40:26 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 33:22 \*\*\*\*Genesis 15:5; "countless," \*\*\*Daniel 7:10).

*his light* — (\*\*\*James 1:17).

- **4.** ( **3047** Job 4:17,18 **3844** 14:4 **3854** 15:14).
- 5. "Look up even unto the moon" (\*\*\*\*Job 15:15). "Stars" here answer to "saints" (angels); the moon" here to "the heavens" there. Even the "stars," the most dazzling object to man's eye, and the angels, of which the stars are emblems (\*\*\*Job 4:18 \*\*\*Revelation 9:1), are imperfect in His sight. Theirs is the light and purity but of creatures; His of the Creator.
- **6.** (\*\*\*Job 4:19-21 15:16).

**worm** ... **worm** — Two distinct *Hebrew* words. The first, a worm bred in putridity; alluding to man's *corruption*. The second a crawling worm; implying that man is *weak and grovelling*.

### THIRD SERIES.

**™**JOB 26:1-14.

#### JOB'S REPLY.

**2, 3.** without power ... no strength ... no wisdom — The negatives are used instead of the positives, powerlessness, etc., designedly (so \*\*\*\*Isaiah 31:8\*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:21). Granting I am, as you say (\*\*\*\*Iob 18:17 \*\*\*\*Ibis:2), powerlessness itself, etc. How hast thou helped such a one?"

savest — supportest.

- **3.** *plentifully* ... *the thing as it is* rather, "abundantly wisdom." Bildad had made great pretensions to abundant wisdom. How has he shown it?
- **4.** For whose instruction were thy words meant? If for me I know the subject (God's omnipotence) better than my instructor Job 26:5-14 is a sample of Job's knowledge of it.

whose spirit — not that of God (\*\*\*\*Job 32:8); nay, rather, the borrowed sentiment of Eliphaz (\*\*\*\*Job 4:17-19 \*\*\*\*\*15:14-16).

**Dead things are formed** — Rather, "The souls of the dead (Rephaim) tremble." Not only does God's power exist, as Bildad says (\*\*\*\*Job 25:2), "in high places" (heaven), but reaches to the region of the dead. *Rephaim* here, and in \*\*\*\*Proverbs 21:16 and \*\*\*\*Isaiah 14:9, is from a *Hebrew* root, meaning "to be weak," hence "deceased"; in \*\*Genesis 14:5 it is applied to

the Canaanite giants; perhaps in derision, to express their *weakness*, in spite of their gigantic size, as compared with Jehovah [UMBREIT]; or, as the imagination of the living magnifies apparitions, the term originally was applied to *ghosts*, and then to *giants* in general [MAGEE].

from under — UMBREIT joins this with the previous word "tremble from beneath" (so "Isaiah 14:9). But the Masoretic text joins it to "under the waters." Thus the place of the dead will be represented as "under the waters" (\*\*\*Psalm 18:4,5); and the waters as under the earth (\*\*\*\*Psalm 24:2). MAGEE well translates thus: "The souls of the dead tremble; (the places) under the waters, and their inhabitants." Thus the Masoretic connection is retained; and at the same time the parallel clauses are evenly balanced. "The inhabitants of the places under the waters" are those in Gehenna, the lower of the two parts into which Sheol, according to the Jews, is divided; they answer to "destruction," that is, the place of the wicked in 'Tob 26:6, as "Rephaim" ('Tob 26:5) to "Hell" (Sheol) ('Tob 26:6). "Sheol" comes from a *Hebrew* root — "ask," because it is insatiable Proverbs 27:20); or "ask as a loan to be returned," implying Sheol is but a temporary abode, previous to the resurrection; so for English Version "formed," the Septuagint and Chaldee translate; shall be born, or born again, implying the dead are to be given back from Sheol and born again into a new state [MAGEE].

**6.** (\*\*\*Job 38:17 \*\*\*Psalm 139:8 \*\*\*\*Proverbs 5:11).

**destruction** — the abode of destruction, that is, of lost souls. *Hebrew, Abaddon* (\*\*\*Revelation 9:11).

*no covering* — from God's eyes.

7. Hint of the true theory of the earth. Its suspension in empty space is stated in the second clause. The north in particular is specified in the first, being believed to be the highest part of the earth (\*\*\*Isaiah 14:13). The northern hemisphere or vault of *heaven* is included; often compared to a stretched-out canopy (\*\*\*PSalm 104:2). The chambers of the south are mentioned (\*\*\*\*IDD 9:9), that is, the southern hemisphere, consistently with the earth's globular form.

- **8.** *in* ... *clouds* as if in airy vessels, which, though light, do not burst with the weight of water in them (\*\*Proverbs 30:4).
- **9.** Rather, He *encompasseth* or *closeth*. God makes the clouds a veil to screen the glory not only of His person, but even of the exterior of His throne from profane eyes. His agency is everywhere, yet He Himself is invisible (\*\*Psalm 18:11 \*\*\*Psalm 104:3).
- **10.** Rather, "He hath drawn a circular bound round the waters" (\*\*\*Proverbs 8:27 \*\*\*Psalm 94:9). The horizon seems a circle. Indication is given of the globular form of the earth.

until the day, etc. — to the confines of light and darkness. When the light falls on our horizon, the other hemisphere is dark. UMBREIT and MAURER translate "He has most perfectly (literally, to perfection) drawn the bound between light and darkness" (compare Genesis 1:4,6,9): where the bounding of the light from darkness is similarly brought into proximity with the bounding of the waters.

**11.** *pillars* — poetically for the mountains which seem to bear up the sky (\*\*Psalm 104:32).

*astonished* — namely, from terror. Personification.

**his reproof** — (\*\*\*Psalm 104:7). The thunder, reverberating from cliff to cliff (\*\*\*\*Bakkuk 3:10 \*\*\*\*Nahum 1:5).

**12.** *divideth* — (\*\*Psalm 74:13). Perhaps at creation (\*\*Genesis 1:9,10). The parallel clause favors Umbreit, "He stilleth." But the *Hebrew* means "He moves." Probably such a "moving" is meant as that at the assuaging of the flood by the wind which "God made to pass over" it (\*\*Genesis 8:1\*\*Psalm 104:7).

*the proud* — rather, "its pride," namely, of the sea (\*\*\*Job 9:13).

**13.** UMBREIT less simply, "By His breath He maketh the heavens to revive": namely, His wind dissipates the clouds, which obscured the shining stars. And so the next clause in contrast, "His hand doth strangle," that is, obscures the north constellation, the dragon. Pagan astronomy typified the flood trying to destroy the ark by the dragon constellation,

about to devour the moon in its eclipsed crescent-shape like a boat (\*\*\*\*Job 3:8, *Margin*). But better as *English Version* (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 33:6).

**crooked** — implying the oblique course, of the stars, or the ecliptic. "Fleeing" or "swift" [UMBREIT] (\*\*Isaiah 27:1). This particular constellation is made to represent the splendor of all the stars.

**14.** *parts* — Rather, "only the extreme boundaries of," etc., and how faint is the whisper that we hear of Him!

### **№** JOB 27:1-23.

It was now Zophar's turn to speak. But as he and the other two were silent, virtually admitting defeat, after a pause Job proceeds.

**1.** *parable* — applied in the East to a figurative sententious embodiment of wisdom in poetic form, a gnome (\*\*Psalm 49:4).

**continued** — proceeded to put forth; implying elevation of discourse.

2. (\*\*1 Samuel 20:3).

*taken away ... judgment* — words unconsciously foreshadowing Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 53:8\*\*\*\*Acts 8:33). God will not give Job his right, by declaring his innocence.

vexed — Hebrew, "made bitter" ("Ruth 1:20).

- **3.** Implying Job's knowledge of the fact that the living soul was breathed into man by God (\*\*Genesis 2:7). "All the while." But MAURER, "As yet all my breath is in me" (notwithstanding my trials): the reason why I can speak so boldly.
- **4.** (\*\*\*Job 6:28,30). The "deceit" would be if he were to admit guilt against the witness of his conscience.
- **5.** *justify you* approve of your views.

*mine integrity* — which you deny, on account of my misfortunes.

- **6.** Rather, my "heart" (conscience) reproaches "not one of my days," that is, I do not repent of any of my days since I came into existence [MAURER].
- 7. Let ... be Let mine enemy be accounted as wicked, that is, He who opposes my asseveration of innocence must be regarded as actuated by criminal hostility. Not a curse on his enemies.

**8.** "What hope hath the hypocrite, notwithstanding all his gains, when?" etc. "Gained" is antithetic to "taketh away." UMBREIT'S translation is an unmeaning tautology. "When God cuts off, when He *taketh away* his life."

taketh away — literally, "draws out" the soul from the body, which is, as it were, its scabbard (\*\*\*Dob 4:21 \*\*\*Psalm 104:29 \*\*\*Daniel 7:15). Job says that he admits what Bildad said (\*\*\*Job 8:13) and Zophar (\*\*\*Job 20:5). But he says the very fact of his still calling upon God (\*\*\*Dob 27:10) amid all his trials, which a hypocrite would not dare to do, shows he is no "hypocrite."

- **9.** (\*\*\*Psalm 66:18).
- **10.** Alluding to \*\*\*\*Job 22:26.

**always call** — He may do so in times of prosperity in order to be thought religious. But he will not, as I do, call on God in calamities verging on death. Therefore I cannot be a "hypocrite" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 19:25 20:5 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 62:8).

11-23. These words are contrary to Job's previous sentiments (see notes on Job 21:22-33 24:22-25). They therefore seem to be Job's statement, not so much of his own sentiments, as of what Zophar would have said had he spoken when his turn came (end of the twenty-sixth chapter). So Job stated the friends' opinion (\*\*217-21 \*\*24:18-21). The objection is, why, if so, does not Job answer Zophar's opinion, as stated by himself? The fact is, it is probable that Job tacitly, by giving, in the twenty-eighth chapter, only a general answer, implies, that in spite of the wicked often dying, as he said, in prosperity, he does not mean to deny that the wicked are in the main dealt with according to right, and that God herein vindicates His moral government even here. Job therefore states Zophar's argument more strongly than Zophar would have done. But by comparing Job 27:13 with Job 20:29 ("portion," "heritage"), it will be seen, it is Zophar's argument, rather than his own, that Job states. Granting it to be true, implies Job, you ought not to use it as an argument to criminate me. For ( Job 28:1-28) the ways of divine wisdom in afflicting the godly are inscrutable: all that is sure to man is, the fear of the Lord is wisdom ( Job 28:28).

by the hand — rather, concerning the hand of God, namely, what God does in governing men.

with the Almighty — the counsel or principle which regulates God's dealings.

- **12.** "Ye yourselves see" that the wicked *often* are afflicted (though often the reverse, "You 21:33). But do you "vainly" make this an argument to prove from my afflictions that I am wicked?
- **13.** (See on \*\*\*Job 27:11).
- **14.** His family only increases to perish by sword or famine ( Fermiah 18:21; Job 5:20,the converse).
- **15.** Those that escape war and famine (\*\*\*\*Job 27:14) shall be buried by *the deadly plague* "death" (\*\*\*\*Job 18:13 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 15:2 \*\*\*\*Revelation 6:8). The plague of the Middle Ages was called "the black death." *Buried by* it implies that they would have none else but the death plague itself (poetically personified) to perform their funeral rites, that is, would have no one.

*his* — rather, "*their* widows." Transitions from *singular* to *plural* are frequent. Polygamy is not implied.

- **16.** *dust* ... *clay* images of multitudes (\*\*\*Zechariah 9:3). Many changes of raiment are a chief constituent of wealth in the East.
- **17.** Introverted parallelism. (See *Introduction*). Of the four clauses in the two verses, one answers to four, two to three (so Matthew 7:6).
- **18.** (\*\*\*\*Job 8:14 \*\*\*\*Job 8:14 \*\*\*\*Job 27:16) to the "house" of the "moth" in it, and of it, when in its larva state. The *moth worm's house* is broken whenever the "raiment" is shaken out, so frail is it.

**booth** — a bough-formed hut which the guard of a vineyard raises for temporary shelter (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 1:8).

**19.** *gathered* — buried honorably (\*\*\*Genesis 25:8 \*\*\*\*2 Kings 22:20). But UMBREIT, agreeably to \*\*\*\*Job 27:18, which describes *the short continuance of the sinner's prosperity*, "He layeth himself rich in his bed, *and nothing* 

is robbed from him, he openeth his eyes, and nothing more is there." If English Version be retained, the first clause probably means, rich though he be in dying, he shall not be honored with a funeral; the second, When he opens his eyes in the unseen world, it is only to see his destruction: the Septuagint reads for "not gathered," He does not proceed, that is, goes to his bed no more. So MAURER.

- **22.** *cast* namely, thunderbolts (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 6:4 \*\*\*\*\*7:20 \*\*\*\*\*\*16:13 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:12,13).
- **23.** *clap* ... *hands* for joy at his downfall ( Lamentations 2:15 Nahum 3:19).

*hiss* — deride (<sup>2009</sup>Jeremiah 25:9). Job alludes to Bildad's words (<sup>3009</sup>Job 18:18).

**™**JOB 28:1-28.

#### JOB'S SPEECH CONTINUED.

In the twenty-seventh chapter Job had tacitly admitted that the statement of the friends was often true, that God vindicated His justice by punishing the wicked here; but still the affliction of the godly remained unexplained. Man has, by skill, brought the precious metals from their concealment. But the Divine Wisdom, which governs human affairs, he cannot similarly discover ( Job 28:12, etc.). However, the image from the same metals ( Job 23:10) implies Job has made some way towards solving the riddle of his life; namely, that affliction is to him as the refining fire is to gold.

**1.** vein — a mine, from which it goes forth, Hebrew, "is dug."

**place for gold** — a place where gold may be found, *which* men refine. Not as *English Version*, "A place — *where*," (Malachi 3:3). Contrasted with gold found in the bed and sand of rivers, which does not need refining; as the gold *dug from a mine does*. Golden ornaments have been found in Egypt, of the times of Joseph.

- **2.** *brass* that is, copper; for brass is a mixed metal of copper and zinc, of modern invention. Iron is less easily discovered, and wrought, than copper; therefore copper was in common use long before iron. Copperstone is called "cadmium" by PLINY [*Natural History*, 34:1; 36:21]. Iron is fitly said to be taken out of the "earth" (dust), for ore looks like mere earth.
- **3.** "Man makes an end of darkness," by exploring the darkest depths (with torches).

*all perfection* — rather, carries out his search to the utmost perfection; most thoroughly searches the stones of darkness and of the shadow of

death (thickest gloom); that is, the stones, whatever they be, embedded in the darkest bowels of the earth [UMBREIT] (\*\*\*Job 26:10).

#### **4.** Three hardships in mining:

- **1.** "A stream (flood) breaks out at the side of the stranger"; namely, *the miner*, *a strange newcomer* into places heretofore unexplored; his surprise at the sudden stream breaking out *beside* him is expressed (*English Version*, "from the inhabitant").
- 2. "Forgotten (unsupported) by the foot they *hang*," namely, by ropes, in descending. In the *Hebrew*, "Lo there" precedes this clause, graphically placing it as if before the eyes. "The waters" is inserted by *English Version*. "Are dried up," ought to be, "hang," "are suspended." *English Version* perhaps understood, waters of whose existence man was previously *unconscious*, and near which he *never trod*; and yet man's energy is such, that by pumps, etc., he soon causes them to "dry up and go away" [So HERDER].
- **3.** "Far away from men, they move with uncertain step"; they stagger; not "they are gone" [UMBREIT].
- **5.** Its fertile surface yields food; and yet "beneath it is turned up as it were with fire." So PLINY [*Natural History*, 33] observes on the ingratitude of man who repays the debt he owes the earth for food, by digging out its bowels. "Fire" was used in mining [UMBREIT]. *English Version* is simpler, which means precious stones which glow *like fire*; and so "Bob 28:6 follows naturally ("Ezekiel 28:14).
- **6.** Sapphires are found in alluvial soil near rocks and embedded in gneiss. The ancients distinguished two kinds:
  - **1.** The real, of transparent blue:
  - **2.** That improperly so called, opaque, with gold spots; that is, lapis lazuli.

To the latter, looking like gold dust, UMBREIT refers "dust of gold." *English Version* better, "The *stones* of the earth are, etc., and the *clods* of it (*Vulgate*) are gold"; the parallel clauses are thus neater.

- 7. *fowl* rather, "ravenous bird," or "eagle," which is the most sharp-sighted of birds (2361 Isaiah 46:11). A vulture will spy a carcass at an amazing distance. The miner penetrates the earth by a way unseen by birds of keenest sight.
- **8.** *lion's whelps* literally, "the sons of pride," that is, the fiercest beasts.

**passed** — The *Hebrew* implies *the proud gait* of the lion. The miner ventures where not even the fierce lion dares to go in pursuit of his prey.

**9.** *rock* — flint. He puts forth his hand to cleave the *hardest rock*.

by the roots — from their foundations, by undermining them.

- **10.** *He cuts* channels to drain off the waters, which hinder his mining; and when the waters are gone, he he is able to *see the precious things* in the earth.
- **11.** *floods* "He restrains *the streams* from *weeping*"; a poetical expression for the *trickling* subterranean *rills*, which impede him; answering to the first clause of \*\*\*Job 28:10; so also the two latter clauses in each verse correspond.
- 12. Can man discover the Divine Wisdom by which the world is governed, as he can the treasures hidden in the earth? Certainly not. Divine Wisdom is conceived as a person ( Job 28:12-27) distinct from God ( Job 28:23; also in Proverbs 8:23,27). The Almighty Word, Jesus Christ, we know now, is that Wisdom. The order of the world was originated and is maintained by the breathing forth (Spirit) of Wisdom, unfathomable and unpurchasable by man. In Job 28:28, the only aspect of it, which relates to, and may be understood by, man, is stated.

*understanding* — insight into the plan of the divine government.

- **13.** Man can fix no price upon it, as it is nowhere to be found in man's abode ( Said 13:11). Job implies both its valuable worth, and the impossibility of buying it at any price.
- **15.** Not the usual word for "gold"; from a *Hebrew* root, "to shut up" with care; that is, purest gold (\*\*\*IRS 6:20, *Margin*).

weighed — The precious metals were weighed out before coining was known (\*\*\*Genesis 23:16).

**16.** *gold of Ophir* — the most precious (See on \*\*\*\*\*Job 22:24 and \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 45:9).

**onyx** — (\*\*\*Genesis 2:12). More valued formerly than now. The term is *Greek*, meaning "thumb nail," from some resemblance in color. The *Arabic* denotes, of two colors, white preponderating.

**17.** *crystal* — Or else glass, if then known, very costly. From a root, "to be transparent."

*jewels* — rather, "vessels."

**18.** Red coral (\*\*Ezekiel 27:16).

**pearls** — literally, "what is frozen." Probably *crystal*; and "SNT Job 28:17 will then be *glass*.

**rubies** — UMBREIT translates "pearls" (see "Lamentations 4:1 Proverbs 3:15). The Urim and Thummim, the means of consulting God by the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate, "the stones of the sanctuary" ("Lamentations 4:1), have their counterpart in this chapter; the precious stones symbolizing the "light" and "perfection" of the divine wisdom.

- **19.** *Ethiopia Cush* in the *Hebrew*. Either Ethiopia, or the south of Arabia, near the Tigris.
- **20.** Job 28:12 repeated with great force.
- **21.** None can tell whence or where, seeing it, etc.

fowls — The gift of divination was assigned by the heathen especially to birds. Their rapid flight heavenwards and keen sight originated the superstition. Job may allude to it. Not even the boasted divination of birds has an insight into it (\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 10:20). But it may merely mean, as in \*\*\*\*Job 28:7, It escapes the eye of the most keen-sighted bird.

**22.** That is, the abodes of *destruction* and of the *dead*. "Death" put for Sheol (\*\*\*Dob 30:23 \*\*\*\*26:6 \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:13).

**We have** [only] **heard** — the report of her. We have not *seen* her. In the land of the living (\*\*\*Job 28:13) the workings of Wisdom are seen, though not herself. In the regions of the dead she is only *heard* of, her actings on nature not being seen (\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 9:10).

- 23. God hath, and is Himself, wisdom.
- 24. "Seeth (all that is) under," etc.
- **25.** God has adjusted the weight of the winds, so seemingly imponderable, lest, if too weighty, or too light, injury should be caused. He measureth out the waters, fixing their bounds, with wisdom as His counsellor (\*\*Proverbs 8:27-31 \*\*\*Isaiah 40:12).
- **26.** The decree regulating at what time and place, and in what quantity, the rain should fall.
- a way through the parted clouds (\*\*\*Job 38:25 \*\*\*Zechariah 10:1).
- **27.** *declare* manifest her, namely, in His works (\*\*\*Psalm 19:1,2). So the approval bestowed by the Creator on His works (\*\*\*One Genesis 1:10,31); compare the "rejoicing" of wisdom at the same (\*\*\*Proverbs 8:30; which UMBREIT translates; "I was the skillful artificer by His side").

**prepared** — not *created*, for wisdom is from everlasting (\*\*\*Proverbs 8:22-31); but "established" her as Governor of the world.

**searched** ... out — examined her works to see whether she was adequate to the task of governing the world [MAURER].

**28.** Rather, "*But* unto man," etc. *My* wisdom is that whereby all things are governed; *Thy* wisdom is *in fearing God and shunning evil*, and in feeling assured that My wisdom always acts aright, though thou dost not understand the principle which regulates it; for example, in afflicting the godly ("Tohn 7:17). The friends, therefore, as not comprehending the Divine Wisdom, should not infer Job's guilt from his sufferings. Here alone in Job the name of God, *Adonai*, occurs; "Lord" or "master," often applied to Messiah in Old Testament. Appropriately here, in speaking of the Word or Wisdom, by whom the world was made ("Proverbs 8:22-3" John 1:3; Ecclesiasticus 24:1-34).

### **№**JOB 29:1-25.

- **1.** Job pauses for a reply. None being made, he proceeds to illustrate the mysteriousness of God's dealings, as set forth (\*\*\*\*Job 28:1-28) by his own case.
- **2.** *preserved me* from calamity.
- **3.** candle when His favor shone on me (see on \*\*\*Job 18:6 and \*\*\*Psalm 18:28).
- *darkness* By His safeguard I passed secure through *dangers*. Perhaps alluding to the lights carried before caravans in nightly travels through deserts [Noyes].
- **4.** *youth* literally, "autumn"; the time of the ripe fruits of my prosperity. Applied to *youth*, as the Orientalists *began* their year with autumn, the most temperate season in the East.
- secret when the intimate friendship of God rested on my tent (\*\*Proverbs 3:32 \*\*\*Psalm 31:20 \*\*\*Genesis 18:17 \*\*\*\*John 15:15). The Hebrew often means a divan for deliberation.
- **6.** *butter* rather, "cream," literally, "thick milk." Wherever I turned my steps, the richest milk and oil flowed in to me abundantly. Image from pastoral life.
- When I washed my steps Literal washing of the feet in milk is not meant, as the second clause shows; Margin, "with me," that is, "near" my path, wherever I walked ("Deuteronomy 32:13). Olives amidst rocks yield the best oil. Oil in the East is used for food, light, anointing, and medicine.
- **7-10.** The great influence Job had over young and old, and noblemen.

through ... street! — rather, When I went out of my house, in the country (see \*\*\*Dob 1:1, prologue) to the gate (ascending), *up* to the city (which was on elevated ground), and when I prepared my (judicial) seat in *the market place*. The market place was the place of judgment, at the gate or propylæa of the city, such as is found in the remains of Nineveh and Persepolis (\*\*\*Isaiah 59:14 \*\*\*\*IPsalm 55:11 \*\*\*\*IPsalm 55:11

- **8.** *hid* not literally; rather, "stepped backwards," reverentially. *The aged*, who were already seated, *arose and remained standing (Hebrew)* until Job seated himself. Oriental manners.
- **9.** (\*\*\*\*Job 4:2; see on \*\*\*\*Job 21:5).

**Refrained talking** — stopped in the middle of their speech.

**10.** Margin, "voice — hid," that is, "hushed" (\*\*Ezekiel 3:26).

**Tongue cleaved**, etc. — that is, awed by my presence, the emirs or sheiks were silent.

**11. blessed** — extolled my virtues (Proverbs 31:28). Omit "me" after "heard"; whoever *heard of* me (in general, not in the market place, 29:7-10) praised me.

**gave witness** — to my honorable character. Image from a court of justice (\*\*D\*Luke 4:22).

the eye — that is, "face to face"; antithesis to

ear — that is, report of me.

- **12-17.** The grounds on which Job was praised (\*\*\*Job 29:11), his helping the afflicted (\*\*\*Psalm 72:12) who cried to him for help, as a judge, or as one possessed of means of charity. Translate: "The fatherless who had none to help him."
- 13. So far was I from sending "widows" away empty (\*\*\*\*\*Job 22:9).

ready to perish — (\*\*Proverbs 31:6).

**14.** (2511) Isaiah 61:10 13128 | Chronicles 12:18).

*judgment* — justice.

- **diadem** tiara. Rather, "turban," "head-dress." It and the full flowing outer mantle or "robe," are the prominent characteristics of an Oriental grandee's or high priest's dress (\*\*Zechariah 3:5). So Job's righteousness especially characterized him.
- **15.** Literally, "the blind" (\*\*Deuteronomy 27:18); "lame" (\*\*\* Samuel 9:13); figuratively, also the spiritual support which the more enlightened gives to those less so (\*\*\* Hebrews 12:13 \*\* Numbers 10:31).
- **16.** So far was I from "breaking the arms of the *fatherless*," as Eliphaz asserts (\*\*\*\*Job 22:9), I was a "father" to such.
- the cause which I knew not rather, "of him whom I knew not," the stranger (\*\*Proverbs 29:7 [UMBREIT]; contrast \*\*\*Luke 18:1, etc.). Applicable to almsgiving (\*\*Psalm 41:1); but here primarily, judicial conscientiousness (\*\*\*IJob 31:13).
- **17.** Image from combating with wild beasts (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 3:7). So compassionate was Job to the oppressed, so terrible to the oppressor!
- *jaws* Job broke *his power*, so that he could do no more hurt, and tore from him the spoil, which he had torn from others.
- **18.** *I said* in my heart (\*\*Psalm 30:6).
- in rather, "with my nest"; as the second clause refers to long life. Instead of my family dying before me, as now, I shall live so long as to die with them: proverbial for long life. Job did realize his hope (\*\*\*Tob 42:16). However, in the bosom of my family, gives a good sense (\*\*\*Obadiah 1:4). Use "nest" for a secure dwelling.
- sand ( Genesis 22:17 Genesis

era or cycle. The death and revival every five hundred years, and the reference to *the sun*, implies such a grand cycle commencing afresh from the same point in relation to the sun from which the previous one started. Job probably refers to this.

- **19.** Literally, "opened to the waters." Opposed to \*\*\*Job 18:16. Vigorous health.
- **20.** My renown, like my bodily health, was continually fresh.
- **bow** Metaphor from war, for, *my strength*, which gains me "renown," was ever renewed (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 49:35).
- **21.** Job reverts with peculiar pleasure to his former dignity in assemblies (\*\*\*Job 29:7-10).
- **22.** *not again* did not contradict me.
- **dropped** affected their minds, as the genial rain does the soil on which it gently drops (\*\*\*\*Amos 7:16 \*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:2 \*\*\*\*Song of Solomon 4:11).
- **23.** Image of Job 29:22 continued. They waited for my salutary counsel, as the dry soil does for the refreshing rain.
- opened ... mouth panted for; Oriental image (\*\*Psalm 119:131). The "early rain" is in autumn and onwards, while the seed is being sown. The "latter rain" is in March, and brings forward the harvest, which ripens in May or June. Between the early and latter rains, some rain falls, but not in such quantities as those rains. Between March and October no rain falls (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 11:14\*\*\*James 5:7).
- **24.** When I relaxed from my wonted gravity (a virtue much esteemed in the East) and smiled, they could hardly credit it; and yet, notwithstanding my condescension, *they did not cast aside reverence* for *my gravity*. But the parallelism is better in UMBREIT'S translation, "I smiled kindly on those who trusted not," that is, in times of danger I cheered those in despondency. And they could not cast down (by their despondency) my *serenity of countenance* (flowing from trust in God) (\*\*Proverbs 16:15\*\*Psalm 104:15). The opposite phrase (\*\*\*Genesis 4:5,6). "Gravity" cannot well be meant by "light of countenance."

**25.** *I chose out their way* — that is, I willingly went up to their assembly (from my country residence, \*\*\*\*\*Job 29:7).

in the army — as a king supreme in the midst of his army.

**comforteth the mourners** — Here again Job unconsciously foreshadows Jesus Christ (\*\*\*Isaiah 61:2,3). Job's afflictions, as those of Jesus Christ, were fitting him for the office hereafter (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 50:4\*\*\*\*Hebrews 2:18).

#### **№**JOB 30:1-31.

1. younger — not the three friends (\*\*\*\*Job 15:10 \*\*\*\*32:4,6,7). A general description: \*\*\*\*Job 30:1-8, the lowness of the persons who derided him; \*\*\*\*Job 30:9-15, the derision itself. Formerly old men rose to me (\*\*\*\*Job 29:8). Now not only my juniors, who are bound to reverence me (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 19:32), but even the mean and base-born actually deride me; opposed to, "smiled upon" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 29:24). This goes farther than even the "mockery" of Job by relations and friends (\*\*\*\*\*Job 12:4 \*\*\*\*\*\*16:10,20 \*\*\*\*\*\*17:2,6 19:22). Orientals feel keenly any indignity shown by the young. Job speaks as a rich Arabian emir, proud of his descent.

dogs — regarded with disgust in the East as unclean (\*\*\*Proverbs 26:11). They are not allowed to enter a house, but run about wild in the open air, living on offal and chance morsels (\*\*\*Psalm 59:14,15). Here again we are reminded of Jesus Christ (\*\*\*Psalm 22:16). "Their fathers, my coevals, were so mean and famished that I would not have associated them with (not to say, set them over) my dogs in guarding my flock."

- **2.** If their fathers could be of no profit to me, much less the sons, who are feebler than their sires; and in whose case the hope of attaining old age is utterly gone, so puny are they (\*\*Dob 5:26) [Maurer]. Even if they had "strength of hands," that could be now of no use to me, as all I want in my present affliction is sympathy.
- **3.** *solitary* literally, "hard as a rock"; so translate, rather, "dried up," emaciated with hunger. Job describes the rudest race of Bedouins of the desert [UMBREIT].

**fleeing** — So the *Septuagint*. Better, as *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Vulgate*, "gnawers of the wilderness." What they gnaw follows in 4800 30:4.

in former time — literally, the "yesternight of desolation and waste" (the most utter desolation; "Ezekiel 6:14); that is, those deserts frightful as night to man, and even there from time immemorial. I think both ideas are in the words darkness [GESENIUS] and antiquity [UMBREIT]. ("ISSAIAH 30:33, Margin).

**4.** *mallows* — rather, "salt-wort," which grows in deserts and is eaten as a salad by the poor [Maurer].

by the bushes — among the bushes.

**juniper** — rather, a kind of broom, *Spartium junceum* [LINNAEUS], still called in Arabia, as in the *Hebrew* of Job, *retem*, of which the bitter roots are eaten by the poor.

- **5.** *they cried* that is, "a cry is raised." Expressing the contempt felt for this race by civilized and well-born Arabs. When these wild vagabonds make an incursion on villages, they are driven away, as thieves would be.
- **6.** They are forced "to dwell."

*cliffs of the valleys* — rather, "in the gloomy valleys"; literally, "in the gloom of the valleys," or wadies. To dwell in valleys is, in the East, a mark of wretchedness. The troglodytes, in parts of Arabia, lived in such dwellings as caves.

**7.** *brayed* — like the wild ass (\*\*\*Job 6:5 for food). The inarticulate tones of this uncivilized rabble are but little above those of the beast of the field.

*gathered together* — rather, sprinkled here and there. Literally, "poured out," graphically picturing their disorderly mode of encampment, lying up and down behind the thorn bushes.

*nettles* — or brambles [Umbreit].

**8.** *fools* — that is, the impious and abandoned ( Samuel 25:25).

**base** — nameless, low-born rabble.

viler than, etc. — rather, they were driven or beaten out of the land. The Horites in Mount Seir (\*\*Genesis 14:6, with which compare \*\*Genesis 36:20,21 \*\*Deuteronomy 2:12,22) were probably the aborigines, driven

out by the tribe to which Job's ancestors belonged; their name means troglodytæ, or "dwellers in caves." To these Job alludes here (\*\*\*\*Job 30:1-8, and \*\*\*\*Genesis 24:4-8, which compare together).

- 9. (\*\*\*\*\*Job 17:6). Strikingly similar to the derision Jesus Christ underwent (\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:14 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 69:12). Here Job returns to the sentiment in \*\*\*\*\*Job 30:1. It is to such I am become a song of "derision."
- **10.** *in my face* rather, refrain not to spit in deliberate contempt *before* my face. To spit at all in presence of another is thought in the East insulting, much more so when done to mark "abhorrence." Compare the further insult to Jesus Christ ( Saiah 50:6 Matthew 26:67).
- **11.** *He* that is, "God"; antithetical to "they"; *English Version* here follows the marginal reading (*Keri*).

**my cord** — image from a bow unstrung; opposed to "Job 29:20. The text (*Chetib*), "*His* cord" or "reins" is better; "yea, each lets loose his reins" [UMBREIT].

**12.** *youth* — rather, a (low) *brood*. To rise on the right hand is to accuse, as that was the position of the accuser in court (\*\*\*Zechariah 3:1 \*\*\*Psalm 109:6).

push ... feet — jostle me out of the way ( Job 24:4).

ways of — that is, their ways of (that is, with a view to my) destruction. Image, as in SDD 19:12, from a besieging army throwing up a way of approach for itself to a city.

**13.** Image of an assailed fortress continued. They tear up the path by which succor might reach me.

set forward — (\*\*Zechariah 1:15).

*they have no helper* — Arabic proverb for *contemptible* persons. Yet even such afflict Job.

**14.** waters — (So \*\*\*\* 2 Samuel 5:20). But it is better to retain the image of \*\*\*\* Job 30:12,13. "They came [upon me] as through a wide breach," namely, made by the besiegers in the wall of a fortress (\*\*\*\* Isaiah 30:13) [MAURER].

*in the desolation* — "Amidst the crash" of falling masonry, or "with a shout like the crash" of, etc.

**15.** *they* — terrors.

**soul** — rather, "my dignity" [UMBREIT].

welfare — prosperity.

**cloud** — (\*\*\*\*\*Job 7:9 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 44:22).

**16-23.** Job's outward calamities affect his mind.

poured out — in irrepressible complaints (\*\*Psalm 42:4 \*\*\*Joshua 7:5).

**17.** In the *Hebrew*, night is poetically personified, as in ""Job 3:3: "night pierceth my bones (so that they fall) *from* me" (not as *English Version*, "in me"; see ""Job 30:30).

**sinews** — so the *Arabic*, "veins," akin to the *Hebrew*; rather, "gnawers" (see on Solution 30:3), namely, my gnawing pains never cease. Effects of elephantiasis.

**18.** *of my disease* — rather, "of God" (\*\*\*Job 23:6).

garment changed — from a robe of honor to one of mourning, literally (\*\*\*\*Job 2:8 \*\*\*\*John 3:6) and metaphorically [Umbreit]. Or rather, as SCHUTTENS, following up \*\*\*\*Job 30:17, My *outer* garment is changed into affliction; that is, affliction has become my outer garment; it also bindeth me fast round (my throat) as the collar of the *inner* coat; that is, it is both my inner and outer garment. Observe the distinction between the inner and outer garments. The latter refers to his afflictions *from without* (\*\*\*\*Job 30:1-13); the former his personal afflictions (\*\*\*\*Job 30:14-23). UMBREIT makes "God" subject to "bindeth," as in \*\*\*\*Job 30:19.

- **19.** God is poetically said to do that which the mourner had done to himself (\*\*\*\*Job 2:8). With lying in the ashes he had become, like them, in dirty color.
- **20.** *stand up* the reverential attitude of a suppliant before a king (<sup>41084</sup>1 Kings 8:14 <sup>40081</sup>Luke 18:11-13).

- **not** supplied from the first clause. But the intervening affirmative "stand" makes this ellipsis unlikely. Rather, as in "Stand" Job 16:9 (not only dost thou refuse aid to me "standing" as a suppliant, but), *thou dost regard me with a frown:* eye me sternly.
- **22.** *liftest* ... *to wind* as a "leaf" or "stubble" (\*\*\*\*Job 13:25). The moving pillars of sand, raised by the wind to the clouds, as described by travelers, would happily depict Job's agitated spirit, if it be to them that he alludes.
- dissolvest ... substance The marginal Hebrew reading (Keri), "my wealth," or else "wisdom," that is, sense and spirit, or "my hope of deliverance." But the text (Chetib) is better: Thou dissolvest me (with fear, \*\*DEX\*\*Dob 15:15) in the crash (of the whirlwind; see on \*\*SE\*\*Job 30:14) [MAURER]. UMBREIT translates as a verb, "Thou terrifiest me."
- **23.** This shows <sup>1825</sup>Job 19:25 cannot be restricted to Job's hope of a *temporal* deliverance.
- **death** as in \*\*\*Job 28:22, the realm of the dead (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 9:27 Genesis 3:19).
- 24. Expressing Job's faith as to the state after death. Though one must go to the grave, yet He will no more afflict *in the ruin* of the body (so *Hebrew* for "grave") there, if one has cried to Him when being destroyed. The "stretching of His hand" to punish after death answers antithetically to the raising "the cry" of prayer in the second clause. MAURER gives another translation which accords with the scope of "Bob 30:24-31; if it be natural for one in affliction to ask aid, why should it be considered (by the friends) wrong in my case? "Nevertheless does not a man in ruin stretch out his hand" (imploring help, "Bob 30:20" Lamentations 1:17)? If one be in his calamity (destruction) is there not therefore a "cry" (for aid)? Thus in the parallelism "cry" answers to "stretch hand"; "in his calamity," to "in ruin." The negative of the first clause is to be supplied in the second, as in "Bob 30:25 ("Bob 30:25).
- **25.** May I not be allowed to complain of my calamity, and beg relief, seeing that I myself sympathized with those "in trouble" literally, "hard of day"; those who had a hard time of it.

**26.** I may be allowed to crave help, seeing that, "when I looked for good (on account of my piety and charity), yet evil," etc.

**27.** *bowels* — regarded as the seat of deep feeling ( Isaiah 16:11).

**boiled** — violently heated and agitated.

**prevented** — Old English for "unexpectedly came upon" me, "surprised" me.

**28.** *mourning* — rather, I move about *blackened*, though not by the sun; that is, whereas many are blackened by the sun, I am, by the heat of God's wrath (so "boiled," Job 30:27); the elephantiasis covering me with blackness of skin (SO) Job 30:30), as with the garb of mourning (SO) Jeremiah 14:2). This striking enigmatic form of *Hebrew* expression occurs, SO) Isaiah 29:9.

**stood up** — as an innocent man crying for justice in an assembled court (\*\*\*\*\*\*Dob 30:20).

- **29.** *dragons* ... *owls* rather, "jackals," "ostriches," both of which utter dismal screams ("Micah 1:8); in which respect, as also in their living amidst solitudes (the emblem of desolation), Job is their brother and companion; that is, resembles them. "Dragon," *Hebrew, tannim,* usually means the crocodile; so perhaps here, its open jaws lifted towards heaven, and its noise making it seem as if it mourned over its fate [BOCHART].
- **30.** *upon me* rather, as in Solution 30:17 (see on Solution 30:17), "my skin is black (and falls away) *from me*."

*my bones* — (\*\*\*\*\*Job 19:20 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 102:5).

**31.** organ — rather, "pipe" (\*\*\*\*Job 21:12). "My joy is turned into the voice of weeping" (\*\*\*\*Lamentations 5:15). These instruments are properly appropriated to joy (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 30:29,32), which makes their use now in sorrow the sadder by contrast.

#### **№**0JOB 31:1-40.

- **1.** Job proceeds to prove that he deserved a better lot. As in the twenty-ninth chapter, he showed his uprightness as an emir, or magistrate in *public* life, so in this chapter he vindicates his character in *private* life.
- **1-4.** He asserts his guarding against being allured to sin by his senses.
- **think** rather, "cast a (lustful) look." He not merely did not so, but put it out of the question by covenanting with his eyes against leading him into temptation ("Proverbs 6:25 "Matthew 5:28).
- **3.** Answer to the question in Job 31:2.

*strange* — extraordinary.

- **4.** *Doth not he see*? etc. Knowing this, I could only have expected "destruction" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 31:3), had I committed this sin (\*\*\*\*\*\*Proverbs 5:21).
- **5.** Job's abstinence from evil deeds.

vanity — that is, falsehood (\*\*Psalm 12:2).

- **6.** Parenthetical. Translate: "Oh, that God would weigh me ... *then* would He know," etc.
- 7. Connected with Job 31:6.

the way — of God ( Job 23:11 Jeremiah 5:5). A godly life.

**heart ... after ... eyes** — if my heart coveted, what my eyes beheld (\*\*\*\*DEcclesiastes 11:9 \*\*\*\*Toshua 7:21).

**hands** — (\*\*Psalm 24:4).

**8.** Apodosis to STD ob 31:5,7; the curses which he imprecates on himself, if he had done these things (STD Leviticus 26:16 Amos 9:14 Psalm 128:2).

offspring — rather, "what I plant," my harvests.

**9-12.** Job asserts his innocence of adultery.

**deceived** — hath let itself be seduced (\*\*Proverbs 7:8 \*\*Genesis 39:7-12).

*laid wait* — until the husband went out.

- **10.** *grind* turn the handmill. Be the most abject slave and concubine (Staight 47:2 Samuel 12:11).
- 11. In the earliest times punished with death (\*\*\*Genesis 38:24). So in later times (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 22:22). Heretofore he had spoken only of sins against conscience; now, one against the community, needing the cognizance of the judge.
- **12.** (\*\*Proverbs 6:27-35 \*\*\*8:6-23,26,27). No crime more provokes God to send *destruction as a consuming fire*; none so desolates the soul.
- **13-23.** Job affirms his freedom from unfairness towards his servants, from harshness and oppression towards the needy.

despise the cause — refused to do them justice.

- **14, 15.** Parenthetical; the reason why Job did not despise the cause of his servants. Translate: What then (had I done so) could I have done, when God arose (to call me to account); and when He visited (came to enquire), what could I have answered Him?
- **15.** Slaveholders try to defend themselves by maintaining the *original* inferiority of the slave. But Malachi 2:10 Acts 17:26 Ephesians 6:9 make the common origin of masters and servants the argument for brotherly love being shown by the former to the latter.
- **16.** *fail* in the vain expectation of relief ( Job 11:20).

- **17.** Arabian rules of hospitality require the stranger to be helped first, and to the best.
- **18.** Parenthetical: asserting that he did the contrary to the things in <sup>4830</sup>Job 31:16,17.

**he** — the orphan.

**guided her** — namely, the widow, by advice and protection. On this and "a father," see \*\*\*Job 29:16.

- **19.** *perish* that is, ready to perish (\*\*\*SJob 29:13).
- **20.** *loins* The parts of the body benefited by Job are poetically described as thanking him; the loins before naked, when clad by me, wished me every blessing.
- 21. when that is, "because."

*I saw* — that I might calculate on the "help" of a powerful party in the court of justice — ("gate"), if I should be summoned by the injured fatherless.

**22.** Apodosis to SIBJob 31:13,16,17,19,20,21. If I had done those crimes, I should have made a bad use of my influence ("my arm," figuratively, SIBJOB 31:21): therefore, if I have done them let my arm (literally) suffer. Job alludes to Eliphaz' charge (SIBJOB 22:9). The first "arm" is rather the *shoulder*. The second "arm" is the *forearm*.

*from the bone* — literally, "a reed"; hence the upper arm, above the elbow.

**23.** For — that is, the reason why Job guarded against such sins. Fear of God, though he could escape man's judgment (\*\*Genesis 39:9). UMBREIT more spiritedly translates, Yea, destruction and terror from God might have befallen me (had I done so): mere fear not being the motive.

highness — majestic might.

endure — I could have availed nothing against it.

**24, 25.** Job asserts his freedom from trust in money (\*\*\*\*\*1 Timothy 6:17). Here he turns to his duty towards God, as before he had spoken of his duty towards *himself* and his *neighbor*. Covetousness is covert idolatry, as

it transfers the heart from the Creator to the creature (\*\*Colossians 3:5). In \*\*3125,27 he passes to overt idolatry.

- 26. If I looked unto the sun (as an object of worship) *because* he shined; or to the moon *because* she walked, etc. Sabaism (from *tsaba*, "the heavenly hosts") was the earliest form of false worship. God is hence called in contradistinction, "Lord of Sabaoth." The sun, moon, and stars, the brightest objects in nature, and seen everywhere, were supposed to be visible representatives of the invisible God. They had no temples, but were worshipped on high places and roofs of houses (\*\*Ezekiel 8:16\*\*Deuteronomy 4:19 \*\*ZEZ\*\*2 Kings 23:5,11). The *Hebrew* here for "sun" is *light*. Probably light was worshipped as the emanation from God, before its embodiments, the sun, etc. This worship prevailed in Chaldea; wherefore Job's exemption from the idolatry of his neighbors was the more exemplary. Our "Sun-day," "Mon-day," or Moon-day, bear traces of Sabaism.
- **27.** *enticed* away from God to idolatry.
- **kissed ... hand** "adoration," literally means this. In worshipping they used to kiss the hand, and then throw the kiss, as it were, towards the object of worship (\*\*IDN8\*1 Kings 19:18 \*\*Thosea 13:2).
- **28.** The Mosaic law embodied subsequently the feeling of the godly from the earliest times against idolatry, as deserving judicial penalties: being treason against the Supreme King (\*\*Deuteronomy 13:9\*\*\*\*17:2-7\*\*\*\*Ezekiel 8:14-18). This passage therefore does not prove Job to have been subsequent to Moses.
- **29.** *lifted up myself* in malicious triumph (<sup>2000</sup>Proverbs 17:5 <sup>2000</sup>Psalm 7:4).
- **30.** *mouth* literally, "palate." (See on Tob 6:30).
- wishing literally, "so as to demand his (my enemy's) soul," that is, "life by a curse." This verse parenthetically confirms "Job 31:30. Job in the patriarchal age of the promise, anterior to the law, realizes the Gospel spirit, which was the end of the law (compare Leviticus 19:18 Deuteronomy 23:6, with Matthew 5:43,44).

- **31.** That is, Job's household said, Oh, that we had Job's enemy to devour, we cannot rest satisfied till we have! But Job refrained from even wishing revenge (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 26:8 \*\*\*\*\* Samuel 16:9,10). So Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*\* Luke 9:54,55). But, better (see \*\*\*\*\* Job 31:32), translated, "Who can show (literally, give) the man who was not satisfied with the flesh (meat) provided by Job?" He never let a poor man leave his gate without giving him enough to eat.
- **32.** *traveler* literally, "way," that is, wayfarers; so expressed to include all of every kind (\*\*\*\*) Samuel 12:4).
- 33. Adam translated by UMBREIT, "as men do" (Hosea 6,7, where see Margin). But English Version is more natural. The very same word for "hiding" is used in "Genesis 3:8,10, of Adam hiding himself from God. Job elsewhere alludes to the flood. So he might easily know of the fall, through the two links which connect Adam and Abraham (about Job's time), namely, Methuselah and Shem. Adam is representative of fallen man's propensity to concealment (Proverbs 28:13). It was from God that Job did not "hide his iniquity in his bosom," as on the contrary it was from God that "Adam" hid in his lurking-place. This disproves the translation, "as men"; for it is from their fellow men that "men" are chiefly anxious to hide their real character as guilty. MAGEE, to make the comparison with Adam more exact, for my "bosom" translates, "lurking-place."
- **34.** Rather, the apodosis to Tob 31:33, "Then let me be fear-stricken before a great multitude, let the contempt, etc., let me keep silence (the greatest disgrace to a patriot, heretofore so prominent in assemblies), and not go out," etc. A just retribution that he who hides his sin from God, should have it exposed before man (Tob 2 Samuel 12:12). But Job had not been so exposed, but on the contrary was esteemed in the assemblies of the "tribes" ("families"); a proof, he implies, that God does not hold him guilty of hiding sin (Tob 24:16, contrast with Tob 29:21-25).
- **35.** Job returns to his wish (\*\*\*Job 13:22 \*\*\*\*19:23). Omit "is"; "Behold my *sign*," that is, my mark of subscription to the statements just given in my defense: the *mark* of signature was originally a *cross;* and hence the letter Tau or T. Translate, also "Oh, *that* the Almighty," etc. He marks "God" as the "One" meant in the first *clause*.

*adversary* — that is, he who contends with me, refers also to God. The vagueness is designed to express "whoever it be that judicially opposes me" — the Almighty if it be He.

*had written a book* — rather, "would write down his charge."

**36.** So far from hiding the adversary's "answer" or "charge" through fear,

*I would take it on my shoulders* — as a public honor ( saiah 9:6).

a crown — not a mark of shame, but of distinction (2008 Isaiah 62:3).

- **37.** A good conscience imparts a princely dignity before man and free assurance in approaching God. This can be realized, not in Job's way (\*\*\*\*Job 42:5,6); but only through Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 10:22).
- **38.** Personification. The complaints of the unjustly ousted proprietors are transferred to the lands themselves (\*\*\*\*Job 31:20 \*\*\*\*Genesis 4:10 \*\*\*\*Habakkuk 2:11). If I have unjustly acquired lands (\*\*\*\*Job 24:2 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 5:8).

furrows — The specification of these makes it likely, he implies in this, "If I paid not the laborer for *tillage*"; as "Job 31:39, "If I paid him not for gathering in the fruits." Thus of the four clauses in "Job 31:38,39, the first refers to the same subject as the fourth, the second is connected with the third by introverted parallelism. Compare "James 5:4, which plainly alludes to this passage: compare "Lord of Sabaoth" with "Job 31:26 here.

**39.** *lose* ... *life* — not literally, but "harassed to death"; until he gave me up his land gratis [MAURER]; as in "TiddJudges 16:16; "suffered him to languish" by taking away his means of living [UMBREIT] (\*\*ITT) Kings 21:19).

**40.** *thistles* — or brambles, thorns.

*cockle* — literally, "noxious weeds."

The words ... ended — that is, in the controversy with the friends. He spoke in the book afterwards, but not to them. At Job 31:37 would be the regular conclusion in strict art. But Job 31:38-40 are naturally added by one whose mind in agitation recurs to its sense of innocence, even after it has come to the usual stopping point; this takes away the appearance of

rhetorical artifice. Hence the transposition by Eichorn of Job 31:38-40 to follow 31:25 is quite unwarranted.

₩JOB 32:1-37:24.

#### SPEECH OF ELIHU.

**1-6.** Prose (poetry begins with "I am young").

*because*, etc. — and because they could not prove to him that he was unrighteous.

**2.** *Elihu* — meaning "God is Jehovah." In his name and character as messenger between God and Job, he foreshadows Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Job 33:23-26).

**Barachel** — meaning "God blesses." Both names indicate the piety of the family and their separation from idolaters.

**Buzite** — Buz was son of Nahor, brother of Abraham. Hence was named a region in Arabia-Deserta (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 25:23).

**Ram** — Aram, nephew of Buz. Job was probably of an older generation than Elihu. However, the identity of names does not necessarily prove the identity of persons. The particularity with which Elihu's descent is given, as contrasted with the others, led LIGHTFOOT to infer Elihu was the author of the book. But the reason for particularity was, probably, that Elihu was *less known* than the three called "friends" of Job; and that it was right for the poet to mark especially him who was mainly to solve the problem of the book.

rather than God — that is, was more eager to vindicate himself than God. In \*\*OFF Job 4:17, Job denies that man can be more just than God. UMBREIT translates, "Before (in the presence of) God."

3. Though silenced in argument, they held their opinion still.

- **4.** *had spoken Hebrew*, "in words," referring rather to *his own* "words" of reply, which he had long ago ready, but kept back in deference to the seniority of the friends *who spoke*.
- **6.** was afraid The root meaning in *Hebrew* is "to crawl" (Deuteronomy 32:24).
- **7.** *Days* that is, the aged ( Tob 15:10).
- 8. Elihu claims inspiration, as a divinely commissioned messenger to Job (STO) Job 33:6,23); and that claim is not contradicted in STO) Job 42:4,5.

  Translate: "But the spirit (which God puts) in man, and the inspiration ... is that which giveth," etc.; it is not mere "years" which give understanding (STO) Proverbs 2:6 STO) John 20:22).
- **9.** *Great* rather, "old" (\*\*\*\*Job 32:6). So *Hebrew*, in \*\*\*Genesis 25:23. "Greater, less" for *the older*, *the younger*.

**judgment** — what is right.

**10.** Rather, "I say."

opinion — rather, "knowledge."

11. Therefore Elihu was present from the first.

*reasons* — literally, "understandings," that is, the meaning intended by words.

*whilst* — I waited *until* you should discover a suitable reply to Job.

- **13.** This has been so ordered, "lest you should" pride yourselves on having overcome him by your "wisdom" ("Beremiah 9:23, the great aim of the Book of Job); and that you may see, "God alone can thrust him down," that is, confute him, "not man." So Elihu grounds his confutation, not on the maxims of sages, as the friends did, but on his special commission from God ("BDB Job 32:8" 33:4,6).
- **14.** I am altogether unprejudiced. For it is not I, whom he addressed. "Your speeches" have been influenced by irritation.

**15.** Here Elihu turns from the friends to Job: and so passes from the second person to the third; a transition frequent in a rebuke (\*\*\*\*Job 18:3,4).

*they left off* — Words were taken from them.

17. my part — for my part.

*opinion* — knowledge.

18. "I am full of words," whereas the friends have not a word more to say.

**the spirit** — (\*\*\*\*\*Job 32:8 \*\*\*\*\*Job 33:4 \*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 20:9 \*\*\*\*\*Acts 18:5).

- **19.** *belly* bosom: from which the words of Orientalists in speaking seem to come more than with us; they speak gutturally. "Like (new) wine (in fermentation) without a vent," to work itself off. *New* wine is kept in new goatskin bottles. This fittingly applies to the *young* Elihu, as contrasted with the *old* friends (\*\*Matthew 9:7).
- **20.** refreshed literally, "that there may be air to me" (\*\*\*\* Samuel 16:23).
- **21.** "May I never accept," etc. Elihu alludes to Job's words (\*\*\*Job 13:8,10), wherein he complains that the friends plead for God partially, "accepting His person." Elihu says he will not do so, but will act impartially between God and Job. "And I will not give flattery," etc. (\*\*Proverbs 24:23).
- 22. take me away as a punishment (\*Psalm 102:24).

**™**JOB 33:1-33.

### ADDRESS TO JOB, AS (\*\*\*JOB 32:1-22) TO THE FRIENDS.

**2.** *mouth* — rather, "palate," whereby the taste *discerns*. Every man speaks with his mouth, but few, as Elihu, *try* their words *with discrimination* first, and only say what is really good (\*\*\*Job 6:30\*\*12:11).

**hath** spoken — rather, "proceeds to speak."

**3.** I will speak according to my inward conviction.

*clearly* — rather, "purely"; sincerely, not distorting the truth through passion, as the friends did.

- **4.** The Spirit of God hath made me— as He did thee: latter clause of 33:6 (\*\*\*Genesis 2:7). Therefore thou needest not fear me, as thou wouldest God (\*\*\*\*Job 33:7 \*\*\*SJob 9:34). On the other hand, "the breath of the Almighty hath inspired me" (as \*\*\*SJob 32:8); not as English Version, "given me life"; therefore "I am according to thy wish (\*\*\*SJob 9:32,33) in God's stead" to thee; a "daysman," umpire, or mediator, between God and thee. So Elihu was designed by the Holy Ghost to be a type of Jesus Christ (\*\*\*SJob 33:23-26).
- **5.** Images from a court of justice.

stand up — alluding to Job's words (\*\*\*\*Job 30:20).

**formed** — Though acting as God's representative, I am but a creature, like thyself. *Arabic*, "pressed together," as a mass of clay by the potter, in forming a vessel [UMBREIT]. *Hebrew*, "cut off," as the portion taken from the clay to form it [MAURER].

- 7. *hand* alluding to Job's words (\*\*\*Job 13:21).
- 8. thy words (\*\*\*\*Job 10:7 \*\*\*\*Job 16:17 \*\*\*\*Z3:11,12 \*\*\*\*Z7:5,6 \*\*\*Z9:14). In \*\*\*\*Job 9:30 \*\*\*Z3:13:23, Job had acknowledged sin; but the general spirit of his words was to maintain himself to be "clean," and to charge God with injustice. He went too far on the opposite side in opposing the friends' false charge of hypocrisy. Even the godly, though willing to confess themselves sinners in general, often dislike sin in particular to be brought as a charge against them. Affliction is therefore needed to bring them to feel that sin in them deserves even worse than they suffer and that God does them no injustice. Then at last humbled under God they find, affliction is for their real good, and so at last it is taken away either here, or at least at death. To teach this is Elihu's mission.
- **9.** *clean* spotless.
- **10.** *occasions* for hostility; literally, "enmities" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 13:24 \*\*\*\*\*16:9\*\*\*\*19:11 \*\*\*\*\*\*30:21).
- **11.** (\*\*\*Job 13:27).

*marketh* — narrowly watches ( 4846 Job 14:16 4870 7:12 4830 31:4).

- **12.** *in this* view of God and His government. It cannot be that God should jealously "watch" man, though "spotless," as an "enemy," or as one afraid of him as an equal. For "God is greater than man!" There must be sin in man, even though he be no hypocrite, which needs correction by suffering for the sufferer's good.
- **13.** ( saiah 45:9).

*his matters* — ways. Our part is, not to "strive" with God, but to *submit*. To believe it is right because He does it, not because *we see all the reasons* for His doing it.

**14.** Translate, "Yet, man *regardeth* it not"; or rather, as UMBREIT, "Yea, twice (He repeats the warning) — if man gives no heed" to the first warning. Elihu implies that God's reason for sending affliction is because, when God has communicated His will in various ways, man in prosperity has not heeded it; God therefore must try what affliction will effect (TDJohn 15:2 \*\*\* Psalm 62:11 \*\*\* Isaiah 28:10,13).

- **15.** *slumberings* light is opposed to "deep sleep." Elihu has in view Eliphaz (\*\*\*Job 4:13), and also Job himself (\*\*\*\*Job 7:14). "Dreams" in sleep, and "visions" of actual apparitions, were among the ways whereby God then spake to man (\*\*\*Genesis 20:3).
- **16.** Literally, "sealeth (their ears) to Himself by warnings," that is, with the sureness and secrecy of a seal He reveals His warnings [UMBREIT]. To seal up securely (SSO) Job 37:7).
- **17.** *purpose Margin*, "work." So "Dob 36:9. So "business" in a bad sense ("I Samuel 20:19). Elihu alludes to Job's words ("I Job 17:11). "Pride," an open "pit" ("I Job 33:18) which God hides or covers up, lest man should fall into it. Even the godly need to learn the lesson which trials teach, to "*humble* themselves under the mighty hand of God."
- 18. his soul his life.

*the pit* — the grave; a symbol of hell.

*perishing by the sword* — that is, a violent death; in the Old Testament a symbol of the future punishment of the ungodly.

**19.** When man does not heed warnings of the night, he is chastened, etc. The new thought suggested by Elihu is that affliction is *disciplinary* (and Job 36:10); *for the good* of the godly.

**multitude** — so the *Margin*, *Hebrew* (*Keri*). Better with the text (*Chetib*), "And with the perpetual (strong) *contest* of his bones"; the never-resting fever in his bones (\*\*\*Psalm 38:3) [UMBREIT].

**20.** *life* — that is, the appetite, which ordinarily sustains "life" (\*\*\*Job 38:39 \*\*\*Psalm 107:18 \*\*\*Ecclesiastes 12:5). The taking away of desire for food by sickness symbolizes the removal by affliction of lust, for things which foster the spiritual fever of pride.

**soul** — desire.

**21.** His flesh once prominent "can no more be seen." His bones once not seen now appear prominent.

**stick out** — literally, "are bare." The *Margin, Hebrew (Keri)* reading. The text (*Chetib*) reads it a noun "(are become) bareness." The *Keri* was no doubt an explanatory reading of transcribers.

- **22.** destroyers angels of death commissioned by God to end man's life (\*\*\*Psalm 24:16 \*\*\*Psalm 78:49). The death pains personified may, however, be meant; so "gnawers" (see on \*\*\*\*Job 30:17).
- **23.** Elihu refers to himself as the divinely-sent (\*\*\*Job 32:8 33:6) "messenger," the "interpreter" to explain to Job and vindicate God's righteousness; such a one Eliphaz had denied that Job could look for (\*\*\*Job 5:1), and Job (\*\*\*Job 9:33) had wished for such a "daysman" or umpire between him and God. The "messenger" of good is antithetical to the "destroyers" (\*\*\*\*Job 33:23).

with him — if there be vouchsafed to the sufferer. The office of the interpreter is stated "to show unto man God's uprightness" in His dealings; or, as UMBREIT, "man's upright course towards God" ("Proverbs 14:2). The former is better; Job maintained his own "uprightness" ("Sol Job 16:17 \*\*27:5,6); Elihu on the contrary maintains God's, and that man's true uprightness lies in submission to God. "One among a thousand" is a man rarely to be found. So Jesus Christ ("Song of Solomon 5:10). Elihu, the God-sent mediator of a temporal deliverance, is a type of the God-man Jesus Christ the Mediator of eternal deliverance: "the messenger of the covenant" ("Malachi 3:1). This is the wonderful work of the Holy Ghost, that persons and events move in their own sphere in such a way as unconsciously to shadow forth Him, whose "testimony is the Spirit of prophecy"; as the same point may be center of a small and of a vastly larger concentric circle.

**24.** Apodosis to Job 33:23.

*he* — God.

**Deliver** — literally, "redeem"; in it and "ransom" there is reference to the *consideration*, on account of which God pardons and relieves the sufferers; here it is primarily the intercession of Elihu. But the language is too strong for its full meaning to be *exhausted* by this. The Holy Ghost has suggested language which receives its *full* realization only in the "eternal redemption

found" by God in the price paid by Jesus Christ for it; that is, His blood and meritorious intercession (\*\*PHebrews 9:12). "Obtained," literally, "found"; implying the earnest zeal, wisdom, and faithfulness of the *finder*, and the newness and joyousness of the *finding*. Jesus Christ could not but have *found* it, but still His *seeking* it was needed [BENGEL], (\*\*Luke 15:8). God the Father, is the Finder (\*\*\*Psalm 89:19). Jesus Christ the Redeemer, to whom He saith, *Redeem* (so *Hebrew*) him from going, etc. (\*\*\*D2\*\*Corinthians 5:19).

**ransom** — used in a general sense by Elihu, but meant by the Holy Ghost in its strict sense as applied to Jesus Christ, of a *price* paid for deliverance (\*\*Exodus 21:30), an *atonement* (that is, means of selling *at once*, that is, reconciling "two" who are estranged), *a covering*, as of the ark with pitch, typical of what covers us sinners from wrath (\*\*Genesis 6:14 \*\*\*Psalm 32:1). The pit is primarily here the *grave* (\*\*\*Isaiah 38:17), but the spiritual pit is mainly shadowed forth (\*\*\*UZechariah 9:11).

his flesh shall be fresher than a child's — so Naaman, 415142 Kings 5:14, spiritually, 41715 John 3:3-7.

**26.** Job shall no longer pray to God, as he complains, in vain (\*\*\*Job 23:3,8,9). True especially to the redeemed in Jesus Christ (\*\*\*John 16:23-27).

*he* — Job.

shall see his face — or, God shall make Job to see His face [MAURER]. God shall no longer "hide His face" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 13:24). True to the believer now (\*\*\*\*\*John 14:21,22); eternally (\*\*\*\*\*\*John 17:15 \*\*\*\*\*John 17:24).

*his* — God's

**righteousness** — God will again make the restored Job no longer ("I perverted ... fight," Job 33:27) doubt God's justice, but to justify Him in His dealings. The penitent justifies God (\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:4). So the believer is made to see God's righteousness in Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 45:24 46:13).

- **27.** *he looketh* God. Rather, with UMBREIT, "Now he (*the restored penitent*) *singeth joyfully* (answering to "joy," STD ob 33:26 Psalm 51:12) before men, and saith," etc. (STD Proverbs 25:20 Psalm 66:16 STD 16:14).
- *perverted* made the straight crooked: as Job had misrepresented God's character.
- profited literally, "was made even" to me; rather, "My punishment was not commensurate with my sin" (so Zophar, "Job 11:6); the reverse of what Job heretofore said ("NOT Job 16:17" Psalm 103:10 ("NOT Ezra 9:13).
- **28.** (See on "Job 33:24); rather, as *Hebrew* text (*English Version* reads as the *Margin*, *Hebrew*, *Keri*, "his soul, his life"), "He hath delivered *my* soul ... *my* life." Continuation of the penitent's testimony to the people.
- *light* (\*\*\*\*Job 33:30 \*\*\*\*Job 3:16,20 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 56:13 \*\*\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 11:7).
- **29.** *Margin*, "twice and thrice," alluding to "Job 33:14; once, by visions, Job 33:15-17; secondly, by afflictions, Job 33:19-22; now, by the "messenger," thirdly, Job 33:23.
- **30.** Referring to Tob 33:28 (Psalm 50:13).
- **32.** *justify* to do thee justice; and, if I can, consistently with it, to declare thee innocent. At SID 33:34 Elihu pauses for a reply; then proceeds in SID 34:1.

#### **№**0JOB 34:1-37.

- 1. answered proceeded.
- **2.** This chapter is addressed also to the "friends" as the thirty-third chapter to Job alone.
- **3.** *palate* (See on See Job 12:11; See Job 33:2).
- **4.** *judgment* Let us select among the conflicting sentiments advanced, what will stand the test of examination.
- **5.** *judgment* my right. Job's own words (\*\*\*\*Job 13:18 27:2).
- **6.** Were I to renounce my right (that is, confess myself guilty), I should die. Job virtually had said so (\*\*\*\*Job 27:4,5 \*\*\*\*6:28). MAURER, not so well, "Notwithstanding my right (innocence) I am treated as a liar," by God, by His afflicting me.

my wound — literally, "mine arrow," namely, by which I am pierced. So "my stroke" ("hand," "SEE Job 23:2, Margin). My sickness ("SEE Job 6:4" 16:13).

without transgression — without fault of mine to deserve it (\*\*\*\*Job 16:17).

- 7. ( Tob 15:16). Image from the camel.
- scorning against God (\*\*\*Job 15:4).
- **8.** Job virtually goes in company (makes common cause) with the wicked, by taking up their sentiments (\*\*\*\*\*Job 9:22,23,30 \*\*\*\*\*21:7-15), or at least by saying, that those who act on such sentiments are unpunished (\*\*\*\*\*Malachi 3:14). To deny God's righteous government because we do not see the reasons of His acts, is virtually to take part with the ungodly.
- **9.** with God in intimacy (\*\*Psalm 50:18, Margin).

- **10.** The true answer to Job, which God follows up (\*\*\*Job 38:1-41). Man is to *believe* God's ways are right, because they are His, not because we fully *see* they are so (\*\*\*Romans 9:14 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 32:4 \*\*\*Genesis 18:25).
- **11.** Partly here; fully, hereafter (\*\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 32:19 \*\*\*\*\*Romans 2:6 \*\*\*\*\*Pleter 1:17 \*\*\*\*\*Revelation 22:12).
- **12.** ( Job 8:3). In opposition to Job, Job 34:5, will not cannot.
- **13.** If the world were not God's property, as having been made by Him, but committed to His charge by some superior, it might be possible for Him to act unjustly, as He would not thereby be injuring Himself; but as it is, for God to act unjustly would undermine the whole order of the world, and so would injure God's own property (\*\*\*\*\*Job 36:23).
- **disposed** hath founded (<sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 44:7), established the circle of the globe.
- 14, 15. "If He were to set His heart on man," either to injure him, or to take strict account of his sins. The connection supports rather [UMBREIT], "If He had regard to himself (only), and were to gather unto Himself (spanning) man's spirit, etc. (which he sends forth, spanning) man's spirit, etc. (which he sends forth, spanning) etc. (spanning) Genesis 3:19). God's loving preservation of His creatures proves He cannot be selfish, and therefore cannot be unjust.
- **16.** In Stop 34:2, Elihu had spoken *to all* in general, now he calls Job's special attention.
- 17. "Can even He who (in thy view) hateth right (justice) govern?" The government of the world would be impossible if injustice were sanctioned. God must be just, because He governs (428) Samuel 23:3).
- **govern** literally, "bind," namely, by authority (so "reign," <sup>1007</sup>1 Samuel 9:17, *Margin*). UMBREIT translates for "govern, *repress wrath*, namely, against Job for his accusations.
- *most just* rather, "Him who is at once mighty and just" (in His government of the world).

- **18.** Literally, (Is it fit) *to be said* to a king? It would be a gross outrage to reproach thus an earthly monarch, much more the King of kings (\*\*Exodus 22:28). But MAURER with the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* reads, (It is not fit to accuse of injustice Him) *who says* to a king, Thou art wicked; to princes, Ye are ungodly; that is, who punishes impartially the great, as the small. This accords with \*\*STOP Job 34:19.
- **19.** (\*\*\*\*Acts 10:34 \*\*\*\* 2 Chronicles 19:7 \*\*\*Proverbs 22:2 \*\*\*\*\* Job 31:15).
- **20.** *they* "the rich" and "princes" who offend God.
- *the people* namely, of the guilty princes: guilty also themselves.
- at midnight image from a night attack of an enemy on a camp, which becomes an easy prey (\*\*\*Exodus 12:29,30).
- without hand without visible agency, by the mere word of God (so Job 20:26 \*\*\* Zechariah 4:6 \*\*\* Daniel 2:34).
- **21.** God's omniscience and omnipotence enable Him to execute immediate justice. He needs not to be long on the "watch," as Job thought (\*\*\*\*Job 7:12 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 32:19).
- 23. (\*\*\*I\* Corinthians 10:13 \*\*\*Lamentations 3:32 \*\*\*Isaiah 27:8). Better, as UMBREIT, "He does not (needs not to) regard (as in \*\*\*Job 34:14 \*\*\*Isaiah 41:20) man long (so Hebrew, \*\*\*Genesis 46:29) in order that he may go (be brought by God) into judgment." Literally, "lest his (attention) upon men" (\*\*\*IDob 11:10,11). So \*\*\*\*Job 34:24, "without number" ought to be translated, "without [needing any] searching out," such as has to be made in human judgments.
- **24.** *break in pieces* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:9\*\*\*\*Job 12:18 \*\*\*\*\*Daniel 2:21).
- **25.** *Therefore* because He knows all things (\*\*\*\*Job 34:21). He knows their works, without a formal investigation (\*\*\*\*\*Job 34:24).
- *in the night* suddenly, unexpectedly (\*\*\*\*Job 34:20). Fitly *in the night*, as it was in it that the godless hid themselves (\*\*\*\*Job 34:22). UMBREIT, *less* simply, for "overturneth," translates, "walketh"; that is, God is ever on the alert, discovering all wickedness.

**26.** *He striketh them* — chasteneth.

as — that is, because they are wicked.

**sight of others** — Sinners hid themselves in darkness; therefore they are punished before all, in open day. Image from the place of public execution (\*\*\*Dob 40:12 \*\*\*Exodus 14:30 \*\*\*\*Exodus 12:12).

- **27, 28.** The grounds of their punishment in <sup>380</sup>Job 34:26. <sup>380</sup>Job 34:28 states in what respect they "considered not God's ways," namely, by *oppression*, whereby "they caused the cry," etc.
- **29.** (\*\*\*Proverbs 16:7 \*\*\*\* Isaiah 26:3).

make trouble — rather, "condemn" ( Romans 8:33,34). MAURER, from the reference being only to the godless, in the next clause, and Sulfob 34:20 translates, "When God keeps quiet" (leaves men to perish) Sulfom Ball; [UMBREIT] from the Arabic (strikes to the earth), "who shall condemn Him as unjust?" Sulfob 34:17.

it be done — Whether it be against a guilty nation (<sup>283</sup>2 Kings 18:9-12) or an individual, that God acts so.

- **30.** *Ensnared* into sin (\*IDES) Kings 12:28,30). Or rather, "enthralled by further oppression," \*IDES Job 34:26-28.
- **31.** Job accordingly says so (\*\*\*Job 40:3-5 \*\*\*Micah 7:9 \*\*\*Leviticus 26:41). It was to lead him to this that Elihu was sent. Though no hypocrite, Job, like all, had sin; therefore through affliction he was to be brought to humble himself under God. All sorrow is a proof of the common heritage of sin, in which the godly shares; and therefore he ought to regard it as a merciful correction. UMBREIT and MAURER lose this by translating, as the *Hebrew* will bear, "Has any a right to say to God, I have borne chastisement and yet have not sinned?" (so \*\*\*\*Job 34:6).

**borne** — namely, the penalty of sin, as in Leviticus 5:1,17.

offend — literally, "to deal destructively or corruptly" (\*\*Nehemiah 1:7).

**32.** (\*\*\*\*\* Job 10:2 \*\*\*\* Psalm 32:8 \*\*\*\* 19:12 \*\*\*\* 139:23,24).

- no more (\*\*Proverbs 28:13 \*\*\*Ephesians 4:22).
- **33.** Rather, "should God recompense (sinners) according to thy mind? Then it is for thee to reject and to choose, and not me" [UMBREIT]; or as MAURER, "For thou hast rejected God's way of recompensing; state therefore thy way, for thou must choose, not I," that is, it is thy part, not mine, to show a better way than God's.
- **34, 35.** Rather, "men ... will say to me, and the wise man ( decomposed by 34:2,10) who hearkens to me (will say), 'Job hath spoken,' etc.
- **36.** *Margin*, not so well, "My father," Elihu addressing God. This title does not elsewhere occur in Job.

*tried* — by calamities.

*answers for wicked men* — (See on <sup>4888</sup>Job 34:8). Trials of the godly are not removed until they produce the effect designed.

37. clappeth ... hands — in scorn (\*\*\*\*\* Job 27:23 \*\*\*\*\*\*\* Ezekiel 21:17).

*multiplieth* ... *words* — (<sup>™</sup>Job 11:2 35:16). To his original "sin" to correct which trials have been sent, "he adds *rebellion*," that is, words arraigning God's justice.

### **™**JOB 35:1-16.

- **2.** *more than* rather as in \*\*\*\*Job 9:2 25:4: "I am righteous (literally, my righteousness is) before God." The *English Version*, however, agrees with Job 9:17 \*\*\*\*Job 9:17 16:12-17 \*\*\*\*Z7:2-6. \*\*\*\*Job 4:17 is susceptible of either rendering. Elihu means Job said so, not in so many words, but *virtually*.
- 3. Rather, explanatory of "this" in "Dob 35:2, "That thou sayest (to thyself, as if a distinct person) What advantage is it (thy integrity) to thee? What profit have I (by integrity) more than (I should have) by my sin?" that is, more than if I had sinned ("Dob 34:9). Job had said that the wicked, who use *these very words*, do not suffer for it ("Dob 21:13-15); whereby he virtually sanctioned their sentiments. The same change of persons from oblique to direct address occurs ("Dob 19:28" 22:17).
- **4.** *companions* those entertaining like sentiments with thee (\*\*\*Job 34:8,36).
- **5-8.** Elihu like Eliphaz (\*\*\*Job 22:2,3,12) shows that God is too exalted in nature to be susceptible of benefit or hurt from the righteousness or sin of men respectively; it is themselves that they benefit by righteousness, or hurt by sin.

behold the clouds, which are higher than thou — spoken with irony. Not only are they higher than thou, but thou canst not even reach them clearly with the eye. Yet these are not as high as God's seat. God is therefore too exalted to be dependent on man. Therefore He has no inducement to injustice in His dealings with man. When He afflicts, it must be from a different motive; namely, the good of the sufferer.

- **6.** what doest how canst thou affect Him?
- unto him that can hurt Him? (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 8:36).

- **9.** (\*\*Decclesiastes 4:1) the difficulty; the "cries" of "the oppressed" not being heard might lead man to think that wrongs are not punished by Him.
- **10-13.** But the reason is that the innocent sufferers often do not humbly seek God for succor; so to their "pride" is to be laid the blame of their ruin; also because (\*\*\*\*Job 35:13-16) they, as Job, instead of waiting God's time in pious trust, are prone to despair of His justice, when it is not immediately visible (\*\*\*\*Job 33:19-26). If the sufferer would apply to God with a humbled, penitent spirit, He would hear.

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Where, etc. — (***Deremiah 2:6,8 ***Deremiah 51:13).

songs — of joy at deliverance (****Psalm 42:8 149:5 ***Acts 16:25).

in the night — unexpectedly (****Job 34:20,25). Rather, "in calamity."
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**11.** Man's spirit, which distinguishes him from the brute, is the strongest proof of God's beneficence; by the use of it we may understand that God is the Almighty helper of all sufferers who humbly seek Him; and that they err who do not so seek Him.

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fowls — (see on <sup>⊲</sup>SS2</sup>Job 28:21).
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- **12.** *There* rather, "Then" (when none humbly casts himself on God, God) 35:10). They cry proudly *against* God, rather than humbly *to* God. So, as the design of affliction is to humble the sufferer, there can be no answer until "pride" gives place to humble, penitent prayer (\*\*\*Psalm 10:4\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 13:17).
- **13.** *vanity* that is, cries uttered in an unhumbled spirit, which applies in some degree to Job's cries; still more to those of the wicked (\*\*\*Job 27:9\*\*Proverbs 15:29).
- 14. Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him (as a temporal deliverer; for he did look for a Redeemer after death, "Job 19:25-27; which passage cannot consistently with Elihu's assertion here be interpreted of "seeing" a temporal "redeemer"), "Job 7:7 " Job 35:13), since thou sayest, that He does not regard thee." So in "Job 4:19. Thus Elihu alludes to Job's words ("Job 19:7 " Job 19:7 " J

**judgment** — that is, thy cause, thy right; as in \*\*\*Psalm 9:16 \*\*\*Proverbs 31:5,8.

*trust* — rather, "wait thou" on Him, patiently, until He take up thy cause (\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:7).

**15.** As it is, because Job waited not trustingly and patiently (\*\*\*Job 35:14 Numbers 20:12 \*\*\*Cephaniah 3:2 \*\*\*Micah 7:9), God hath visited ...; yet still he has not taken (severe) cognizance of the great multitude (English Version wrongly, "extremity") of sins; therefore Job should not complain of being punished with undue severity (\*\*\*\*Job 7:20 \*\*\*\*I1:6). MAURER translates: "Because His anger hath not visited (hath not immediately punished Job for his impious complaints), nor has He taken strict (great) cognizance of his folly (sinful speeches); therefore," etc. For "folly," UMBREIT translates with the Rabbins, "multitude." GESENIUS reads with the Septuagint and Vulgate needlessly, "transgression."

**16.** Apodosis to 

Solution 35:15.

in vain — rashly.

### **№**10B 36:1-33.

- **1, 2.** Elihu maintains that afflictions are to the godly disciplinary, in order to lead them to attain a higher moral worth, and that the reason for their continuance is not, as the friends asserted, on account of the sufferer's extraordinary guilt, but because the discipline has not yet attained its object, namely, to lend him to humble himself penitently before God (\*\*\*Jaiah 9:13\*\*\*Jeremiah 5:3). This is Elihu's *fourth* speech. He thus exceeds the ternary number of the others. Hence his formula of politeness (\*\*\*Job 36:2). Literally, "Wait yet but a little for me." Bear with me a little farther. *I have yet* (much, \*\*\*Job 32:18-20). There are Chaldeisms in this verse, agreeably to the view that the scene of the book is near the Euphrates and the Chaldees.
- **3.** *from afar* not trite commonplaces, but drawn from God's mighty works.
- ascribe righteousness whereas Job ascribed unrighteousness (\*\*\*Job 34:10,12). A man, in enquiring into God's ways, should at the outset presume they are all just, be willing to find them so, and expect that the result of investigation will prove them to be so; such a one will never be disappointed [BARNES].
- **4.** I will not "speak wickedly for God," as the friends (\*\*\*\*Job 13:4,7,8) that is, vindicate God by unsound arguments.
- he that is perfect, etc. Rather, as the parallelism requires, "a man of integrity in sentiments is with thee" (is he with whom thou hast to do). Elihu means himself, as opposed to the dishonest reasonings of the friends (\*\*\*Job 21:34).
- **5.** Rather, "strength of understanding" (heart) the force of the repetition of "mighty"; as "mighty" as God is, none is too low to be "despised" by Him; for His "might" lies especially in "His strength of understanding,"

whereby He searches out the most minute things, so as to give to each his right. Elihu confirms his exhortation (\*\*\*\*Job 35:14).

- **6.** *right* ... *poor* He espouses the cause of the afflicted.

and they are — that they may be.

**8-10.** If they be afflicted, it is no proof that they are hypocrites, as the friends maintain, or that God disregards them, and is indifferent whether men are good or bad, as Job asserts: God is thereby "disciplining them," and "showing them their sins," and if they bow in a right spirit under God's visiting hand, the greatest blessings ensue.

**9.** work — transgression.

**that** ... **exceeded** — "In that they behaved themselves mightily" (literally, "great"); that is, presumptuously, or, at least, self-confidently.

- **10.** ( Job 33:16-18,23).
- **11.** *serve* that is, worship; as in \*\*\*Isaiah 19:23. *God* is to be supplied (compare \*\*Isaiah 1:19,20).
- **12.** ( Job 33:18).

without knowledge — that is, on account of their foolishness (<sup>∞∞</sup>Job 4:20,21).

**13-15.** Same sentiment as desired of 36:11,12, expanded.

**hypocrites** — or, the ungodly [MAURER]; but "hypocrites" is perhaps a distinct class from the openly wicked (\*\*\*\*Job 36:12).

**heap up wrath** — of God against themselves (\*\*Romans 2:5). UMBREIT translates, "nourish *their* wrath *against God*," instead of "crying" unto Him. This suits well the parallelism and the *Hebrew*. But the *English Version* gives a good parallelism, "hypocrites" answering to "cry not"

- (\*\*\*Job 27:8,10); "heap up wrath" against themselves, to "He bindeth them" with fetters of affliction (\*\*\*\*Job 36:8).
- **14.** Rather (\*\*Deuteronomy 23:17), *Their life* is (ended) as that of (literally, "among") *the unclean*, prematurely and dishonorably. So the second clause answers to the first. A warning that Job make not common cause with the wicked (\*\*\*\*Job 34:36).
- **15.** *poor the afflicted* pious.
- **openeth** ... ears (\*\*\*\*Job 36:10); so as to be *admonished* in their straits ("oppression") to seek God penitently, and so be "delivered" (\*\*\*\*Job 33:16,17,23-27).
- **16.** Rather, "He *will* lead forth thee also out of *the jaws of* a strait" (\*\*\*Psalm 18:19 118:5).
- **broad place** expresses the *liberty*, and the well-supplied "table" the *abundance* of the prosperous (\*\*\*Psalm 23:5\*\*Tsaiah 25:6).
- **17.** Rather, "But *if* thou art fulfilled (that is, entirely filled) with the judgment of the wicked (that is, the *guilt* incurring judgment" [MAURER]; or rather, as UMBREIT, referring to "Job 34:5-7,36, *the judgment pronounced on God by the guilty* in misfortunes), judgment (*God's judgment on the wicked*, "Jeremiah 51:9, playing on the double meaning of "judgment") and justice shall closely follow each other [UMBREIT].
- **18.** (\*\*\*Numbers 16:45 \*\*\*Psalm 49:6,7 \*\*\*Matthew 16:26). Even the "ransom" by Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Job 33:24) will be of no avail to wilful despisers (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 10:26-29).
- with his stroke (\*\*\*\*Job 34:26). UMBREIT translates, "Beware lest the wrath of God (thy severe calamity) lead thee to scorn" (\*\*\*\*Job 34:7\*\*\*27:23). This accords better with the verb in the parallel clause, which ought to be translated, "Let not the great ransom (of money, which thou canst give) seduce thee (Margin, turn thee aside, as if thou couldst deliver thyself from "wrath" by it). As the "scorn" in the first clause answers to the "judgment of the wicked" (\*\*\*\*Job 36:17), so "ransom" ("seduce") to "will he esteem riches" (\*\*\*\*Job 36:19). Thus, \*\*\*\*Job 36:18 is the transition between \*\*\*\*Job 36:17 and \*\*\*\*Job 36:19.

- **19.** *forces of strength* that is, resources of wealth (\*\*\*Psalm 49:7\*\*Proverbs 11:4).
- **20.** *Desire* rant for. Job had *wished for death* (\*\*\*Job 3:3-9, etc.).

*night* — (\*\*\*\*John 9:4).

when — rather, "whereby."

**cut off** — literally, "ascend," as the corn cut and lifted upon the wagon or stack (\*\*\*Job 36:26); so "cut off," "disappear."

in their place — literally, "under themselves"; so, without moving from their place, on the spot, suddenly (\*\*\*\*Dob 40:12) [MAURER]. UMBREIT'S translation: "To ascend (which is really, as thou wilt find to thy cost, to descend) to the people below" (literally, "under themselves"), answers better to the parallelism and the Hebrew. Thou pantest for death as desirable, but it is a "night" or region of darkness; thy fancied ascent (amelioration) will prove a descent (deterioration) (\*\*\*\*\*Job 10:22); therefore desire it not.

**21.** regard — literally, "turn thyself to."

*iniquity* — namely, presumptuous speaking against God ( Job 34:5, and above, see on Job 36:17,18).

**rather than** — to bear "affliction" with pious patience. Men think it an alleviation to complain against God, but this is adding sin to sorrow; it is sin, not sorrow, which can really hurt us (contrast "Hebrews 11:25).

**22-25.** God is not to be impiously arraigned, but to be praised for His might, shown in His works.

**exalteth** — rather, doeth lofty things, shows His exalted power [UMBREIT] (\*\*PIB\*Psalm 21:13).

**teacheth** — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 94:12, etc.). The connection is, returning to \*\*\*\*Job 36:5, God's "might" is shown in His "wisdom"; He alone can *teach*; yet, because He, as a sovereign, explains not all His dealings, forsooth Job must presume to *teach Him* (\*\*\*Isaiah 40:13,14 \*\*\*Romans 11:34 \*\*\*\*ISA\*\*\*Corinthians 2:16). So the transition to \*\*\*\*Job 36:23 is natural. UMBREIT

with the *Septuagint* translates, "Who is *Lord*," wrongly, as this meaning belongs to later *Hebrew*.

- **23.** Job dared to *prescribe* to God what He should do ( Job 34:10,13).
- **24.** Instead of arraigning, let it be thy fixed principle to *magnify* God in His works (\*\*Psalm 111:2-8 \*\*Revelation 15:3); these, which all may "see," may convince us that what we do not see is altogether wise and good (\*\*Romans 1:20).

**behold** — As "see" ( Job 36:25), shows; not, as MAURER, "sing," laud (see on Job 33:27).

**25.** *See* — namely, with wondering admiration [MAURER].

man may behold — rather, "(yet) mortals (a different Hebrew word from 'man') behold it (only) from afar off," see but a small "part" (\*\*\*\*Job 26:14).

**26.** ( God's greatness in heaven and earth: a reason why Job should bow under His afflicting hand.

**know him not** — only in part ( description 36:25 description 13:12).

*his years* — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 90:2\*\*\*\*\*\*102:24,27); applied to Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*\*\*Phebrews 1:12).

**27, 28.** The marvellous formation of rain (so Tob 5:9,10).

maketh small — Rather, "He draweth (up) to Him, He attracts (from the earth below) the drops of water; they (the drops of water) pour down rain, (which is) His vapor." "Vapor" is in apposition with "rain," marking the way in which rain is formed; namely, from the vapor drawn up by God into the air and then condensed into drops, which fall (\*\*Psalm 147:8). The suspension of such a mass of water, and its descent not in a deluge, but in drops of vapory rain, are the marvel. The selection of this particular illustration of God's greatness forms a fit prelude to the storm in which God appears (\*\*\*UJob 40:1).

- **28.** *abundantly* literally, "upon many men."
- **29.** ( God's marvels in thunder and lightnings.

*spreadings*, etc. — the canopy of thick clouds, which covers the heavens in a storm (\*\*\*Psalm 105:39).

the noise — "crashing"; namely, thunder.

of his tabernacle — God being poetically said to have *His pavilion* amid dark clouds (\*\*\*Psalm 18:11 \*\*\*\* Isaiah 40:22).

**30.** *light* — lightning.

it — His tabernacle (\*\*\*Job 36:29). The light, in an instant spread over the vast mass of dark clouds, forms a striking picture.

**spread** — is repeated from 586:29 to form an antithesis. "He spreads not only *clouds*, but *light*."

covereth the bottom — roots.

of the sea — namely, with the light. In the storm the depths of ocean are laid bare; and the light "covers" them, at the same moment that it "spreads" across the dark sky. So in "Psalm 18:14,15, the discovering of "the channels of waters" follows the "lightnings." UMBREIT translates: "He spreadeth His light *upon Himself*, and *covereth Himself with* the roots of the sea" ("Psalm 104:2). God's garment is woven of celestial light and of the watery depths, raised to the sky to form His cloudy canopy. The phrase, "cover Himself with the roots of the sea," is harsh; but the image is grand.

- **31.** These (rain and lightnings) are marvellous and *not* to be *understood* (\*\*\*Job 36:29), yet necessary. "*For* by them He judgeth (chastiseth on the one hand), etc. (and on the other, by them) He giveth meat" (food), etc. (\*\*\*Job 37:13 \*\*\*38:23,27 \*\*\*4\*\*Acts 14:17).
- **32.** Rather, "He covereth (both) *His hands* with light (*lightning*, \*\*\*\*Job 37:3, *Margin*), and giveth it a command *against his adversary*" (literally, the one "assailing" Him, \*\*\*Psalm 8:2 \*\*\*Job 21:19). Thus, as in \*\*\*Job 36:31, the twofold effects of His *waters* are set forth, so here, of His *light*; in the one hand, *destructive lightning* against the wicked; in the other, *the genial light* for good to His friends, etc. (\*\*\*\*Job 36:33) [UMBREIT].

33. noise — rather, He revealeth it (literally, "announceth concerning it") to *His friend* (antithesis to *adversary*, "Tob 36:32, so the *Hebrew* is translated, "Tob 2:11); also to cattle and plants (literally, "that which shooteth up"; "Genesis 40:10 "Tob 2:122). As the genial effect of "water" in the growth of food, is mentioned, "Tob 36:31, so here that of "light" in cherishing *cattle* and *plants* [UMBREIT]. If *English Version*, "noise" be retained, translate, "His noise announces concerning Him (His coming in the tempest), the cattle (to announce) concerning Him when He is in the act of *rising up*" (in the storm). Some animals give various intimations that they are sensible of the approach of a storm [VIRGIL, *Georgics*, I.373, etc.].

### **★\*\*\*JOB** 37:1-24.

- **1.** *At this* when I hear the thundering of the Divine Majesty. Perhaps the storm already had begun, out of which God was to address Job (\*\*\*Job 38:1).
- **2.** *Hear attentively* the thunder (noise), etc., and then you will feel that there is good reason to tremble.

**sound** — muttering of the thunder.

- **3.** *directeth it* however zigzag the lightning's course; or, rather, it applies to the pealing roll of the thunder. God's *all-embracing* power.
- ends literally, "wings," "skirts," the habitable earth being often compared to an extended garment (SSE) Job 38:13 Call Isaiah 11:12).
- **4.** The thunderclap follows at an interval after the flash.
- **stay them** He will not hold back the lightnings (\*\*\*Job 37:3), when the thunder is heard [Maurer]. Rather, take "them" as the usual concomitants of thunder, namely, *rain and hail* [UMBREIT] (\*\*\*Job 40:9).
- **5.** (\*\*\*\*Job 36:26 \*\*\*Psalm 65:6 \*\*\*\*139:14). The sublimity of the description lies in this, that God is everywhere in the storm, directing it whither He will [BARNES]. See \*\*\*Psalm 29:1-11, where, as here, the "voice" of God is repeated with grand effect. The thunder in Arabia is sublimely terrible.
- **6. Be** more forcible than "fall," as UMBREIT translates Genesis 1:3.
- to the small rain, etc. He saith, Be on the earth. The shower increasing from "small" to "great," is expressed by the *plural* "showers" (*Margin*), following the *singular* "shower." Winter rain ( Song of Solomon 2:11).
- 7. In winter God stops man's out-of-doors activity.
- sealeth closeth up (\*\*\*\*Job 9:7). Man's "hands" are then tied up.

**his work** — in antithesis to man's own work ("hand") which at other times engages men so as to make them liable to forget their dependence on God. Umbreit more literally translates, That all men whom He has made (literally, "of His making") may be brought to acknowledgment."

- **8.** *remain* rest in their lairs. It is beautifully ordered that during the cold, when they could not obtain food, many lie torpid, a state wherein they need no food. The desolation of the fields, at God's bidding, is poetically graphic.
- **9.** *south* literally, "chambers"; connected with the south (\*\*\*\*Job 9:9). The whirlwinds are poetically regarded as pent up by God in His southern chambers, whence He sends them forth (so \*\*\*\*\*ZJob 38:22 \*\*\*\*Psalm 135:7). As to the southern whirlwinds (see \*\*\*\*Zechariah 9:14), they drive before them burning sands; chiefly from February to May.

*the north* — literally, "scattering"; the north wind *scatters* the clouds.

**10.** *the breath of God* — poetically, for the ice-producing north wind.

*frost* — rather, "ice."

**straitened** — physically accurate; frost *compresses* or *contracts* the expanded liquid into a congealed mass (\*\*\*Job 38:29,30 \*\*\*\*Psalm 147:17,18).

**11-13.** How the thunderclouds are dispersed, or else employed by God, either for correction or mercy.

by watering — by loading it with water.

wearieth — burdeneth it, so that it falls in rain; thus "wearieth" answers to the parallel "scattereth" (compare, see on "Job 37:9); a clear sky resulting alike from both.

bright cloud — literally, "cloud of his light," that is, of His lightning. UMBREIT for "watering," etc., translates; "Brightness drives away the clouds, His light scattereth the thick clouds"; the parallelism is thus good, but the Hebrew hardly sanctions it.

**12.** *it* — the cloud of lightning.

**counsels** — guidance (\*\*\*Psalm 148:8); literally, "steering"; the clouds obey God's guidance, as the ship does the helmsman. So the lightning (see on \*\*\*Job 36:31,32); neither is haphazard in its movements.

they — the clouds, implied in the collective singular "it."

*face of the world*, etc. — in the face of the earth's circle.

**13.** Literally, "He maketh it (the rain-cloud) find place," whether for correction, if (it be destined) for His land (that is, for the part *inhabited by man*, with whom *God* deals, as opposed to the parts *uninhabited*, on which rain is at other times appointed to fall, "Tob 38:26,27) or for mercy. "If it be destined for His land" is a parenthetical supposition [MAURER]. In *English Version*, this clause spoils the even balance of the antithesis between the "rod" (*Margin*) and "mercy" ("Psalm 68:9" Genesis 7:1-24).

**14.** (\*\*Presalm 111:2).

15. when — rather, "how."

*disposed them* — lays His charge on these "wonders" (\*\*\*\*Job 37:14) to arise.

*light* — lightning.

**shine** — flash. How is it that *light* arises from the *dark* thundercloud?

**16.** Hebrew, "Hast thou understanding of the balancings," etc., how the clouds are poised in the air, so that their watery gravity does not bring them to the earth? The condensed moisture, descending by gravity, meets a warmer temperature, which dissipates it into vapor (the tendency of which is to ascend) and so counteracts the descending force.

perfect in knowledge — God; not here in the sense that Elihu uses it of himself ( 3870 Job 36:4).

dost thou know — how, etc.

**17.** *thy garments*, etc. — that is, dost thou know how thy body grows warm, so as to affect thy garments with heat?

**south wind** — literally, "region of the south." "When He *maketh still* (and sultry) the earth (that is, the atmosphere) by (during) the south wind" (So 4:16).

**18.** *with him* — like as He does (\*\*\*Job 40:15).

**spread out** — given expanse to.

**strong** — firm; whence the term "firmament" ("expansion," "Genesis 1:6, *Margin*; "Isaiah 44:24).

*molten looking glass* — image of the bright smiling sky. Mirrors were then formed of molten polished metal, not glass.

**19.** Men cannot explain God's wonders; we ought, therefore, to be dumb and not contend with God. If Job thinks we ought, "let him teach us, what we shall say."

order — frame.

**darkness** — of mind; ignorance. "The eyes are bewilderingly blinded, when turned in bold controversy with God towards the sunny heavens" (\*\*\*\*\*Job 37:18) [UMBREIT].

- **20.** What I a mortal say against God's dealings is not worthy of being told HIM. In opposition to Job's wish to "speak" before God (\*\*\*\*Job 13:3,18-22).
- if ... surely he shall be swallowed up The parallelism more favors UMBREIT, "Durst a man speak (before Him, complaining) that he is (without cause) being destroyed?"
- 21. cleanseth that is, cleareth the air of clouds. When the "bright light" of the sun, previously not seen through "clouds," suddenly shines out from behind them, owing to the wind clearing them away, the effect is dazzling to the eye; so if God's majesty, now hidden, were suddenly revealed in all its brightness, it would spread darkness over Job's eyes, anxious as he is for it (compare, see on "Bob 37:19) [UMBREIT]. It is because now man sees not the bright sunlight (God's dazzling majesty), owing to the intervening "clouds" ("Bob 26:9), that they dare to wish to "speak" before God ("Bob 37:20). Prelude to God's appearance ("Bob 37:20)

- 38:1). The words also hold true in a sense not intended by Elihu, but perhaps included by the Holy Ghost. Job and other sufferers cannot see the *light* of God's countenance through the *clouds* of trial: but the wind will soon clear them off, and God shall appear again: let them but wait patiently, for He still shines, though for a time they see Him not (see on Job 23:9).
- **22.** Rather, "golden splendor." MAURER translates "gold." *It* is found in northern regions. But *God* cannot be "found out," because of His "Majesty" (\*\*\*\*Job 37:23). Thus the twenty-eighth chapter corresponds; *English Version* is simpler.

the north — Brightness is chiefly associated with it (see on Dob 23:9). Here, perhaps, because the north wind clears the air (Proverbs 25:23). Thus this clause answers to the last of Job 37:21; as the second of this verse to the first of Job 37:21. Inverted parallelism. (See Rail Saiah 14:13 Psalm 48:2).

with God — rather, "upon God," as a garment (\*\*PATP Psalm 104:1,2).

majesty — splendor.

- **23.** *afflict* oppressively, so as to "pervert *judgment*" as Job implied (see on "No Job 8:3); but see on "Sto Job 37:21, end of note. The reading, "He answereth not," that is, gives no account of His dealings, is like a transcriber's correction, from "Sto Job 33:13, *Margin*.
- **24.** *do* rather, "ought."

wise — in their own conceits.

### **™**JOB 38:1-41.

1. Jehovah appears unexpectedly in a whirlwind (already gathering 37:1,2), the symbol of "judgment" (37:1,2) properties of the symbol of "judgment" (37:1,2), to which Job had challenged Him. He asks him now to get himself ready for the contest. Can he explain the phenomena of God's natural government? How can he, then, hope to understand the principles of His moral government? God thus confirms Elihu's sentiment, that submission to, not reasonings on, God's ways is man's part. This and the disciplinary design of trial to the godly is the great lesson of this book. He does not solve the difficulty by reference to future retribution: for this was not the immediate question; glimpses of that truth were already given in the fourteenth and nineteenth chapters, the full revelation of it being reserved for Gospel times. Yet even now we need to learn the lesson taught by Elihu and God in Job.

#### 2. *this* — Job.

*counsel* — impugning My divine wisdom in the providential arrangements of the universe. Such "words" (including those of the friends) rather obscure, than throw light on My ways. God is about to be Job's Vindicator, but must first bring him to a *right state of mind* for receiving relief.

- **3.** a man hero, ready for battle (\*\*\*31 Corinthians 16:13), as he had wished (\*\*\*5Job 9:35 \*\*\*31:37). The robe, usually worn flowing, was girt up by a girdle when men ran, labored, or fought (\*\*\*113).
- **4.** To understand the cause of things, man should have been present at their origin. The finite creature cannot fathom the infinite wisdom of the Creator (\*\*\*\*Job 28:12 \*\*\*\*Job 28:12 \*\*\*Job 28:12 \*\*\*\*Job 28:12 \*

hast — "knowest."

understanding — (\*\*\* Proverbs 4:1).

**5.** *measures* — of its proportions. Image from an architect's plans of a building.

**line** — of measurement ( $^{2007}$ Isaiah 28:17). The earth is formed on an allwise *plan*.

**6.** foundations — not "sockets," as Margin.

**fastened** — literally, "made to sink," as a foundation-stone let down till it settles firmly in the clay (\*\*\*\*\*Job 26:7). Gravitation makes and keeps the earth a sphere.

**7.** So at the founding of Zerubbabel's temple (\*\*Ezra 3:10-13). So hereafter at the completion of the Church, the temple of the Holy Ghost (\*\*Zechariah 4:7); as at its foundation (\*\*Luke 2:13,14).

morning stars — especially beautiful. The creation morn is appropriately associated with these, it being the commencement of this world's day. The stars are figuratively said to sing God's praises, as in \*\*Psalm 19:1\*\* 148:3. They are symbols of the angels, bearing the same relation to our earth, as angels do to us. Therefore they answer to "sons of God," or angels, in the parallel. See on \*\*ST5Job 25:5.

**8.** *doors* — floodgates; these when opened caused the flood ( Genesis 8:2); or else, *the shores*.

**womb** — of chaos. The bowels of the earth. Image from childbirth (\*\*\*\*\*Job 38:8,9 \*\*\*\*\*Ezekiel 32:2 \*\*\*\*\*Micah 4:10). Ocean at its birth was wrapped in clouds as its swaddling bands.

- **10.** brake up for that is, appointed it. Shores are generally broken and abrupt cliffs. The *Greek* for "shore" means "a broken place." I broke off or measured off for it my limit, that is, the limit which I thought fit (\*\*\*\*Job 26:10).
- **11.** *stayed Hebrew*, "a limit shall be set to."
- **12-15.** Passing from creation to phenomena in the existing inanimate world.

*Hast thou* — as God daily does.

commanded the morning — to rise.

since thy days — since thou hast come into being.

*his place* — It varies in its place of rising from day to day, and yet it has its place each day according to fixed laws.

**13.** *take hold of the ends*, etc. — spread itself over the earth to its utmost bounds in a moment.

wicked — who hate the light, and do their evil works in the dark (<sup>∞</sup>Job 24:13).

**shaken out of it** — The corners (*Hebrew*, "wings" or "skirts") of it, as of a garment, are taken hold of by the dayspring, so as to shake off the wicked.

**14.** Explaining the first clause of \*\*\*Job 38:13, as \*\*\*Job 38:15 does the second clause. As the plastic clay presents the various figures impressed on it by a seal, so the earth, which in the dark was void of all form, when illuminated by the dayspring, presents a variety of forms, hills, valleys, etc.

*turned* — (*Hebrew*, "turns itself") alludes to the rolling cylinder seal, such as is found in Babylon, which leaves its impressions on the clay, as it is turned about; so the morning light rolling on over the earth.

*they stand* — The forms of beauty, unfolded by the dawn, stand forth as a garment, in which the earth is clad.

**15.** *their light* — by which they work; namely, darkness, which is *their day* (\*\*\*Job 24:17), is extinguished by daylight.

**high** — Rather, "The arm uplifted" for murder or other crime is broken; it falls down suddenly, powerless, through their fear of light.

**16.** *springs* — fountains beneath the sea (\*\*Psalm 95:4,5).

**search** — Rather, "the inmost recesses"; literally, "that which is only found by searching," the deep caverns of ocean.

**17.** *seen* — The second clause heightens the thought in the first. Man during life does not even "see" the gates of the realm of the dead ("death,"

- Job 10:21); much less are they "opened" to him. But those are "naked before God" (\*\*\*Job 26:6).
- **18.** *Hast thou* as God doth (\*\*\*Job 28:24).
- **19-38.** The marvels in heaven.
- "What is the way (to the place wherein) light dwelleth?" The origin of light and darkness. In "Genesis 1:3-5,14-18, "light" is created distinct from, and previous to, light-emitting bodies, the luminaries of heaven.
- **20.** Dost thou know its place so well as to be able to *guide*, ("take" as in Isaiah 36:17) it to (but UMBREIT, "*reach* it in") its own boundary, that is, the limit between light and darkness (\*\*\*\*Job 26:10)?
- **21.** Or without the interrogation, in an ironical sense [UMBREIT].
- *then* when I created light and darkness (\*\*\*\*Job 15:7).
- **22.** *treasures* storehouses, from which God draws forth snow and hail. Snow is vapor congealed in the air before it is collected in drops large enough to form hail. Its shape is that of a crystal in endless variety of beautiful figures. Hail is formed by rain falling through dry cold air.
- **23.** against the time of trouble the time when I design to chastise men (\*\*\*Exodus 9:18 \*\*\*\*Ioshua 10:11 \*\*\*\*\*Revelation 16:21 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 28:17 \*\*\*\*Psalm 18:12,13 \*\*\*\*\*Haggai 2:17).
- **24.** *is* ... *parted* parts, so as to diffuse itself over the whole earth, though seeming to come from one point. Light travels from the sun to the earth, ninety millions of miles, in eight minutes.
- which scattereth rather, "And by what way the east wind (personified) spreads (scattereth) itself." The light and east wind are associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together (Jon 4:8).
- **25.** *waters* Rain falls, not in a mass on one spot, but in countless separate canals in the air marked out for them.

way for the lightning — (\*\*\*\*Job 28:26).

- **26.** Since rain fails also on places uninhabited by man, it cannot be that *man* guides its course. Such rain, though man cannot explain the reason for it, is not lost. *God* has some wise design in it.
- **27.** As though the desolate ground thirsted for God's showers. Personification. The beauty imparted to the uninhabited desert pleases God, for whom primarily all things exist, and He has ulterior designs in it.
- **28.** Can any visible origin of rain and dew be assigned by man? Dew is moisture, which was suspended in the air, but becomes condensed on reaching the in the night lower temperature of objects on the earth.
- **29.** 4870 Job 37:10.
- **30.** The unfrozen *waters are hid* under the frozen, as *with* a covering of *stone*.

**frozen** — literally, "is taken"; the particles take hold of one another so as to cohere.

- **31.** *sweet influences* the joy diffused by spring, the time when the Pleiades appear. The Eastern poets, Hafiz, Sadi, etc., describe them as "brilliant rosettes." Gesenius translates: "bands" or "knot," which answers better the parallelism. But *English Version* agrees better with the *Hebrew*. The seven stars are closely "bound" together (see on "Good 9:9). "Canst thou bind or loose the tie?" "Canst thou loose the bonds by which the constellation Orion is held fast?" (See on "Good 9:9).
- **32.** Canst thou bring forth from their places or houses (Mazzaloth, Times 23:5, Margin; to which Mazzaroth here is equivalent) into the sky the signs of the Zodiac at their respective seasons the twelve lodgings in which the sun successively stays, or appears, in the sky?

Arcturus — Ursa Major.

his sons? — the three stars in his tail. Canst thou make them appear in the sky? (\*\*\*Job 9:9). The great and less Bear are called by the Arabs "Daughters of the Bier," the quadrangle being the bier, the three others the mourners.

- **33.** *ordinances* which regulate the alternations of seasons, etc. (\*\*\*Genesis 8:22).
- **dominion** controlling influence of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, etc., on the earth (on the tides, weather) (Genesis 1:16 Psalm 136:7-9).
- **34.** Jeremiah 14:22; above Job 22:11, metaphorically.
- **35.** *Here we are* at thy disposal ( saiah 6:8).
- **36.** *inward parts ... heart* But "dark clouds" ("shining phenomena") [UMBREIT]; "meteor" [MAURER], referring to the consultation of these as signs of weather by the husbandman (\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 11:4). But *Hebrew* supports *English Version*. The connection is, "Who hath given thee the intelligence to comprehend in any degree the phenomena just specified?"
- **heart** not the usual *Hebrew* word, but one from a root "to view"; perception.
- **37.** Who appoints by his wisdom the due measure of the clouds?
- **stay** rather, "empty"; literally, "lay down" or "incline" so as to pour out.
- **bottles of heaven** rain-filled clouds.
- **38.** *groweth*, etc. rather, pour itself into a mass by the rain, like molten metal; then translate Job 38:38, "Who is it that *empties*," etc., "when,"? The *English Version*, however, is tenable: "*Is caked into a mass*" by heat, like molten metal, *before* the rain falls; "Who is it that *can empty* the rain vessels, and bring down rain *at such a time*?" (\*\*\*\*Job 38:38).
- **39.** At \*\*\*Job 38:39-39:30, the instincts of animals. Is it thou that givest it the instinct to hunt its prey? (\*\*\*Psalm 104:21).
- appetite literally, "life," which depends on the appetite" (\*\*\*Job 33:20).
- **40.** *lie in wait*? for their prey (\*Psalm 10:9).
- **41.** Luke 12:24. Transition from the noble lioness to the croaking raven. Though man dislikes it, as of ill omen, God cares for it, as for all His creatures.

### **™**JOB 39:1-30.

1. Even wild beasts, cut off from all care of *man*, are cared for by *God* at their seasons of greatest need. Their instinct comes direct from God and guides them to help themselves in parturition; the very time when the herdsman is most anxious for his herds.

wild goats — ibex (\*\*Psalm 104:18 \*\*\* Samuel 24:2).

*hinds* — fawns; most timid and defenseless animals, yet cared for by God.

- **2.** They bring forth with ease and do not need to reckon the months of pregnancy, as the shepherd does in the case of his flocks.
- **3.** bow themselves in parturition; bend on their knees (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 4:19).

*bring forth* — literally, "cause their young to cleave the womb and break forth."

sorrows — their young ones, the cause of their momentary pains.

**4.** are in good liking — in good condition, grow up strong.

with corn — rather, "in the field," without man's care.

*return not* — being able to provide for themselves.

5. wild ass — Two different Hebrew words are here used for the same animal, "the ass of the woods" and "the wild ass." (See on "ND Job 6:5; ND Job 11:12; "ND Job 24:5; and "Department 2:24).

*loosed the bands* — given its liberty to. Man can rob animals of freedom, but not, as God, give freedom, combined with subordination to fixed laws.

**6.** barren — literally, "salt," that is, unfruitful. (So Psalm 107:34, *Margin.*)

**7.** *multitude* — rather, "din"; he sets it at defiance, being far away from it in the freedom of the wilderness.

*driver* — who urges on the tame ass to work. The wild ass is the symbol of uncontrolled freedom in the East; even kings have, therefore, added its name to them.

- **8.** *The range* literally, "searching," "that which it finds by searching is his pasture."
- **9.** *unicorn* PLINY [*Natural History*, 8.21], mentions such an animal; its figure is found depicted in the ruins of Persepolis. The *Hebrew reem* conveys the idea of *loftiness* and *power* (compare *Ramah*; Indian, *Ram*; Latin, *Roma*). The rhinoceros was perhaps the original type of the unicorn. The Arab *rim* is a two-horned animal. Sometimes "unicorn" or *reem* is a mere poetical symbol or abstraction; but the buffalo is the animal referred to here, from the contrast to the tame ox, used in ploughing (\*\*\*\*)Job 39:10,12).

abide — literally, "pass the night."

*crib* — (<sup>23008</sup>Isaiah 1:3).

**10.** *his band* — fastened to the horns, as its chief strength lies in the head and shoulders.

*after thee* — obedient to thee; willing to follow, instead of being goaded on *before* thee.

- 11. thy labor rustic work.
- 12. believe trust.

**seed** — produce (\*\*\* Samuel 8:15).

*into thy barn* — rather, "gather (the contents of) thy threshing-floor" [MAURER]; the corn threshed on it.

**13.** Rather, "the wing of the ostrich hen" — literally, "the crying bird"; as the Arab name for it means "song"; referring to its night cries (\*\*\*\*Dob 30:29\*\*\*Micah 1:8) vibrating joyously. "Is it not like the quill and feathers of *the pious bird*" (the stork)? [UMBREIT]. The *vibrating*, *quivering wing*, serving

for sail and oar at once, is characteristic of the ostrich in full course. Its white and black feathers in the wing and tail are like the stork's. But, unlike that bird, the symbol of parental love in the East, it with seeming want of natural (pious) affection deserts its young. Both birds are poetically called by descriptive, instead of their usual appellative, names.

- **14, 15.** Yet (unlike the stork) she "leaveth," etc. Hence called by the Arabs "the impious bird." However, the fact is, she lays her eggs with great care and hatches them, as other birds do; but in hot countries the eggs do not need so constant incubation; she therefore often leaves them and sometimes forgets the place on her return. Moreover, the outer eggs, intended for food, she feeds to her young; these eggs, lying separate in the sand, exposed to the sun, gave rise to the idea of her altogether leaving them. God describes her as she *seems to man;* implying, though she may seem foolishly to neglect her young, yet really she is guided by a sure instinct from God, as much as animals of instincts widely different.
- **16.** On a slight noise she often forsakes her eggs, and returns not, *as if* she were "hardened towards her young."

*her labor* — in producing eggs, *is in vain*, (yet) *she has not disquietude* (about her young), unlike other birds, who, if one egg and another are taken away, will go on laying till their full number is made up.

- 17. wisdom such as God gives to other animals, and to man (\*\*\*Job 35:11). The Arab proverb is, "foolish as an ostrich." Yet her very seeming want of wisdom is not without wise design of God, though man cannot see it; just as in the trials of the godly, which seem so unreasonable to Job, there lies hid a wise design.
- **18.** Notwithstanding her deficiencies, she has distinguishing excellences.
- *lifteth* ... *herself* for running; she cannot mount in the air. GESENIUS translates: "lashes herself" up to her course by flapping her wings. The old versions favor *English Version*, and the parallel "scorneth" answers to her *proudly* "lifting up herself."
- **19.** The allusion to "the horse" ( SD 39:18), suggests the description of him. Arab poets delight in praising the horse; yet it is not mentioned in the

possessions of Job ( Job 1:3 42:12). It seems to have been at the time chiefly used for war, rather than "domestic purposes."

**thunder** — poetically for, "he with arched neck inspires fear as thunder does." Translate, "majesty" [UMBREIT]. Rather "the trembling, quivering mane," answering to the "vibrating wing" of the ostrich (see on 39:13) [MAURER]. "Mane" in *Greek* also is from a root meaning "fear." *English Version* is more sublime.

**20.** *make* ... *afraid* — rather, "canst thou (as I do) make him *spring* as the *locust?*" So in "Joel 2:4, the comparison is between *locusts* and *war-horses*. The heads of the two are so similar that the Italians call the locusts *cavaletta*, "little horse."

*nostrils* — snorting furiously.

**21.** *valley* — where the battle is joined.

**goeth on** — goeth forth (\*\*\*Numbers 1:3\*\*\*21:23).

**23.** *quiver* — for the arrows, which they contain, and which are directed "against him."

**glittering spear** — literally, "glittering of the spear," like "lightning of the spear" (\*\*\*Habakkuk 3:11).

shield — rather, "lance."

**24.** *swalloweth* — Fretting with impatience, he *draws the ground towards him* with his hoof, as if he would *swallow* it. The parallelism shows this to be the sense; not as MAURER, "scours over it."

**neither believeth** — for joy. Rather, "he will not *stand still*, when the note of the trumpet (soundeth)."

**25.** *saith* — poetically applied to his mettlesome neighing, whereby he shows his love of the battle.

**smelleth** — snuffeth; discerneth (\*\*Isaiah 11:3, *Margin*).

*thunder* — thundering voice.

- **26.** The instinct by which some birds migrate to warmer climes before winter. Rapid flying peculiarly characterizes the whole hawk genus.
- **27.** *eagle* It flies highest of all birds: thence called "the bird of heaven."
- **28.** *abideth* securely (\*\*\*Psalm 91:1); it occupies the same abode mostly for life.

*crag* — literally, "tooth" ( Samuel 14:5, *Margin*).

strong place — citadel, fastness.

**29.** seeketh — is on the lookout for.

**behold** — The eagle descries its prey at an astonishing distance, by sight, rather than smell.

**30.** Quoted partly by Jesus Christ (\*\*\*Matthew 24:28). The food of young eagles is the blood of victims brought by the parent, when they are still too feeble to devour flesh.

**slain** — As the vulture chiefly feeds on carcasses, *it* is included probably in the eagle genus.

**№**JOB 40:1-24.

#### GOD'S SECOND ADDRESS.

He had paused for a reply, but Job was silent.

- **1.** *the Lord Hebrew*. "JEHOVAH."
- **2.** *he that contendeth* as Job had so often expressed a wish to do. Or, *rebuketh*. Does Job now still (after seeing and hearing of God's majesty and wisdom) wish to set God right?

answer it — namely, the questions I have asked

- 3. Lord JEHOVAH
- **4.** I am (too) vile (to reply). It is a very different thing to vindicate ourselves before God, from what it is before men. Job could do the latter, not the former.

lay ... hand ... upon ... mouth — I have no plea to offer (\*\*\*\*Job 21:5\*\*\*Judges 18:19).

**5.** Once ... twice — oftentimes, more than once (\*\*\*Job 33:14, compare with \*\*\*Job 33:29 \*\*\*Psalm 62:11):

*I have spoken* — namely, against God.

*not answer* — not plead against Thee.

- **6.** *the Lord* JEHOVAH.
- **7.** (See on SSS Job 38:3). Since Job has not only spoken against God, but accused Him of injustice, God challenges him to try, could *he* govern the world, as *God* by His power doth, and punish the proud and wicked (SSS Job 40:7-14).

**8.** Wilt thou not only contend with, but *set aside My judgment* or justice in the government of the world?

**condemn** — declare Me unrighteous, in order *that thou mayest be* accounted *righteous* (innocent; undeservingly afflicted).

9. arm — God's omnipotence ( Isaiah 53:1).

thunder — God's voice ( Job 37:4).

- **10.** See, hast thou power and majesty like God's, to enable thee to judge and govern the world?
- **11.** *rage* rather, pour out *the redundant floods of*, etc.

**behold** — Try, canst thou, as God, by a mere *glance* abase the proud (ADD) [Saiah 2:12, etc.)?

**12.** *proud* — high ( Daniel 4:37).

in their place — on the spot; suddenly, before they can move from their place. (See on 4886 Job 34:26; 4862 Job 36:20).

**13.** (Experimental Properties 13). Abase and remove them out of the sight of men.

bind ... faces — that is, shut up their persons [MAURER]. But it refers rather to the custom of binding a cloth over the faces of persons about to be executed (\*\*\*\*\*Job 9:24 \*\*\*\*Esther 7:8).

*in secret* — consign them to *darkness*.

**14.** *confess* — rather, "extol"; "I also," who now *censure* thee. But since thou canst not do these works, thou must, instead of censuring, extol *My* government.

thine own ... hand ... save — (\*\*\*Psalm 44:3). So as to eternal salvation by Jesus Christ (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 59:16 \*\*\*\*63:5).

**15-24.** God shows that if Job cannot bring under control the lower animals (of which he selects the two most striking, behemoth on land, leviathan in the water), much less is he capable of governing the world.

**behemoth** — The description in part agrees with the hippopotamus, in part with the elephant, but exactly in all details with neither. It is rather a

poetical personification of the great *Pachydermata*, or *Herbivora* (so "he eateth grass"), the idea of the hippopotamus being predominant. In "MJob 40:17, "the tail like a cedar," hardly applies to the latter (so also "MJob 40:20,23, "Jordan," a river which elephants alone could reach, but see on "MJob 40:23). On the other hand, "MJob 40:21,22 are characteristic of the *amphibious* river horse. So leviathan (the twisting animal), "MJob 41:1, is a generalized term for cetacea, pythons, saurians of the neighboring seas and rivers, including the crocodile, which is the most prominent, and is often associated with the river horse by old writers. "Behemoth" seems to be the Egyptian *Pehemout*, "water-ox," Hebraized, so-called as being like an ox, whence the Italian *bombarino*.

with thee — as I made thyself. Yet how great the difference! The manifold wisdom and power of God!

*he eateth grass* — marvellous in an animal living so much in the water; also strange, that such a monster should not be carnivorous.

**16.** *navel* — rather, "muscles" of his belly; the weakest point of the elephant, therefore *it* is not meant.

**17.** *like a cedar* — As the tempest *bends* the cedar, so it can move its smooth thick tail [UMBREIT]. But the cedar implies straightness and length, such as do not apply to the river horse's short tail, but perhaps to an extinct species of animal (see on 40:15).

stones — rather, "thighs."

wrapped — firmly twisted together, like a thick rope.

**18.** *strong* — rather, "tubes" of copper [UMBREIT].

**19.** Chief of the *works* of God; so "ways" (\*\*\*Job 26:14 \*\*\*Proverbs 8:22).

*can make his sword to approach* — rather, "has furnished him with his sword" (*harpe*), namely, the *sickle-like* teeth with which he cuts down grain. *English Version*, however, is literally right.

**20.** The mountain is not his *usual* haunt. BOCHART says it is *sometimes* found there (?).

**beasts** ... **play** — a graphic trait: though armed with such teeth, he lets the beasts play near him unhurt, for his food is grass.

**21.** *lieth* — He leads an inactive life.

shady trees — rather, "lotus bushes"; as \*\*\*Job 40:22 requires.

- **22.** *shady trees* Translate: "lotus bushes."
- **23.** Rather, "(Though) a river be violent (overflow), he trembleth not"; (for though living on land, he can live in the water, too); he is secure, though a Jordan swell up to his mouth. "Jordan" is used for *any great river* (consonant with the "behemoth"), being a poetical generalization (see on Job 40:5). The author cannot have been a *Hebrew* as UMBREIT asserts, or he would not adduce the Jordan, where there were no river horses. He alludes to it as a name for *any* river, but not as one known to him, except by hearsay.
- **24.** Rather, "Will any take him by open force" (literally, "before his eyes"), "or pierce his nose with cords?" No; he can only be taken by guile, and in a pitfall (\*\*\*\*Job 41:1,2).

### **№**0JOB 41:1-34.

**1.** *leviathan* — literally, "the twisted animal," gathering itself in folds: a synonym to the Thannin (\*\*TB\*Job 3:8, *Margin*; see \*\*Psalm 74:14; type of the Egyptian tyrant \*\*Psalm 104:26 \*\*TIsaiah 27:1; the Babylon tyrant). A poetical generalization for all cetacean, serpentine, and saurian monsters (see on \*\*STOB 40:15, hence *all* the description applies to no *one* animal); especially the crocodile; which is naturally described after the *river horse*, as both are found in the Nile.

**tongue** ... **lettest down?** — The crocodile has no tongue, or a very small one cleaving to the lower jaw. But as in fishing the tongue of the fish draws the baited hook to it, God asks, Canst thou in like manner take leviathan?

2. *hook* — rather, "a rope of rushes."

**thorn** — rather, a "ring" or "hook." So wild beasts were led about when caught ("Isaiah 37:29 Ezekiel 29:4); fishes also were secured thus and thrown into the water to keep them alive.

- **3.** *soft words* that thou mayest spare his life. No: he is untamable.
- **4.** Can he be tamed for domestic use (so 39:10-12)?
- **5.** *a bird*? that is, tamed.
- **6.** Rather, "partners" (namely, in fishing).

make a banquet — The parallelism rather supports UMBREIT, "Do partners (in trade) desire to purchase him?" So the Hebrew (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 2:6).

*merchants* — literally, "Canaanites," who were great merchants (\*\*\*\*Hosea 12:7, *Margin*).

**7.** His hide is not penetrable, as that of fishes.

- **8.** If thou *lay* ... thou wilt have reason ever to *remember* ... and thou wilt never try it again.
- **9.** *the hope* of taking *him*.
- cast down with fear "at the (mere) sight of him."
- **10.** *fierce* courageous. If a man *dare* attack one of My creatures (\*\*\*\*Genesis 49:9 \*\*\*Numbers 24:9), who will dare (as Job has wished) oppose himself (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:2) to Me, the Creator? This is the main drift of the description of leviathan.
- **11.** prevented done Me a favor first: anticipated Me with service (\*\*PSalm 21:3). None can call Me to account ("stand before Me," \*\*SUD\*Job 41:10) as unjust, because I have withdrawn favors from him (as in Job's case): for none has laid Me under a prior obligation by conferring on Me something which was not already My own. What can man give to Him who possesses all, including man himself? Man cannot constrain the creature to be his "servant" (\*\*SUD\*Job 41:4), much less the Creator.
- **12.** *I will not conceal* a resumption of the description broken off by the digression, which formed an agreeable change.

*his power* — literally, "the way," that is, true proportion or expression *of his strength* (so *Hebrew*, Deuteronomy 19:4).

- **comely proportion** literally, "the comeliness of his structure" (his apparatus: so "suit of apparel" "Judges 17:10) [MAURER]. UMBREIT translates, "his armor." But that follows after.
- **13.** *discover* rather, "uncover the surface" of his garment (*skin*, <sup>481</sup>Job 10:11): strip off the hard *outer coat* with which the inner skin is covered.
- with rather, "within his double jaws"; literally, "bridle"; hence that into which the bridle is put, the double row of teeth; but "bridle" is used to imply that none dare put his hand in to insert a bridle where in other animals it is placed (\*\*\*\*Job 41:4\*\*\*\*39:10).
- **14.** *doors of ... face* his mouth. His teeth are sixty in number, larger in proportion than his body, some standing out, some serrated, fitting into each other like a comb [BOCHART].

- **15.** Rather, his "furrows of shields" (as "tubes," "*channels*," see on <sup>\$10</sup>Job 40:18), are, etc., that is, the *rows of scales*, like *shields* covering him: he has seventeen such rows.
- **shut up** firmly closed together. A musket ball cannot penetrate him, save in the eye, throat, and belly.
- **18.** Translate: "his sneezing, causeth a light to shine." Amphibious animals, emerging after having long held their breath under water, respire by violently expelling the breath like one sneezing: in the effort the *eyes* which are usually directed towards the sun, seem to flash fire; or it is the expelled *breath* that, in the sun, seems to emit light.
- eyelids of morning The Egyptian hieroglyphics paint the eyes of the crocodile as the symbol for morning, because the eyes appear the first thing, before the whole body emerges from the deep [Horae Hierogliphicæ 1.65. BOCHART].
- **19.** burning lamps "torches"; namely, in respiring (\*\*\*\*\*Job 41:18), seem to go out.
- **20.** *seething* boiling: literally, "blown under," under which a fire is blown.
- **21.** *kindleth coals* poetical imagery (\*\*\*Psalm 18:8).
- **22.** *remaineth* abideth permanently. His chief strength is in the neck.

sorrow — anxiety or dismay personified.

*is turned into joy* — rather, "danceth," "exulteth"; wherever he goes, he spreads terror "before him."

**23.** *flakes* — rather, "dewlaps"; that which *falls* down (*Margin*). They are "joined" *fast and firm*, together, not *hanging loose*, as in the ox.

are firm — UMBREIT and MAURER, "are spread."

in themselves — rather, "upon him."

**24.** *heart* — "In large beasts which are less acute in feeling, there is great firmness of the *heart*, and slower motion" [BOCHART]. The nether millstone, on which the upper turns, is especially hard.

**25.** *he* — the crocodile; a type of the awe which the Creator inspires when He rises in wrath.

**breakings** — namely, of the mind, that is, terror.

*purify themselves* — rather, "they wander from the way," that is, flee away bewildered [MAURER and UMBREIT].

**26.** *cannot hold* — on his hard skin.

**habergeon** — coat of mail; *avail* must be taken by zeugma out of "hold," as the verb in the second clause: "hold" cannot apply to the "coat of mail."

**27.** *iron* ... *brass* — namely, weapons.

**28.** *arrow* — literally, "son of the bow"; Oriental imagery (\*\*\*\*\*\*Lamentations 3:13; *Margin*).

*stubble* — Arrows produce no more effect than it would to throw stubble at him.

**29.** *Darts* — rather, "clubs"; darts have been already mentioned (\*\*\*\*Job 41:26).

**30.** *stones* — rather, "potsherds," that is, the sharp and pointed scales on the belly, like broken pieces of pottery.

**sharp-pointed things** — rather, "a threshing instrument," but not on the *fruits* of the earth, but "on the *mire*"; irony. When he lies on the mire, he leaves the marks of his scales so imprinted on it, that one might fancy a threshing instrument with its sharp teeth had been drawn over it (\*\*\* Isaiah 28:27).

**31.** Whenever he moves.

sea — the Nile (2005 Isaiah 19:5 Na 3:8).

**pot of ointment** — the vessel in which it is mixed. Appropriate to the crocodile, which emits a musky smell.

**32.** *path* — the foam on his track.

**hoary** — as hair of the aged.

- 33. who being one who, etc.
- **34.** *beholdeth* as their superior.

*children of pride* — the proud and fierce beasts. So \*\*\*Job 28:8; *Hebrew*, "sons of pride." To humble the *pride* of man and to teach implicit submission, is the aim of Jehovah's speech and of the book; therefore with this as to leviathan, the type of God in His lordship over creation, He closes.

### CHAPTER 42

**№** JOB 42:1-6.

#### JOB'S PENITENT REPLY.

**2.** In the first clause he owns God to be omnipotent over nature, as contrasted with his own feebleness, which God had proved (\*\*\*Job 40:15 41:34); in the second, that God is supremely just (which, in order to be governor of the world, He must needs be) in all His dealings, as contrasted with his own vileness (\*\*\*Job 42:6), and incompetence to deal with the wicked as a just judge (\*\*\*Job 40:8-14).

**thought** — "purpose," as in "Job 17:11; but it is usually applied to *evil devices* ("Job 21:27" Psalm 10:2): the ambiguous word is designedly chosen to express that, while to Job's finite view, God's plans seem bad, to the All-wise One they continue unhindered in their development, and will at last be seen to be as good as they are infinitely wise. No evil can emanate from the Parent of good ("James 1:13,17); but it is His prerogative to overrule evil to good.

**3.** I am the man! Job *in God's own words* (\*\*\*\*Job 38:2) expresses his deep and humble penitence. God's word concerning our guilt should be engraven on our hearts and form the groundwork of our confession. Most men in confessing sin palliate rather than confess. Job in omitting "by words" (\*\*\*\*Job 38:2), goes even further than God's accusation. Not merely my *words*, but my whole thoughts and ways were "without knowledge."

**too wonderful** — I rashly denied that Thou hast any fixed plan in governing human affairs, merely because Thy plan was "too wonderful" for my comprehension.

**4.** When I said, "Hear," etc., Job's *demand* (\*\*\*Job 13:22) convicted him of being "without knowledge." God alone could speak thus to Job, not Job to God: therefore he quotes again God's words as the groundwork of retracting his own foolish words.

- **5.** hearing of the ear (\*\*\*\*Psalm 18:44, Margin). Hearing and seeing are often in antithesis (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 18:8).
- **seeth** not God's *face* (\*\*\*Exodus 33:20), but His presence in the veil of a dark cloud (\*\*\*Job 38:1). Job implies also that, besides this literal *seeing*, he now saw spiritually what he had indistinctly taken on hearsay before God's infinite wisdom. He "now" proves this; he had seen in a *literal* sense before, at the beginning of God's speech, but he had not seen *spiritually* till "now" at its close.
- **6.** *myself* rather "I abhor," and retract *the rash speeches* I made against thee (SUBJO 42:3,4) [UMBREIT].
- Job 42:7-17. EPILOGUE, in prose.
- **7.** *to Eliphaz* because he was the foremost of the three friends; their speeches were but the echo of his.
- **right** literally, "well-grounded," sure and true. Their spirit towards Job was unkindly, and to justify themselves in their unkindliness they used false arguments (\*\*\*\*Job 13:7); (namely, that calamities always prove *peculiar* guilt); therefore, though it was "for God" they spake thus falsely, God "reproves" them, as Job said He would (\*\*\*\*Job 13:10).
- as ... Job hath Job had spoken rightly in relation to them and their argument, denying their theory, and the fact which they alleged, that he was peculiarly guilty and a hypocrite; but wrongly in relation to God, when he fell into the opposite extreme of almost denying all guilt. This extreme he has now repented of, and therefore God speaks of him as now altogether "right."
- **8.** seven (See *Introduction*). The number offered by the Gentile prophet (\*\*PNumbers 23:1). Job plainly lived before the legal priesthood, etc. The patriarchs acted as priests for their families; and sometimes as praying mediators (\*\*TGenesis 20:17), thus foreshadowing the true Mediator (\*\*TI Timothy 2:5), but sacrifice accompanies and is the groundwork on which the mediation rests.

**him** — rather, "His *person* [face] only" (see on "Dob 22:30). The "person," must be first accepted, before God can accept his offering and work ("Genesis 4:4); *that* can be only through Jesus Christ.

**folly** — impiety (4802) Job 1:22 2:10).

- **9.** The forgiving spirit of Job foreshadows the love of Jesus Christ and of Christians to enemies (\*\*Matthew 5:44 \*\*\*Luke 23:34 \*\*\*Acts 7:60 16:24,28,30,31).
- **10.** turned ... captivity proverbial for restored, or amply indemnified him for all he had lost (\*\*Ezekiel 16:53 \*\*Psalm 14:7 \*\*Hosea 6:11). Thus the future vindication of man, body and soul, against Satan (\*\*Dob 1:9-12), at the resurrection (\*\*Dob 19:25-27), has its earnest and adumbration in the temporal vindication of Job at last by Jehovah in person.

twice — so to the afflicted literal and spiritual Jerusalem (\*\*\*\*Tsaiah 40:2 60:7 61:7 \*\*\*Zechariah 9:12). As in Job's case, so in that of Jesus Christ, the glorious recompense follows the "intercession" for enemies (\*\*\*Tsaiah 53:12).

**11.** It was Job's complaint in his misery that his "brethren," were "estranged" from him (\*\*\*\*Job 19:13); these now return with the return of his prosperity (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 14:20 \*\*\*\*\*\*19:6,7); the true friend loveth at all times (\*\*\*\*\*\*Proverbs 17:17 \*\*\*\*18:24). "Swallow friends leave in the winter and return with the spring" [Henry].

eat bread — in token of friendship (\*\*Psalm 41:9).

piece of money — Presents are usual in visiting a man of rank in the East, especially after a calamity (\*\*\*22 Chronicles 32:23). Hebrew, kesita.

MAGEE translates "a lamb" (the medium of exchange then before money was used), as it is in Margin of \*\*Genesis 33:19 \*\*Genesis 33:19 \*\*Joshua 24:32. But it is from the Arabic kasat, "weighed out" [UMBREIT], not coined; so \*\*Genesis 42:35 33:19; compare with \*\*Genesis 23:15, makes it likely it was equal to four shekels; Hebrew kashat, "pure," namely, metal. The term, instead of the usual "shekel," etc., is a mark of antiquity.

- **earring** whether for the nose or ear ( Genesis 35:4 Esaiah 3:21). Much of the gold in the East, in the absence of banks, is in the shape of ornaments.
- **12.** Probably by degrees, not all at once.
- **13.** The same number as before, Tob 1:2; perhaps by a second wife; in Tob 19:17 his wife is last mentioned.
- **14.** Names significant of his restored prosperity ( Genesis 4:25 5:29).

**Jemima** — "daylight," after his "night" of calamity; but MAURER, "a dove."

**Kezia** — "cassia," an aromatic herb (\*\*Psalm 45:8), instead of his offensive breath and ulcers.

**Keren-happuch** — "horn of stibium," a paint with which females dyed their eyelids; in contrast to his "horn defiled in the dust" (\*\*\*Job 16:15). The names also imply the beauty of his daughters.

- **15.** *inheritance among ... brethren* An unusual favor in the East to daughters, who, in the Jewish law, only inherited, if there were no sons (\*\*Numbers 27:8), a proof of wealth and unanimity.
- **16.** The *Septuagint* makes Job live a hundred seventy years after his calamity, and two hundred forty in all. This would make him seventy at the time of his calamity, which added to a hundred forty in *Hebrew* text makes up two hundred ten; a little more than the age (two hundred five) of Terah, father of Abraham, perhaps his contemporary. Man's length of life gradually shortened, fill it reached threescore and ten in Moses' time (\*\*Psalm 90:10).

sons' sons — a proof of divine favor (Genesis 50:23 decemporal 128:6 decemporate 17:6).

17. full of days — fully sated and contented with all the happiness that life could give him; realizing what Eliphaz had painted as the lot of the godly (\*\*Sob 5:26 \*\*Psalm 91:16 \*\*Genesis 25:8 \*\*35:29). The Septuagint adds, "It is written, that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will

raise up." Compare Matthew 27:52,53, from which it perhaps was derived spuriously.

#### THE BOOK OF

## **PSALMS**

Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Hebrew title of this book is *Tehilim* ("praises" or "hymns"), for a leading feature in its contents is *praise*, though the word occurs in the title of only one Psalm (the hundred forty-fifth). The Greek title (in the Septuagint, a translation made two hundred years before Christ) is *psalmoi*, whence our word "Psalms." This corresponds to the Hebrew word *mizmoi* by which sixty-five Psalms are designated in their inscriptions, and which the Syriac, a language like the Hebrew, uses for the whole book. It means, as does also the Greek name, an ode, or song, whose singing is accompanied by an instrument, particularly the harp (compare Chronicles 16:4-8 Chronicles 5:12,13). To some Psalms, the Hebrew word (*shir*) "a song," is prefixed. Paul seems to allude to all these terms in Chronicles 5:19, "singing...in *psalms*, *hymns*, and spiritual *songs*."

**Titles.** — To more than a hundred Psalms are prefixed inscriptions, which give one or more (and in one case, [Psalm 60], all) of these particulars: the direction to the musician, the name of the author or the instrument, the style of the music or of the poetry, the subject or occasion. The authority of these inscriptions has been disputed by some writers. They say that the earliest translators, as the Greek and Syriac, evince a disregard for their authority, by variations from a proper translation of some, altering others, and, in several instances, supplying titles to Psalms which, in Hebrew, had none. It is also alleged that the subject of a Psalm, as given in the title, is often inconsistent with its contents. But those translators have also varied from a right translation of many passages in the Bible, which all agree to be of good authority; and the alleged inconsistency may be shown, on more

accurate investigation, not to exist. The admitted antiquity of these inscriptions, on the other hand, and even their obscurity, raise a presumption in their favor, while such prefaces to a composition accord with the usages of that age and part of the world (compare (Saiah 38:9)).

"The Chief Musician" was the superintendent of the music (compare "to oversee," "To" Chronicles 15:21, *Margin*). "To" prefixed to this, means, "pertaining to" in his official character. This inscription is found in fifty-three Psalms and is attached to Habakkuk's prayer ("Habakkuk 3:1-19). The same Hebrew preposition is prefixed to the name of the author and translated "of," as "a Psalm *of* David," "*of* Asaph," except that to "the sons of Korah," it is translated "for," which is evidently wrong, as the usual direction, "to the chief musician," is given, and no other authorship intimated. On the apparent exception to this last remark, see below, and see on "Psalm 88:1, title. The explanations of other particulars in the titles will be given as they occur.

**Authors**. — This book is often called "The Psalms of David," he being the only author mentioned in the New Testament (\*\*Luke 20:42) and his name appearing in more titles than that of any other writer. Besides about one-half of the Psalms in which it thus appears, Psalms 2 and 95 are ascribed to him (\*\*Acts 4:25 and \*\*Hebrews 4:7). He was probably the author of many others which appear without a name. He used great efforts to beautify the worship of the sanctuary. Among the two hundred eightyeight Levites he appointed for singing and performing instrumental music, we find mentioned the "sons of Korah" (400e) Chronicles 9:19); including Heman (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 6:33-38); and also Asaph (\*\*\*\*1 Chronicles 6:39-44); and Ethan ( Chronicles 15:19). God was doubtless pleased to endow these men with the inspiration of His Spirit, so that they used those poetic talents which their connection with the kindred art of music had led them to cultivate, in the production of compositions like those of their king and patron. To Asaph are ascribed twelve Psalms; to the sons of Korah, eleven, including the eighty-eighth, which is also ascribed to Heman, that being the only instance in which the name of the "son" (or descendant) is mentioned; and to Ethan, one. Solomon's name appears before the seventy-second and hundred twenty-seventh; and that of Moses before the ninetieth. Special questions respecting authorship will be explained as they arise.

Contents. — As the book contains one hundred fifty independent compositions, it is not susceptible of any logical analysis. The Jews having divided it into five books, corresponding to the Five Books of Moses (First, Psalms 1-42; Second, Psalms 43-72; Third, Psalms 73-89; Fourth, Psalms 90-106; Fifth, Psalms 107-150), many attempts have been made to discover, in this division, some critical or practical value, but in vain. Sundry efforts have been made to classify the Psalms by subject. *Angus' Bible Hand Book* is perhaps the most useful, and is appended.

Still the Psalms have a form and character peculiar to themselves; and with individual diversities of style and subject, they all assimilate to that form, and together constitute a consistent system of moral truth. They are all poetical, and of that peculiar parallelism (see *Introduction to the Poetical Books*,) which distinguished Hebrew poetry. They are all lyrical, or songs adapted to musical instruments, and all religious lyrics, or such as were designed to be used in the sanctuary worship.

The distinguishing feature of the Psalms is their devotional character. Whether their matter be didactic, historical, prophetical, or practical, it is made the ground or subject of prayer, or praise, or both. The doctrines of theology and precepts of pure morality are here inculcated. God's nature, attributes, perfections, and works of creation, providence, and grace, are unfolded. In the sublimest conceptions of the most exalted verse, His glorious supremacy over the principalities of heaven, earth, and hell, and His holy, wise, and powerful control of all material and immaterial agencies, are celebrated. The great covenant of grace resting on the fundamental promise of a Redeemer, both alike the provisions of God's exhaustless mercy, is set forth in respect of the doctrines of regeneration by the Spirit, forgiveness of sins, repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ, while its glorious results, involving the salvation of men "from the ends of the earth" [ Acts 13:47], are proclaimed in believing, prophetic prayer and thankful praise. The personal history of the authors, and especially David's in its spiritual aspects, is that of God's people generally. Christian biography is edifying only as it is truth illustrated in experience, such as God's Word and Spirit produce. It may be factitious in origin and of doubtful authenticity. But here the experience of the truly pious is detailed, under divine influence, and "in words which the Holy Ghost" taught [403] Corinthians 2:13]. The whole inner life of the pious man is laid open, and Christians of all ages have here the temptations, conflicts, perplexities, doubts, fears, penitent moanings, and overwhelming griefs on the one hand, and the joy and hope of pardoning mercy, the victory over the seductions of false-hearted flatterers, and deliverance from the power of Satan on the other, with which to compare their own spiritual exercises. Here, too, are the fruits of that sovereign mercy, so often sought in earnest prayer, and when found, so often sung in rapturous joy, exhibited by patience in adversity, moderation in prosperity, zeal for God's glory, love for man, justice to the oppressed, holy contempt for the proud, magnanimity towards enemies, faithfulness towards friends, delight in the prosperity of Zion, and believing prayer for her enlargement and perpetuity.

The historical summaries of the Psalms are richly instructive. God's choice of the patriarchs, the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, their exodus, temptations of God, rebellions and calamities in the wilderness, settlement in Canaan, backslidings and reformations, furnish illustrations of God's providential government of His people, individually and collectively, tending to exalt His adorable grace and abase human pride. But the promises and prophecies connected with these summaries, and elsewhere presented in the Psalms, have a far wider reach, exhibiting the relations of the book to the great theme of promise and prophecy:

The Messiah And His Kingdom. — David was God's chosen servant to rule His people, as the head at once of the State and the Church, the lineal ancestor, "according to the flesh" [ACCORD ROMAND 1:3], of His adorable Son, and His type, in His official relations, both in suffering and in triumph. Generally, David's trials by the ungodly depicted the trials of Christ, and his final success the success of Christ's kingdom. Typically, he uses language describing his feelings, which only finds its full meaning in the feelings of Christ. As such it is quoted and applied in the New Testament. And further, in view of the great promise (ADD 2 Samuel 7:12-16) to him and his seed, to which such frequent reference is made in the Psalms, David was inspired to know, that though his earthly kingdom should perish, his spiritual would ever endure, in the power, beneficence, and glory of Christ's. In repeating and amplifying that promise, he speaks not only as a type, but "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the

flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," he "foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. His incarnation, humiliating sorrows, persecution, and cruel death are disclosed in the plaintive cries of a despairing sufferer; and His resurrection and ascension, His eternal priesthood, His royal dignity, His prophetical office, the purchase and bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit, the conversion of the nations, the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Church, the end of time, and the blessedness of the righteous who acknowledge, and the ruin of the wicked who reject this King in Zion, are predicted in the language of assured confidence and joy." While these great themes have supplied the people of God with a popular theology and a guide in religious experience and Christian morality, clothed in the language of devotion, they have provided an inspired liturgy in which the pious, of all creeds and sects, have, for nearly three thousand years, poured out their prayers and praises. The pious Jew, before the coming of Christ, mourned over the adversity, or celebrated the future glories, of Zion, in the words of her ancient king. Our Savior, with His disciples, sang one of these hymns on the night on which He was betrayed [ Matthew 26:30]; He took from one the words in which He uttered the dreadful sorrows of His soul Matthew 27:46], and died with those of another on His lips [ Luke 23:46]. Paul and Silas in the dungeon [ \*\*Acts 16:25], primitive Christians in their covert places of worship, or the costly churches of a later day, and the scattered and feeble Christian flocks in the prevalence of darkness and error through the Middle Ages, fed their faith and warmed their love with these consoling songs. Now, throughout the Christian world, in untold forms of version, paraphrase, and imitation, by Papists and Protestants, Prelatists and Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Methodists — men of all lands and all creeds, in public and private worship, God is still adored in the sentiments expressed in these venerable Psalms. From the tone of sorrow and suffering which pervade their earlier portions we are gradually borne on amid alternate conflicts and triumphs, mournful complaints and awakening confidence; as we approach the close the tones of sorrow grow feebler, and those of praise wax louder and stronger — till, in the exulting strains of the last Psalm, the chorus of earth mingles with the hallelujahs of the multitude, which no man can number, in the sanctuary above.

Angus' or Bickersteth's arrangement may be profitably used as a guide for finding a Psalm on a special topic. It is a little modified, as follows:

#### 1. Didactic.

- (1) Good and bad men: Psalms 1, 5, 7, 9-12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133;
- (2) God's law: Psalms 19, 119;
- (3) Human life vain: Psalms 39, 49, 90;
- (4) Duty of rulers: Psalms 82, 101.

#### 2. Praise.

- (1) For God's goodness generally to Israel: Psalms 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149;
- (2) To good men, Psalms 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146;
- (3) Mercies to individuals: Psalms 9, 18, 22, 30, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144;
- (4) For His attributes generally: Psalms 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95-97, 99 104, 111, 113-115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150

### **3.** Devotional — expressive of

- (1) Penitence: Psalms 6, 25, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143;
- (2) Trust in trouble: Psalms 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86;
- (3) Sorrow with hope: Psalms 13, 22, 69, 77, 88;
- (4) Of deep distress: Psalms 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 143;
- (5) Feelings when deprived of religious privileges: Psalms 42, 43, 63, 84;
- (6) Desire for help: Psalms 7, 17, 26, 35, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 129, 137;

- (7) Intercession: Psalms 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.
- 4. Historical. Psalms 78, 105, 106.
- **5.** Prophetical. Psalms 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 69, 72, 97, 110, 118.

Note. — The compiler of the following notes has omitted all references to authors, as needlessly encumbering the commentary. He has had before him the works of Calvin, Scott, Poole, Ainsworth, Cobbin, Geice, Vatablus, Tholuck, J. H. Michaelis, Rosenmuller, and Alexander. To the two last named he has been particularly indebted for the parallel passages. He has made a free use of the views advanced by these authors, and claims no credit for anything in the work except the conciseness united with fullness of exposition. Whoever attempts it will find it far easier to write a long commentary than a brief one.

### 

The character and condition, and the present and future destiny, of the pious and the wicked are described and contrasted, teaching that true piety is the source of ultimate happiness, and sin of misery. As this is a summary of the teachings of the whole book, this Psalm, whether designedly so placed or not, forms a suitable preface.

**1.** *Blessed* — literally, "oh, the happiness" — an exclamation of strong emotion, as if resulting from reflecting on the subject. The use of the plural may denote fullness and variety (4002 Chronicles 9:7).

**counsel ... way ... seat** — With their corresponding verbs, mark gradations of evil, as acting on the principles, cultivating the society, and permanently conforming to the conduct of the wicked, who are described by three terms, of which the last is indicative of the boldest impiety (compare \*\*PSalm 26:4,5 \*\*\* Jeremiah 15:17).

- 2. *law* all of God's word then written, especially the books of Moses (compare Psalm 119:1,55,97, etc.).

*planted* — settled, fast.

**by** — or, "over."

the rivers — canals for irrigation.

**shall prosper** — literally, "make prosper," brings to perfection. The basis of this condition and character is given (\*\*Psalm 32:1).

**4.** *not so* — either as to conduct or happiness.

*like the chaff* — which, by Eastern modes of winnowing against the wind, was utterly blown away.

- **5.** *stand in the judgment* be acquitted. They shall be driven from among the good (\*\*Matthew 25:45,46).
- **6. knoweth the way** attends to and provides for them (\*Psalm 101:6 Proverbs 12:10 \*Hosea 13:5).

### **♥900**PSALM 2:1-12.

The number and authorship of this Psalm are stated (\*\*\*Acts 4:25\*\*13:33). Though the warlike events of David's reign may have suggested its imagery, the scenes depicted and the subjects presented can only find a fulfillment in the history and character of Jesus Christ, to which, as above cited and in \*\*\*Thebrews 1:5\*\*\*5:5, the New Testament writers most distinctly testify. In a most animated and highly poetical style, the writer, in "four stanzas of three verses each," sets forth the inveterate and furious, though futile, hostility of men to God and His anointed, God's determination to carry out His purpose, that purpose as stated more fully by His Son, the establishment of the Mediatorial kingdom, and the imminent danger of all who resist, as well as the blessing of all who welcome this mighty and triumphant king.

**1.** Why do the heathen, etc. — Beholding, in prophetic vision, the peoples and nations, as if in a tumultuous assembly, raging with a fury like the raging of the sea, designing to resist God's government, the writer breaks forth into an exclamation in which are mingled surprise at their folly, and indignation at their rebellion.

**heathen** — nations generally, not as opposed to Jews.

*the people* — or, literally, "peoples," or races of men.

2. The kings and rulers lead on their subjects.

set themselves — take a stand.

*take counsel* — literally, "sit together," denoting their deliberation.

anointed — Hebrew, "Messiah"; Greek, "Christ" (\*\*\*John 1:41).

Anointing, as an emblem of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, was conferred on prophets (\*\*\*Exodus 30:30); and kings (\*\*\*\*Exodus 30:30); and kings (\*\*\*\*Exodus 10:1\*\*\*Exodus 30:30). Hence this title well suited Him who holds

all these offices, and was generally used by the Jews before His coming, to denote Him (\*\*Daniel 9:26). While the prophet has in view men's opposition generally, he here depicts it in its culminating aspect as seen in the events of Christ's great trial. Pilate and Herod, and the rulers of the Jews (\*\*\*Matthew 27:1 \*\*\*Luke 23:1-25), with the furious mob, are vividly portrayed.

**3.** The rebellious purposes of men are more distinctly announced by this representation of their avowal in words, as well as actions.

**bands** ... and ... cords — denote the restraints of government.

**4.** By a figure whose boldness is only allowable to an inspired writer, God's conduct and language in view of this opposition are now related.

He that sitteth in the heavens — enthroned in quiet dignities (compare Psalm 29:10 (SIE) Isaiah 40:22).

**shall laugh** — in supreme contempt; their vain rage excites His derision. He is still *the Lord*, literally, "Sovereign," though they rebel.

**5.** Then shall he speak — His righteous indignation as well as contempt is roused. For God to speak is for Him to act, for what He resolves He will do (\*\*Genesis 1:3\*\*\*Psalm 33:9).

*vex them* — agitate or terrify them (\*\*\*Psalm 83:15).

**6.** The purpose here declared, in its execution, involves their overthrow.

**Yet** — literally, "and," in an adversative sense.

*I have set* — anointed, or firmly placed, with allusion in the *Hebrew* to "casting an image in a mould." The sense is not materially varied in either case.

my king — appointed by Me and for Me (\*\*Numbers 27:18).

upon my holy hill of Zion — Zion, selected by David as the abode of the ark and the seat of God's visible residence (\*\*\*I Kings 8:1); as also David, the head of the Church and nation, and type of Christ, was called holy, and the Church itself came to be thus named (\*\*\*Psalm 9:11 \*\*\*51:18

**7.** The king thus constituted declares the fundamental law of His kingdom, in the avowal of His Sonship, a relation involving His universal dominion.

this day have I begotten thee — as The Samuel 7:14, "he shall be My son," is a solemn recognition of this relation. The interpretation of this passage to describe the inauguration of Christ as Mediatorial King, by no means impugns the Eternal Sonship of His divine nature. In Acts 13:33, Paul's quotation does not imply an application of this passage to the resurrection; for "raised up" in Acts 13:32 is used as in Acts 2:30 are 3:22, etc., to denote bringing Him into being as a man; and not that of resurrection, which it has only when, as in Acts 2:34, allusion is made to His death (Romans 1:4). That passage says He was declared as to His divine nature to be the Son of God, by the resurrection, and only teaches that that event manifested a truth already existing. A similar recognition of His Sonship is introduced in Hebrews 5:5, by these ends, and by others in Matthew 3:17

**8.** The hopes of the rebels are thus overthrown, and not only so; the kingdom they opposed is destined to be coextensive with the earth.

heathen — or, "nations" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:1).

and the uttermost parts of the earth — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:27); denotes universality.

*rod of iron* — denotes severity (\*\*\*\*Revelation 2:27).

*a potter's vessel* — when shivered cannot be mended, which will describe utter destruction.

- **10-12.** *kings* ... *judges* For rulers generally (\*\*Psalm 148:11), who have been leaders in rebellion, should be examples of penitent submission, and with fear for His terrible judgments, mingled with trust in His mercy, acknowledge —
- **12.** *Kiss the Son* the authority of the Son.

*perish from the way* — that is, suddenly and hopelessly.

kindled but a little — or, "in a little time."

put their trust in him — or take refuge in Him (\*\*\*Psalm 5:11). Men still cherish opposition to Christ in their hearts and evince it in their lives. Their ruin, without such trust, is inevitable (\*\*\*PHebrews 10:29), while their happiness in His favor is equally sure.

### **PSALM 3:1-8.**

For the historical occasion mentioned, compare Samuel 15:1-17:29. David, in the midst of great distress, with filial confidence, implores God's aid, and, anticipating relief, offers praise.

- **1.** *Lord* ... *increased* The extent of the rebellion (\*\*\*2 Samuel 15:13) surprises and grieves him.
- **2.** say of my soul that is, "of me" (compare \*\*Psalm 25:3). This use of "soul" is common; perhaps it arose from regarding the soul as man's chief part.

**no help ... in God** — rejected by Him. This is the bitterest reproach for a pious man, and denotes a spirit of malignant triumph.

**Selah** — This word is of very obscure meaning. It probably denotes *rest* or *pause*, both as to the music and singing, intimating something emphatic in the sentiment (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:16).

**3. But** — literally, "and" (\*\*\*Psalm 2:6). He repels the reproach by avowing his continued trust.

**shield** — a favorite and often-used figure for protection.

*my glory* — its source.

*lifter up of mine head* — one who raises me from despondency.

**4.** *cried* ... *heard* — Such has been my experience. The latter verb denotes a gracious hearing or answering.

out of — or, "from."

*his holy hill* — Zion (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:6). His visible earthly residence.

**5.** *the Lord sustained me* — literally, "will sustain me," the reason of his composure.

- **6.** *ten thousands of people* or, "myriads," any very great number (compare 30082 Samuel 16:18).
- **7.** *Arise*, *O Lord* God is figuratively represented as asleep to denote His apparent indifference (\*\*\*Psalm 7:6). The use of "*cheekbone*" and "*teeth*" represents his enemies as fierce, like wild beasts ready to devour (\*\*\*Psalm 27:2), and smiting their cheekbone (\*\*\*I Kings 22:24) denotes violence and insult.

*thou hast broken* — God took his part, utterly depriving the enemy of power to injure.

**8.** an ascription of praise to a delivering God, whose favor is an efficient benefit.

### 

On Neginoth, that is, stringed instruments, as the kind of musical accompaniment. On other parts of title, see *Introduction*., The historical occasion was probably the same as that of the foregoing [see on \*\*Psalm 3:1]. The writer, praying for further relief, admonishes his enemies of the vanity of attacking God's servant, exhorts them to repentance, and avows his confidence and peace in God's favor.

**1.** *Hear* — as in \*\*Psalm 3:4.

God of my righteousness — or, "my righteous God, as my holy hill" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:6), who will act towards me on righteous principles.

*thou hast enlarged* — expresses relief afforded in opposition to "distress," which is expressed by a word denoting straits or pressure. Past favor is a ground of hope for the future.

**2.** sons of men — men of note or prominence (compare 400)2 Chronicles 21:9).

turn my glory — or, "royal dignity."

into shame — or, "reproach."

*vanity* — a foolish and hopeless enterprise (\*\*Psalm 2:1).

*leasing* — a lie.

- **3. godly** an object as well as subject of divine favor (compare \*Psalm 105:14,15).
- **4.** Stand in awe (\*\*Dephesians 4:26), from Septuagint, "be angry." Both clauses are qualified by "not."
- **5.** Not only repent, but manifest penitence by sacrifices or righteousness or righteous sacrifices, etc.

**6, 7.** Contrast true with vain confidence.

**light of thy countenance upon us** — figure for favor (\*\*Numbers 6:26 \*\*Numbers 44:3 \*\*\*\*81:16).

7. corn and wine — literally, "new corn and wine."

increased — an abundant harvest giving great joy ( saiah 9:3).

**8.** both lay me down, etc. — or, will lie down at once, and sleep in sure confidence and quiet repose (\*\*\*Psalm 3:5).

### **♥9701**PSALM 5:1-12.

**Upon Nehiloth** — flutes or wind instruments. The writer begs to be heard, on the ground of God's regard for His covenant-people and true worshippers as contrasted with His holy hatred to the wicked. He prays for divine guidance, on account of his watchful, malignant, and deceitful enemies; and for their destruction as being also God's enemies. At the same time he expresses his confidence that God will extend aid to His people.

- **1.** *meditation* moanings of that half-uttered form to which deep feeling gives rise groanings, as in Romans 8:26,27.
- **2.** *Hearken* incline the ear (\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:17; compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 61:2) give close attention.

my cry — that is, for help (\*\*\*Psalm 61:2 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 8:19).

my King — thus by covenant relation interested in my cause.

- 3. *direct* literally, "set in order," as the showbread was placed or set in order (\*\*Exodus 40:23).
- **4.** *For*, etc. God only regards sincere worshippers.

evil — or, "the evil man."

**dwell** — lodge, remain under protection.

**5.** *foolish* — vainglorious and insolent.

*iniquity* — especially such as denotes a negation, or defect, that is, of moral principle.

6. leasing — a lie.

*the bloody ... man* — literally, "man of blood" — murderer.

7. But — as in Psalm 2:6, literally, "and."

**house** — ( Chronicles 9:23), the tabernacle.

*temple* — literally, "palace," applied to God's residence, the Holy of Holies ("" Samuel 3:3" Samuel 22:7); the inner part of the tabernacle.

toward — not in; the high priest alone was allowed to enter.

**8.** *enemies* — literally, "watchers" (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 27:11), hence special need of guidance.

*in thy righteousness* — an attribute implying faithfulness in promises as well as threatenings.

*make thy way straight* — that is, make the way of providence plain.

**9.** The wicked are not reliable because by nature they are full of wickedness, or literally, "wickednesses," of every kind (\*\*Romans 8:7).

*sepulcher* — a dwelling-place of corruption, emitting moral putridness.

*flatter* — or, "make smooth."

*their tongue* — speaks deceitfully.

- **10.** *Destroy* or, "condemn" them to destruction as guilty.
- **11.** *defendest* (compare *Margin*).

*love thy name* — Thy manifested perfections (\*\*\*Psalm 9:10).

**12.** *with favor* — or, "acceptance," alluding to the favor shown to an acceptable offering and worshipper (\*\*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 7:18,19:7).

**shield** — (compare \*\*Psalm 3:3).

#### 

On Neginoth (See on \*\*\*Psalm 4:1, title) upon Sheminith — the eighth — an instrument for the eighth key; or, more probably, the bass, as it is contrasted with Alamoth (the treble, \*\*\*Psalm 46:1) in \*\*\*I Chronicles 15:20,21. In deep affliction the Psalmist appeals to God's mercy for relief from chastisement, which otherwise must destroy him, and thus disable him for God's service. Sure of a gracious answer, he triumphantly rebukes his foes.

- 1. He owns his ill desert in begging a relief from chastisement.
- 2. I am weak as a culled plant ( saiah 24:4).

my bones — the very frame.

are vexed — (\*\*PS Psalm 2:5) — shaken with fear.

3. how long? — shall this be so (compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 79:5).

*but* — or, "and."

**thou** — The sentence is incomplete as expressive of strong emotion.

**4.** *Return* — that is, to my relief; or, "turn," as now having His face averted.

*for thy mercies' sake* — to illustrate Thy mercy.

**5.** (Compare Psalm 115:17,18 Isaiah 38:18). There is no incredulity as to a future state. The contrast is between this scene of life, and the grave or *Sheol*, the unseen world of the dead.

give ... thanks — or, "praise for mercies."

**6.** By a strong figure the abundance as well as intensity of grief is depicted.

**7.** *consumed* — or, "has failed," denoting general debility (\*\*Psalm 13:3 38:10).

waxeth old — or, "dim."

grief — mingled with indignation.

- **8, 9.** Assured of God's hearing, he suddenly defies his enemies by an address indicating that he no longer fears them.
- **10.** and knows they will be disappointed and in their turn (compare Psalm 6:3) be terror-stricken or confounded.

### **♥9701**PSALM 7:1-17.

Shiggaion — a plaintive song or elegy. Though obscure in details, this title seems to intimate that the occasion of this Psalm was some event in David's persecution by Saul. He prays for relief because he is innocent, and God will be glorified in his vindication. He thus passes to the celebration of God's righteous government, in defending the upright and punishing the wicked, whose malignant devices will result in their own ruin; and, confident of God's aid, he closes with rejoicing.

- **1, 2.** Though many enemies set upon him, one is singled out as prominent, and compared to a wild beast tearing his prey to pieces (compare Samuel 20:1 23:23 26:19).
- **3.** *if I have done this* that is, the crime charged in the "words of Cush" (compare \*\*\frac{4020}{2} 1 Samuel 24:9).
- **4.** If I have injured my friend.
- **yea, I have delivered,** etc. This makes a good sense, but interrupts the course of thought, and hence it is proposed to render, "if I have spoiled my enemy" in either case (compare \*\* Samuel 24:4-17 \*\*\* Samuel 24:4-17
- **5.** This is the consequence, if such has been his conduct.
- *mine honor* (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 3:3 \*\*\*\*4:2) my personal and official dignity.
- **6.** God is involved as if hitherto careless of him (\*\*Psalm 3:7 9:18).
- *rage* the most violent, like a flood rising over a river's banks.
- the judgment ... commanded or, "ordained"; a just decision.
- 7. *compass thee* as those seeking justice.

- **return thou on high** assume the judgment seat, to be honored as a just Ruler by them.
- **8.** Though not claiming innocence in general, he can confidently do so in this case, and in demanding from the Judge of all the earth a judgment, he virtually asks acquittal.
- **9.** the hearts and reins the affections and motives of men, or the seat of them (compare \*\*\*Psalm 16:7 \*\*\*26:2); as we use heart and bosom or breast.
- **10.** *defense* literally, "shield" ("Psalm 5:12).
- **11.** *judgeth* as in <sup>□</sup>Psalm 7:8.
- *the wicked* Though not expressed, they are implied, for they alone are left as objects of anger.
- **12, 13.** They are here distinctly pointed out, though by changing the person, a very common mode of speech, one is selected as a representative of wicked men generally. The military figures are of obvious meaning.
- **13.** *against the persecutors* Some render "for burning," but the former is the best sense. Arrows for burning would be appropriate in besieging a town, not in warring against one man or a company in open fight.
- **14.** The first clause expresses the general idea that wicked men labor to do evil, the others carry out the figure fully.
- **15, 16.** These verses are expository of Psalm 7:14, showing how the devices of the wicked end in disappointment, falsifying their expectations.
- **17.** *his righteousness* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 5:8). Thus illustrated in the defense of His servant and punishment of the wicked.

### **♥900**PSALM 8:1-19.

**Upon** [or according to the] *Gittith*, probably means that the musical performance was directed to be according to a tune of that name; which, derived from *Gath*, a "wine-press," denotes a tune (used in connection with gathering the vintage) of a joyous character. All the Psalms to which this term is prefixed [\*\*\*Psalm 8:1 \*\*\*\*81:1 \*\*\*84:1] are of such a character. The Psalmist gives vent to his admiration of God's manifested perfections, by celebrating His condescending and beneficent providence to man as evinced by the position of the race, as originally created and assigned a dominion over the works of His hands.

**1.** thy name — perfections (\*\*\*\*Psalm 5:11 \*\*\*\*7:17).

who hast set — literally, "which set Thou Thy glory," etc. or "which glory of Thine set Thou," etc. that is, make it more conspicuous as if earth were too small a theater for its display. A similar exposition suits the usual rendering.

**2.** So manifest are God's perfections, that by very weak instruments He conclusively sets forth His praise. Infants are not only wonderful illustrations of God's power and skill, in their physical constitution, instincts, and early developed intelligence, but also in their spontaneous admiration of God's works, by which they put to shame —

still — or, silence men who rail and cavil against God. A special illustration of the passage is afforded in Matthew 21:16, when our Savior *stilled* the cavillers by quoting these words; for the glories with which God invested His incarnate Son, even in His humiliation, constitute a most wonderful display of the perfections of His wisdom, love, and power. In view of the scope of Psalm 8:4-8 (see below), this quotation by our Savior may be regarded as an exposition of the prophetical character of the words.

**sucklings** — among the Hebrews were probably of an age to speak (compare 491221 Samuel 1:22-24 41227).

**ordained** — founded, or prepared, and perfected, which occurs in Matthew 21:16; taken from the *Septuagint*, has the same meaning.

**strength** — In the quotation in the New Testament, praise occurs as the consequence or effect put for the cause (compare Psalm 118:14).

avenger — as in \*Psalm 44:16; one desirous of revenge, disposed to be quarrelsome, and so apt to cavil against God's government.

- **3, 4.** The allusion to the magnificence of the visible heavens is introduced for the purpose of illustrating God's condescension, who, though the mighty Creator of these glorious worlds of light, makes man the object of regard and recipient of favor.
- **4.** *man* literally, "frail man," an allusion to his essential infirmity.

**son of man** — only varies the form of speech.

*visitest* — in favor (\*\*\*Psalm 65:10). This favor is now more fully illustrated.

**5-8.** God has placed man next in dignity to angels, and but a little lower, and has crowned him with the empire of the world.

glory and honor — are the attributes of royal dignity (\*\*\*Psalm 21:5\*\*45:3). The position assigned man is that described (\*\*\*Genesis 1:26-28) as belonging to Adam, in his original condition, the terms employed in detailing the subjects of man's dominion corresponding with those there used. In a modified sense, in his present fallen state, man is still invested with some remains of this original dominion. It is very evident, however, by the apostle's inspired expositions (\*\*\*Thebrews 2:6-8\*\*\*1 Corinthians 15:27,28) that the language here employed finds its fulfillment only in the final exaltation of Christ's human nature. There is no limit to the "all things" mentioned, God only excepted, who "puts all things under." Man, in the person and glorious destiny of Jesus of Nazareth, the second Adam, the head and representative of the race, will not only be restored to his original position, but exalted far beyond it. "The last enemy, death," through fear of which, man, in his present estate, is "all his lifetime in

bondage" [\*\*\*Hebrews 2:15], "shall be destroyed" [\*\*\*\*I Corinthians 15:26]. Then *all things* will have been put under his feet, "principalities and powers being made subject to him" [\*\*\*IPeter 3:22]. This view, so far from being alien from the scope of the passage, is more consistent than any other; for man as a race cannot well be conceived to have a higher honor put upon him than to be thus exalted in the person and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth. And at the same time, by no other of His glorious manifestations has God more illustriously declared those attributes which distinguish His name than in the scheme of redemption, of which this economy forms such an important and essential feature. In the generic import of the language, as describing man's present relation to the works of God's hands, it may be regarded as typical, thus allowing not only the usual application, but also this higher sense which the inspired writers of the New Testament have assigned it.

**9.** Appropriately, the writer closes this brief but pregnant and sublime song of praise with the terms of admiration with which it was opened.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 9:1-20.

Upon Muthlabben, or, after the manner according to "death to the Son," by which some song was known, to whose air or melody the musician is directed to perform this Psalm. This mode of denoting a song by some prominent word or words is still common (compare \*\*Psalm 22:1). The Psalmist praises God for deliverance from his enemies and celebrates the divine government, for providing security to God's people and punishment to the wicked. Thus encouraging himself, he prays for new occasions to recount God's mercies, and confident of His continued judgment on the wicked and vindication of the oppressed, he implores a prompt and efficient manifestation of the divine sovereignty.

- **1.** Heartfelt gratitude will find utterance.
- **3-5.** When ... are turned back It is the result of God's power alone. He, as a righteous Judge (\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:11), vindicates His people. He rebukes by acts as well as words (\*\*\*\*Psalm 6:1 \*\*\*\*18:15), and so effectually as to destroy the names of nations as well as persons.
- **6.** Literally, "As to the enemy finished are his ruins for ever. Thou [God] hast destroyed," etc. (\*\*\*\* Samuel 15:3,7 \*\*\*\*27:8,9). The wicked are utterly undone. Their ruins shall never be repaired.
- **7, 8.** God's eternal possession of a throne of justice is contrasted with the ruin of the wicked.
- **9, 10.** The oppressed, and all who know Him (\*\*\*Psalm 5:3\*\*\*7:1), find Him a sure refuge.
- **11.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 2:6 \*\*\*3:4).
- **12.** *for blood* that is, murders (\*\*Psalm 5:6), including all the oppressions of His people.

*maketh inquisition* — (compare Genesis 9:5). He will avenge their cause.

- 13. gates or, "regions."
- *of death* Gates being the entrance is put for the bounds.
- **14.** gates ... Zion The enclosure of the city (compare \*\*Psalm 48:12 Isaiah 23:12), or, church, as denoted by this phrase contrasted with that of death, carries out the idea of exaltation as well as deliverance. Signal favors should lead us to render signal and public thanks.
- **15, 16.** The undesigned results of the devices of the wicked prove them to be of God's overruling or ordering, especially when those results are destructive to the wicked themselves.
- **16.** *Higgaion* means "meditation," and, combined with *Selah*, seems to denote a pause of unusual solemnity and emphasis (compare "Psalm 3:2). Though *Selah* occurs seventy-three times, this is the only case in which *Higgaion* is found. In the view which is given here of the retribution on the wicked as an instance of God's wise and holy ordering, we may well pause in adoring wonder and faith.
- **17.** *shall be turned* or, "shall turn," retreating under God's vengeance, and driven by Him to the extreme of destruction, even hell itself. Those who forget God are classed with the deprayed and openly profane.
- **18.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 13:1-6).

*the needy* — literally, "poor," as deprived of anything; hence miserable.

expectation of the poor — or, "meek," "humble," made so by affliction.

**19.** *Arise* — (compare \*\*\* Psalm 4:7).

*let not man* — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 8:4).

*let* ... *be judged* — and of course condemned.

**20.** By their effectual subjection, make them to realize their frail nature (\*\*\*\*Psalm 8:4), and deter them from all conceit and future rebellion.

### PSALM 10:1-18.

The Psalmist mourns God's apparent indifference to his troubles, which are aggravated by the successful malice, blasphemy, pride, deceit, and profanity of the wicked. On the just and discriminating providence of God he relies for the destruction of their false security, and the defense of the needy.

**1.** These are, of course, figurative terms (compare \*\*\*Psalm 7:6 \*\*\*\*Psalm 7:6 \*\*\*\*\*13:1, etc.).

hidest — Supply "thine eyes" or "face."

- **2.** Literally, "In pride of the wicked they (the poor or humble, "Psalm 10:17 "Psalm 12:5) shall be taken in the devices they (the proud) have imagined."
- **3.** *heart's* or, "soul's."

*desire* — that is, his success in evil.

*and blesseth*, etc. — he (the wicked) blesseth the covetous, he despiseth the Lord.

- **4.** The face expresses the self-conceit, whose fruit is practical atheism (\*\*\*Psalm 14:1).
- **7-10.** The malignity and deceit (\*\*Psalm 140:3) of such are followed by acts combining cunning, fraud, and violence (compare \*\*Proverbs 1:11,18), aptly illustrated by the habits of the lion, and of hunters taking their prey. "Poor," in \*\*Psalm 10:8,10,14, represents a word peculiar to this Psalm,

meaning the sad or sorrowful; in \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:9, as usual, it means the pious or meek sufferer.

- **8.** eyes ... privily He watches with half-closed eyes, appearing not to see.
- **10.** *croucheth* as a lion gathers himself into as small compass as possible to make the greater spring.

*fall by his strong ones* — The figure of the lion is dropped, and this phrase means the accomplices of the chief or leading wicked man.

- **11.** As before, such conduct implies disbelief or disregard of God's government.
- **12.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:19 \*\*\*\*3:7).

*the humble* — (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 10:17, and *Margin*.)

*lift up thine hand* — exert thy power.

- **13, 14.** It is in vain to suppose God will overlook sin, however forbearing; for He carefully examines or beholds all wickedness, and will mark it by His providential (Thine hand) punishment.
- **14.** *mischief and spite* provocation and trouble of the sufferer (compare Psalm 6:7 \*\*\*7:14).

committeth — or, "leaves (his burden) on Thee."

**15.** *arm* — power.

till thou find none — So far from not requiting (\*\*\*Psalm 10:11,13), God will utterly destroy the wicked and his deeds (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:5,6 \*\*\*34:16 \*\*\*37:36).

**16-18.** God reigns. The wicked, if for a time successful, shall be cut off. He hears and confirms the hearts of His suffering people (\*\*Psalm 112:7), executes justice for the feeble, and represses the pride and violence of conceited, though frail, men (compare \*\*Psalm 9:16).

### ◆910 PSALM 11:1-7.

On title, see *Introduction*. Alluding to some event in his history, as in Samuel 23:13, the Psalmist avows his confidence in God, when admonished to flee from his raging persecutors, whose destruction of the usual foundations of safety rendered all his efforts useless. The grounds of his confidence are God's supreme dominion, His watchful care of His people, His hatred to the wicked and judgments on them, and His love for righteousness and the righteous.

**1.** *my soul* — me (\*\*PPsalm 3:2).

*Flee* — literally, "flee ye"; that is, he and his companion.

as a bird to your mountain — having as such no safety but in flight (compare 4000) 1 Samuel 26:20 Camentations 3:52).

- **2.** *privily* literally, "in darkness," treacherously.
- **3.** Literally, "The foundations (that is, of good order and law) will be destroyed, what has the righteous done (to sustain them)?" All his efforts have failed.
- **4.** *temple* ... *heaven* The connection seems to denote God's heavenly residence; the term used is taken from the place of His visible earthly abode (\*\*Psalm 2:6\*\*3:4\*\*5:7). Thence He inspects men with close scrutiny.
- **5.** The trial of the righteous results in their approval, as it is contrasted with God's hatred to the wicked.
- **6.** Their punishment is described by vivid figures denoting abundant, sudden, furious, and utter destruction (compare Genesis 19:24 Solution 18:15 Psalm 7:15 Solution 9:15).

**cup** — is a frequent figure for God's favor or wrath (\*\*Psalm 16:5\*\*23:5\*\*Matthew 20:22,23).

7. his countenance — literally, "their faces," a use of the plural applied to God, as in Genesis 1:26 3:22 11:7 2000 Isaiah 6:8, etc., denoting the fullness of His perfections, or more probably originating in a reference to the trinity of persons. "Faces" is used as "eyes" (3000 Psalm 11:4), expressing here God's complacency towards the upright (compare 34:15,16).

#### **→9201**PSALM 12:1-8.

On title, see *Introduction* and see on \*\*\*Psalm 6:1. The Psalmist laments the decrease of good men. The pride and deceit of the wicked provokes God's wrath, whose promise to avenge the cause of pious sufferers will be verified even amidst prevailing iniquity.

- **1.** the faithful or literally, "faithfulness" (\*\*\*Psalm 31:23).
- **2.** The want of it is illustrated by the prevalence of deceit and instability.
- **3, 4.** Boasting (Daniel 7:25) is, like flattery, a species of lying.

lips, and ... tongue — for persons.

- **5.** The writer intimates his confidence by depicting God's actions (compare \*\*\*Psalm 9:19 \*\*\*\*\*10:12) as coming to save the poor at whom the wicked sneer (\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:5).
- **6.** *The words* literally, "saying of" (\*\*\*Psalm 12:5).

seven times — thoroughly (\*\*Daniel 3:19).

- **7.** *them* (*Margin*.)
- **8.** The wicked roam undisturbed doing evil, when vileness and vile men are exalted.

#### ◆9101PSALM 13:1-6.

On title, see *Introduction*. The Psalmist, mourning God's absence and the triumph of his enemies, prays for relief before he is totally destroyed, and is encouraged to hope his trust will not be in vain.

1. The forms of expression and figure here used are frequent (compare Psalm 9:12,18 10:11,12).

**How long ... for ever** — Shall it be for ever?

- **2.** The counsels or devices of his heart afford no relief.
- 3. *lighten mine eyes* dim with weakness, denoting approaching death (compare \*\* 1 Samuel 14:27-29 \*\*\* Psalm 6:7 \*\*\* 38:10).
- **4.** *rejoice* literally, "shout as in triumph."

*I am moved* — cast down from a firm position (\*\*Psalm 10:6).

**5, 6.** Trust is followed by rejoicing in the deliverance which God effects, and, instead of his enemy, he can lift the song of triumph.

#### **♥ \*\*\***

The practical atheism and total and universal depravity of the wicked, with their hatred to the good, are set forth. Yet, as they dread God's judgments when He vindicates His people, the Psalmist prays for His delivering power.

**1.** Sinners are termed "fools," because they think and act contrary to right reason ("Genesis 34:7" Joshua 7:15 Psalm 39:8 74:18,22).

*in his heart* — to himself (\*\*Genesis 6:12).

**2.** *looked* — in earnest enquiry.

understand — as opposed to "fool" (\*\*\*Psalm 14:1).

- **3.** *filthy* literally, "spoiled," or, "soured," "corrupted" (\*\*\*\*Job 15:16 Romans 3:12).
- **4-6.** Their conduct evinces indifference rather than ignorance of God; for when He appears in judgment, they are stricken with great fear.

who eat up my people — to express their beastly fury (\*\*\*Proverbs 30:14\*\* Habakkuk 3:14). To "call on the Lord" is to worship Him.

7. captivity — denotes any great evil.

**Zion** — God's abode, from which He revealed His purposes of mercy, as He now does by the Church (compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 3:4 \*\*\*\*\*\*\*20:2), and which He rules and in which He does all other things for the good of His people (\*\*\*\*\*\*Ephesians 1:22).

#### **◆950**PSALM 15:1-5.

Those who are fit for communion with God may be known by a conformity to His law, which is illustrated in various important particulars.

**1.** *abide* — or, "sojourn" (compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:4), where it means under God's protection here, as (\*\*\*\*Psalm 23:6, \*\*\*\*\*27:4,6) communion.

*tabernacle* — seat of the ark ( Samuel 6:17), the symbol of God's presence.

**holy hill** — (Compare \*\*Psalm 2:6).

**2.** *walketh* — (Compare \*\*Psalm 1:1).

*uprightly* — in a complete manner, as to all parts of conduct (Genesis 17:1), not as to degree.

worketh — or, "does."

righteousness — what is right.

in his heart — sincerely (\*\*Proverbs 23:7).

- **3.** He neither slanders nor spreads slander.
- **4.** Love and hate are regulated by a regard to God.

**sweareth** ... **hurt** — or what so results (compare Leviticus 5:4).

**5.** (Compare Leviticus 25:37 Deuteronomy 23:19,20).

*usury* is derived from a verb meaning "to bite." All gains made by the wrongful loss of others are forbidden.

taketh reward, etc. — The innocent would not otherwise be condemned (compare Exodus 23:8 Deuteronomy 16:19). Bribery of all sorts is denounced.

#### \*\*\*PSALM 16:1-11.

Michtam, or, by the change of one letter, Michtab — a "writing," such as a poem or song (compare Saiah 38:9). Such a change of the letter *m* for *b* was not unusual. The position of this word in connection with the author's name, being that usually occupied by some term, such as Psalm or song, denoting the style or matter of the composition, favors this view of its meaning, though we know not why this and Psalms 56-60 should be specially, called "a writing." "A golden (Psalm)," or "a memorial" are explanations proposed by some — neither of which, however applicable here, appears adapted to the other Psalms where the term occurs. According to Peter (\*\*\*Acts 2:25) and Paul (\*\*\*Acts 13:35), this Psalm relates to Christ and expresses the feelings of His human nature, in view of His sufferings and victory over death and the grave, including His subsequent exaltation at the right hand of God. Such was the exposition of the best earlier Christian interpreters. Some moderns have held that the Psalm relates exclusively to David; but this view is expressly contradicted by the apostles; others hold that the language of the Psalm is applicable to David as a type of Christ, capable of the higher sense assigned it in the New Testament. But then the language of Psalm 16:10 cannot be used of David in any sense, for "he saw corruption." Others again propose to refer the first part to David, and the last to Christ; but it is evident that no change in the subject of the Psalm is indicated. Indeed, the person who appeals to God for help is evidently the same who rejoices in having found it. In referring the whole Psalm to Christ, it is, however, by no means denied that much of its language is expressive of the feelings of His people, so far as in their humble measure they have the feelings of trust in God expressed by Him, their head and representative. Such use of His language, as recorded in His last prayer (\*\*\*John 17:1-26), and even that which He used in Gethsemane, under similar modifications, is equally proper. The propriety of this reference of the Psalm to Christ will appear in the scope and interpretation. In view of the sufferings before Him, the Savior, with

that instinctive dread of death manifested in Gethsemane, calls on God to "preserve" Him; He avows His delight in holiness and abhorrence of the wicked and their wickedness; and for "the joy that was set before Him, despising the shame" [\*\*\*PHebrews 12:2], encourages Himself; contemplating the glories of the heritage appointed Him. Thus even death and the grave lose their terrors in the assurance of the victory to be attained and "the glory that should follow" [\*\*\*\*[\*\*\*PHEBRE\*\*]\*\*].

1. Preserve me, etc. — keep or watch over my interests.

*in thee ... I ... trust* — as one seeking shelter from pressing danger.

**2.** *my soul* — must be supplied; expressed in similar cases (\*\*\*Psalm 42:5,11).

my goodness ... thee — This obscure passage is variously expounded. Either one of two expositions falls in with the context. "My goodness" or merit is not on account of Thee — that is, is not for Thy benefit. Then follows the contrast of "Psalm 16:3 (but is), in respect, or for the saints, etc. — that is, it enures to them. Or, my goodness — or happiness is not besides Thee — that is, without Thee I have no other source of happiness. Then, "to the saints," etc., means that the same privilege of deriving happiness from God only is theirs. The first is the most consonant with the Messianic character of the Psalm, though the latter is not inconsistent with it.

**3.** saints — or, persons consecrated to God, set apart from others to His service.

*in the earth* — that is, land of Palestine, the residence of God's chosen people — figuratively for the Church.

excellent — or, "nobles," distinguished for moral excellence.

**4.** He expresses his abhorrence of those who seek other sources of happiness or objects of worship, and, by characterizing their rites by drink offerings of blood, clearly denotes idolaters. The word for "sorrows" is by some rendered "idols"; but, though a similar word to that for idols, it is not the same. In selecting such a term, there may be an allusion, by the author, to the sorrows produced by idolatrous practices.

**5-7.** God is the chief good, and supplies all need (\*\*Deuteronomy 10:9).

portion of mine inheritance and of my cup — may contain an allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi (\*\*Deuteronomy 18:1,2).

*maintainest* — or, *drawest out* my lot — enlargest it. \*\*Psalm 16:7 carries out this idea more fully.

7. given me counsel — cared for me.

my reins — the supposed seat of emotion and thought (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:9, \*\*\*\*\*\*\*26:2).

*instruct me* — or, excite to acts of praise ( Isaiah 53:11,12 Hebrews 12:2).

- **8.** With God's presence and aid he is sure of safety (\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:6\*\*\*\*15:5\*\*\*John 12:27,28 \*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 5:7,8).
- **9. glory** as heart (\*\*\*Psalm 7:5), for self. In \*\*Acts 2:26, after the *Septuagint*, "my tongue" as "the glory of the frame" the instrument for praising God.

**flesh** — If taken as opposed to Soul (\*\*\*Psalm 16:10), it may mean the body; otherwise, the whole person (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 63:1 \*\*\*84:2).

rest in hope — (compare Margin).

10. soul — or, "self." This use of "soul" for the person is frequent (""Genesis 12:5 "46:26 ""Psalm 3:2 ""7:2 ""11:1), even when the body may be the part chiefly affected, as in ""Psalm 35:13 ""105:18. Some cases are cited, as ""Leviticus 22:4 ""Numbers 6:6 ""9:6,10 ""19:13 ""Haggai 2:13, etc., which seem to justify assigning the meaning of body, or dead body; but it will be found that the latter sense is given by some adjunct expressed or implied. In those cases person is the proper sense.

wilt not leave ... hell — abandon to the power of (\*\*\*Job 39:14 \*\*\*Psalm 49:10). Hell as (\*\*\*Genesis 42:38 \*\*\*\*Psalm 6:5 \*\*\*\*Jonah 2:2) the state or region of death, and so frequently — or the grave itself (\*\*\*\*Job 14:13, \*\*\*\*\*T7:13 \*\*\*\*Ecclesiastes 9:10, etc.). So the Greek Hades (compare \*\*\*\*Acts 2:27,31). The context alone can settle whether the state mentioned is one

of suffering and place of the damned (compare \*\*\*Psalm 9:17 \*\*\*Proverbs 5:5 \*\*\*\*7:27).

wilt ... suffer — literally, "give" or "appoint."

**Holy One** — (\*\*\*Psalm 4:3), one who is the object of God's favor, and so a recipient of divine grace which he exhibits — *pious*.

to see — or, "experience" — undergo ( Luke 2:26).

corruption — Some render the word, the pit, which is possible, but for the obvious sense which the apostle's exposition (Acts 2:27 Acts 2:27 and 3:36,37) gives. The sense of the whole passage is clearly this: by the use of flesh and soul, the disembodied state produced by death is indicated; but, on the other hand, no more than the state of death is intended; for the last clause of Psalm 16:10 is strictly parallel with the first, and Holy One corresponds to soul, and corruption to hell. As Holy One, or David (Acts 13:36,37), which denotes the person, including soul and body, is used for body, of which only corruption can be predicated (compare Acts 2:31); so, on the contrary, soul, which literally means the immaterial part, is used for the person. The language may be thus paraphrased, "In death I shall hope for resurrection; for I shall not be left under its dominion and within its bounds, or be subject to the corruption which ordinarily ensues."

**11.** Raised from the dead, he shall die no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

**Thou wilt show me** — guide me to attain.

*the path of life* — or, "lives" — the plural denoting variety and abundance — immortal blessedness of every sort — as "life" often denotes.

in thy presence — or, "before Thy faces." The frequent use of this plural form for "faces" may contain an allusion to the Trinity (\*\*Numbers 6:25,26 \*\*\*Psalm 17:15 \*\*\*\*31:16).

at thy right hand — to which Christ was exalted (\*\*\*Psalm 110:1 \*\*\*Acts 2:33 \*\*\*Colossians 3:1 \*\*\*Hebrews 1:3). In the glories of this state, He shall see of the travail (\*\*\*Isaiah 53:10,11 \*\*\*Philippians 2:9) of His soul, and be satisfied.

#### ◆ PSALM 17:1-15.

This Psalm is termed a prayer because the language of petition is predominant. With a just cause, sincerely presented, the writer prays for a just decision and help and protection. Pleading former mercies as a ground of hope, he urges his prayer in view of the malice, pride, rapacity, and selfishness of his foes, whose character is contrasted with his pious devotion and delight in God's favor.

**2.** *sentence* — acquitting judgment.

*from thy presence* — Thy tribunal.

things that are equal — just and right, do Thou regard.

**3.** *proved* ... *visited* ... *tried* — His character was most rigidly tested, at all times, and by all methods, affliction and others (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:10).

*purposed that*, etc. — or, my mouth does not exceed my purpose; I am sincere.

**4.** works of men — sinful practices.

by the word of thy lips — as a guide (\*\*\*Psalm 119:9,11,95).

destroyer — violent man.

- **5.** May be read as an assertion "my steps or goings have held on to Thy paths."
- **6.** wilt hear me that is, graciously (\*\*\*Psalm 3:4).
- 7. Show set apart as special and eminent (\*\*Exodus 8:18 \*\*\*Psalm 4:3).

*thy right hand* — for Thy power.

**8.** Similar figures, denoting the preciousness of God's people in His sight, in Deuteronomy 32:10,11 Matthew 23:37.

- **9.** *compass me* (compare \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 118:10-12).
- **10.** *enclosed* ... *fat* are become proud in prosperity, and insolent to God (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:15 \*\*\*Psalm 73:7).
- 11. They pursue us as beasts tracking their prey.
- **12.** The figure made more special by that of a lion lurking.
- **13-15.** *disappoint* literally, "come before," or, "encounter him." Supply "with" before "sword" (\*\*\*Psalm 17:13), and "hand" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:14). These denote God's power.
- **14.** *men* ... *world* all men of this present time. They appear, by fullness of bread and large families, to be prosperous; but (\*\*Psalm 17:15) he implies this will be transient, contrasting his better portion in a joyful union with God hereafter.

#### ••••PSALM 18:1-50.

"The servant of the LORD," which in the *Hebrew* precedes "David," is a significant part of the title (and not a mere epithet of David), denoting the inspired character of the song, as the production of one entrusted with the execution of God's will. He was not favored by God because he served Him, but served Him because selected and appointed by God in His sovereign mercy. After a general expression of praise and confidence in God for the future, David gives a sublimely poetical description of God's deliverance, which he characterizes as an illustration of God's justice to the innocent and His righteous government. His own prowess and success are celebrated as the results of divine aid, and, confident of its continuance, he closes in terms of triumphant praise. Samuel 22:1-51 is a copy of this Psalm, with a few unimportant variations recorded there as a part of the history, and repeated here as part of a collection designed for permanent use.

- **1.** *I will love thee* with most tender affection.
- **2, 3.** The various terms used describe God as an object of the most implicit and reliable trust.

*rock* — literally, "a cleft rock," for concealment.

strength — a firm, immovable rock.

**horn of my salvation** — The horn, as the means of attack or defense of some of the strongest animals, is a frequent emblem of power or strength efficiently exercised (compare described Power of Strength 23:17 \*\*Luke 1:69).

*tower* — literally, "high place," beyond reach of danger.

- **3.** *to be praised* for past favors, and worthy of confidence.
- **4.** sorrows literally, "bands as of a net" (\*\*Posalm 116:3).

*floods* — denotes "multitude."

**5. death** — and **hell** (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 16:10) are personified as man's great enemies (compare \*\*\*\*Revelation 20:13,14).

*prevented* — encountered me, crossed my path, and endangered my safety. He does not mean he was in their power.

**6.** He relates his methods to procure relief when distressed, and his success.

*temple* — (Compare <sup>◆910</sup> Psalm 11:4).

- **7, 8.** God's coming described in figures drawn from His appearance on Sinai (compare Deuteronomy 32:22).
- **8.** *smoke out ... his nostrils* bitter in His wrath (compare <sup>4990</sup>Psalm 74:1).

**by it** — that is, the fire (\*\*Exodus 19:18).

- **9.** darkness or, a dense cloud (\*\*Exodus 19:16 \*\*Deuteronomy 5:22).
- **10.** *cherub* angelic agents (compare Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), representing God's dwelling; used here to enhance the majesty of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (compare Genesis 3:24), the figures of which is a simple of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (compare Genesis 3:24), the figures of which is a simple of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (compare Genesis 3:24), the figures of which is a simple of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (compare Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (Genesis 3:24), the figures of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (compare Genesis 3:24).

*did fly* — Rapidity of motion adds to the grandeur of the scene.

- 11. dark waters or, clouds heavy with vapor.
- **12.** Out of this obscurity, which impresses the beholder with awe and dread, He reveals Himself by sudden light and the means of His terrible wrath ( Toshua 10:11 Psalm 78:47).
- **13.** The storm breaks forth thunder follows lightning, and hail with repeated lightning, as often seen, like balls or coals of fire, succeed (\*\*DE\*\*Exodus 9:23).
- **14.** The fiery brightness of lightning, in shape like burning arrows rapidly shot through the air, well represents the most terrible part of an awful

storm. Before the terrors of such a scene the enemies are confounded and overthrown in dismay.

- **15.** The tempest of the air is attended by appropriate results on earth. The language, though not expressive of any special physical changes, represents the utter subversion of the order of nature. Before such a God none can stand.
- **16-19.** *from above* As seated on a throne, directing these terrible scenes, God —

**sent** — His hand (\*\*Psalm 144:7), reached down to His humble worshipper, and delivered him.

many waters — calamities (\*\*\*\*\*Job 30:14 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 124:4,5).

**18.** *prevented* — (\*\*\*Psalm 18:3).

- **19.** *a large place* denotes safety or relief, as contrasted with the straits of distress (\*\*901\*Psalm 4:1). All his deliverance is ascribed to God, and this sublime poetical representation is given to inspire the pious with confidence and the wicked with dread.
- **20-24.** The statements of innocence, righteousness, etc., refer, doubtless, to his personal and official conduct and his purposes, during all the trials to which he was subjected in Saul's persecutions and Absalom's rebellions, as well as the various wars in which he had been engaged as the head and defender of God's Church and people.
- **23.** *upright before him* In my relation to God I have been perfect as to all parts of His law. The perfection does not relate to degree.

*mine iniquity* — perhaps the thought of his heart to kill Saul (\*\*\* Samuel 24:6). That David does not allude to all his conduct, in all relations, is evident from \*\*\* Psalm 51:1, etc.

**25-27.** God renders to men according to their deeds in a penal, not vindictive, sense (\*\*Euriticus 26:23,24).

merciful — or, "kind" (\*\*\*Psalm 4:3).

**26.** *froward* — contrary to.

- **27.** the afflicted people that is, the humbly pious.
- *high looks* pride (\*Paul Psalm 101:5 131:1).
- **28.** To give one light is to make prosperous ( Job 18:5,6 21:17).
- **thou** is emphatic, as if to say, I can fully confide in *Thee* for help.
- **29.** And this on past experience in his military life, set forth by these figures.
- **30-32.** God's perfection is the source of his own, which has resulted from his trust on the one hand, and God's promised help on the other.
- **tried** "as metals are tried by fire and proved genuine" (\*\*Psalm 12:6). Shield (\*\*Psalm 3:3). Girding was essential to free motion on account of the looseness of Oriental dresses; hence it is an expressive figure for describing the gift of strength.
- **33-36.** God's help farther described. He gives swiftness to pursue or elude his enemies (\*\*\*Habakkuk 3:19), strength, protection, and a firm footing.
- **35.** *thy gentleness* as applied to God condescension or that which He gives, in the sense of *humility* (compare <sup>applie</sup> Proverbs 22:4).
- **36.** *enlarged my steps* made ample room (compare Proverbs 4:12).
- **37-41.** In actual conflict, with God's aid, the defeat of his enemies is certain. A present and continued success is expressed.
- **39.** that rose up against me literally, "insurgents" (\*\*\*Psalm 3:1 44:5).
- **40.** *given me the necks* literally, "backs of the necks"; made them retreat (\*\*Exodus 23:27 \*\*\*Toshua 7:8).
- **42.** This conquest was complete.
- **43-45.** Not only does He conquer civil foes, but foreigners, who are driven from their places of refuge.
- **44.** *submit*, etc. (compare *Margin*) that is, show a forced subjection.
- **46.** *The Lord liveth* contrasts Him with idols ( Corinthians 8:4).
- **47, 48.** avengeth me His cause is espoused by God as His own.

**48.** *liftest me up* — to safety and honors.

49, 50. Paul ( Romans 15:9) quotes from this doxology to show that under the Old Testament economy, others than the Jews were regarded as subjects of that spiritual government of which David was head, and in which character his deliverances and victories were typical of the more illustrious triumphs of David's greater Son. The language of Psalm 18:50 justifies this view in its distinct allusion to the great promise (compare Samuel 7:12). In all David's successes he saw the pledges of a fulfillment of that promise, and he mourned in all his adversities, not only in view of his personal suffering, but because he saw in them evidences of danger to the great interests which were committed to his keeping. It is in these aspects of his character that we are led properly to appreciate the importance attached to his sorrows and sufferings, his joys and successes.

#### **→ PSALM 19:1-14.**

After exhibiting the harmonious revelation of God's perfections made by His works and His word, the Psalmist prays for conformity to "the glory of God."

**1.** *the glory of God* — is the sum of His perfections (\*\*Psalm 24:7-10 Romans 1:20).

*firmament* — another word for "heavens" (\*\*\*Genesis 1:8).

**handywork** — old English for "work of His hands."

- 2. uttereth pours forth as a stream; a perpetual testimony.
- **3.** Though there is no articulate speech or words, yet without these their voice is heard (compare *Margin*).
- **4.** *Their line* or, "instruction" the influence exerted by their tacit display of God's perfections. Paul (\*\*Romans 10:8), quoting from the *Septuagint*, uses "sound," which gives the same sense.
- **5, 6.** The sun, as the most glorious heavenly body, is specially used to illustrate the sentiment; and his vigorous, cheerful, daily, and extensive course, and his reviving heat (including light), well display the wondrous wisdom of his Maker.
- **7-9.** The law is described by six names, epithets, and effects. It is a rule, God's testimony for the truth, His special and general prescription of duty, fear (as its cause) and judicial decision. It is distinct and certain, reliable, right, pure, holy, and true. Hence it revives those depressed by doubts, makes wise the unskilled (\*\*\*\*\* Timothy 3:15), rejoices the lover of truth, strengthens the desponding (\*\*\*\*\*\* Psalm 13:4 34:6), provides permanent principles of conduct, and by God's grace brings a rich reward.

**12-14.** The clearer our view of the law, the more manifest are our sins. Still for its full effect we need divine grace to show us our faults, acquit us, restrain us from the practice, and free us from the power, of sin. Thus only can our conduct be blameless, and our words and thoughts acceptable to God.

#### **™PSALM 20:1-9.**

David probably composed this Psalm to express the prayers of the pious for his success as at once the head of the Church and nation. Like other compositions of which David in such relations is the subject, its sentiments have a permanent value — the prosperity of Christ's kingdom being involved, as well as typified, in that of Israel and its king.

**1.** *hear thee* — graciously (\*\*\*Psalm 4:1).

**name of** — or manifested perfections, as power, wisdom, etc.

defend thee — set thee on high from danger (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9 18:3).

- **2.** *strengthen thee sustain* in conflict; even physical benefits may be included, as courage for war, etc., as such may proceed from a sense of divine favor, secured in the use of spiritual privileges.
- **3.** *all thy offerings* or gifts, vegetable offerings.

*accept* — literally, "turn to ashes" (compare <sup>4188</sup>1 Kings 18:38).

**Selah** — (See on Psalm 3:2).

- **4.** *thy counsel* or plan.
- **5.** salvation that wrought and experienced by him.

*set up our banners* — (\*\*Numbers 2:3,10). In usual sense, or, as some render, "may we be made great."

**6.** He speaks as if suddenly assured of a hearing.

*his anointed* — not only David personally, but as the specially appointed head of His Church.

his holy heaven — or, literally, "the heavens of His holiness," where He resides (\*\*\*Psalm 2:6 11:4).

saving ... hand — His power which brings salvation.

- 7. remember or cause to remember, mention thankfully (\*\*\*\* Samuel 17:45 \*\*\*\* Psalm 33:16).
- **8.** *They* that is, who trust in horses, etc.

*stand upright* — literally, "we have straightened ourselves up from our distress and fears."

**9.** *let the king hear* — as God's representative, delivered to deliver. Perhaps a better sense is, "LORD, save the king; hear us when we call," or pray.

#### ◆200 PSALM 21:1-13.

The pious are led the Psalmist to God's favor to the king in the already conferred and in prospective victories. The doxology added may relate to both Psalms; the preceding of petition, chiefly this of thanksgiving, ascribing honor to God for His display of grace and power to His Church in all ages, not only under David, but also under his last greatest successor, "the King of the Jews."

- **1.** thy strength ... thy salvation as supplied by Thee.
- **2.** The sentiment affirmed in the first clause is reaffirmed by the negation of its opposite in the second.
- **3.** preventest literally, "to meet here in good sense," or "friendship" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 59:10; compare opposite, \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:13).

blessings of goodness — which confer happiness.

*crown of pure gold* — a figure for the highest royal prosperity.

- **4-6.** (Compare <sup>4073</sup>2 Samuel 7:13-16). The glory and blessedness of the king as head of his line, including Christ, as well as in being God's specially selected servant, exceeded that of all others.
- **6.** *made him most blessed* or set him "to be blessings," as Abraham (\*\*\*Genesis 12:2).

with thy countenance — by sight of thee (\*\*Psalm 16:11), or by Thy favor expressed by the light of Thy countenance (\*\*Numbers 6:25), or both.

- 7. The mediate cause is the king's faith, the efficient, God's mercy.
- **8.** The address is now made to the king.

**hand** — denotes power, and

**right hand** — a more active and efficient degree of its exercise.

*find out* — reach, lay hold of, indicating success in pursuit of his enemies.

**9.** The king is only God's agent.

anger — literally, "face," as appearing against them.

as a fiery oven — as in it.

- **10.** *fruit* children (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:25 \*\*\*\*\*Hosea 9:16).
- **11.** This terrible overthrow, reaching to posterity, is due to their crimes (Exodus 20:5,6).
- **12.** *turn their back* literally, "place them [as to the] shoulder."

*against the face of them* — The shooting against their faces would cause them to turn their backs in flight.

**13.** The glory of all is ascribable to God alone.

#### \*\*\*PSALM 22:1-31.

The obscure words Aijeleth Shahar in this title have various explanations. Most interpreters agree in translating them by "hind of the morning." But great difference exists as to the meaning of these words. By some they are supposed (compare Psalm 9:1) to be the name of the tune to which the words of the Psalm were set; by others, the name of a musical instrument. Perhaps the best view is to regard the phrase as enigmatically expressive of the subject — the sufferer being likened to a hind pursued by hunters in the early morning (literally, "the dawn of day") — or that, while hind suggests the idea of a meek, innocent sufferer, the addition of morning denotes relief obtained. The feelings of a pious sufferer in sorrow and deliverance are vividly portrayed. He earnestly pleads for divine aid on the ground of his relation to God, whose past goodness to His people encourages hope, and then on account of the imminent danger by which he is threatened. The language of complaint is turned to that of rejoicing in the assured prospect of relief from suffering and triumph over his enemies. The use of the words of the first clause of Psalm 22:1 by our Savior on the cross, and the quotation of Psalm 22:18 by John (John 19:24), and of Psalm 22:22 by Paul (Hebrews 2:12), as fulfilled in His history, clearly intimate the prophetical and Messianic purport of the Psalm. The intensity of the grief, and the completeness and glory of the deliverance and triumph, alike appear to be unsuitable representations of the fortunes of any less personage. In a general and modified sense (see on Psalm 16:1), the experience here detailed may be adapted to the case of all Christians suffering from spiritual foes, and delivered by divine aid, inasmuch as Christ in His human nature was their head and representative.

**1.** A summary of the complaint. Desertion by God, when overwhelmed by distress, is the climax of the sufferer's misery.

**words of my roaring** — shows that the complaint is expressed intelligently, though the term "roaring" is figurative, taken from the conduct of irrational creatures in pain.

**2.** The long distress is evinced by —

*am not silent* — literally, "not silence to me," either meaning, I continually cry; or, corresponding with "thou hearest not," or answerest not, it may mean, there is no rest or quiet to me.

**3.** Still he not only refrains from charging God foolishly, but evinces his confidence in God by appealing to Him.

*thou art holy* — or possessed of all the attributes which encourage trust, and the right object of the praises of the Church: hence the sufferer need not despair.

- **4, 5.** Past experience of God's people is a ground of trust. The mention of "our fathers" does not destroy the applicability of the words as the language of our Savior's human nature.
- **6.** He who was despised and rejected of His own people, as a disgrace to the nation, might well use these words of deep abasement, which express not His real, but esteemed, value.
- **7, 8.** For the Jews used one of the gestures (\*\*\*Matthew 27:39) here mentioned, when taunting Him on the cross, and (\*\*\*Matthew 27:43) reproached Him almost in the very, language of this passage.

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shoot out — or, "open."
the lip — (Compare ***Psalm 35:21).
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- **8.** trusted on the Lord literally, "rolled" that is, his burden (\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:5 \*\*Proverbs 16:3) on the Lord. This is the language of enemies sporting with his faith in the hour of his desertion.
- **9, 10.** Though ironically spoken, the exhortation to trust was well founded on his previous experience of divine aid, the special illustration of which is drawn from the period of helpless infancy.

didst make me hope — literally, "made me secure."

- **11.** From this statement of reasons for the appeal, he renews it, pleading his double extremity, the nearness of trouble, and the absence of a helper.
- **12, 13.** His enemies, with the vigor of bulls and rapacity of lions, surround him, eagerly seeking his ruin. The force of both figures is greater without the use of any particle denoting comparison.
- 14, 15. Utter exhaustion and hopeless weakness, in these circumstances of pressing danger, are set forth by the most expressive figures; the solidity of the body is destroyed, and it becomes like water; the bones are parted; the heart, the very seat of vitality, melts like wax; all the juices of the system are dried up; the tongue can no longer perform its office, but lies parched and stiffened (compare Genesis 49:4 Samuel 14:14 Psalm 58:8). In this, God is regarded as the ultimate source, and men as the instruments.
- **15.** the dust of death of course, denotes the grave. We need not try to find the exact counterpart of each item of the description in the particulars of our Savior's sufferings. Figurative language resembles pictures of historical scenes, presenting substantial truth, under illustrations, which, though not essential to the facts, are not inconsistent with them. Were any portion of Christ's terrible sufferings specially designed, it was doubtless that of the garden of Gethsemane.
- **16.** Evildoers are well described as dogs, which, in the East, herding together, wild and rapacious, are justly objects of great abhorrence. The last clause has been a subject of much discussion (involving questions as to the genuineness of the *Hebrew* word translated "pierce)" which cannot be made intelligible to the English reader. Thought not quoted in the New Testament, the remarkable aptness of the description to the facts of the Savior's history, together with difficulties attending any other mode of explaining the clause in the *Hebrew*, justify an adherence to the terms of our version and their obvious meaning.
- **17.** His emaciated frame, itself an item of his misery, is rendered more so as the object of delighted contemplation to his enemies. The verbs, "look" and "stare," often occur as suggestive of feelings of satisfaction (compare \*\*Psalm 27:13 54:7 118:7).

- **18.** This literally fulfilled prediction closes the sad picture of the exposed and deserted sufferer.
- **19, 20.** He now turns with unabated desire and trust to God, who, in His strength and faithfulness, is contrasted with the urgent dangers described.
- **20.** *my soul* or self (compare \*\*Psalm 3:2 16:10).
- my darling literally, "my only one," or, "solitary one," as desolate and afflicted (\*\*Psalm 25:16 35:17).
- **21.** Deliverance pleaded in view of former help, when in the most imminent danger, from the most powerful enemy, represented by the unicorn or wild buffalo.
- *the lion's mouth* (Compare \*\*Psalm 22:13). The lion often used as a figure representing violent enemies; the connecting of the *mouth* intimates their rapacity.
- **22-24.** He declares his purpose to celebrate God's gracious dealings and publish His manifested perfections ("name," <sup>4951</sup>Psalm 5:11), etc., and forthwith he invites the pious (those who have a reverential fear of God) to unite in special praise for a deliverance, illustrating God's kind regard for the lowly, whom men neglect (<sup>4922</sup>Psalm 22:24). *To hide the face* (or eyes) expresses a studied neglect of one's cause, and refusal of aid or sympathy (compare <sup>4900</sup>Psalm 30:7 <sup>4910</sup>Isaiah 1:15).
- 25, 26. My praise shall be of thee or, perhaps better, "from thee," that is, God gives grace to praise Him. With offering praise, he further evinces his gratitude by promising the payment of his vows, in celebrating the usual festival, as provided in the law (Deuteronomy 12:18 16:11), of which the pious or humble, and they that seek the Lord (His true worshippers) shall partake abundantly, and join him in praise (Deuteronomy 12:26). In the enthusiasm produced by his lively feelings, he addresses such in words, assuring them of God's perpetual favor (Deuteronomy 12:26). The dying of the heart denotes death (Deuteronomy 12:37); so its living denotes life.
- **27-31.** His case illustrates God's righteous government. Beyond the existing time and people, others shall be brought to acknowledge and

worship God; the *fat ones*, or the rich as well as the poor, the helpless who cannot keep themselves alive, shall together unite in celebrating God's delivering power, and transmit to unborn people the records of His grace.

- **30.** *it shall be accounted to the Lord for*, etc. or, "it shall be told of the Lord to a generation." God's wonderful works shall be told from generation to generation.
- **31.** *that he hath done this* supply "it," or "this" that is, what the Psalm has unfolded.

### PSALM 23:1-6.

Under a metaphor borrowed from scenes of pastoral life, with which David was familiar, he describes God's providential care in providing refreshment, guidance, protection, and abundance, and so affording grounds of confidence in His perpetual favor.

- 1. Christ's relation to His people is often represented by the figure of a shepherd (\*\*\*Hebrews 13:20 \*\*\*\*\* Peter 2:25 5:4), and therefore the opinion that He is *the Lord* here so described, and in Genesis 48:15 \*\*\*\* Psalm 80:1 \*\*\*\* Isaiah 40:11, is not without some good reason.
- **2.** *green pastures* or, "pastures of tender grass," are mentioned, not in respect to food, but as places of cool and refreshing rest.

*the still waters* — are, literally, "waters of "stillness," whose quiet flow invites to repose. They are contrasted with boisterous streams on the one hand, and stagnant, offensive pools on the other.

**3.** To restore the soul is to revive or quicken it (\*\*\*Psalm 19:7), or relieve it (\*\*\*\*Lamentations 1:11,19).

*paths of righteousness* — those of safety, as directed by God, and pleasing to Him.

*for his name's sake* — or, regard for His perfections, pledged for His people's welfare.

**4.** In the darkest and most trying hour God is near.

*the valley of the shadow of death* — is a ravine overhung by high precipitous cliffs, filled with dense forests, and well calculated to inspire dread to the timid, and afford a covert to beasts of prey. While expressive of any great danger or cause of terror, it does not exclude the greatest of all, to which it is most popularly applied, and which its terms suggest.

*thy rod and thy staff* — are symbols of a shepherd's office. By them he guides his sheep.

**5, 6.** Another figure expresses God's provided care.

a table — or, "food."

*oil* — anointing oil, the symbol of gladness.

*cup* (which represents abundance) — are prepared for the child of God, who may feast in spite of his enemies, confident that this favor will ever attend him. This beautiful Psalm most admirably sets before us, in its chief figure, that of a shepherd, the gentle, kind, and sure care extended to God's people, who, as a shepherd, both *rules and feeds them*. The closing verse shows that the blessings mentioned are spiritual.

#### PSALM 24:1-10.

God's supreme sovereignty requires a befitting holiness of life and heart in His worshippers; a sentiment sublimely illustrated by describing His entrance into the sanctuary, by the symbol of His worship — the ark, as requiring the most profound homage to the glory of His Majesty.

**1.** *fullness* — everything.

world — the habitable globe, with

*they that dwell* — forming a parallel expression to the first clause.

- **2.** Poetically represents the facts of Genesis 1:9.
- **3, 4.** The form of a question gives vivacity. *Hands, tongue,* and *heart* are organs of action, speech, and feeling, which compose character.

*hill of the Lord* — (compare \*\*\*Psalm 2:6, etc.). His Church — the true or invisible, as typified by the earthly sanctuary.

**4.** *lifted up his soul* — is to set the affections (\*\*Psalm 25:1) on an object; here,

*vanity* — or, any false thing, of which swearing falsely, or *to falsehood*, is a specification.

- **5.** *righteousness* the rewards which God bestows on His people, or the grace to secure those rewards as well as the result.
- **6. Jacob** By "Jacob," we may understand God's people (compare Isaiah 43:22 44:2, etc.), corresponding to "the generation," as if he had said, "those who seek Thy face are Thy chosen people."
- **7-10.** The entrance of the ark, with the attending procession, into the holy sanctuary is pictured to us. The repetition of the terms gives emphasis.

**10.** Lord of hosts — or fully, Lord God of hosts (\*\*\*Hosea 12:5 \*\*\*Amos 4:13), describes God by a title indicative of supremacy over all creatures, and especially the heavenly armies (\*\*\*\*Joshua 5:14 \*\*\*\*12\*\*1 Kings 22:19). Whether, as some think, the actual enlargement of the ancient gates of Jerusalem be the basis of the figure, the effect of the whole is to impress us with a conception of the matchless majesty of God.

#### PSALM 25:1-22.

The general tone of this Psalm is that of prayer for help from enemies. Distress, however, exciting a sense of sin, humble confession, supplication for pardon, preservation from sin, and divine guidance, are prominent topics.

- **1.** *lift up my soul* (\*\*Psalm 24:4 86:4), set my affections (compare Colossians 3:2).
- **2.** *not be ashamed* by disappointment of hopes of relief.
- **3.** The prayer generalized as to all who *wait on God* that is, who expect His favor. On the other hand, the disappointment of the perfidious, who, unprovoked, have done evil, is invoked (compare \*\* Samuel 22:9).
- **4, 5.** On the ground of former favor, he invokes divine guidance, according to God's gracious ways of dealing and faithfulness.
- **6, 7.** Confessing past and present sins, he pleads for mercy, not on palliations of sin, but on God's well-known benevolence.
- **8, 9. upright** acting according to His promise.

sinners — the general term, limited by

*meek* — who are *penitent*. the way — and *his way* — God's way of providence.

- **9.** in judgment rightly.
- **10.** *paths* similar sense His modes of dealing (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 25:4).

*mercy and truth* — (\*\*\*\*Job 14:1-22), God's grace in promising and faithfulness in performing.

- **11.** God's perfections of love, mercy, goodness, and truth are manifested (*his name*, compare \*\*\*Psalm 9:10) in pardoning sin, and the greatness of sin renders pardon more needed.
- 12, 13. What he asks for himself is the common lot of all the pious.
- **13.** *inherit the earth* (compare Matthew 5:5). The phrase, alluding to the promise of Canaan, expresses all the blessings included in that promise, temporal as well as spiritual.
- **14.** The reason of the blessing explained the pious enjoy communion with God (compare Proverbs 3:21,22), and, of course, learn His gracious terms of pardon.
- 15. His trust in God is fixed.
- **net** is frequently used as a figure for dangers by enemies (\*\*\*Psalm 9:15 10:9).
- **16-19.** A series of earnest appeals for aid because God had seemed to desert him (compare \*\*\*Psalm 13:1 17:13, etc.), his sins oppressed him, his enemies had enlarged his troubles and were multiplied, increasing in hate and violence (\*\*\*Psalm 9:8 18:48).
- **20.** *keep my soul* (\*\*\*PoliPsalm 16:1).

*put my trust* — flee for refuge (\*\*PPP salm 2:12).

**21.** In conscious innocence of the faults charged by his enemies, he confidently commits his cause to God. Some refer —

*integrity*, etc. — to God, meaning His covenant faithfulness. This sense, though good, is an unusual application of the terms.

**22.** Extend these blessings to all Thy people in all their distresses.

#### PSALM 26:1-12.

After appealing to God's judgment on his avowed integrity and innocence of the charges laid by his enemies, the Psalmist professes delight in God's worship, and prays for exemption from the fate of the wicked, expressing assurance of God's favor.

**1. Judge** — decide on my case; the appeal of innocence.

*in mine integrity* — freedom from blemish (compare \*Psalm 25:21). His confidence of perseverance results from trust in God's sustaining grace.

- **2.** He asks the most careful scrutiny of his affections and thoughts (\*\*Psalm 7:9), or motives.
- **3.** As often, the ground of prayer for present help is former favor.
- **4-8.** As exemplified by the fruits of divine grace, presented in his life, especially in his avoiding the wicked and his purposes of cleaving to God's worship.
- **6.** wash mine hands expressive symbol of freedom from sinful acts (compare 4022) Matthew 27:24).
- **8.** *the habitation of thy house* where Thy house rests, as the tabernacle was not yet permanently fixed.

*honor dwelleth* — conveys an allusion to the Holy of Holies.

**9.** *Gather not*, etc. — Bring me not to death.

**bloody men** — (compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:6).

- **10.** Their whole conduct is that of violence and fraud.
- 11, 12. *But*, etc. He contrasts his character and destiny with that of the wicked (compare \*\*\* Psalm 26:1,2).

**12.** *even place* — free from occasions of stumbling — safety in his course is denoted. Hence he will render to God his praise publicly.

#### PSALM 27:1-14.

With a general strain of confidence, hope, and joy, especially in God's worship, in the midst of dangers, the Psalmist introduces prayer for divine help and guidance.

**1.** *light* — is a common figure for comfort.

**strength** — or, "stronghold" — affording security against all violence. The interrogations give greater vividness to the negation implied.

**2.** eat ... my flesh — (\*\*\*\* Job 19:22 \*\*\*\* Psalm 14:4). The allusion to wild beasts illustrates their rapacity.

*they stumbled* — "they" is emphatic; *not I*, but *they* were destroyed.

3. In the greatest dangers.

*in this* — that is, then, in such extremity.

- **4, 5.** The secret of his confidence is his delight in communion with God (\*\*Psalm 16:11 23:6), beholding the harmony of His perfections, and seeking His favor in His temple or palace; a term applicable to the tabernacle (compare \*\*Psalm 5:7). There he is safe (\*\*Psalm 31:21 61:5). The figure is changed in the last clause, but the sentiment is the same.
- **6.** *head be lifted up* I shall be placed beyond the reach of my enemies. Hence he avows his purpose of rendering joyful thank offerings.
- **7.** Still pressing need extorts prayer for help.

*cry with my voice* — denotes earnestness. Other things equal, Christians in earnest pray audibly, even in secret.

**8.** The meaning is clear, though the construction in a literal translation is obscure. The *English Version* supplies the implied clause. To *seek God's face* is to seek His favor (\*\*Psalm 105:4).

- **9.** *Hide not*, etc. (\*\*900) Psalm 4:6 22:24). Against rejection he pleads former mercy and love.
- **10.** In the extremity of earthly destitution (\*\*\*Psalm 31:11 38:11), God provides (compare \*\*\*Matthew 25:35).
- **11.** *thy way* of providence.
- *a plain path* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 26:12).
- enemies literally, "watchers for my fall" (\*\*\*Psalm 5:8).
- 12. will literally, "soul," "desire" (Psalm 35:25).
- enemies literally, "oppressors." Falsehood aids cruelty against him.

**breathe out** — as being filled with it (\*\*\*Acts 9:1).

**13.** The strong emotion is indicated by the incomplete sentence, for which the *English Version* supplies a proper clause; or, omitting that, and rendering, "*yet* I *believed*," etc., the contrast of his faith and his danger is expressed.

to see — is to experience (\*\*Psalm 22:17).

**14.** *Wait*, etc. — in confident expectation. The last clause is, literally, "and wait," etc., as if expecting new measures of help.

#### **♥**PSALM 28:1-9.

An earnest cry for divine aid against his enemies, as being also those of God, is followed by the Psalmist's praise in assurance of a favorable answer, and a prayer for all God's people.

**1.** *my rock* — (<sup>→980</sup>Psalm 18:2,31).

be not silent to me — literally, "from me," deaf or inattentive.

become like them, etc. — share their fate.

go down into the pit — or, "grave" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 30:3).

- 2. *lift up my hands* a gesture of prayer (\*\*\*\*Psalm 63:4 141:2).
- *oracle* place of *speaking* (\*\*Exodus 25:22 \*\*Numbers 7:89), where God answered His people (compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:7).
- **3.** *Draw me not away* implies punishment as well as death (compare Psalm 26:9). Hypocrisy is the special *wickedness* mentioned.
- **4.** The imprecation is justified in Psalm 28:5. The force of the passage is greatly enhanced by the accumulation of terms describing their sin.
- *endeavors* points out their deliberate sinfulness.
- 5. Disregard of God's judgments brings a righteous punishment.

*destroy* ... *build* ... *up* — The positive strengthened by the negative form.

- **6.** supplications or, "cries for mercy."
- **7.** The repetition of "heart" denotes his sincerity.
- **8.** The distinction made between the people.

*their strength* — and the *anointed* — may indicate Absalom's rebellion as the occasion.

**9.** The special prayer for the people sustains this view.

**feed them** — as a shepherd (\*\*Psalm 23:1, etc.).

#### \*\*\*PSALM 29:1-11.

Trust in God is encouraged by the celebration of His mighty power as illustrated in His dominion over the natural world, in some of its most terrible and wonderful exhibitions.

- **1.** *Give* or, "ascribe" (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:3).
- *mighty* or, "sons of the mighty" (\*\*\*Psalm 89:6). Heavenly beings, as angels.
- 2. *name* as (\*\*\*Psalm 5:11 8:1).

**beauty of holiness** — the loveliness of a spiritual worship, of which the perceptible beauty of the sanctuary worship was but a type.

**3.** *The voice of the Lord* — audible exhibition of His power in the tempest, of which thunder is a specimen, but not the uniform or sole example.

*the waters* — the clouds or vapors (\*\*\*Psalm 18:11 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 10:13).

- **4.** powerful ... majesty literally, "in power, in majesty."
- **5, 6.** The tall and large cedars, especially of Lebanon, are shivered, utterly broken. The waving of the mountain forests before the wind is expressed by the figure of skipping or leaping.
- **7.** *divideth* literally, "hews off." The lightning, like flakes and splinters hewed from stone or wood, flies through the air.
- **8.** *the wilderness* especially Kadesh, south of Judea, is selected as another scene of this display of divine power, as a vast and desolate region impresses the mind, like mountains, with images of grandeur.
- **9.** Terror-stricken animals and denuded forests close the illustration. In view of this scene of awful sublimity, God's worshippers respond to the

call of \*\*Psalm 29:2, and speak or cry, "Glory!" By "temple," or "palace" (God's residence, \*\*Psalm 5:7), may here be meant heaven, or the whole frame of nature, as the angels are called on for praise.

**10, 11.** Over this terrible raging of the elements God is enthroned, directing and restraining by sovereign power; and hence the comfort of His people. "This awful God is ours, our Father and our Love."

#### PSALM 30:1-12.

Literally, "A Psalm-Song" — a composition to be sung with musical instruments, or without them — or, "Song of the dedication," etc. specifying the particular character of the Psalm. Some suppose that of David should be connected with the name of the composition, and not with "house"; and refer for the occasion to the selection of a site for the temple (\*\* 1 Chronicles 21:26-30 22:1). But "house" is never used absolutely for the temple, and "dedication" does not well apply to such an occasion. Though the phrase in the Hebrew, "dedication of the house of David," is an unusual form, yet it is equally unusual to disconnect the name of the author and the composition. As a "dedication of David's house" (as provided, \*\* Deuteronomy 20:5), the scope of the Psalm well corresponds with the state of repose and meditation on his past trials suited to such an occasion (\*\* 2 Samuel 5:11 7:2). For beginning with a celebration of God's delivering favor, in which he invites others to join, he relates his prayer in distress, and God's gracious and prompt answer.

- **1.** *lifted me up* as one is drawn from a well (<sup>™</sup>Psalm 40:2).
- **2.** *healed me* Affliction is often described as disease (\*\*\*Psalm 6:2 41:4 107:20), and so relief by healing.
- **3.** The terms describe extreme danger.

soul — or, "myself."

grave — literally, "hell," as in \*\*\*Psalm 16:10.

hast kept me ... pit — quickened or revived me from the state of dying (compare \*Psalm 28:1).

**4.** *remembrance* — the thing remembered or memorial.

**holiness** — as the sum of God's perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 22:3), used as *name* (\*\*\*\*Exodus 3:15 \*\*\*\*Psalm 135:13).

- **5.** Relatively, the longest experience of divine anger by the pious is momentary. These precious words have consoled millions.
- **6, 7.** What particular prosperity is meant we do not know; perhaps his accession to the throne. In his self-complacent elation he was checked by God's *hiding His face* (compare \*\*Psalm 22:24 27:9).
- 7. troubled confounded with fear (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:5).
- **8-11.** As in \*\*\*Psalm 6:5 88:10 \*\*\*Isaiah 38:18, the appeal for mercy is based on the destruction of his agency in praising God here, which death would produce. The terms expressing relief are poetical, and not to be pressed, though "dancing" is the translation of a word which means a *lute*, whose cheerful notes are contrasted with mourning, or (\*\*\*Amos 5:16) wailing.
- **11.** sackcloth was used, even by kings, in distress (\*\* Chronicles 21:16 \*\* Isaiah 37:1) but "gladness," used for a garment, shows the language to be figurative.
- **12.** Though "my" is supplied before "glory" it is better as in \*\*\*Psalm 16:9, to receive it as used for *tongue*, the organ of praise. The ultimate end of God's mercies to us is our praise to Him.

#### ◆800PSALM 31:1-24.

The prayer of a believer in time of deep distress. In the first part, cries for help are mingled with expressions of confidence. Then the detail of griefs engrosses his attention, till, in the assurance of strong but submissive faith, he rises to the language of unmingled joyful trust and exhorts others to like love and confidence towards God.

- **1.** Expresses the general tone of feeling of the Psalm.
- **2-4.** He seeks help in God's righteous government (\*\*Psalm 5:8), and begs for an attentive hearing, and speedy and effectual aid. With no other help and no claim of merit, he relies solely on God's regard to His own perfections for a safe guidance and release from the snares of his enemies. On the terms "rock," etc., (compare \*\*Psalm 17:2 18:2,50 20:6 23:3 25:21).
- **5, 6.** *commit my spirit* my life, or myself. Our Savior used the words on the Cross (\*\*DL\*\*Luke 23:46), not as prophetical, but, as many pious men have done, as expressive of His unshaken confidence in God. The Psalmist rests on God's faithfulness to His promises to His people, and hence avows himself one of them, detesting all who revere objects of idolatry (compare \*\*Deuteronomy 32:21 \*\*\*Corinthians 8:4).
- 7. hast known my soul, etc. had regard to me in trouble.
- 8. shut me up ... enemy abandon to (\*\*\* Samuel 23:11).

*large room* — place of safety (compare \*\*\*Psalm 18:19).

**9, 10.** *mine eye*, etc. — denotes extreme weakness (compare \*\*Psalm 6:7).

*grief* — mingled sorrow and indignation (\*\*\*Psalm 6:7).

**soul and ... belly** — the whole person.

10. Though the effects ascribed to grief are not mere figures of speech —

**spent** ... **consumed** — must be taken in the modified sense of *wasted* and *decayed*.

*iniquity* — or, suffering by it (see on \*\*Psalm 40:12).

- **11.** *among* or, literally, "from," or, "by" my enemies. The latter clauses describe the progress of his disgrace to the lowest degree, till,
- 12. he is forgotten as one dead, and contemned as a useless broken vessel.
- **13.** *For* introduces further reasons for his prayer, the unjust, deliberate, and murderous purposes of his foes.
- **14-18.** In his profession of trust he includes the terms of the prayer expressing it.
- **15.** *times* course of life.

**deliver ... hand** — opposed to "shut me up," etc. of Psalm 31:8.

- **16.** *Make* ... *shine* (Compare Numbers 6:25 Span 4:6). Deprecating from himself, he imprecates on the wicked God's displeasure, and prays that their virulent persecution of him may be stopped.
- **19-21.** God displays openly His purposed goodness to His people.
- **20.** *the secret of thy presence* or, *covering* of Thy countenance; the protection He thus affords; compare \*\*Psalm 27:5 for a similar figure; "dwelling" used there for "presence" here. The idea of security further presented by the figure of a tent and a fortified city [\*\*Psalm 31:21].
- **22.** *For I said* literally, "And I said," in an adversative sense. I, thus favored, was despondent.

in my haste — in my terror.

*cut off ... eyes* — from all the protection of Thy presence.

**23, 24.** *the Lord ... proud doer* — literally, "the Lord is keeping faith," that is, with His people, and is repaying, etc. Then let none despair, but take courage; their hopes shall not be in vain.

#### PSALM 32:1-11.

Maschil — literally, "A Psalm of David giving instruction." The Psalmist describes the blessings of His forgiveness, succeeding the pains of conviction, and deduces from his own experience instruction and exhortation to others.

**1, 2.** (Compare Romans 4:6).

*forgiven* — literally, "taken away," opposed to *retain* ( John 20:23).

**covered** — so that God no longer regards the sin (\*\*\*\*Psalm 85:3).

**2.** *imputeth* — charge to him, and treat him accordingly.

**no guile** — or, *deceit*, no false estimate of himself, nor insincerity before God (compare \*\*Romans 8:1).

3, 4. A vivid description of felt, but unacknowledged, sin.

When — literally, "for," as in <sup>™</sup>Psalm 32:4.

**4.** *thy hand* — of God, or power in distressing him (\*\*Psalm 38:2).

**moisture** — vital juices of the body, the parching heat of which expresses the anguish of the soul. On the other figures, compare Psalm 6:2,7 31:9-11. If composed on the occasion of the fifty-first Psalm, this distress may have been protracted for several months.

- **5.** A prompt fulfillment of the purposed confession is followed by a prompt forgiveness.
- **6.** For this that is, my happy experience.

**godly** — pious in the sense of Psalm 4:3.

*a time* — (<sup>2000</sup>Isaiah 55:6); when God's Spirit inclines us to seek pardon, He is ready to forgive.

- *floods*, etc. denotes great danger (\*\*\*Psalm 18:17 66:12).
- 7. His experience illustrates the statement of Psalm 32:6.
- **8.** Whether, as most likely, the language of David (compare 51:13), or that of God, this is a promise of divine guidance.

*I will ... mine eye* — or, My eye shall be on thee, watching and directing thy way.

- **9.** The latter clause, more literally, "in that they come not near thee"; that is, because they will not come, etc., unless forced by bit and bridle.
- **10.** The sorrows of the impenitent contrasted with the peace and safety secured by God's mercy.
- **11.** The righteous and upright, or those conforming to the divine teaching for securing the divine blessing, may well rejoice with shouting.

#### PSALM 33:1-22.

A call to lively and joyous praise to God for His glorious attributes and works, as displayed in creation, and His general and special providence, in view of which, the Psalmist, for all the pious, professes trust and joy and invokes God's mercy.

- **1-3.** The sentiment falls in with Psalm 32:11 (compare 14:15). The instruments (14:15) do not exclude the voice.
- **3.** *a new song* fresh, adapted to the occasion (\*\*Psalm 40:3 96:1).
- *play skilfully* (Compare \*\*Psalm 15:1-5 16:1-11 21:1-13).
- **4-9.** Reasons for praise: first, God's truth, faithfulness, and mercy, generally; then, His creative power which all must honor.
- **6.** In "word" and "breath" or, "spirit," there may be an allusion to the Son (\*\*Tohn 1:1) and Holy Spirit.
- 9. he spake literally, "said."
- *it was* The addition of "done" weakens the sense (compare Genesis 1:3-10).
- **10, 11.** In God's providence He thwarts men's purposes and executes His own.

**heathen** — literally, "nations."

- **12-19.** The inference from the foregoing in \*\*Psalm 33:12 is illustrated by God's special providence, underlying which is His minute knowledge of all men.
- 13. looketh intently ( Tsaiah 14:16).
- **15.** *fashioneth* or, "forms," and hence knows and controls (Theorems 21:1).

- alike without exception.
- considereth or, "understands"; God knows men's motives.
- **16, 17.** Men's usual reliances in their greatest exigencies are, in themselves, useless.
- **17.** *On the war horse* (compare Job 39:19-25).
- a vain thing a lie, which deceives us.
- **18, 19.** Contrasted is God's guidance and power to save from the greatest earthly evil and its most painful precursor, and hence from all.
- **20-22.** *waiteth* in earnest expectation.
- **21.** *his holy name* (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:12 22:22 30:4). Our faith measures mercy (\*\*\*Matthew 9:29); and if of grace, it is no more of debt (\*\*\*Romans 11:6).

#### PSALM 34:1-22.

On the title compare Genesis 20:13. Abimelech was the general name of the sovereign (Genesis 20:2). After celebrating God's gracious dealings with him, the Psalmist exhorts others to make trial of His providential care, instructing them how to secure it. He then contrasts God's care of His people and His punitive providence towards the wicked.

- **1-4.** Even in distress, which excites supplication, there is always matter for praising and thanking God (compare Ephesians 5:20 Philippians 4:6).
- **2.** make her boast "glory" (\*\*\*Psalm 105:3; compare \*\*\*\*Galatians 6:14). humble "the pious," as in \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:12 25:9.
- **3.** *magnify the Lord* ascribe greatness to Him, an act of praise.
- together "alike" (\*\*\*Psalm 33:15), or, equally, without exception.
- **4.** *delivered* ... *fears* as well as actual evil (\*\*Psalm 64:1).
- **5-7.** God's favor to the pious generally, and to himself specially, is celebrated.

**looked** — with desire for help.

- **lightened** or, "brightened," expressing joy, opposed to the downcast features of those who are ashamed or disappointed (\*\*\*Psalm 25:2,3).
- **6.** *This poor man* literally, "humble," himself as a specimen of such.
- 7. *angel* of the covenant (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 63:9), of whom as a leader of God's host (\*\*\*Isaiah 5:14 \*\*\*Isaiah 5:19), the phrase —
- **encampeth**, etc. is appropriate; or, "angel" used collectively for angels (\*\*\*Hebrews 1:14).

- **8.** *taste and see* try and experience.
- **9.** that fear him who are pious fear and love (\*\*Proverbs 1:7 9:10).
- saints consecrated to His service (\*\*Isaiah 40:31).
- **10.** *not want any good* "good" is emphatic; they may be afflicted (compare \*\* Psalm 34:10); but this may be a *good* (\*\* Corinthians 4:17,18 \*\* Hebrews 12:10,11).
- **11.** *children* subjects of instruction (\*\*Proverbs 1:8,10).
- **12.** *What man* Whoever desires the blessings of piety, let him attend.
- **13, 14.** Sins of thought included in those of speech (\*\*Euke 6:45), avoiding evil and doing good in our relations to men are based on a right relation to God.
- **15.** *eyes of the Lord are upon* (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 32:8 33:18).
- **16.** face ... against opposed to them (\*\*\*Leviticus 17:10 20:3).
- cut off the remembrance utterly destroy ( Psalm 109:13).
- **17, 18.** Humble penitents are objects of God's special tender regard (\*\*\*Psalm 51:19 \*\*\*Isaiah 57:15).
- **20.** *bones* framework of the body.
- **21, 22.** Contrast in the destiny of righteous and wicked; the former shall be delivered and never come into condemnation (\*\*\*John 5:24 \*\*\*Romans 8:1); the latter are left under condemnation and desolate.

#### PSALM 35:1-28.

The Psalmist invokes God's aid, contrasting the hypocrisy, cunning, and malice of his enemies with his integrity and generosity. The imprecations of the first part including a brief notice of their conduct, the fuller exposition of their hypocrisy and malice in the second, and the earnest prayer for deliverance from their scornful triumph in the last, are each closed (\*\*Psalm 35:9,10,18,27,28) with promises of praise for the desired relief, in which his friends will unite. The historical occasion is probably Samuel 24:1-22.

- **1-3.** God is invoked in the character of a warrior (\*Exodus 15:3 Deuteronomy 32:41).
- **3.** *fight against* literally, "devour my devourers."

stop the way against — literally, "shut up" (the way), to meet or oppose, etc.

- *I* ... thy salvation who saves thee.
- **4.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:17).

*devise my hurt* — purpose for evil to me.

- **5, 6.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 1:4) a terrible fate; driven by wind on a slippery path in darkness, and hotly pursued by supernatural violence (\*\*\*2 Samuel 24:16 \*\*\*Acts 12:23).
- 7, 8. net in a pit or, "pit of their net" or, "net-pit," as "holy hill" for "hill of holiness" ("Psalm 2:6); a figure from hunting ("Psalm 7:15).

  Their imprecations on impenitent rebels against God need no vindication; His justice and wrath are for such; His mercy for penitents. Compare "Psalm 7:16 11:5, on the peculiar fate of the wicked here noticed."
- **10.** *All my bones* every part.

him that spoileth him — (Compare \*\*Psalm 10:2).

- **11.** *False witnesses* literally, "Witnesses of injustice and cruelty" (compare \*Psalm 11:5 25:19).
- **12-14.** Though they rendered evil for good, he showed a tender sympathy in their affliction.

**spoiling** — literally, "bereavement." The usual modes of showing grief are made, as figures, to express his sorrow.

- **13.** *prayer* ... *bosom* may denote either the posture the head bowed (compare I Kings 18:42) or, that the prayer was in secret. Some think there is a reference to the result the prayer would benefit him if not them.
- **14.** *behaved* literally, "went on" denoting his habit.

*heavily* — or, "squalidly," his sorrowing occasioning neglect of his person. Altogether, his grief was that of one for a dearly loved relative.

**15, 16.** On the contrary, they rejoiced in his affliction. *Halting*, or, "lameness," as in "Psalm 38:17 for any distress.

*abjects* — either as cripples (compare Samuel 4:4), contemptible; or, degraded persons, such as had been beaten (compare 30:1-8).

*I knew it not* — either the persons, or, reasons of such conduct.

*tear me, and ceased not* — literally, "were not silent" — showing that the *tearing* meant slandering.

**16.** *mockers* — who were hired to make sport at feasts ( Proverbs 28:21).

- **17.** *darling* (Compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:20,21).
- **18.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 22:22).
- **19.** *enemies wrongfully* by false and slanderous imputations.

wink with the eye — an insulting gesture (\*\*\*Proverbs 6:13).

without a cause — manifests more malice than having a wrong cause.

- **20.** deceitful matters or, "words of deceit."
- *quiet in the land* the pious lovers of peace.
- **21.** On the gesture compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:7; and on the expressions of malicious triumph, compare \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:13 28:3.
- **23, 24.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 7:6 26:1 \*\*\*\*2 Thessalonians 1:6). God's righteous government is the hope of the pious and terror of the wicked.
- **25.** *swallowed him up* utterly destroyed him (\*\*PPSalm 21:9\*\*Lamentations 2:16).
- **26.** *clothed* covered wholly (\*\*\*\*\*Job 8:22).
- **27.** *favor* ... *cause* delight in it, as vindicated by Thee.
- **Let the Lord**, etc. Let Him be greatly praised for His care of the just.
- **28.** In this praise of God's equitable government (\*\*\*Psalm 5:8) the writer promises ever to engage.

#### PSALM 36:1-12.

On *servant of the Lord*, see on Psalm 18:1, title. The wickedness of man contrasted with the excellency of God's perfections and dispensations; and the benefit of the latter sought, and the evils of the former deprecated.

- 1. The general sense of this difficult verse is, "that the wicked have no fear of God." The first clause may be rendered, "Saith transgression in my heart, in respect to the wicked, there is no fear," etc., that is, such is my reflection on men's transgressions.
- **2-4.** This reflection detailed.

until his iniquity — literally, "for finding his iniquity for hating"; that is, he persuades himself God will not so find it — "for hating" involving the idea of punishing. Hence his words of *iniquity* and *deceit*, and his bold rejection of all right principles of conduct. The climax is that he deliberately adopts and patronizes evil. The negative forms affirm more emphatically their contraries.

- **5, 6.** *mercy ... and ... faithfulness* as mercy and truth (\*\*Psalm 25:10).
- **6.** *righteousness* [and] *judgments* qualities of a good government (\*\*\*\*Psalm 5:8 31:1). These all are set forth, by the figures used, as unbounded.
- 7. shadow of thy wings (Compare Deuteronomy 32:11 \*\*\*\*Psalm 91:1).
- **8.** *fatness* richness.

thy house — residence — for the privileges and blessings of communion with God (\*\*Psalm 23:6 27:4).

river of thy pleasures — plenteous supply; may allude to Eden.

- **9.** Light is an emblem of all blessings, given of God as a means to gain more.
- **10.** *that know thee* right knowledge of God is the source of right affections and conduct.
- 11. foot of ... hand ... wicked all kinds of violent dealing.
- **12.** *There* in the acting of violence, they are overthrown. A signal defeat.

#### PSALM 37:1-40.

A composed and uniform trust in God and a constant course of integrity are urged in view of the blessedness of the truly pious, contrasted in various aspects with the final ruin of the wicked. Thus the wisdom and justice of God's providence are vindicated, and its seeming inequalities, which excite the cavils of the wicked and the distrust of the pious, are explained. David's personal history abundantly illustrates the Psalm.

- **1, 2.** The general sentiment of the whole Psalm is expressed. The righteous need not be vexed by the prosperity of the wicked; for it is transient, and their destiny undesirable.
- **3.** *Trust* sure of safety.

*shalt thou dwell* — or, "dwell thou"; repose quietly.

verily ... fed — or, "feed on truth," God's promise (\*\*\*Psalm 36:5; compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 12:1).

- **4.** *desires* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 20:5 21:2), what is lawful and right, really good (\*\*\*\*Psalm 84:11).
- **5.** Commit thy way (\*\*Proverbs 16:3). Works what you have to do and cannot set forth as a burden.

trust ... in him — literally, "on Him." He will do what you cannot (compare \*\*Psalm 22:8 31:6). He will not suffer your character to remain under suspicion.

7, 8. *Rest in* — literally, "Be silent to the Lord."

*and wait* — Be submissive — avoid petulance and murmurings, anger and rash doing.

- **9.** Two reasons: The prosperity of the wicked is short; and the pious, by humble trust, will secure all covenant blessing, denoted here by "inherit the earth" (compare \*\*Psalm 25:13).
- **10, 11.** *shall not be* literally, "is not" is not to be found.
- **11.** *peace* includes prosperity.
- **12.** *gnasheth* ... *teeth* in beastly rage.
- **13.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 2:4).

**seeth** — knows certainly.

*his day* — of punishment, long delayed, shall yet come (\*\*\*Hebrews 10:37).

**14, 15.** *sword*, *and* ... *bow* — for any instruments of violence.

slay — literally, "slaughter" ( Samuel 25:11).

**poor and needy** — God's people (\*\*Psalm 10:17 12:5). The punishment of the wicked as drawn on themselves — often mentioned (compare \*\*Psalm 7:15,16 35:8).

- **16.** *riches* literally, "noise and tumult," as incidental to much wealth (compare "Psalm 39:6). Thus the contrast with the "little" of one man is more vivid.
- 17. Even the members of the body needed to hold weapons are destroyed.
- **18, 19.** God, who knows His people's changes, provides against evil and supplies all their need.
- **20.** While the wicked, however mighty, are destroyed, and that utterly, as smoke which vanishes and leaves no trace.
- **21, 22.** *payeth not* not able; having grown poor (compare Deuteronomy 15:7). Ability of the one and inability of the other do not exclude moral dispositions. God's blessing or cursing makes the difference.
- **22.** *cut off* opposed to "inherit the earth" (compare <sup>AND</sup>Leviticus 7:20,21).

- **23**, **24**. *steps* way, or, "course of life"; as ordered by God, failures will not be permanent.
- **26.** *his seed is blessed* literally, "for a blessing" (Genesis 12:2 Psalm 21:6). This position is still true as the rule of God's economy (MR) Timothy 4:8 6:6).
- **27-29.** The exhortation is sustained by the assurance of God's essential rectitude in that providential government which provides perpetual blessings for the good, and perpetual misery for the wicked.
- **30, 31.** The righteous described as to the elements of character, thought, word, and action.
- **31.** *steps* or, "goings" for conduct which is unwavering (\*\*\*Psalm 18:36).
- **32, 33.** The devices of the wicked against the good fail because God acquits them.
- **34.** On the contrary, the good are not only blessed, but made to see the ruin of their foes.
- **35, 36.** of which a picture is given, under the figure of a flourishing tree (compare *Margin*), which soon withers.
- **36.** *he was not* (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 37:10).
- **37.** By "the end" is meant reward ( Proverbs 23:18 24:14), or expectation of success, as in Psalm 37:38, which describes the *end of the wicked* in contrast, and that is *cut off* (compare Psalm 73:17).
- **38.** *together* at once; entirely (\*\*\*Psalm 4:8).
- **39, 40.** *strength* (\*\*\*Psalm 27:1 28:8).
- **trouble** straits (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9 10:1). In trust and quietness is the salvation of the pious from all foes and all their devices.

#### PSALM 38:1-22.

To bring to remembrance, or, remind God of His mercy and himself of his sin. Appealing to God for relief from His heavy chastisement, the Psalmist avows his integrity before men, complains of the defection of friends and persecution of enemies, and in a submissive spirit, casting himself on God, with penitent confession he pleads God's covenant relation and his innocence of the charges of his enemies, and prays for divine comfort and help.

- **1-4.** He deprecates deserved punishment, which is described (\*\*\*Psalm 6:1), under the figure of bodily disease (\*\*\*\*Psalm 38:3).
- **2.** arrows ... and thy hand the sharp and heavy afflictions he suffered (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:23).
- **4.** *iniquities* afflictions in punishment of sin (\*\*\*2 Samuel 16:12 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 31:10 40:12).

gone over mine head — as a flood.

**5-8.** The loathsomeness, corruption, and wasting torture of severe physical disease set forth his mental anguish (\*\*\*Psalm 38:6). It is possible some bodily disease was connected. The

*loins* are the seat of strength. His exhaustion left him only the power to groan [\*\*\*\*Psalm 38:9].

- **9.** That God can hear ( Romans 8:26).
- **10.** *My heart panteth* as if barely surviving.
- *light ... from me* utter exhaustion (\*\*\*Psalm 6:7 13:3).
- 11, 12. Friends desert, but foes increase in malignity.
- **12.** seek after my life (\*\*\*\*\* | Samuel 20:1 22:23).

**13, 14.** He patiently submits, uttering no reproaches or replies ( John 19:9) to their insulting speeches;

#### 15-17. for he is confident the

**Lord** — literally, "Sovereign" (to whom he was a servant), would answer his prayer (\*\*Psalm 3:4 4:1), and not permit their triumph in his partial halting, of which he was in danger.

- **18.** Consciousness of sin makes suffering pungent, and suffering, rightly received, leads to confession.
- **19, 20.** Still, while humbled before God, he is the victim of deadly enemies, full of malice and treachery.

*enemies are lively* — literally, "of life," who would take my life, that is, deadly.

**21, 22.** (Compare Psalm 22:19 35:3). All terms of frequent use. In this Psalm the language is generally susceptible of application to Christ as a sufferer, David, as such, typifying Him. This does not require us to apply the confessions of sin, but only the pains or penalties which He bore for us.

#### PSALM 39:1-13.

To Jeduthun ( Chronicles 16:41,42), one of the chief singers. His name mentioned, perhaps, as a special honor. Under depressing views of his frailty and the prosperity of the wicked, the Psalmist, tempted to murmur, checks the expression of his feelings, till, led to regard his case aright, he prays for a proper view of his condition and for the divine compassion.

1. I said — or, "resolved."

will take heed — watch.

ways — conduct, of which the use of the tongue is a part ( Tames 1:26).

**bridle** — literally, "muzzle for my mouth" (compare Deuteronomy 25:4).

- **2.** even from good ( Genesis 31:24), everything.
- **3.** His emotions, as a smothered flame, burst forth.
- **4-7.** Some take these words as those of fretting, but they are not essentially such. The tinge of discontent arises from the character of his suppressed emotions. But, addressing God, they are softened and subdued.

make me to know mine end — experimentally appreciate.

how frail I am — literally, "when I shall cease."

- **5, 6.** His prayer is answered in his obtaining an impressive view of the vanity of the life of all men, and their transient state. Their pomp is a mere image, and their wealth is gathered they know not for whom.
- **7.** The interrogation makes the implied negative stronger. Though this world offers nothing to our expectation, God is worthy of all confidence.

- **8-10.** Patiently submissive, he prays for the removal of his chastisement, and that he may not be a reproach.
- **11.** From his own case, he argues to that of all, that the destruction of man's enjoyments is ascribable to sin.
- **12, 13.** Consonant with the tenor of the Psalm, he prays for God's compassionate regard to him as a stranger here; and that, as such was the condition of his fathers, so, like them, he may be cheered instead of being bound under wrath and chastened in displeasure.

### PSALM 40:1-17.

In this Psalm a celebration of God's deliverance is followed by a profession of devotion to His service. Then follows a prayer for relief from imminent dangers, involving the overthrow of enemies and the rejoicing of sympathizing friends. In Hebrews 10:5, etc., Paul quotes Psalm 40:6-8 as the words of Christ, offering Himself as a better sacrifice. Some suppose Paul thus accommodated David's words to express Christ's sentiments. But the value of his quotation would be thus destroyed, as it would have no force in his argument, unless regarded by his readers as the original sense of the passage in the Old Testament. Others suppose the Psalm describes David's feelings in suffering and joy; but the language quoted by Paul, in the sense given by him, could not apply to David in any of his relations, for as a type the language is not adapted to describe any event or condition of David's career, and as an individual representing the pious generally, neither he nor they could properly use it (see on Psalm 40:7, below). The Psalm must be taken then, as the sixteenth, to express the feelings of Christ's human nature. The difficulties pertinent to this view will be considered as they occur.

**1-3.** The figures for deep distress are illustrated in Jeremiah's history ( Peremiah 38:6-12). Patience and trust manifested in distress, deliverance in answer to prayer, and the blessed effect of it in eliciting praise from God's true worshippers, teach us that Christ's suffering is our example, and His deliverance our encouragement ( Hebrews 5:7,8 12:3

inclined — (the ear, \*\*Psalm 17:6), as if to catch the faintest sigh.

**3.** *a new song* — (See on <sup>←</sup>Psalm 33:3).

*fear, and ... trust* — revere with love and faith.

**4.** *Blessed* — (\*\*900\*Psalm 1:1 2:12).

**respecteth** — literally, "turns towards," as an object of confidence.

*turn aside* — from true God and His law to falsehood in worship and conduct.

- **5.** be reckoned up in order (compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:3 33:14 \*\*\*Isaiah 44:7), too many to be set forth regularly. This is but one instance of many. The use of the plural accords with the union of Christ and His people. In suffering and triumph, they are one with Him.

mine ears hast thou opened — Whether allusion is made to the custom of boring a servant's ear, in token of voluntary and perpetual enslavement (\*\*Exodus 21:6), or that the opening of the ear, as in \*\*Isaiah 48:8 50:5 (though by a different word in Hebrew) denotes obedience by the common figure of hearing for obeying, it is evident that the clause is designed to express a devotion to God's will as avowed more fully in \*\*Psalm 40:8, and already explained. Paul, however, uses the words, "a body hast thou prepared me" [\*\*Thebrews 10:5], which are found in the Septuagint in the place of the words, "mine ears hast thou opened." He does not lay any stress on this clause, and his argument is complete without it. It is, perhaps, to be regarded rather as an interpretation or free translation by the Septuagint, than either an addition or attempt at verbal translation. The Septuagint translators may have had reference to Christ's vicarious

sufferings as taught in other Scriptures, as in \*\*\*Isaiah 53:4-11; at all events, the sense is substantially the same, as a body was essential to the required obedience (compare \*\*Romans 7:4 \*\*\*\* Peter 2:24).

7. **Then** — in such case, without necessarily referring to order of time.

**Lo, I come** — I am prepared to do, etc.

*in the volume of the book* — *roll of the book*. Such rolls, resembling maps, are still used in the synagogues.

written of me — or on me, prescribed to me (\*\*\*\*2 Kings 22:13). The first is the sense adopted by Paul. In either case, the Pentateuch, or law of Moses, is meant, and while it contains much respecting Christ directly, as Genesis 3:15 49:10 \*\*Deuteronomy 18:15, and, indirectly, in the Levitical ritual, there is nowhere any allusion to David.

- **9, 10.** *I have preached* literally, "announced good tidings." Christ's prophetical office is taught. He "preached" the great truths of God's government of sinners.
- **11.** may be rendered as an assertion, that God *will not withhold* (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 16:1).
- **12.** *evils* inflicted by others.

iniquities — or penal afflictions, and sometimes calamities in the wide sense. This meaning of the word is very common. (\*\*Psalm 31:11 38:4; compare \*\*Genesis 4:13, Cain's punishment; \*\*Genesis 19:15, that of Sodom \*\*Sodom \*\*Sodom

my heart faileth me — (\*\*Matthew 26:38), "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

**cannot look up** — literally, "I cannot see," not denoting the depression of conscious guilt, as \*\*\*Luke 18:13, but exhaustion from suffering, as dimness of eyes (compare \*\*\*Psalm 6:7 13:3 38:10). The whole context thus sustains the sense assigned to *iniquities*.

- **13.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 22:19).
- **14, 15.** The language is not necessarily imprecatory, but rather a confident expectation (\*\*Psalm 5:11), though the former sense is not inconsistent with Christ's prayer for the forgiveness of His murderers, inasmuch as their confusion and shame might be the very means to prepare them for humbly seeking forgiveness (compare \*\*Acts 2:37).
- **15.** *for a reward* literally, "in consequence of."

**Aha** — (Compare <sup>→</sup>Psalm 35:21,25).

**16.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 35:27).

*love thy salvation* — delight in its bestowal on others as well as themselves.

**17.** A summary of his condition and hopes.

**thinketh upon** — or provides for me. "He was heard," "when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death" [\*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 5:7].

### 

The Psalmist celebrates the blessedness of those who compassionate the poor, conduct strongly contrasted with the spite of his enemies and neglect of his friends in his calamity. He prays for God's mercy in view of his ill desert, and, in confidence of relief, and that God will vindicate his cause, he closes with a doxology.

**1-3.** God rewards kindness to the poor (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 19:17). From \*\*\*\*Psalm 41:2,11 it may be inferred that the Psalmist describes his own conduct,

**poor** — in person, position, and possessions.

**2.** *shall be blessed* — literally, "led aright," or "safely," prospered (\*\*Psalm 23:3).

**upon the earth** — or land of promise (\*\*\*\*Psalm 25:13 27:3-9, etc.). The figures are drawn from the acts of a kind nurse.

**4.** *I said* — I asked the mercy I show.

**heal my soul** — (Compare Sealing 30:2). "Sin and suffering are united," is one of the great teachings of the Psalms.

- **5, 6.** A graphic picture of the conduct of a malignant enemy.
- **6.** to see me as if to spy out my case.

**he speaketh** ... itself — or, "he speaketh vanity as to his heart" — that is, does not speak candidly, "he gathereth iniquity to him," collects elements for mischief, and then divulges the gains of his hypocrisy.

- 7, 8. So of others, all act alike.
- **8.** *An evil disease* literally, "a word of Belial," some slander.

*cleaveth* — literally, "poured on him."

*that he lieth* — who has now laid down, "he is utterly undone and our victory is sure."

**9.** *mine* ... *friend* — literally, "the man of my peace."

eat ... bread — who depended on me or was well treated by me.

hath lifted up heel — in scornful violence. As David and his fortunes typified Christ and His (compare *Introduction*), so these words expressed the treatment he received, and also that of his Son and Lord; hence, though not distinctly prophetical, our Savior applies them to Judas, "that the Scripture may be fulfilled" (\*\*\*John 13:18). This last phrase has a wide use in the New Testament, and is not restricted to denote special prophecies.

- **10.** A lawful punishment of criminals is not revenge, nor inconsistent with their final good (compare \*\*Psalm 40:14,15).
- **11-13.** *favourest* or tenderly lovest me (Genesis 34:19), evinced by relief from his enemies, and, farther, God recognizes his innocence by upholding him.
- **12.** settest ... before thy face under thy watch and care, as God before man's face (\*\*Psalm 16:8) is an object of trust and love.
- **13.** *Blessed* praised, usually applied to God. The word usually applied to men denotes *happiness* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 1:1 32:1). With this doxology the first book closes.

### PSALM 42:1-11.

Maschil — (See on Seal Psalm 32:1, title). For (see Introduction) the sons of Korah. The writer, perhaps one of this Levitical family of singers accompanying David in exile, mourns his absence from the sanctuary, a cause of grief aggravated by the taunts of enemies, and is comforted in hopes of relief. This course of thought is repeated with some variety of detail, but closing with the same refrain.

**1, 2.** Compare (\*\*\*Psalm 63:1).

**panteth** — desires in a state of exhaustion.

- **2.** *appear before God* in acts of worship, the terms used in the command for the stated personal appearance of the Jews at the sanctuary.
- **3.** Where is thy God? implying that He had forsaken him (compare Samuel 16:7 Psalm 3:2 22:8).
- **4.** The verbs are properly rendered as futures, "I will remember," etc., that is, the recollection of this season of distress will give greater zest to the privileges of God's worship, when obtained.
- **5.** Hence he chides his despondent soul, assuring himself of a time of joy.

**help of his countenance** — or, "face" (compare \*\*\* Numbers 6:25 \*\*\* Psalm 4:6 16:11).

**6.** Dejection again described.

**therefore** — that is, finding no comfort in myself, I turn to Thee, even in this distant "land of Jordan and the (mountains) Hermon, the country east of Jordan.

*hill Mizar* — as a name of a small hill contrasted with the mountains round about Jerusalem, perhaps denoted the contempt with which the place of exile was regarded.

- **7.** The roar of successive billows, responding to that of floods of rain, represented the heavy waves of sorrow which overwhelmed him.
- **8.** Still he relies on as constant a flow of divine mercy which will elicit his praise and encourage his prayer to God.
- **9, 10.** in view of which (\*\*Psalm 42:8), he dictates to himself a prayer based on his distress, aggravated as it was by the cruel taunts and infidel suggestions of his foes.
- 11. This brings on a renewed self-chiding, and excites hopes of relief.

*health* — or help.

of my countenance — (compare \*\*Psalm 42:5) who cheers me, driving away clouds of sorrow from my face.

*my God* — It is He of whose existence and favor my foes would have me doubt.

### **→PSALM 43:1-5.**

Excepting the recurrence of the refrain, there is no good reason to suppose this a part of the preceding, though the scope is the same. It has always been placed separate.

**1.** *Judge* — or, "vindicate" (\*\*\*Psalm 10:18).

*plead*, etc. — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 35:1).

**ungodly** — neither in character or condition objects of God's favor (compare \*\*\*Psalm 4:3).

**2.** God of my strength — by covenant relation my stronghold (\*\*\*\*Psalm 18:1).

cast me off — in scorn.

**because** — or, "in," that is, in such circumstances of oppression.

**3.** *light* — as in <sup>□270</sup> Psalm 27:1.

**truth** — or, "faithfulness" (\*\*\*Psalm 25:5), manifest it by fulfilling promises. *Light* and *truth* are personified as messengers who will bring him to the privileged place of worship.

tabernacles — plural, in allusion to the various courts.

**4.** *the altar* — as the chief place of worship. The mention of the harp suggests the prominence of praise in his offering.

#### **№**PSALM 44:1-26.

In a time of great national distress, probably in David's reign, the Psalmist recounts God's gracious dealings in former times, and the confidence they had learned to repose in Him. After a vivid picture of their calamities, he humbly expostulates against God's apparent forgetfulness, reminding Him of their faithfulness and mourning their heavy sorrows.

**1-3.** This period is that of the settlement of Canaan (\*\*\*Joshua 24:12\*\*Judges 6:3).

**have told** — or, "related" (compare Exodus 10:2).

- **2.** *plantedst them* that is, "our fathers," who are also, from the parallel construction of the last clause, to be regarded as the object of "*cast* them out," which means literally, "send" them out, or, "extend them." *Heathen* and *people* denote the nations who were driven out to make room for the Israelites.
- **4.** Thou art my King literally, "he who is my King," sustaining the same covenant relation as to the "fathers."
- **5.** The figure drawn from the habits of the ox.
- **6-8.** God is not only our sole help, but only worthy of praise.
- 7. put ... to shame (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 6:10), disgraced.
- **8.** *thy name* as in \*\*\*Psalm 5:11.
- **9. But** contrasting, cast off as abhorrent (\*Psalm 43:2).

**goest not forth** — literally, "will not go" (\*\*\*2 Samuel 5:23). In several consecutive verses the leading verb is *future*, and the following one *past* (in *Hebrew*), thus denoting the causes and effects. Thus (\*\*\*Psalm 44:10-12), when defeated, spoiling follows; when delivered as sheep, dispersion follows, etc.

- **11.** The Babylonian captivity not necessarily meant. There were others (compare <sup>4186</sup>1 Kings 8:46).
- **13, 14.** (Compare Deuteronomy 28:37 Psalm 79:4).
- **15.** *shame of ... face* blushes in disgrace.
- **16.** Its cause, the taunts and presence of malignant enemies (\*\*\*Psalm 8:2).
- **17-19.** They had not apostatized totally were still God's people.
- **18.** declined turned aside from God's law.
- **19.** *sore broken* crushed.
- **place of dragons** desolate, barren, rocky wilderness (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 63:10 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 13:22),
- *shadow of death* (Compare \*\*Psalm 23:4).
- **20, 21.** A solemn appeal to God to witness their constancy.
- **stretched out ... hands** gesture of worship (\*\*\*\*Exodus 9:29 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 88:9).
- **22.** Their protracted sufferings as God's people attests the constancy. Paul (\*\*Romans 8:36) uses this to describe Christian steadfastness in persecution.
- **23-26.** This style of addressing God, as indifferent, is frequent (\*\*\*Psalm 3:7 9:19 13:1, etc.). However low their condition, God is appealed to, on the ground, and for the honor, of His mercy.

### \*\*\*PSALM 45:1-17.

Shoshannim — literally, "Lilies," either descriptive of an instrument so shaped, or denoting some tune or air so called, after which the Psalm was to be sung (see on Psalm 8:1, title). A song of loves, or, of beloved ones (plural and feminine) — a conjugal song. *Maschil* — (See on \*\*\*Psalm 32:1, title, and Psalm 42:1, title) denotes the didactic character of the Psalm; that it gives instruction, the song being of allegorical, and not literal, import. The union and glories of Christ and his Church are described. He is addressed as a king possessed of all essential graces, as a conqueror exalted on the throne of a righteous and eternal government, and as a bridegroom arrayed in nuptial splendor. The Church is portrayed in the purity and loveliness of a royally adorned and attended bride, invited to forsake her home and share the honors of her affianced lord. The picture of an Oriental wedding thus opened is filled up by representing the complimentary gifts of the wealthy with which the occasion is honored, the procession of the bride clothed in splendid raiment, attended by her virgin companions, and the entrance of the joyous throng into the palace of the king. A prediction of a numerous and distinguished progeny, instead of the complimentary wish for it usually expressed (compare Genesis 24:60 Ruth 4:11,12), and an assurance of a perpetual fame, closes the Psalm. All ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters regarded this Psalm as an allegory of the purport above named. In the Song of Songs the allegory is carried out more fully. Hosea (\*\*\*\*\*Hosea 1:1-3:5) treats the relation of God and His people under the same figure, and its use to set forth the relation of Christ and His Church runs through both parts of the Bible (compare \*\*\* Isaiah 54:5 62:4,5 \*\*\* Matthew 22:3 25:1 \*\*\* John 3:29 Ephesians 5:25-32, etc.). Other methods of exposition have been suggested. Several Jewish monarchs, from Solomon to the wicked Ahab, and various foreign princes, have been named as the hero of the song. But to none of them can the terms here used be shown to apply, and it is hardly probable that any mere nuptial song, especially of a heathen king,

would be permitted a place in the sacred songs of the Jews. The advocates for any other than the Messianic interpretation have generally silenced each other in succession, while the application of the most rigorous rules of a fair system of interpretation has but strengthened the evidences in its favor. The scope of the Psalm above given is easy and sustained by the explication of its details. The quotation of Psalm 45:6,7 by Paul (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 1:8,9), as applicable to Christ, *ought to be conclusive*, and their special exposition shows the propriety of such an application.

**1.** An animated preface indicative of strong emotion. Literally, "My heart overflows: a good matter I speak; the things which I have made," etc.

*inditing* — literally, "boiling up," as a fountain overflows.

my tongue is the pen — a mere instrument of God's use.

*of a ready writer* — that is, it is fluent. The theme is inspiring and language flows fast.

- **2.** To rich personal attractions is added grace of the lips, captivating powers of speech. This is given, and becomes a source of power and proves a blessing. Christ is a prophet (\*\*Luke 4:22).
- **3, 4.** The king is addressed as ready to go forth to battle.

**sword** — (Compare Revelation 1:16 19:15).

*mighty* — (Compare \*\*\* Isaiah 9:6).

**glory and ... majesty** — generally used as divine attributes (\*\*\*Psalm 96:6 104:1 111:3), or as specially conferred on mortals (\*\*\*Psalm 21:5), perhaps these typically.

**4.** *ride prosperously* — or conduct a successful war.

**because of** — for the interests of truth, etc.

*meekness* ... *righteousness* — without any connection — that is, a righteousness or equity of government, distinguished by meekness or condescension (\*\*\*Psalm 18:35).

right hand — or power, as its organ.

**shall teach thee** — point the way to terrible things; that is, in conquest of enemies.

5. The result.

*people* — Whole nations are subdued.

- 6. No lawful construction can be devised to change the sense here given and sustained by the ancient versions, and above all by Paul (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 1:8). Of the perpetuity of this government, compare \*\*\*\* Samuel 7:13 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:16 72:5 89:4 110:4 \*\*\*\*\*\* Isaiah 9:7.
- 7. As in \*\*Psalm 45:6 the divine nature is made prominent, here the moral qualities of the human are alleged as the reason or ground of the mediatorial exultation. Some render "O God, thy God," instead of

God, thy God — but the latter is sustained by the same form (\*\*\*\*Psalm 50:7), and it was only of His human nature that the anointing could be predicated (compare \*\*\*Isaiah 61:3).

*oil of gladness* — or token of gladness, as used in feasts and other times of solemn joy (compare Tings 1:39,40).

*fellows* — other kings.

**8.** The king thus inaugurated is now presented as a bridegroom, who appears in garments richly perfumed, brought out from

*ivory palaces* — His royal residence; by which, as indications of the happy bridal occasion, He has been gladdened.

- **9.** In completion of this picture of a marriage festival, female attendants or bridesmaids of the highest rank attend Him, while the queen, in rich apparel (\*\*\*Psalm 45:13), stands ready for the nuptial procession.
- **10, 11.** She is invited to the union, for forming which she must leave her father's people. She representing, by the form of the allegory, the Church, this address is illustrated by all those scriptures, from Genesis 12:1 on, which speak of the people of God as a chosen, separate, and peculiar people. The relation of subjection to her spouse at once accords with the law of marriage, as given in Genesis 3:16 18:12 Ephesians 5:22 The Peter 3:5,6, and the relation of the Church to Christ (Ephesians

- 5:24). The love of the husband is intimately connected with the entire devotion to which the bride is exhorted.
- **12.** daughter of Tyre (\*\*Psalm 9:14); denotes the people. Tyre, celebrated for its great wealth, is selected to represent the richest nations, an idea confirmed by the next clause. These gifts are brought as means to conciliate the royal parties, representing the admitted subjection of the offerers. This well sets forth the exalted position of the Church and her head, whose moral qualities receive the homage of the world. The contribution of material wealth to sustain the institutions of the Church may be included (compare "riches of the Gentiles," \*\*Psalm 72:10\*\* Isaiah 60:5-10).
- **13.** *the king's daughter* a term of dignity. It may also intimate, with some allusion to the teaching of the allegory, that the bride of Christ, the Church, is the daughter of the great king, God.

*within* — Not only is her outward raiment costly, but all her apparel is of the richest texture.

wrought gold — gold embroidery, or cloth in which gold is woven.

**14, 15.** The progress of the procession is described; according to the usual custom the bride and attendants are conducted to the palace. Some for the words —

*in raiment of needlework* — propose another rendering, "on variegated (or embroidered) cloths" — that is, in the manner of the East, richly wrought tapestry was spread on the ground, on which the bride walked. As the dress had been already mentioned, this seems to be a probable translation.

- **15.** *shall they be brought* in solemn form (compare \*\*\*Job 10:19 21:22). The entrance into the palace with great joy closes the scene. So shall the Church be finally brought to her Lord, and united amid the festivities of the holy beings in heaven.
- **16.** As earthly monarchs govern widely extended empires by viceroys, this glorious king is represented as supplying all the principalities of earth with princes of his own numerous progeny.

**17.** The glories of this empire shall be as wide as the world and lasting as eternity.

therefore — Because thus glorious, the praise shall be universal and perpetual. Some writers have taxed their ingenuity to find in the history and fortunes of Christ and His Church exact parallels for every part of this splendid allegory, not excepting its gorgeous Oriental imagery. Thus, by the dresses of the king and queen, are thought to be meant the eminent endowments and graces of Christ and His people. The attendant women, supposed (though inconsistently it might seem with the inspired character of the work) to be concubines, are thought to represent the Gentile churches, and the bride the Jewish, etc. But it is evident that we cannot pursue such a mode of interpretation. For, following the allegory, we must suspend to the distant future the results of a union whose consummation as a marriage is still distant (compare Revelation 21:9). In fact, the imagery here and elsewhere sets before us the Church in two aspects. As a body, it is yet incomplete, the whole is yet ungathered. As a moral institution, it is yet imperfect. In the final catastrophe it will be complete and perfect. Thus, as a bride adorned, etc., it will be united with its Lord. Thus the union of Christ and the Church triumphant is set forth. On the other hand, in regard to its component parts, the relation of Christ as head, as husband, etc., already exists, and as these parts form an institution in this world, it is by His union with it, and the gifts and graces with which He endows it, that a spiritual seed arises and spreads in the world. Hence we must fix our minds only on the one simple but grand truth, that Christ loves the Church, is head over all things for it, raises it in His exaltation to the highest moral dignity — a dignity of which every, even the meanest, sincere disciple will partake. As to the time, then, in which this allegorical prophecy is to fulfilled, it may be said that no periods of time are specially designated. The characteristics of the relation of Christ and His Church are indicated, and we may suppose that the whole process of His exaltation from the declaration of His Sonship, by His resurrection, to the grand catastrophe of the final judgment, with all the collateral blessings to the Church and the world, lay before the vision of the inspired prophet.

#### **№PSALM 46:1-11.**

Upon Alamoth — most probably denotes the *treble*, or part sung by female voices, the word meaning "virgins"; and which was sung with some appropriately keyed instrument (compare "Thronicles 15:19-21; see on "Psalm 6:1, title). The theme may be stated in Luther's well-known words, "A mighty fortress is our God." The great deliverance ("Thronicles 15:19-21) Kings 19:35 "Tsaiah 37:36) may have occasioned its composition.

1. refuge — literally, "a place of trust" (\*\*\*PPsalm 2:12).

*strength* — (<sup>⊲୭№</sup>Psalm 18:2).

*present help* — literally, "a help He has been found exceedingly."

trouble — as in \*\*Psalm 18:7.

- **2, 3.** The most violent civil commotions are illustrated by the greatest physical commotions.
- **3.** *swelling* well represents the *pride* and haughtiness of insolent foes.
- **4.** God's favor is denoted by a river (compare Psalm 36:8 Zechariah 14:8 Revelation 22:1).

city of God, the holy place — His earthly residence, Jerusalem and the temple (compare \*\*\* Psalm 2:6,3:4 20:2 48:2, etc.). God's favor, like a river whose waters are conducted in channels, is distributed to all parts of His Church.

*most High* — denoting His supremacy (\*\*\*Psalm 17:2).

- **6.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 46:2).

- earth melted all powers dissolved by His mere word (\*\*\*\*Psalm 75:3\*\*\*\*Phosea 2:22).
- 7. with us on our side; His presence is terror to our enemies, safety to us.
- *refuge* high place (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9; compare also \*\*\*\*Psalm 24:6,10).
- **8.** what desolations literally, "who hath put desolations," destroying our enemies.
- **9.** The usual weapons of war (\*\*\*Psalm 7:12), as well as those using them, are brought to an end.
- **10. Be still**, etc. literally, "Leave off to oppose Me and vex My people. I am over all for their safety." (Compare Tsaiah 2:11 Ephesians 1:22).

### ■PSALM 47:1-9.

Praise is given to God for victory, perhaps that recorded (\*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 20:20-30); and His dominions over all people, Jews and Gentiles, is asserted.

- **1.** *clap* ... *hands* ... *people* literally, "peoples," or "nations" (compare Deuteronomy 32:43 \*\*\*Psalm 18:49 98:9).
- **2, 3.** His universal sovereignty now exists, and will be made known.
- **3.** *under us* that is, His saints; Israel's temporal victories were types of the spiritual conquests of the true Church.
- **4.** *He shall ... inheritance* the heathen to be possessed by His Church (\*\*Psalm 2:8), as Canaan by the Jews.

*excellency of Jacob* — literally, "pride," or, that in which he glories (not necessarily, though often, in a bad sense), the privileges of the chosen people —

whom he loved — His love being the sole cause of granting them.

**5-7.** God, victorious over His enemies, reascends to heaven, amid the triumphant praises of His people, who celebrate His sovereign dominion. This sovereignty is what the Psalm teaches; hence he adds,

sing ... praises with understanding — literally, "sing and play an instructive (Psalm)." The whole typifies Christ's ascension (compare Psalm 68:18).

**8, 9.** The instruction continued.

**throne of ... holiness** — or, "holy throne" (see on "Psalm 2:6; "Psalm 2:6; 23:4).

**9.** *princes* — who represent *peoples*. For —

**even** — supply, "as," or, "to" — that is, they all become united under covenant with Abraham's God.

*shields* — as in \*\*Mosea 4:18, "rulers" [*Margin*].

#### PSALM 48:1-14.

This is a spirited Psalm and song (compare \*\*\*Psalm 30:1), having probably been suggested by the same occasion as the foregoing. It sets forth the privileges and blessings of God's spiritual dominion as the terror of the wicked and joy of the righteous.

**1.** to be praised — always: it is an epithet, as in Psalm 18:3.

**mountain of his holiness** — His Church (compare Saiah 2:2,3 25:6,7,10); the sanctuary was erected first on Mount Zion, then (as the temple) on Moriah; hence the figure.

**2, 3.** *situation* — literally, "elevation."

joy of, etc. — source of joy.

**sides of the north** — poetically for eminent, lofty, distinguished, as the ancients believed the *north* to be the highest part of the earth (compare Isaiah 14:13).

3. palaces — literally, "citadels."

**refuge** — (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:10 18:3). He was so known in them because they enjoyed His presence.

- 4-6. For The reason is given. Though the kings (perhaps of Moab and Ammon, compare \*\*Psalm 83:3-5) combined, a conviction of God's presence with His people, evinced by the unusual courage with which the prophets (compare \*\*D\*2 Chronicles 20:12-20) had inspired them, seized on their minds, and smitten with sudden and intense alarm, they fled astonished.
- **7.** *ships of Tarshish* as engaged in a distant and lucrative trade, the most valuable. The phrase may illustrate God's control over all material agencies, whether their literal destruction be meant or not.

- **8.** This present experience assures of that perpetual care which God extends to His Church.
- **9.** *thought of* literally, "compared," or considered, in respect of former dealings.

in the ... temple — in acts of solemn worship (compare 40182 Chronicles 20:28).

**10.** *According ... praise* — that is, As Thy perfections manifested (compare \*\*Psalm 8:1 20:1-7), demand praise, it shall be given, everywhere.

*thy right hand*, etc. — Thy righteous government is displayed by Thy power.

**11.** *the daughters*, etc. — *the small towns*, or the people, with the chief city, or rulers of the Church.

*judgments* — decisions and acts of right government.

**12-14.** The call to survey Zion, or the Church, as a fortified city, is designed to suggest "how well our God secures His fold." This security is perpetual, and its pledge is His guidance through this life.

#### **№PSALM 49:1-20.**

This Psalm instructs and consoles. It teaches that earthly advantages are not reliable for permanent happiness, and that, however prosperous worldly men may be for a time, their ultimate destiny is ruin, while the pious are safe in God's care.

**1-3.** All are called to hear what interests all.

world — literally, "duration of life," the present time.

**4.** *incline* — to hear attentively (\*\*\*Psalm 17:6 31:2).

parable — In Hebrew and Greek "parable" and "proverb" are translations of the same word. It denotes a comparison, or form of speech, which under one image includes many, and is expressive of a general truth capable of various illustrations. Hence it may be used for the illustration itself. For the former sense, "proverb" (that is, one word for several) is the usual English term, and for the latter, in which comparison is prominent, "parable" (that is, one thing laid by another). The distinction is not always observed, since here, and in "Psalm 78:2; "proverb" would better express the style of the composition (compare also "Proverbs 26:7,9" Habakkuk 2:6 "John 16:25,29). Such forms of speech are often very figurative and also obscure (compare "Matthew 13:12-15). Hence the use of the parallel word —

dark saying — or, "riddle" (compare Ezekiel 17:2).

open — is to explain.

*upon the harp* — the accompaniment for a lyric.

**5.** *iniquity* — or, "calamity" (\*\*Psalm 40:12).

of my heels — literally "my supplanters" (\*\*\*Genesis 27:36), or oppressors: "I am surrounded by the evils they inflict."

- **6.** They are vainglorious.
- **7-9.** yet unable to save themselves or others.
- **8.** it ceaseth for ever that is, the ransom fails, the price is too precious, costly.
- **9.** *corruption* literally, "pit," or, "grave," thus showing that "soul" is used for "life" (\*\*\*Psalm 49:8).
- **10.** For he seeth that is, corruption; then follows the illustration.

*wise ... fool* — (\*\*\*Psalm 14:1\*\*\*Proverbs 1:32 10:1).

*likewise* — alike altogether — (\*\*\*Psalm 4:8) — die — all meet the same fate.

- **11.** Still infatuated and flattered with hopes of perpetuity, they call their lands, or "celebrate their names on account of (their) lands."
- **12.** Contrasted with this vanity is their frailty. However honored, man

*abideth not* — literally, "lodgeth not," remains not till morning, but suddenly perishes as (wild) beasts, whose lives are taken without warning.

- 13. Though their way is folly, others follow the same course of life.
- **14.** *Like sheep* (compare Psalm 49:12) unwittingly, they

are laid — or, "put," etc.

death shall feed on — or, better, "shall rule"

them — as a shepherd (compare "feed," Psalm 28:9, Margin).

have dominion over — or, "subdue"

them in the morning — suddenly, or in their turn.

*their beauty* — literally, "form" or shape.

**shall consume** — literally, "is for the consumption," that is, of the grave.

*from their dwelling* — literally, "from their home (they go) to it," that is, the grave.

- **15.** The pious, delivered from "the power of the grave."
- *power* literally, "the hand," of death, are taken under God's care.
- **16-19.** applies this instruction. Be not anxious (\*\*\*Psalm 37:1, etc.), since death cuts off the prosperous wicked whom you dread.
- **18.** *Though* ... *lived*, etc. literally, "For in his life he blessed his soul," or, "himself" (\*\*\*Luke 12:19,16:25); yet (\*\*\*Psalm 49:19); he has had his portion.
- *men will praise* ... *thyself* Flatterers enhance the rich fool's self-complacency; the form of address to him strengthens the emphasis of the sentiment.
- **20.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 49:12). The *folly* is more distinctly expressed by "understandeth not," substituted for "abideth not."

### PSALM 50:1-23.

In the grandeur and solemnity of a divine judgment, God is introduced as instructing men in the nature of true worship, exposing hypocrisy, warning the wicked, and encouraging the pious.

- **1-4.** The description of this majestic appearance of God resembles that of His giving the law (compare Exodus 19:16 20:18 Deuteronomy 32:1).
- **4.** *above* literally, "above" ( Genesis 1:7).

**heavens ... earth** — For all creatures are witnesses (\*\*Deuteronomy 4:26 30:19 \*\*Tsaiah 1:2).

**5.** *my saints* — (\*\*Psalm 4:3).

made — literally, "cut"

- *a covenant*, etc. alluding to the dividing of a victim of sacrifice, by which covenants were ratified, the parties passing between the divided portions (compare \*\*Genesis 15:10,18).
- **6.** The inhabitants of heaven, who well know God's character, attest His righteousness as a judge.
- 7. I will testify that is, for failure to worship aught.
- *thy God* and so, by covenant as well as creation, entitled to a pure worship.
- **8-15.** However scrupulous in external worship, it was offered as if they conferred an obligation in giving God His own, and with a degrading view of Him as needing it (\*\*\*Psalm 50:9-13). Reproving them for such foolish and blasphemous notions, He teaches them to *offer*, or literally, "sacrifice," thanksgiving, and pay, or perform, their vows that is, to bring, with the external symbolical service, the homage of the heart, and

faith, penitence, and love. To this is added an invitation to seek, and a promise to afford, all needed help in trouble.

- **16-20.** *the wicked* that is, the formalists, as now exposed, and who lead vicious lives (compare Romans 2:21,23). They are unworthy to use even the words of God's law. Their hypocrisy and vice are exposed by illustrations from sins against the seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments.
- **21, 22.** God, no longer (even in appearance) disregarding such, exposes their sins and threatens a terrible punishment.
- **22.** *forget God* This denotes unmindfulness of His true character.
- **23.** *offereth praise* (\*\*Psalm 50:14), so that the external worship is a true index of the heart.

ordereth ... aright — acts in a straight, right manner, opposed to turning aside (\*\*Psalm 25:5). In such, pure worship and a pure life evince their true piety, and they will enjoy God's presence and favor.

### \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 51:1-19.

On the occasion, compare 2 Samuel 11:12. The Psalm illustrates true repentance, in which are comprised conviction, confession, sorrow, prayer for mercy, and purposes of amendment, and it is accompanied by a lively faith.

**1-4.** A plea for mercy is a confession of guilt.

**blot out** — as from a register.

*transgressions* — literally, "rebellions" (\*\*Psalm 19:13 32:1).

- 2. Wash me Purity as well as pardon is desired by true penitents.
- 3. For ... before me Conviction precedes forgiveness; and, as a gift of God, is a plea for it ( Samuel 12:13 Samuel 32:5 All John 1:9).
- **4.** *Against thee* chiefly, and as sins against others are violations of God's law, in one sense *only*.
- *that* ... *judgest* that is, all palliation of his crime is excluded; it is the design in making this confession to recognize God's justice, however severe the sentence.
- **5, 6.** His guilt was aggravated by his essential, native sinfulness, which is as contrary to God's requisitions of inward purity as are outward sins to those for right conduct.
- **6.** *thou shalt make*, etc. may be taken to express God's gracious purpose in view of His strict requisition; a purpose of which David might have availed himself as a check to his native love for sin, and, in not doing so, aggravated his guilt.

*truth* ... *and* ... *wisdom* — are terms often used for piety (compare 28:28 description of the state of th

- **7-12.** A series of prayers for forgiveness and purifying.
- **Purge ... hyssop** The use of this plant in the ritual (\*\*Exodus 12:22 Numbers 19:6,18) suggests the idea of atonement as prominent here; "purge" refers to vicarious satisfaction (\*\*Numbers 19:17-20).
- **8.** *Make* ... *joy* by forgiving me, which will change distress to joy.
- **9.** *Hide*, etc. Turn from beholding.
- **10.** *Create* a work of almighty power.
- in me literally, "to me," or, "for me"; bestow as a gift, a heart free from taint of sin (\*\*Psalm 24:4 73:1).
- **renew** implies that he had possessed it; the essential principle of a new nature had not been lost, but its influence interrupted (\*\*\*\*Luke 22:32); for \*\*\*Stalm 51:11 shows that he had not lost God's presence and Spirit (\*\*\*\*Stalm Samuel 16:13), though he had lost the "joy of his salvation" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:12), for whose return he prays.
- *right spirit* literally, "constant," "firm," not yielding to temptation.
- **12.** *free spirit* "thy" ought not to be supplied, for the word "free" is, literally, "willing," and "spirit" is that of David. "Let a willing spirit uphold me," that is, with a soul willingly conformed to God's law, he would be preserved in a right course of conduct.
- **13.** *Then* Such will be the effect of this gracious work.
- ways of providence and human duty (<sup>™</sup>Psalm 18:21,30 32:8 <sup>™</sup>Luke 22:32).
- **14.** *Deliver* or, "Free me" (\*\*\*Psalm 39:8) from the *guilt* of murder (\*\*\*2 Samuel 12:9,10 \*\*\*\*Psalm 5:6).
- *righteousness* as in ⁴9977Psalm 7:17 31:1.
- **15.** open ... lips by removing my sense of guilt.
- **16.** Praise is better than sacrifice (\*\*\*Psalm 50:14), and implying faith, penitence, and love, glorifies God. In true penitents the joys of pardon mingle with sorrow for sin.

**18. Do good**, etc. — Visit not my sin on Thy Church.

**build ... walls** — is to show favor; compare \*\*\*Psalm 89:40, for opposite form and idea.

**19.** *God reconciled,* material sacrifices will be acceptable (\*\*\*Psalm 4:5; compare \*\*\* Isaiah 1:11-17).

### ◆ PSALM 52:1-9.

Compare The Samuel 21:1-10 22:1-10, for the history of the title. Psalm 52:1 gives the theme; the boast of the wicked over the righteous is vain, for God constantly cares for His people. This is expanded by describing the malice and deceit, and then the ruin, of the wicked, and the happy state of the pious.

- **1.** *mighty man* literally, "hero." Doeg may be thus addressed, ironically, in respect of his might in slander.
- 2. tongue for self.

*mischiefs* — evil to others (\*\*\*\*Psalm 5:9 38:12).

working deceitfully — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:7), as a keen, smoothly moving razor, cutting quietly, but deeply.

- **4.** *all-devouring* literally, "swallowing," which utterly destroy (compare \*Psalm 21:9 35:25).
- **5.** *likewise* or, "so," "also," as you have done to others God will do to you (\*\*\*Psalm 18:27). The following terms describe the most entire ruin.
- **6.** *shall* ... *fear* regard with religious awe.

*laugh at him* — for his folly;

7. for trusting in riches and being strong in "wickedness."

wickedness — literally, "mischief" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 52:2), instead of trusting in God.

the man — literally, "the mighty man," or "hero" (\*\*\*Psalm 52:1).

**8.** The figure used is common (\*\*\*Psalm 1:3 \*\*\*Jeremiah 11:16).

green — fresh.

*house*, etc. — in communion with God (compare \*\*\*Psalm 27:4,5).

for ever and ever — qualifies "mercy."

**9.** *hast done* — that is, what the context supplies, "preserved me" (compare Psalm 22:31).

wait ... name — hope in Thy perfections, manifested for my good (\*\*\*Psalm 5:11 20:1).

for it is good — that is, Thy name, and the whole method or result of its manifestation (\*\*\*Psalm 54:6 69:16).

### **♥■■PSALM 53:1-6.**

*Upon Mahalath* — (See on \*\*Psalm 88:1, title). Why this repetition of the fourteenth Psalm is given we do not know.

- **1-4.** with few verbal changes, correspond with Psalm 14:1-4.
- **5.** Instead of assurances of God's presence with the pious, and a complaint of the wicked, \*\*Psalm 14:5,6 portrays the ruin of the latter, whose "bones" even "are scattered" (compare \*\*Psalm 141:7), and who are put to shame as contemptuously rejected of God.

### ◆ PSALM 54:1-7.

See on Psalm 4:1, title; Psalm 32:1, title; for the history, see Samuel 23:19,29 26:1-25. After an earnest cry for help, the Psalmist promises praise in the assurance of a hearing.

- **1.** by thy name (\*\*Psalm 5:11), specially, power.
- *judge me* as in <sup>4900</sup>Psalm 7:8 26:1.
- **2.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 4:1 5:1).
- 3. strangers perhaps Ziphites.

*oppressors* — literally, "terrible ones" (2001 Isaiah 13:11 25:3). Such were Saul and his army.

**not set ... them** — acted as atheists, without God's fear (compare \*\*\*Psalm 16:8).

- **4.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 30:10).
- with them on their side, and for me (compare \*Psalm 46:11).
- **5.** He shall ... evil or, "Evil shall return on" (\*\*Psalm 7:16) my enemies or watchers, that is, to do me evil (\*\*\*Psalm 6:7).

*in thy truth* — Thy verified promise.

- **6.** *I will freely*, etc. or, present a *freewill* offering (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 7:16\*\*\*Numbers 15:3).
- 7. *mine eye ... desire* (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 59:10 112:8), expresses satisfaction in beholding the overthrow of his enemies as those of God, without implying any selfish or unholy feeling (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 52:6,7).

### PSALM 55:1-23.

In great terror on account of enemies, and grieved by the treachery of a friend, the Psalmist offers an earnest prayer for relief. He mingles confident assurances of divine favor to himself with invocations and predictions of God's avenging judgments on the wicked. The tone suits David's experience, both in the times of Saul and Absalom, though perhaps neither was exclusively before his mind.

- **1.** *hide not thyself*, etc. (compare \*\*Psalm 13:1 27:9), withhold not help.
- **2.** The terms of the last clause express full indulgence of grief.
- **3.** *oppression* literally, "persecution."
- they ... iniquity literally, "they make evil doings slide upon me."
- **4, 5.** express great alarm.
- **5.** *come upon* or literally, "into."
- **6.** be at rest literally, "dwell," that is, permanently.
- **7, 8.** Even a wilderness is a safer place than exposure to such evils, terrible as storm and tempest.
- **9.** *Destroy* literally, "swallow" (\*\*Psalm 21:9).

**divide their tongues** — or, "confound their speech," and hence their counsels ("Genesis 11:7).

*the city* — perhaps Jerusalem, the scene of anarchy.

- **10, 11.** which is described in detail (compare \*\*Psalm 7:14-16).
- **11.** *Wickedness* literally, "Mischief," evils resulting from others (\*\*\*Psalm 5:9 52:2,7).

*streets* — or literally, "wide places," markets, courts of justice, and any public place.

**12-14.** This description of treachery does not deny, but aggravates, the injury from enemies.

**13.** guide — literally, "friend" (The Proverbs 16:28 17:9).

acquaintance — in Hebrew, a yet more intimate associate.

**14.** *in company* — literally, "with a crowd," in a festal procession.

**15.** Let death, etc. — or, "Desolations are on them."

*let them go* — literally, "they will go."

**quick** — or, living in the midst of life, death will come (compare Numbers 16:33).

**among them** — or, "within them," in their hearts (\*\*\*Psalm 5:9 49:11).

**16-18.** God answers his constant and repeated prayers.

**18.** *many with me* — that is, by the context, fighting with me.

19. God hears the wicked in wrath.

abideth — or, "sitteth."

of old — enthroned as a sovereign.

**Because ... no changes** — Prosperity hardens them (\*\*\*Psalm 73:5).

**20, 21.** The treachery is aggravated by hypocrisy. The changes of number, Psalm 55:15,23, and here, enliven the picture, and imply that the chief traitor and his accomplices are in view together.

**22.** *thy burden* — literally, "gift," what is assigned you.

**he shall sustain** — literally, "supply food," and so all need (\*\*\*Psalm 37:25 \*\*\*Matthew 6:11).

**to be moved** — from the secure position of His favor (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 10:6).

**23. bloody** ... **days** — (compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:6 51:14), deceit and murderous dispositions often united. The threat is directed specially (not as a general truth) against the wicked, then in the writer's view.

### PSALM 56:1-13.

Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim — literally, "upon the dove of silence" of distant places; either denoting a melody (see on "Psalm 9:1) of that name, to which this Psalm was to be performed; or it is an enigmatical form of denoting the subject, as given in the history referred to ("" Samuel 21:11, etc.), David being regarded as an uncomplaining, meek dove, driven from his native home to wander in exile. Beset by domestic and foreign foes, David appeals confidently to God, recites his complaints, and closes with joyful and assured anticipations of God's continued help.

- **1, 2. would swallow** literally, "pants as a raging beast" (\*\*\*Acts 9:1).
- **2.** *enemies* watchers (\*\*\*Psalm 54:5).

*most High* — As it is not elsewhere used absolutely for God, some render the word here, arrogantly, or proudly, as qualifying "those who fight," etc.

3. in — or literally, "unto."

*thee* — to whom he turns in trouble.

**4.** in God ... his word — By His grace or aid (\*\*Psalm 60:12 108:13), or, "I will boast in God as to His word"; in either case His word is the special matter and cause of praise.

**flesh** — for mankind (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 65:2\*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 31:3), intimating frailty.

- **5, 6.** A vivid picture of the conduct of malicious enemies.
- 7. Shall they escape? etc. or better, "Their escape is by iniquity."

cast ... people — humble those who so proudly oppose Thy servant.

**8.** God is mindful of his exile and remembers his tears. The custom of *bottling the tears* of mourners as a memorial, which has existed in some Eastern nations, may explain the figure.

- **9.** God is for me or, "on my side" (\*\*\*Psalm 118:6 124:1,2); hence he is sure of the repulse of his foes.
- **12.** *I will render praises* will pay what I have vowed.
- **13.** The question implies an affirmative answer, drawn from past experience.

**falling** — as from a precipice.

**before God** — in His favor during life.

### \*\*\*\*PSALM 57:1-11.

Altaschith — or, "Destroy not." This is perhaps an enigmatical allusion to the critical circumstances connected with the history, for which compare 1 Samuel 22:1 26:1-3. In Moses' prayer (Deuteronomy 9:26) it is a prominent petition deprecating God's anger against the people. This explanation suits the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth also. Asaph uses it for the seventy-fifth, in the scope of which there is allusion to some emergency. Michtam — (See on Sealm 16:1, title). To an earnest cry for divine aid, the Psalmist adds, as often, the language of praise, in the assured hope of a favorable hearing.

**1.** *my soul* — or self, or life, which is threatened.

shadow of thy wings — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:8 36:7).

*calamities* — literally, "mischiefs" (\*\*\*Psalm 52:2 55:10).

- **2.** *performeth* or, completes what He has begun.
- 3. from ... swallow me up that pants in rage after me (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 56:2).

*mercy and ... truth* — (\*\*\*Psalm 25:10 36:5), as messengers (\*\*\*Psalm 43:3) sent to deliver him.

**4.** The mingled figures of wild beasts (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 10:9 17:12) and weapons of war (\*\*\*\*Psalm 11:2) heighten the picture of danger.

whose ... tongue — or slanders.

- **5.** This doxology illustrates his view of the connection of his deliverance with God's glory.
- **6.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 7:15 9:15,16).
- 7. I will ... praise both with voice and instrument.

**8.** *Hence* — he addresses his glory, or tongue (\*\*\*Psalm 16:9 30:12), and his psaltery, or lute, and harp.

*I myself* ... *early* — literally, "I will awaken dawn," poetically expressing his zeal and diligence.

**9, 10.** As His mercy and truth, so shall His praise, fill the universe.

### PSALM 58:1-11.

David's critical condition in some period of the Sauline persecution probably occasioned this Psalm, in which the Psalmist teaches that the innate and actual sinfulness of men deserves, and shall receive, God's righteous vengeance, while the pious may be consoled by the evidence of His wise and holy government of men.

- **1.** *O congregation* literally, "Oh, dumb"; the word used is never translated "congregation." "Are ye dumb? ye should speak righteousness," may be the translation. In any case, the writer remonstrates with them, perhaps a council, who were assembled to try his cause, and bound to give a right decision.
- 2. This they did not design; but

**weigh** ... **violence** — or give decisions of violence. **Weigh** is a figure to express the acts of judges.

in the earth — publicly.

- **3-5.** describe the wicked generally, who sin naturally, easily, malignantly, and stubbornly.
- 4. stoppeth her literally, "his."
- *ear* that is, the wicked man (the singular used collectively), who thus becomes like the deaf adder which has no ear.
- **6.** He prays for their destruction, under the figure of ravenous beasts (\*\*\*Psalm 3:7 7:2).
- **7.** which run continually literally, "they shall go to themselves," utterly depart, as rapid mountain torrents.

**he bendeth** ... his arrows — prepares it. The term for preparing a bow applied to arrows (\*\*\*Psalm 64:3).

*let them ... pieces* — literally, "as if they cut themselves off" — that is, become blunted and of no avail.

- **8, 9.** Other figures of this utter ruin; the last denoting rapidity. In a shorter time than pots feel the heat of thorns on fire —
- **9.** he shall take them away as with a whirlwind literally, "blow him (them) away."

**both living** ... wrath — literally, "as the living" or fresh as the heated or burning — that is, thorns — all easily blown away, so easily and quickly the wicked. The figure of the "snail" perhaps alludes to its loss of saliva when moving. Though obscure in its clauses, the general sense of the passage is clear.

**10, 11.** *wash* ... *wicked* — denoting great slaughter. The joy of triumph over the destruction of the wicked is because they are God's enemies, and their overthrow shows that He reigneth (compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 52:5-7 54:7). In this assurance let heaven and earth rejoice (\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 96:10 97:1, etc.).

#### PSALM 59:1-17.

See on \*\*\*Psalm 57:1, title, and for history, \*\*\*I Samuel 19:11, etc. The scope is very similar to that of the fifty-seventh: prayer in view of malicious and violent foes, and joy in prospect of relief.

- **1.** *defend me* (Compare *Margin*).
- rise up ... me (Compare <sup>◆™</sup>Psalm 17:7).
- **2.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 5:5 6:8).
- **4, 5.** *prepare* literally, "set themselves as in array."
- **awake** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 3:7 7:6), appeals to God in His covenant relation to His people (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:18).
- **6, 7.** They are as ravening dogs seeking prey (\*\*\*Psalm 59:6), and as such,

**belch out** — that is, slanders, their impudent barkings.

- **7.** *for who*, *say they* For the full expression with the supplied words, compare \*\*\* Psalm 64:5.
- **8.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 2:4 37:13).

defense — (Compare Psalm 18:3).

**10.** *prevent me* — (\*\*PS alm 21:3).

see my desire — in their overthrow (\*\*\* Psalm 54:7).

enemies — as in \*\*Psalm 5:8.

- **11.** *Slay them not* at once (\*\*\*\*Judges 2:21-23); but perpetuate their punishment (\*\*\*\*Genesis 4:12 \*\*\*Numbers 32:13), by scattering or making them wander, and humble them.
- **12.** *let them even be ... taken in their pride* while evincing it that is, to be punished for their lies, etc.
- **13.** Though delayed for wise reasons, the utter destruction of the wicked must come at last, and God's presence and power in and for His Church will be known abroad (\*\*\*\* Samuel 17:46 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 46:10,11).
- **14, 15.** Meanwhile let the rapacious dogs prowl, they cannot hurt the pious; yea, they shall wander famished and sleepless.
- **15.** *grudge if*, etc. literally, "they shall stay all night," that is, obtain nothing.
- **16, 17.** Contrast the lot of God's servant, who employs his time in God's praise.

**sing aloud ... in the morning** — when *they* retire famishing and disappointed, or it may denote delightful diligence in praise, as in <sup>3805</sup>Psalm 30:5.

#### PSALM 60:1-12.

Shushan-eduth — Lily of testimony. The lily is an emblem of beauty (see on Psalm 45:1, title). As a description of the Psalm, those terms combined may denote a beautiful poem, witnessing — that is, for God's faithfulness as evinced in the victories referred to in the history cited. Aram-naharaim — Syria of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia beyond the river (Euphrates) (Samuel 10:16). Aram-zobah — Syria of Zobah (Samuel 10:6), to whose king the king of the former was tributary. The war with Edom, by Joab and Abishai (Samuel 10:16) Chronicles 18:12,25), occurred about the same time. Probably, while doubts and fears alternately prevailed respecting the issue of these wars, the writer composed this Psalm, in which he depicts, in the language of God's people, their sorrows under former disasters, offers prayer in present straits, and rejoices in confident hope of triumph by God's aid.

1-3. allude to disasters.

*cast ... off* — in scorn (\*\*Psalm 43:2 44:9).

*scattered* — broken our strength (compare Samuel 5:20).

*Oh*, *turn thyself* — or, "restore to us" (prosperity). The figures of physical, denote great civil, commotions (\*\*\*Psalm 46:2,3).

- 3. drink ... wine of astonishment literally, "of staggering" that is, made us weak (compare \*\*\* Psalm 75:8 \*\*\* Isaiah 51:17,22).
- **4, 5.** Yet to God's banner they will rally, and pray that, led and sustained by His power (right hand, Solution 17:7 20:6), they may be safe.
- 5. hear me or, "hear us."
- **6-10.** God hath spoken in or, "by."

his holiness — (\*\*\*Psalm 89:35 \*\*\*Amos 4:2), on the pledge of His attributes (\*\*\*Psalm 22:3 30:4). Taking courage from God's promise to give them possession (\*\*\*Exodus 23:31 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 11:24) (and perhaps renewed to him by special revelation), with triumphant joy he describes the conquest as already made.

**Shechem, and ... Succoth** — as widely separated points, and —

**7.** *Gilead* ... *and Manasseh* — as large districts, east and west of Jordan, represent the whole land.

divide ... and mete out — means to have entire control over.

**Ephraim** — denotes the military ( Deuteronomy 33:17); and —

**Judah** — (the lawgiver, designations are then presented as subdued.

**8.** *Moab* — is a my washpot — the most ordinary vessel.

over — or, "at"

**Edom** — (as a slave) he casts his shoe.

*Philistia*, *triumph*, etc. — or, rather, "shout."

*for me* — acknowledges subjection (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 108:9, "over Philistia will I triumph").

**9, 10.** He feels assured that, though once angry, God is now ready to favor His people.

who will lead me — or, who has led me, as if the work were now begun.

- **10.** Wilt not thou? or, "Is it not Thou?"
- **11, 12.** Hence he closes with a prayer for success, and an assurance of a hearing.

### 

Neginah — or, Neginoth (see on \*\*\*Psalm 4:1, title). Separated from his usual spiritual privileges, perhaps by Absalom's rebellion, the Psalmist prays for divine aid, and, in view of past mercies, with great confidence of being heard.

- **1-3.** *From the end* that is, places remote from the sanctuary (Deuteronomy 28:64).
- **2.** *heart is overwhelmed* literally, "covered over with darkness," or, "distress."

*to the rock* — (<sup>→NCP</sup>Psalm 18:2 40:2).

*higher than I* — which otherwise I cannot ascend.

- **3.** *shelter* ... *and strong tower* repeat the same sentiment.
- **4.** *I will abide* So I desire to do (compare Psalm 23:6).

*trust in the covert*, etc. — *make* my refuge, in the shadow (compare Psalm 17:8 36:7).

**5.** the heritage — or, part in the spiritual blessings of Israel (\*\*\*PPsalm 21:2-4).

vows — implies prayers.

- **6, 7.** *the king* himself and his royal line ending in Christ. Mercy and truth personified, as in \*Psalm 40:11 57:3.
- **7.** *abide before God* literally, "sit as a king in God's presence," under His protection.
- **8.** Thus for new blessings will new vows of praise ever be paid.

#### PSALM 62:1-12.

To Jeduthun — (See on \*\*Psalm 39:1, title). The general tone of this Psalm is expressive of confidence in God. Occasion is taken to remind the wicked of their sin, their ruin, and their meanness.

- **1.** *waiteth* literally, "is silent," trusts submissively and confidently as a servant.
- 2. The titles applied to God often occur (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9 18:2).

be greatly moved — (\*\*Psalm 10:6). No injury shall be permanent, though devised by enemies.

**3.** Their destruction will come; as a tottering wall they already are feeble and failing.

**bowing wall shall ye be** — better supply "are." Some propose to apply these phrases to describe the condition of "a man" — that is, the pious suffer: thus, "Will ye slay him," etc.; but the other is a good sense.

- **4.** *his excellency* or, elevation to which God had raised him (\*\*\*Psalm 4:2). This they try to do by lies and duplicity (\*\*\*\*Psalm 5:9).
- **5, 6.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 62:1,2).
- **6.** *not be moved* not at all; his confidence has increased.
- 7. rock of my strength or strongest support ( Psalm 7:10 61:3).

*ye people* — God's people.

**9.** No kind of men are reliable, compared with God ( Isaiah 2:22 Isaiah 17:5).

- *altogether* alike, one as the other (\*\*Psalm 34:3).
- **10.** Not only are oppression and robbery, which are wicked means of wealth, no grounds of boasting; but even wealth, increasing lawfully, ought not to engross the heart.
- **11.** *once*; *twice* (as in <sup>4884</sup>Job 33:14 40:5), are used to give emphasis to the sentiment. God's power is tempered by His mercy, which it also sustains.
- **12.** *for thou renderest* literally, "that Thou renderest," etc., connected with "I heard this," as the phrase "that power," etc. [ \*Psalm 62:11] teaching that by His power He can show both mercy and justice.

#### PSALM 63:1-11.

The historical occasion referred to by the title was probably during Absalom's rebellion (compare Samuel 15:23,28 16:2). David expresses an earnest desire for God's favor, and a confident expectation of realizing it in his deliverance and the ruin of his enemies.

1. early ... seek thee — earnestly ( Isaiah 26:9). The figurative terms —

*dry and thirsty* — literally, "weary," denoting moral destitution, suited his outward circumstances.

**soul** — and — **flesh** — the whole man ( $^{\circ \circ \circ}$ Psalm 16:9,10).

- 2. The special object of desire was God's perfections as displayed in his worship (\*\*Psalm 27:4).
- **3.** Experiencing God's mercy, which exceeds all the blessings of life, his lips will be opened for his praise (\*\*\*Psalm 51:15).
- 4. Thus literally, "Truly."

will I bless — praise Thee (\*\*\*Psalm 34:1).

*lift up my hands* — in worship (compare \*\*\*Psalm 28:2).

*in thy name* — in praise of Thy perfections.

- **5-8.** Full spiritual blessings satisfy his desires, and acts of praise fill his thoughts and time.
- **6.** *night* as well as day. Past favors assure him of future, and hence he presses earnestly near to God, whose power sustains him (\*\*\*Psalm 17:8 60:5).
- **9, 10.** *those* ... *to destroy it* or literally, "to ruin," or, "for ruin"; that is, such as seek to injure me (are) *for* ruin, appointed to it (compare \*\*Psalm 35:8).

**shall go ... earth** — into the grave, or, to death; as their bodies are represented as a portion for —

10. foxes — literally, "jackals."

**11.** *the king* — that is, David himself, and all who reverence God, "shall share a glorious part," while treacherous foes shall be for ever silenced (\*\*Psalm 62:4).

#### PSALM 64:1-10.

A prayer for deliverance from cunning and malicious enemies, with a confident view of their overthrow, which will honor God and give joy to the righteous.

- **1.** *preserve* ... *fear* as well as the danger producing it.
- **2.** *insurrection* literally, "uproar," noisy assaults, as well as their secret counsels.
- **3, 4.** Similar figures for slander (\*\*\*Psalm 57:4 59:7).
- **bend** literally, "tread," or, "prepared." The allusion is to the mode of bending a bow by treading on it; here, and in \*\*Psalm 58:7, transferred to arrows.
- **4.** *the perfect* one innocent of the charges made (\*\*Psalm 18:23).
- *fear not* (\*\*\*Psalm 55:19), not regarding God.
- **5.** A sentiment here more fully presented, by depicting their deliberate malice.
- **6.** This is further evinced by their diligent efforts and deeply laid schemes.
- **7.** The contrast is heightened by representing God as using weapons like theirs.
- **8.** *their* ... *tongue to fall*, etc. that is, the consequences of their slanders, etc. (compare \*\*\* Psalm 10:2 31:16).
- all that see ... away Their partners in evil shall be terrified.
- **9, 10.** Men, generally, will acknowledge God's work, and the righteous, rejoicing in it, shall be encouraged to trust Him (\*\*\*Psalm 58:10).

#### **№** PSALM 65:1-13.

This is a song of praise for God's spiritual blessings to His people and His kind providence over all the earth.

- 1. Praise waiteth for thee literally, "To Thee silence praise," or (compare \*\*Psalm 62:1), To Thee silence is praise, that is, Praise is waiting as a servant; it is due to Thee. So the last clause expresses the duty of paying vows. These two parts of acceptable worship, mentioned in \*\*Psalm 50:14, are rendered in Zion, where God chiefly displays His mercy and receives homage.
- **2.** All are encouraged to pray by God's readiness to hear.
- **3.** God's mercy alone delivers us from the burden of iniquities, by purging or expiating by an atonement the transgressions with which we are charged, and which are denoted by —

*Iniquities* — or, literally, "Words of iniquities."

- **4.** dwell in thy courts; ... [and] satisfied with the goodness ... temple denote communion with God (\*\*\*Psalm 15:1 23:6; compare \*\*\*Psalm 5:7). This is a blessing for all God's people, as denoted by the change of number.
- **5.** *terrible things* that is, by the manifestation of justice and wrath to enemies, accompanying that of mercy to His people (\*\*Psalm 63:9-11 64:7-9).

the confidence — object of it.

- *of all ... earth* the whole world; that is, deservedly such, whether men think so or not.
- **6-13.** God's great power and goodness are the grounds of this confidence. These are illustrated in His control of the mightiest agencies of nature and

nations affecting men with awe and dread (\*\*\*Psalm 26:7 98:1, etc.), and in His fertilizing showers, causing the earth to produce abundantly for man and beast.

- **8.** outgoings of ... rejoice all people from east to west.
- 9. visitest in mercy (compare \*\*\*\* Psalm 8:4).
- *river of God* His exhaustless resources.
- **11.** *thy paths* ways of providence (\*\*Psalm 25:4,10).
- **12.** *wilderness* places, though not inhabited by men, fit for pasture (\*\*\*Deviticus 16:21,22 \*\*\*SID 24:5).

*pastures* — is literally, "folds," or "enclosures for flocks"; and in "Psalm 65:13 it may be "lambs," the same word used and so translated in "Psalm 37:20; so that "the flocks are clothed with lambs" (a figure for abundant increase) would be the form of expression.

#### PSALM 66:1-20.

The writer invites all men to unite in praise, cites some striking occasions for it, promises special acts of thanksgiving, and celebrates God's great mercy.

- **1.** *Make* ... *noise* or, "Shout."
- 2. his name as in Psalm 29:2.

*make his praise glorious* — literally, "place honor, His praise," or, "as to His praise"; that is, let His praise be such as will glorify Him, or, be honorable to Him.

**3, 4.** A specimen of the praise.

*How terrible* — (Compare \*\*Psalm 65:8).

*submit* — (Compare *Margin*), show a forced subjection (\*\*\*Psalm 18:44), produced by terror.

- **5, 6.** The terrible works illustrated in Israel's history (\*\*Exodus 14:21). By this example let rebels be admonished.
- 7. behold the nations watch their conduct.
- **8, 9.** Here is, perhaps, cited a case of recent deliverance.
- **9.** *holdeth* ... *in life* literally, "putteth our soul in life"; that is, out of danger (\*\*Psalm 30:3 49:15).

to be moved — (Compare \*\* Psalm 10:6 55:22).

- **10-12.** Out of severe trials, God had brought them to safety (compare Isaiah 48:10 Teter 1:7).
- **11.** *affliction* literally, "pressure," or, as in "Psalm 55:3, "oppression," which, laid on the

- **loins** the seat of strength (\*Deuteronomy 33:11), enfeebles the frame.
- **12.** men to ride over our heads made us to pass.
- **through fire**, etc. figures describing prostration and critical dangers (compare <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 43:2 <sup>2302</sup>Ezekiel 36:12).
- wealthy literally, "overflowing," or, "irrigated," and hence fertile.
- **13-15.** These full and varied offerings constitute the payment of vows (\*\*Deviticus 22:18-23).
- **15.** *I will offer* literally, "make to ascend," alluding to the smoke of burnt offering, which explains the use of "incense."
- *incense* elsewhere always denoting the fumes of aromatics.
- **16-20.** With these he unites his public thanks, inviting those who fear God (\*\*Psalm 60:4 61:5, His true worshippers) to hear. He vindicates his sincerity, inasmuch as God would not hear hypocrites, but had heard him.
- **17.** *he was extolled with my tongue* literally, "exaltation (was) under my tongue," as a place of deposit, whence it proceeded; that is, honoring God was habitual.
- **18.** *If I regard iniquity in my heart* literally, "see iniquity with pleasure."

#### **№PSALM 67:1-7.**

A prayer that, by God's blessing on His people, His salvation and praise may be extended over the earth.

- **1.** cause his face to shine show us favor (\*\*Numbers 6:24,25 \*\*\*Psalm 31:16).
- 2. thy way of gracious dealing (\*\*\*Isaiah 55:8), as explained by saving health or literally, "salvation."
- **3-5.** *Thanks* will be rendered for the blessings of His wise and holy government (compare 2:3,4 11:4).
- **6, 7.** The blessings of a fruitful harvest are mentioned as types of greater and spiritual blessings, under which all nations shall fear and love God.

#### PSALM 68:1-35.

This is a *Psalm-song* (see on See Psalm 30:1, title), perhaps suggested by David's victories, which secured his throne and gave rest to the nation. In general terms, the judgment of God on the wicked, and the equity and goodness of His government to the pious, are celebrated. The sentiment is illustrated by examples of God's dealings, cited from the Jewish history and related in highly poetical terms. Hence the writer intimates an expectation of equal and even greater triumphs and summons all nations to unite in praises of the God of Israel. The Psalm is evidently typical of the relation which God, in the person of His Son, sustains to the Church (compare Sesalm 68:18).

**1-3.** Compare Numbers 10:35 Psalm 1:4 22:14, on the figures here used.

**before him** — as in \*\*\*Psalm 68:2, from His presence, as dreaded; but in \*Psalm 68:3, in His presence, as under His protection (\*\*\*Psalm 61:7).

- **3.** *the righteous* all truly pious, whether of Israel or not.
- **4.** extol him ... heavens literally, "cast up for Him who rideth in the deserts," or "wilderness" (compare "Psalm 68:7), alluding to the poetical representation of His leading His people in the wilderness as a conqueror, before whom a way is to be prepared, or "cast up" (compare "Isaiah 40:3 62:10).

by his name JAH — or, "Jehovah," of which it is a contraction (\*\*Exodus 15:3 \*\*In Isaiah 12:2) (Hebrew).

name — or, "perfections" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:10 20:1), which —

**5, 6.** are illustrated by the protection to the helpless, vindication of the innocent, and punishment of rebels, ascribed to Him.

**6.** *setteth the solitary in families* — literally, "settleth the lonely" (as wanderers) "at home." Though a general truth, there is perhaps allusion to the wandering and settlement of the Israelites.

rebellious dwell in a dry land — removed from all the comforts of home.

**7, 8.** (Compare Exodus 19:16-18).

thou wentest — in the pillar of fire.

thou didst march — literally, "in Thy tread," Thy majestic movement.

- **8.** even Sinai itself literally, "that Sinai," as in "The Judges 5:5.
- **9, 10.** *a plentiful rain* a rain of gifts, as manna and quails.
- **10.** *Thy congregation* literally, "troop," as in <sup>1731</sup>2 Samuel 23:11,13 the military aspect of the people being prominent, according to the figures of the context.

*therein* — that is, in the land of promise.

**the poor** — Thy humble people (\*\*\*Psalm 68:9; compare \*\*\*Psalm 10:17 12:5).

**11.** *gave the word* — that is, of triumph.

company — or, choir of females, celebrating victory (\*\*Exodus 15:20).

**12.** *Kings of armies* — that is, with their armies.

*she that ... at home* — Mostly women so remained, and the ease of victory appears in that such, without danger, quietly enjoyed the spoils.

13. Some translate this, "When ye shall lie between the borders, ye shall," etc., comparing the peaceful rest in the borders or limits of the promised land to the proverbial beauty of a gentle dove. Others understand by the word rendered "pots," the smoked sides of caves, in which the Israelites took refuge from enemies in the times of the judges; or, taking the whole figuratively, the rows of stones on which cooking vessels were hung; and thus that a contrast is drawn between their former low and afflicted state and their succeeding prosperity. In either case, a state of quiet and peace is described by a beautiful figure.

- **14.** Their enemies dispersed, the contrast of their prosperity with their former distress is represented by that of the snow with the dark and somber shades of Salmon.
- **15, 16.** Mountains are often symbols of nations (\*\*Psalm 46:2 65:6). That of Bashan, northeast of Palestine, denotes a heathen nation, which is described as a "hill of God," or a great hill. Such are represented as envious of the hill (Zion) on which God resides;
- **17.** and, to the assertion of God's purpose to make it His dwelling, is added evidence of His protecting care. He is described as in the midst of His heavenly armies —

thousands of angels — literally, "thousands of repetitions," or, "thousands of thousands" — that is, of chariots. The word "angels" was perhaps introduced in our version, from Deuteronomy 33:2, and Galatians 3:19. They are, of course, implied as conductors of the chariots.

as ... Sinai, in the holy place — that is, He has appeared in Zion as once in Sinai.

**18.** From the scene of conquest He ascends to His throne, leading — *captivity captive* — or, "many captives captive" (\*\*\* Judges 5:12).

**received gifts for men** — accepting their homage, even when forced, as that of rebels.

that the Lord God might dwell — or literally, "to dwell, O Lord God" (compare "Psalm 68:16) — that is, to make this hill, His people or Church, His dwelling. This Psalm typifies the conquests of the Church under her divine leader, Christ. He, indeed, "who was with the Church in the wilderness" ("Acts 7:38) is the Lord, described in this ideal ascension. Hence Paul ("Ephesians 4:8) applies this language to describe His real ascension, when, having conquered sin, death, and hell, the Lord of glory triumphantly entered heaven, attended by throngs of adoring angels, to sit on the throne and wield the scepter of an eternal dominion. The phrase "received gifts for (or literally, among) men" is by Paul, "gave gifts to men" ("Ephesians 4:8). Both describe the acts of a conqueror, who

receives and distributes spoils. The Psalmist uses "receiving" as evincing the success, Paul "gave" as the act, of the conqueror, who, having subdued his enemies, proceeds to reward his friends. The special application of the passage by Paul was in proof of Christ's exaltation. What the Old Testament represents of His descending and ascending corresponds with His history. He who descended is the same who has ascended. As then ascension was an element of His triumph, so is it now; and He, who, in His humiliation, must be recognized as our vicarious sacrifice and the High Priest of our profession, must also be adored as Head of His Church and author of all her spiritual benefits.

- **19-21.** God daily and fully supplies us. The issues or escapes from death are under His control, who is the God that saves us, and destroys His and our enemies.
- **21.** wound the head or, "violently destroy" (\*\*\*Numbers 24:8 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 110:6).

goeth on still in ... trespasses — perseveringly impenitent.

**22.** Former examples of God's deliverance are generalized: as He has done, so He will do.

from Bashan — the farthest region; and —

depths of the sea — the severest afflictions. Out of all, God will bring them. The figures of \*\*Psalm 68:23 denote the completeness of the conquest, not implying any savage cruelty (compare \*\*\*2 Kings 9:36 \*\*\* Isaiah 63:1-6 \*\*\* Jeremiah 15:3).

**24-27.** The triumphal procession, after the deliverance, is depicted.

*They have seen* — impersonally, "There have been seen."

*the goings of my God* — as leading the procession; the ark, the symbol of His presence, being in front. The various bands of music (\*\*Psalm 68:25) follow, and all who are —

**26.** from — or literally, "of"

*the fountain of Israel* — that is, lineal descendants of Jacob, are invited to unite in the doxology. Then by one of the nearest tribes, one of the most

- eminent, and two of the most remote, are represented the whole nation of Israel, passing forward (\*\*\*Numbers 7:1-89).
- **28, 29.** Thanks for the past, and confident prayer for the future victories of Zion are mingled in a song of praise.
- 29. thy temple literally, "over"
- **Jerusalem** His palace or residence (\*\*\*Psalm 5:7) symbolized His protecting presence among His people, and hence is the object of homage on the part of others.
- **30.** The strongest nations are represented by the strongest beasts (compare *Margin*).
- **31.** *Princes* or, literally, "fat ones," the most eminent from the most wealthy, and the most distant nation, represent the universal subjection.

stretch out her hands — or, "make to run her hands," denoting haste.

**32-36.** To Him who is presented as riding in triumph through His ancient heavens and proclaiming His presence — to Him who, in nature, and still more in the wonders of His spiritual government, out of His holy place (\*\*Psalm 43:3), is terrible, who rules His Church, and, by His Church, rules the world in righteousness — let all nations and kingdoms give honor and power and dominion evermore.

### \*\*\*PSALM 69:1-36.

Upon Shoshannim — (See on \*\*Psalm 45:1, title). Mingling the language of prayer and complaint, the sufferer, whose condition is here set forth, pleads for God's help as one suffering in His cause, implores the divine retribution on his malicious enemies, and, viewing his deliverance as sure, promises praise by himself, and others, to whom God will extend like blessings. This Psalm is referred to seven times in the New Testament as prophetical of Christ and the gospel times. Although the character in which the Psalmist appears to some in \*\*Psalm 69:5 is that of a sinner, yet his condition as a sufferer innocent of alleged crimes sustains the typical character of the composition, and it may be therefore regarded throughout, as the twenty-second, as typically expressive of the feelings of our Savior in the flesh.

**1, 2.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 40:2).

*come in unto my soul* — literally, "come even to my soul," endanger my life by drowning (Jon 2:5).

- **3.** (Compare \*\* Psalm 6:6).
- *mine eyes fail* in watching (\*\*\*Psalm 119:82).
- **4.** *hate me*, etc. (Compare John 15:25). On the number and power of his enemies (compare Psalm 40:12).
- *then I restored* ... *away* that is, he suffered wrongfully under the imputation of robbery.
- **5.** This may be regarded as an appeal, vindicating his innocence, as if he had said, "If sinful, thou knowest," etc. Though *David's condition* as a *sufferer* may *typify* Christ's, without requiring that a parallel be found *in character*.
- **6.** for my sake literally, "in me," in my confusion and shame.

- **7-12.** This plea contemplates his relation to God as a sufferer in His cause. Reproach, domestic estrangement (\*\*\*Mark 3:21 \*\*\*John 7:5), exhaustion in God's service (\*\*\*John 2:17), revilings and taunts of base men were the sufferings.
- **10.** wept (and chastened) my soul literally, "wept away my soul," a strongly figurative description of deep grief.
- **12.** *sit in the gate* public place (Proverbs 31:31).
- **13-15.** With increasing reliance on God, he prays for help, describing his distress in the figures of \*\*Psalm 69:1,2.
- **16-18.** These earnest terms are often used, and the address to God, as indifferent or averse, is found in Psalm 3:7 22:24 27:9, etc.
- **19, 20.** Calling God to witness his distress, he presents its aggravation produced by the want of sympathizing friends (compare Anni Saiah 63:5 Mark 14:50).
- **21.** Instead of such, his enemies increase his pain by giving him most distasteful food and drink. The Psalmist may have thus described by figure what Christ found in reality (compare \*\*\*John 19:29,30).
- **22, 23.** With unimportant verbal changes, this language is used by Paul to describe the rejection of the Jews who refused to receive the Savior (
  Romans 11:9,10). The purport of the figures used is that blessings shall become curses, the "table" of joy (as one of food) a "snare," their
- **welfare** literally, "peaceful condition," or security, a "trap." Darkened eyes and failing strength complete the picture of the ruin falling on them under the invoked retribution.
- **23.** *continually to shake* literally, "to swerve" or bend in weakness.
- **24, 25.** An utter desolation awaits them. They will not only be driven from their homes, but their homes or, literally, "palaces," indicative of wealth shall be desolate (compare Matthew 23:38).
- **26.** Though smitten of God (\*\*\*Isaiah 53:4), men were not less guilty in persecuting the sufferer (\*\*\*ISActs 2:23).

- talk to the grief in respect to, about it, implying derision and taunts.
- wounded or, literally, "mortally wounded."
- 27, 28. *iniquity* or, "punishment of iniquity" (\*\*\*Psalm 40:12).
- come ... righteousness partake of its benefits.
- **28.** *book of the living* or "life," with the next clause, a figurative mode of representing those saved, as having their names in a register (compare Exodus 32:32 2008 Isaiah 4:3).
- **29.** *poor and sorrowful* the afflicted pious, often denoted by such terms (compare \*\*\*Psalm 10:17 12:5).
- set me ... high out of danger.
- **30, 31.** Spiritual are better than mere material offerings (\*\*Psalm 40:6 50:8); hence a promise of the former, and rather contemptuous terms are used of the latter.
- **32, 33.** Others shall rejoice. "Humble" and poor, as in \*\*\*Psalm 69:29.
- your heart, etc. address to such (compare \*\*\* Psalm 22:26).
- **33.** *prisoners* peculiarly liable to be despised.
- **34-36.** The call on the universe for praise is well sustained by the prediction of the perpetual and extended blessings which shall come upon the covenant-people of God. Though, as usual, the imagery is taken from terms used of Palestine, the whole tenor of the context indicates that the spiritual privileges and blessings of the Church are meant.

### **♥™PSALM 70:1-5.**

This corresponds to \*\*Psalm 40:13-17 with a very few variations, as "turn back" (\*\*Psalm 70:3) for "desolate," and "make haste unto me" (\*\*Psalm 70:5) for "thinketh upon me." It forms a suitable appendix to the preceding, and is called "a Psalm to bring to remembrance," as the thirty-eighth [see on \*\*Psalm 38:1, title].

#### **♥™PSALM** 71:1-24.

The Psalmist, probably in old age, appeals to God for help from his enemies, pleading his past favors, and stating his present need; and, in confidence of a hearing, he promises his grateful thanks and praise.

- **1-3.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 30:1-3).
- **3.** given commandment literally, "ordained," as in \*\*\*Psalm 44:4 68:28. rock ... fortress (\*\*\*\*Psalm 18:2).
- **4, 5.** *cruel man* corrupt and ill-natured literally, "sour."
- 5. trust place of trust.
- **6-9.** His history from early infancy illustrated God's care, and his wonderful deliverances were at once occasions of praise and ground of confidence for the future.
- my praise ... of thee literally, "in" or "by Thee" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 22:25).
- **10, 11.** The craft and malicious taunts of his enemies now led him to call for aid (compare the terms used, <sup>41772</sup>2 Samuel 17:12 <sup>4987</sup>Psalm 3:2 7:2).
- **12.** (Compare Psalm 22:19 40:4).
- **13.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 35:4 40:14).
- **14-16.** The ruin of his enemies, as illustrating God's faithfulness, is his deliverance, and a reason for future confidence.
- **15.** *for I know* ... *thereof* innumerable, as he had not time to count them.
- **16.** *in the strength* or, relying on it.
- **thy righteousness** or, faithful performance of promises to the pious (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:17 31:1).

17-21. Past experience again encourages.

taught me, etc. — by providential dealings.

- **19.** *is very high* distinguished (\*\*\*Psalm 36:5 \*\*\*Isaiah 55:9).
- **20.** *depths of the earth* debased, low condition.
- **21.** *increase*, etc. that is, the great things done for me (\*\*\*\*Psalm 71:19; compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 40:5).
- 22-24. To the occasion of praise he now adds the promise to render it.

will ... praise — literally, "will thank."

even thy truth — as to Thy truth or faithfulness.

#### PSALM 72:1-19.

For, or literally, "of Solomon." The closing verse rather relates to the second book of Psalms, of which this is the last, and was perhaps added by some collector, to intimate that the collection, to which, as chief author, David's name was appended, was closed. In this view, these may consistently be the productions of others included, as of Asaph, sons of Korah, and Solomon; and a few of David's may be placed in the latter series. The fact that here the usual mode of denoting authorship is used, is strongly conclusive that Solomon was the author, especially as no stronger objection appears than what has been now set aside. The Psalm, in highly wrought figurative style, describes the reign of a king as "righteous," universal, beneficent, and perpetual." By the older Jewish and most modern Christian interpreters, it has been referred to Christ, whose reign, present and prospective, alone corresponds with its statements. As the imagery of the second Psalm was drawn from the martial character of David's reign, that of this is from the peaceful and prosperous state of Solomon's.

**1.** Give the king, etc. — a prayer which is equivalent to a prediction.

**judgments** — the acts, and (figuratively) the principles of a right government (\*\*\*\*\*\*John 5:22 9:39).

*righteousness* — qualifications for conducting such a government.

*king's son* — same person as a king — a very proper title for Christ, as such in both natures.

2, etc. The effects of such a government by one thus endowed are detailed.

*thy people ... and thy poor* — or, "meek," the pious subjects of his government.

**3.** As *mountains* and *hills* are not usually productive, they are here selected to show the abundance of peace, being represented as

*bringing* — or, literally, "bearing" it as a produce.

by righteousness — that is, by means of his eminently just and good methods of ruling.

**4.** That peace, including prosperity, as an eminent characteristic of Christ's reign (\*\*\*Isaiah 2:4\*\*\*Isaiah 9:6 11:9), will be illustrated in the security provided for the helpless and needy, and the punishment inflicted on oppressors, whose power to injure or mar the peace of others will be destroyed (compare \*\*\*Isaiah 65:25\*\*\*Zechariah 9:10).

*children of the needy* — for the needy (compare sons of strangers, <sup>4985</sup>Psalm 18:45 [*Margin*]).

- **5.** as long as ... endure literally, "with the sun," coeval with its existence, and before, or, in presence of the moon, while it lasts (compare Genesis 11:28, "before Terah," literally, "in presence of," while he lived).
- **6.** A beautiful figure expresses the *grateful* nature of His influence;

**7**, and, carrying out the figure, the results are described in an abundant production.

the righteous — literally, "righteousness."

*flourish* — literally, "sprout," or, "spring forth."

- 8. The foreign nations mentioned (\*\*\*Psalm 72:9,10) could not be included in the limits, if designed to indicate the boundaries of Solomon's kingdom. The terms, though derived from those used (\*\*\*Exodus 23:31\*\*Deuteronomy 11:24) to denote the possessions of Israel, must have a wider sense. Thus, "ends of the earth" is never used of Palestine, but always of the world (compare *Margin*).
- **9-11.** The extent of the conquests.

*They that dwell in the wilderness* — the wild, untutored tribes of deserts.

**bow** ... **dust** — in profound submission. The remotest and wealthiest nations shall acknowledge Him (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 45:12).

- **12-14.** They are not the conquests of arms, but the influences of humane and peaceful principles (compare Isaiah 9:7 11:1-9 Zechariah 9:9,10).
- **15.** In his prolonged life he will continue to receive the honorable gifts of the rich, and the prayers of his people shall be made for him, and their praises given to him.
- **16.** The spiritual blessings, as often in Scripture, are set forth by material, the abundance of which is described by a figure, in which a "handful" (or literally, "a piece," or small portion) of corn in the most unpropitious locality, shall produce a crop, waving in the wind in its luxuriant growth, like the forests of Lebanon.

*they of the city ... earth* — This clause denotes the rapid and abundant increase of population —

*the city* — Jerusalem, the center and seat of the typical kingdom.

*flourish* — or, glitter as new grass — that is, bloom. This increase corresponds with the increased productiveness. So, as the gospel blessings are diffused, there shall arise increasing recipients of them, out of the Church in which Christ resides as head.

17. *His name* — or, "glorious perfections."

as long as the sun — (Compare \*\*Psalm 72:5).

men shall be blessed — (\*\*Genesis 12:3 18:18).

- **18, 19.** These words close the Psalm in terms consistent with the style of the context, while Psalm 72:20 is evidently, from its prosaic style, an addition for the purpose above explained [see on Psalm 72:1].
- **20.** *ended* literally, "finished," or completed; the word never denotes fulfillment, except in a very late usage, as in \*\*\*Daniel 12:7.

#### PSALM 73:1-28.

Of Asaph — (see Introduction). God is good to His people. For although the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, tempted the Psalmist to misgivings of God's government, yet the sudden and fearful ruin of the ungodly, seen in the light of God's revelation, reassures his heart; and, chiding himself for his folly, he is led to confide renewedly in God, and celebrate His goodness and love.

**1.** The abrupt announcement of the theme indicates that it is the conclusion of a perplexing mental conflict, which is then detailed (compare Jeremiah 12:1-4).

*Truly* — or, "Surely it is so."

*clean heart* — (\*\*Psalm 18:26) describes the true Israel.

- 2. The figures express his wavering faith, by terms denoting tottering and weakness (compare \*\*\*Psalm 22:5 62:3).
- **3-9.** The prosperous wicked are insolently proud (compare Psalm 5:5). They die, as well as live, free from perplexities: pride adorns them, and violence is their clothing; indeed they are inflated with unexpected success. With all this —
- **8.** They are corrupt or, literally, "they deride," they speak maliciously and arrogantly and invade even heaven with blasphemy (\*\*\*Revelation 13:6), and cover earth with slanders (\*\*\*\*TJob 21:7-14).
- **10-12.** Hence God's people are confounded, turned hither (or back) and thither, perplexed with doubts of God's knowledge and care, and filled with sorrow.
- **12.** *prosper in the word* literally, "secure for ever."

- **13, 14.** The Psalmist, partaking of these troubles, is especially disturbed in view of his own case, that with all his diligent efforts for a holy life, he is still sorely tried.
- **15.** Freed from idiomatic phrases, this verse expresses a supposition, as, "Had I thus spoken, I should," etc., intimating that he had kept his troubles to himself.

generation of thy children — Thy people (\*\*THE John 3:1).

offend — literally, "deceive, mislead."

**16, 17.** Still he —

**thought** — literally, "studied," or, "pondered this riddle"; but in vain; it remained a toil (compare *Margin*), till he —

- **17.** went into the sanctuary to enquire (compare Exodus 25:22 Exodus 5:7 27:4).
- **18-20.** *their end* future (\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:37,38), which is dismal and terribly sudden (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 1:27 29:1), aggravated and hastened by terror. They are thrown into ruins as a building falling to pieces (\*\*\*\*Psalm 74:3), As one despises an unsubstantial dream, so God, waking up to judgment (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:6 44:23), despises their vain shadow of happiness (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 \*\*\*\*\*\*
- **21, 22.** He confesses how —

foolish — literally, "stupid," and

*ignorant* — literally, "not discerning," had been his course of thought.

- **22.** *before thee* literally, "with Thee," in conduct respecting Thee.
- **23.** Still he was *with God*, as a dependent beneficiary, and so kept from falling (\*\*\*Psalm 73:2).
- **24.** All doubts are silenced in confidence of divine guidance and future glory.

receive me to glory — literally, "take for (me) glory" (compare \*\*\*Psalm 68:18 \*\*\*Ephesians 4:8).

25, 26. God is his only satisfying good.

**26.** *strength* — literally, "rock" (\*\*\*Psalm 18:2).

**portion** — (\*\*\*Psalm 16:5 \*\*\*Lamentations 3:24).

**27, 28.** The lot of apostates, described by a figure of frequent use (\*\*\*Beremiah 3:1,3 \*\*\*Ezekiel 23:35), is contrasted with his, who finds happiness in nearness to God (\*\*\*James 4:8), and his delightful work the declaration of His praise.

### **♥₱₱₽**PSALM 74:1-23.

If the historical allusions of \*\*Psalm 74:6-8, etc., be referred, as is probable, to the period of the captivity, the author was probably a descendant and namesake of Asaph, David's contemporary and singer (compare \*\*S\*2 Chronicles 35:15 \*\*Ezra 2:41). He complains of God's desertion of His Church, and appeals for aid, encouraging himself by recounting some of God's mighty deeds, and urges his prayer on the ground of God's covenant relation to His people, and the wickedness of His and their common enemy.

**1.** cast ... off — with abhorrence (compare \*\*Psalm 43:2 44:9). There is no disavowal of guilt implied. The figure of fire to denote God's anger is often used; and here, and in \*\*Deuteronomy 29:20, by the word "smoke," suggests its continuance.

sheep ... pasture — (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 80:1 95:7).

- **2.** The terms to denote God's relation to His people increase in force: "congregation" "purchased" "redeemed" "Zion," His dwelling.
- **3.** *Lift* ... *feet* (\*\*\*Genesis 29:1) that is, Come (to behold) the desolations (\*\*\*\*Psalm 73:19).
- **4.** *roar* with bestial fury.

congregations — literally, "worshipping assemblies."

- *ensigns* literally, "signs" substituted their idolatrous objects, or tokens of authority, for those articles of the temple which denoted God's presence.
- **5, 6.** Though some terms and clauses here are very obscure, the general sense is that the spoilers destroyed the beauties of the temple with the violence of woodmen.

was famous — literally, "was known."

**6.** carved work — (4009) Kings 6:29).

**thereof** — that is, of the temple, in the writer's mind, though not expressed till Psalm 74:7, in which its utter destruction by fire is mentioned (XXI)2 Kings 25:9 Right Saiah 64:11).

- 7. defiled or, "profaned," as in \*\*\*Psalm 89:39.
- **8.** *together* at once, all alike.

synagogues — literally, "assemblies," for places of assembly, whether such as schools of the prophets (\*\*DE\*2 Kings 4:23), or "synagogues" in the usual sense, there is much doubt.

9. signs — of God's presence, as altar, ark, etc. (compare \*\*\*Psalm 74:4 Chronicles 36:18,19 Daniel 5:2).

no more any prophet — (\*\*\* Isaiah 3:2 \*\*\* Jeremiah 40:1 43:6).

**how long** — this is to last. Jeremiah's prophecy ( Deremiah 25:11), if published, may not have been generally known or understood. To the bulk of the people, during the captivity, the occasional and local prophetical services of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel would not make an exception to the clause, "there is no more any prophet."

**10.** (Compare \*\*\* Psalm 31:1).

how long ... reproach? — us, as deserted of God.

**blaspheme thy name** — or, "perfections," as power, goodness, etc. (\*\*\*Psalm 29:2).

- **11.** Why cease to help us? (Compare Psalm 3:7 7:6 60:5).
- **12.** *For* literally, "And," in an adversative sense.
- 13-15. Examples of the "salvation wrought" are cited.

divide the sea — that is, Red Sea.

brakest ... waters — Pharaoh and his host (compare Saiah 51:9,10 Ezekiel 29:3,4).

**14.** *heads of leviathan* — The word is a collective, and so used for many.

*the people ... wilderness* — that is, wild beasts, as conies (Proverbs 30:25,26), are called a people. Others take the passages literally, that the sea monsters thrown out on dry land were food for the wandering Arabs.

**15.** *cleave the fountain* — that is, the rocks of Horeb and Kadesh; for fountains.

**driedst up** — Jordan, and, perhaps, Arnon and Jabbok (\*\*Numbers 21:14).

- 16, 17. The fixed orders of nature and bounds of earth are of God.
- **18.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 74:10 \*\*Deuteronomy 32:6). The contrast is striking that such a God should be thus insulted!
- **19.** *multitude* literally, "beast," their flock or company of men (\*\*\*\*Psalm 68:10).

*turtledove* — that is, the meek and lonely Church.

**congregation** — literally, "the company," as above — thus the Church is represented as the spoiled and defeated remnant of an army, exposed to violence.

- **20.** And the prevalence of injustice in heathen lands is a reason for invoking God's regard to His promise (compare Numbers 14:21 Psalm 7:16 18:48).
- **21.** *oppressed* broken (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9).

**return** — from seeking God.

*ashamed* — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 35:4).

**22, 23.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 3:7 7:6). God hears the wicked to their own ruin (\*\*Genesis 4:10 18:20).

#### PSALM 75:1-10.

Al-taschith — (See on \*\*\*Psalm 57:1, title). In impending danger, the Psalmist, anticipating relief in view of God's righteous government, takes courage and renders praise.

- **1.** God's name or perfections are set forth by His wondrous works.
- **2, 3.** These verses express the purpose of God to administer a just government, and in a time of anarchy that He sustains the nation. Some apply the words to the Psalmist.

receive the congregation — literally, "take a set time" (\*\*Psalm 102:13\*\* Hosea 2:3), or an assembly at a set time — that is, for judging.

- **3.** *pillars of it* (\*\*\* Samuel 2:8).
- **4-8.** Here the writer speaks in view of God's declaration, warning the wicked.

*Lift* ... *up the horn* — to exalt power, here, of the wicked himself — that is, to be arrogant or self-elated.

- 5. speak ... neck insolently.
- **6.** *promotion* literally, "a lifting up." God is the only right judge of merit.
- **8.** in the hand ... a cup ... red God's wrath often thus represented (compare <sup>2517</sup>Isaiah 51:17 <sup>2055</sup>Jeremiah 25:15).

but the dregs — literally, "surely the dregs, they shall drain it."

**9, 10.** Contrasted is the lot of the pious who will praise God, and, acting under His direction, will destroy the power of the wicked, and exalt that of the righteous.

#### PSALM 76:1-12.

On Neginoth — (See on Psalm 4:1, title). This Psalm commemorates what the preceding anticipates: God's deliverance of His people by a signal interposition of power against their enemies. The occasion was probably the events narrated in Kings 19:35 Kings 19:35 Isaiah 37:1-28. (Compare Psalm 46:1-11).

- **1, 2.** These well-known terms denote God's people and Church and His intimate and glorious relations to them.
- **2.** Salem ( Genesis 14:18) is Jerusalem.
- **3.** brake ... the arrows literally, "thunderbolts" (\*\*\*Psalm 78:48), from their rapid flight or ignition (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 18:14 \*\*\*\*Ephesians 6:16).

the battle — for arms (\*\*Hosea 2:18).

**4.** *Thou* — God.

**mountains of prey** — great victorious nations, as Assyria (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 41:15\*\*\*Ezekiel 38:11,12\*\*\*\*Zechariah 4:7).

**5.** slept their sleep — died (\*\*\*Psalm 13:3).

**none** ... **found** ... **hands** — are powerless.

- **6.** *chariot and horse* for those fighting on them (compare 68:17).
- 7. may ... sight contend with Thee (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 9:4 \*\*\*Joshua 7:12).
- **8, 9.** God's judgment on the wicked is His people's deliverance (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:12 10:7).
- **10.** Man's wrath praises God by its futility before His power.

**restrain** — or, "gird"; that is, Thyself, as with a sword, with which to destroy, or as an ornament to Thy praise.

**11, 12.** Invite homage to such a God (\*\*\* 2 Chronicles 32:23), who can stop the breath of kings and princes when He wills (\*\*\* Daniel 5:23).

#### ◆5701PSALM 77:1-20.

To Jeduthun — (See on \*\*\*Psalm 39:1, title). In a time of great affliction, when ready to despair, the Psalmist derives relief from calling to mind God's former and wonderful works of delivering power and grace.

- **1.** expresses the purport of the Psalm.
- 2. his importunacy.

my sore ran ... night — literally, "my hand was spread," or, "stretched out" (compare \*\*Psalm 44:20).

**ceased not** — literally, "grew not numb," or, "feeble" (Genesis 45:26 Psalm 38:8).

my soul ... comforted — (compare Genesis 37:35 density 31:15).

**3-9.** His sad state contrasted with former joys.

was troubled — literally, "violently agitated," or disquieted (\*\*\*Psalm 39:6 41:5).

my spirit was overwhelmed — or, "fainted" (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 107:5 Jon 2:7).

- **4.** *holdest* ... *waking* or, "fast," that I cannot sleep. Thus he is led to express his anxious feelings in several earnest questions indicative of impatient sorrow.
- **10.** Omitting the supplied words, we may read, "This is my affliction—the years of," etc., "years" being taken as parallel to affliction (compare Psalm 90:15), as of God's ordering.
- **11, 12.** He finds relief in contrasting God's former deliverances. Shall we receive good at His hands, and not evil? Both are orderings of unerring mercy and unfailing love.

- **13.** Thy way ... in the sanctuary God's ways of grace and providence (Psalm 22:3 67:2), ordered on holy principles, as developed in His worship; or implied in His perfections, if "holiness" be used for "sanctuary," as some prefer translating (compare Desidence Levels 15:11).
- **14-20.** Illustrations of God's power in His special interventions for His people (\*\*Pathexacus 14:1-31), and, in the more common, but sublime, control of nature (\*\*Pathexacus 22:11-14\*\*\*Habakkuk 3:14) which may have attended those miraculous events (\*\*Pathexacus 14:24).
- **15.** *Jacob and Joseph* representing all.
- **19.** *waters* ... , *footsteps* may refer to His actual leading the people through the sea, though also expressing the mysteries of providence.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 78:1-72.

This Psalm appears to have been occasioned by the removal of the sanctuary from Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim to Zion in the tribe of Judah, and the coincident transfer of pre-eminence in Israel from the former to the latter tribe, as clearly evinced by David's settlement as the head of the Church and nation. Though this was the execution of God's purpose, the writer here shows that it also proceeded from the divine judgment on Ephraim, under whose leadership the people had manifested the same sinful and rebellious character which had distinguished their ancestors in Egypt.

- **1.** my people ... my law the language of a religious teacher (\*\*\*Psalm 78:2 \*\*\*Lamentations 3:14 \*\*\*Romans 2:16,27; compare \*\*\*Psalm 49:4). The history which follows was a "dark saying," or riddle, if left unexplained, and its right apprehension required wisdom and attention.
- **3-8.** This history had been handed down (\*\*DE\*Exodus 12:14 Deuteronomy 6:20) for God's honor, and that the principles of His law might be known and observed by posterity. This important sentiment is reiterated in (\*\*PROPSalm 78:7,8) negative form.
- **5.** *testimony* (\*\*\*Psalm 19:7).
- 8. stubborn and rebellious (\*\*Deuteronomy 21:18:1).
- set not their heart on God's service (41242 Chronicles 12:14).
- **9-11.** The privileges of the first-born which belonged to Joseph (and Chronicles 5:1,2) were assigned to Ephraim by Jacob (and Genesis 48:1). The supremacy of the tribe thus intimated was recognized by its position (in the marching of the nation to Canaan) next to the ark (and Numbers 2:18-24), by the selection of the first permanent locality for the ark within its borders at Shiloh, and by the extensive and fertile province given for its possession. Traces of this prominence remained after the schism under

Rehoboam, in the use, by later writers, of *Ephraim* for *Israel* (compare Hosea 5:3-14 11:3-12). Though a strong, well-armed tribe, and, from an early period, emulous and haughty (compare Hosea 17:14 Hosea 17:14 Samuel 19:41), it appears, in this place, that it had rather led the rest in cowardice than courage; and had incurred God's displeasure, because, diffident of His promise, though often heretofore fulfilled, it had failed as a leader to carry out the terms of the covenant, by not driving out the heathen (Hosea 23:24 Hosea 23:24 Kings 17:15).

**12-14.** A record of God's dealings and the sins of the people is now made. The writer gives the history from the exode to the retreat from Kadesh; then contrasts their sins with their reasons for confidence, shown by a detail of God's dealings in Egypt, and presents a summary of the subsequent history to David's time.

**Zoan** — for Egypt, as its ancient capital (\*\*\*Numbers 13:22 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 19:11).

**15, 16.** There were two similar miracles (\*\*Exodus 17:6\*\*Numbers 20:11).

great depths — and — rivers — denote abundance.

**17-20.** *yet more* — literally, "added to sin," instead of being led to repentance (\*\*Romans 2:4).

**provoking** — and — **tempted** — illustrated by their absurd doubts,

**18.** *in their heart* — (\*\*Matthew 15:19).

for their lust — literally, "soul," or, "desire."

- 19, 20. in the face of His admitted power.
- **21.** *fire* the effect of the "anger" (\*\*Numbers 11:1).
- **22.** (Compare \*\*Hebrews 8:8,9).
- **23-29.** (Compare Exodus 16:11-15 Numbers 11:4-9).
- **25.** *angels' food* literally, "bread of the mighty" (compare \*Psalm 105:40); so called, as it came from heaven.

- *meat* literally, "victuals," as for a journey.
- **29.** *their* ... *desire* what they longed for.
- 30, 31. not estranged ... lust or, "desire" that is, were indulging it.
- 31. slew ... fattest or, "among the fattest"; some of them —
- **chosen** the young and strong (\*\*Isaiah 40:31), and so none could resist.
- **33-39.** Though there were partial reformations after chastisement, and God, in pity, withdrew His hand for a time, yet their general conduct was rebellious, and He was thus provoked to waste and destroy them, by long and fruitless wandering in the desert.
- **36.** *lied* ... *tongues* a feigned obedience (\*\*Psalm 18:44).
- **37.** *heart* ... *not right* or, "firm" (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 78:8 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:10).
- **39.** *a wind ... again* literally, "a breath," thin air (compare <sup>4930</sup> Psalm 103:16 <sup>4900</sup> James 4:14).
- **40, 41.** There were ten temptations ( Numbers 14:22).
- **41.** *limited* as in \*\*Psalm 78:19,20. Though some prefer "grieved" or "provoked." The retreat from Kadesh (\*\*Deuteronomy 1:19-23) is meant, whether —
- *turned* be for turning back, or to denote repetition of offense.
- **43.** *wrought* set or held forth.
- **45.** The dog-fly or the mosquito.
- **46.** *caterpillar* the *Hebrew* name, from its voracity, and that of —
- *locust* from its multitude.
- **47, 48.** The additional effects of the storm here mentioned (compare Exodus 9:23-34) are consistent with Moses' account.
- **48.** gave ... cattle literally, "shut up" (compare \*\*Psalm 31:8).

- **49.** *evil angels* or, "angels of evil" many were perhaps employed, and other evils inflicted.
- **50, 51.** *made a way* removed obstacles, gave it full scope.
- **51.** *chief of their strength* literally, "first-fruits," or, "first-born" (\*\*\*Genesis 49:3 \*\*\*Deuteronomy 21:17).
- *Ham* one of whose sons gave name (*Mizraim*, *Hebrew*) to Egypt.
- **52-54.** *made his* ... *forth* or, brought them by periodical journeys (compare \*DECO Exodus 15:1).
- **54.** border of his sanctuary or, "holy border" —
- *this mountain* (Zion) was, as the seat of civil and religious government, the representative, used for the whole land, as afterwards for the Church (2006 Isaiah 25:6,7).
- *purchased* or, "procured by His right hand" or power (\*\*\*Psalm 60:5).
- **55.** *by line* or, the portion thus measured.
- **divided them** that is, the heathen, put for their possessions, so tents that is, of the heathen (compare \*\*\*Deuteronomy 6:11).
- **56, 57.** *a deceitful bow* which turns back, and so fails to project the arrow (\*\*\*\* 2 Samuel 1:22 \*\*\*\*\* Hosea 7:16). They relapsed.
- **58.** Idolatry resulted from sparing the heathen (compare \*\*Psalm 78:9-11).
- **59, 60.** *heard* perceived (\*\*Genesis 11:7).
- *abhorred* but not utterly.
- **60.** *tent* ... *placed* literally, "caused to dwell," set up ( Joshua 18:1).
- **61.** *his strength* the ark, as symbolical of it (\*\*\*\*Psalm 96:6).
- **62.** *gave* or, "shut up."
- *his people* (\*\*\*Psalm 78:48 \*\*\*\* Samuel 4:10-17).
- **63.** *fire* either figure of the slaughter (\*\*900) Samuel 4:10), or a literal burning by the heathen.

given to marriage — literally, "praised" — that is, as brides.

**64.** (Compare 4:17); and there were, doubtless, others.

*made no lamentation* — either because stupefied by grief, or hindered by the enemy.

**65.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 22:16 \*\*Isaiah 42:13).

**66.** *And he smote ... part* — or, "struck His enemies' back." The Philistines never regained their position after their defeats by David.

67, 68. tabernacle of Joseph — or, "home," or, "tribe," to which —

*tribe of Ephraim* — is parallel (compare "Revelation 7:8). Its preeminence was, like Saul's, only permitted. Judah had been the choice ("Genesis 49:10).

**69.** Exalted as —

*high palaces* — or, "mountains," and abiding as — *the earth*.

**70-72.** God's sovereignty was illustrated in this choice. The contrast is striking — humility and exaltation — and the correspondence is beautiful.

**71.** *following* ... *ewes*, etc. — literally, "ewes giving suck" (compare said saiah 40:11). On the pastoral terms, compare Psalm 79:13.

#### PSALM 79:1-13.

This Psalm, like the seventy-fourth, probably depicts the desolations of the Chaldeans (\*\* Jeremiah 52:12-24). It comprises the usual complaint, prayer, and promised thanks for relief.

- **1.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 74:2-7).
- **2, 3.** (Compare Jeremiah 15:3 16:4).
- **4.** (Compare Psalm 44:13 Peremiah 42:18 Lamentations 2:15).
- **5.** *How long* (\*\*\*Psalm 13:1).

**be angry** — (\*\*\*Psalm 74:1-10).

*jealousy burn* — ( Deuteronomy 29:20).

**6, 7.** (Compare \*\*\* Jeremiah 10:25). Though we deserve much, do not the heathen deserve more for their violence to us (\*\*\* Jeremiah 51:3-5 \*\*\* Zechariah 1:14)? The singular denotes the chief power, and the use of the plural indicates the combined confederates.

called upon — or, "by"

thy name — proclaimed Thy attributes and professed allegiance (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 12:4 \*\*\*\*\*Acts 2:21).

**8.** *former iniquities* — literally, "iniquities of former times."

*prevent us* — literally, "meet us," as in \*\*\*Psalm 21:3.

**9.** *for* ... *glory of thy name* [and for] *thy name's sake* — both mean for illustrating Thy attributes, faithfulness, power, etc.

*purge* ... *sins* — literally, "provide atonement for us." Deliverance from sin and suffering, for their good and God's glory, often distinguish the prayers of Old Testament saints (compare Ephesians 1:7).

**10.** This ground of pleading often used (\*\*Exodus 32:12 \*\*Numbers 14:13-16).

**blood** ... **shed** — (\*\*\*Psalm 79:3).

**11.** *prisoner* — the whole captive people.

*power* — literally, "arm" (\*\*\*Psalm 10:15).

- **12.** *into their bosom* The lap or folds of the dress is used by Eastern people for receiving articles. The figure denotes retaliation (compare Isaiah 65:6,7). They reproached God as well as His people.
- **13.** *sheep ... pasture* (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 74:1 78:70).

#### PSALM 80:1-19.

Shoshannim — "Lilies" (see on "Psalm 45:1, title). Eduth — Testimony, referring to the topic as a testimony of God to His people (compare "Psalm 19:7). This Psalm probably relates to the captivity of the ten tribes, as the former to that of Judah. Its complaint is aggravated by the contrast of former prosperity, and the prayer for relief occurs as a refrain through the Psalm.

**1, 2.** *Joseph* — for Ephraim (\*\*\*\*\*\* Chronicles 7:20-29 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 78:67 \*\*\*\*\* Revelation 7:8), for Israel.

**Shepherd** — (Compare <sup>™</sup>Genesis 49:24).

*leadest*, etc. — (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 77:20).

dwellest ... cherubim — (\*\*Exodus 25:20); the place of God's visible glory, whence He communed with the people (\*\*\*Hebrews 9:5).

**shine forth** — appear (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 50:2 94:1).

- **3.** *Turn us* that is, from captivity.

thy face to shine — (\*\*Numbers 6:25).

- **4.** *be angry* (Compare *Margin*.)
- **5.** *bread of tears* still an Eastern figure for affliction.
- **6.** *strife* object or cause of (2001 Isaiah 9:11). On last clause compare Psalm 79:4 2000 Ezekiel 36:4.
- **8-11.** *brought* or, "plucked up," as by roots, to be replanted.

- a vine (\*\*\*Psalm 78:47). The figure (\*\*\*Genesis 28:14), and verified (\*\*\*Genesis 28:14), and verified (\*\*\*Genesis 28:20-25).
- **12.** *hedges* ( \*\*Tsaiah 5:5).
- **13.** *The boar* may represent the ravaging Assyrian and

the wild beast — other heathen.

- **14, 15.** *visit this vine* favorably (\*\*\*Psalm 8:4).
- **15.** *And the vineyard* or, "And protect or guard what thy right hand," etc.

*the branch* — literally, "over the Son of man," preceding this phrase, with "protect" or "watch."

for thyself— a tacit allusion to the plea for help; for

**16.** *it* — the "vine" or

*they* — the "people" are suffering from Thy displeasure.

**17.** thy hand ... upon — that is, strengthen (Ezra 7:6 8:22).

man of ... hand — may allude to Benjamin (\*\*\*Genesis 35:18). The terms in the latter clause correspond with those of \*\*\*Psalm 80:15, from "and the branch," etc., literally, and confirm the exposition given above.

- **18.** We need quickening grace (\*\*Psalm 71:20 119:25) to persevere in Thy right worship (\*\*Genesis 4:26 \*\*Romans 10:11).
- 19. (Compare "Psalm 80:3, "O God"; "Psalm 80:7, "O God of hosts").

#### PSALM 81:1-16.

Gittith — (See on \*\*\*Psalm 8:1, title). A festal Psalm, probably for the passover (compare \*\*\*Matthew 26:30), in which, after an exhortation to praise God, He is introduced, reminding Israel of their obligations, chiding their neglect, and depicting the happy results of obedience.

- **1.** *our strength* (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 38:7).
- **2.** unites the most joyful kinds of music, vocal and instrumental.
- 3. *the new moon* or the month.

*the time appointed* — (Compare <sup>and</sup> Proverbs 7:20).

**5.** *a testimony* — The feasts, especially the passover, attested God's relation to His people.

**Joseph** — for *Israel* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 80:1).

went out through — or, "over," that is, Israel in the exodus.

*I heard* — change of person. The writer speaks for the nation.

**language** — literally, "lip" ( Psalm 14:1). An aggravation or element of their distress that their oppressors were foreigners ( Deuteronomy 28:49).

- **6.** God's language alludes to the burdensome slavery of the Israelites.
- **7.** secret place the cloud from which He troubled the Egyptians (\*\*DE\*Exodus 14:24).

*proved thee* — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:10 17:3) — tested their faith by the miracle.

**8.** (Compare Psalm 50:7). The reproof follows to Psalm 81:12.

- if thou wilt hearken He then propounds the terms of His covenant: they should worship Him alone, who (\*\*Psalm 81:10) had delivered them, and would still confer all needed blessings.
- **11, 12.** They failed, and He gave them up to their own desires and hardness of heart (\*\*Deuteronomy 29:18 \*\*Proverbs 1:30 \*\*Romans 11:25).
- **13-16.** Obedience would have secured all promised blessings and the subjection of foes. In this passage, "should have," "would have," etc., are better, "should" and "would" expressing God's intention at the time, that is, when they left Egypt.

### **♥**PSALM 82:1-8.

Before the great Judge, the judges of the earth are rebuked, exhorted, and threatened.

- **1.** congregation (Compare Exodus 12:3 16:1).
- of the mighty that is, of God, of His appointment.
- the gods or, "judges" (Exodus 21:6 22:9), God's representatives.
- **2.** accept the persons literally, "lift up the faces," that is, from dejection, or admit to favor and communion, regardless of merit (\*\*PS\*\*Leviticus 19:15\*\*\*Proverbs 18:5).
- **3, 4.** So must good judges act (\*\*\*Psalm 10:14 \*\*\*Job 29:12).
- **4.** *poor and needy* (Compare \*Psalm 34:10 41:1).
- **5.** By the wilful ignorance and negligence of judges, anarchy ensues (\*\*\*Psalm 11:3 75:3).
- out of course (Compare Margin; \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:6 62:2).
- **6, 7.** Though God admitted their official dignity (\*\*\*\*John 10:34), He reminds them of their mortality.
- 7. fall like, etc. be cut off suddenly (\*\*Psalm 20:8 91:7).
- **8.** As rightful sovereign of earth, God is invoked personally to correct the evils of His representatives.

#### PSALM 83:1-18.

Of Asaph — (See on \*\*Psalm 74:1, title). The historical occasion is probably that of \*\*Psalm 74:1, title). The historical occasion is probably that of \*\*Psalm 47:1-9 48:1-14). After a general petition, the craft and rage of the combined enemies are described, God's former dealings recited, and a like summary and speedy destruction on them is invoked.

**1.** God addressed as indifferent (compare Psalm 35:22 39:12).

**be not still** — literally, "not quiet," as opposed to action.

- **2.** thine enemies as well as ours (\*\*Psalm 74:23 \*\*\*\* Isaiah 37:23).
- 3. hidden ones whom God specially protects (\*\*\*\*Psalm 27:5 91:1).
- **4.** from being a nation utter destruction (\*\*Isaiah 7:8 23:1).

*Israel* — here used for Judah, having been the common name.

**5.** *they have consulted* — with heart, or cordially.

*together* — all alike.

**6-8.** *tabernacles* — for people (\*\*\*Psalm 78:67).

**they** — all these united with the children of Lot, or Ammonites and Moabites (compare 400)2 Chronicles 20:1).

- **9-11.** Compare the similar fate of these (\*\*\*\*2 Chronicles 20:23) with that of the foes mentioned in \*\*\*Judges 7:22, here referred to. They destroyed one another (\*\*\*Judges 4:6-24 7:25). Human remains form manure (compare \*\*\*Lings 9:37 \*\*\*Jeremiah 9:22).
- **12.** The language of the invaders.

*houses* — literally, "residences," enclosures, as for flocks (\*\*\*\*Psalm 65:12).

- of God as the proprietors of the land (\*\*2 Chronicles 20:11 \*\*1saiah 14:25).
- **13.** *like a wheel* or, whirling of any light thing (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 17:13), as stubble or chaff (\*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 1:4).
- **14, 15.** Pursue them to an utter destruction.
- **16.** that they may seek or as \*\*\*Psalm 83:18, supply "men," since \*\*\*\*Psalm 83:17,18 amplify the sentiment of \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction, and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:18, supply "men," since \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction, and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:18, supply "men," since \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction, and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:18, supply "men," since \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction, and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and the lesson of God's being and perfections (compare \*\*\*Psalm 83:16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction and destruction and

#### PSALM 84:1-12.

(See on \*\*Psalm 8:1, title, and \*\*Psalm 42:1, title). The writer describes the desirableness of God's worship and prays for a restoration to its privileges.

**1.** *amiable* — not lovely, but beloved.

tabernacles — (\*\*PSBP salm 43:3).

2. *longeth* — most intensely ( Genesis 31:30 Psalm 17:12).

**fainteth** — exhausted with desire.

*courts* — as tabernacles (\*\*\*\*Psalm 84:1) — the whole building.

*crieth out* — literally, "sings for joy"; but here, and Lamentations 2:19, expresses an act of sorrow as the corresponding noun (\*The Psalm 17:1 61:2).

heart and ... flesh — as in Psalm 63:1.

- **3.** *thine altars* that is, of burnt offering and incense, used for the whole tabernacle. Its structure afforded facilities for sparrows and swallows to indulge their known predilections for such places. Some understand the statement as to the birds as a comparison: "as they find homes, so do I desire *thine altars*," etc.
- **4.** This view is favored by the language here, which, as in <sup>1980</sup>Psalm 15:1 23:6, recognizes the blessing of membership in God's family by terms denoting a *dwelling in His house*.
- **5.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 68:28).

in whose heart ... the ways — that is, who knows and loves the way to God's favor (\*\*\*Proverbs 16:17 \*\*\* Isaiah 40:3,4).

**6.** *valley of Baca* — or, "weeping." Through such, by reason of their dry and barren condition, the worshippers often had to pass to Jerusalem. As

they might become wells, or fountains, or pools, supplied by refreshing rain, so the grace of God, by the exercises of His worship, refreshes and revives the hearts of His people, so that for sorrows they have "rivers of delight" (\*\*PROB\*PSalm 36:8 46:4).

**7.** The figure of the pilgrim is carried out. As such daily refit their bodily strength till they reach Jerusalem, so the spiritual worshipper is daily supplied with spiritual strength by God's grace till he appears before God in heaven.

appeareth ... God — the terms of the requisition for the attendance on the feasts (compare Deuteronomy 16:16),

**9.** God is addressed as a shield (compare \*\*Psalm 84:11).

thine anointed — David (\*\*\* Samuel 16:12).

- **10.** *I had* ... *doorkeeper* literally, "I choose to sit on the threshold," the meanest place.
- 11, 12. As a sun God enlightens (\*\*Psalm 27:1); as a shield He protects.

grace — God's favor, its fruit —

**glory** — the honor He bestows.

*uprightly* — (\*\*\*Psalm 15:2 18:23).

**12.** *that trusteth* — constantly.

#### PSALM 85:1-13.

On the ground of former mercies, the Psalmist prays for renewed blessings, and, confidently expecting them, rejoices.

- **1.** *captivity* not necessarily the Babylonian, but any great evil (\*\*\*\*Psalm 14:7).
- **2, 3.** (Compare Psalm 32:1-5).
- **3.** To turn from the "fierceness," implies that He was reconcilable, though
- **4-7.** having still occasion for the anger which is deprecated.
- **5.** *draw out* or, "prolong" (\*Psalm 36:10).
- **8.** He is confident God will favor His penitent people (\*\*\*\*Psalm 51:17 80:18).
- saints as in \*\*Psalm 4:3, the "godly."
- **9.** They are here termed "*them that fear him*"; and grace produces glory (\*\*\*\*Psalm 84:11).
- **10.** God's promises of "mercy" will be verified by His "truth" (compare Psalm 25:10 40:10); and the "work of righteousness" in His holy government shall be "peace" (Sum Isaiah 32:17). There is an implied contrast with a dispensation under which God's truth sustains His threatened wrath, and His righteousness inflicts misery on the wicked.
- 11. Earth and heaven shall abound with the blessings of this government;
- **12, 13.** and, under this, the deserted land shall be productive, and men be "set," or guided in God's holy ways. Doubtless, in this description of God's returning favor, the writer had in view that more glorious period, when Christ shall establish His government on God's reconciled justice and abounding mercy.

#### PSALM 86:1-17.

This is a prayer in which the writer, with deep emotion, mingles petitions and praises, now urgent for help, and now elated with hope, in view of former mercies. The occurrence of many terms and phrases peculiar to David's Psalms clearly intimates its authorship.

**1, 2. poor and needy** — a suffering child of God, as in \*\*Psalm 10:12,17 18:27.

*I am holy* — or, "godly," as in <sup>™</sup>Psalm 4:3 85:8.

- **4.** *lift up my soul* with strong desire (\*\*PS\*Psalm 25:1).
- **5-7.** *unto all* ... *that call upon thee* or, "worship Thee" (\*\*\*Psalm 50:15 91:15) however undeserving (\*\*\*Exodus 34:6 \*\*\*Leviticus 11:9-13).
- **8.** *neither* ... *works* literally, "nothing like thy works," the "gods" have none at all.
- **9, 10.** The pious Jews believed that God's common relation to all would be ultimately acknowledged by all men (\*\*\*PS2\*\*PS3\*\*In 45:12-16 47:9).
- 11. *Teach* Show, point out.

*the way* — of Providence.

walk in thy truth — according to its declarations.

unite my heart — fix all my affections (\*\*Psalm 12:2 \*\*\* James 4:8).

to fear thy name — (compare Psalm 86:12) to honor Thy perfections.

- **15.** Contrasts God with his enemies (compare Psalm 86:5).
- **16.** son ... handmaid homeborn servant (compare \*\*DLuke 15:17).

**17.** *Show me* — literally, "Make with me a token," by Thy providential care. Thus in and by his prosperity his enemies would be confounded.

#### ◆ PSALM 87:1-7.

This triumphal song was probably occasioned by the same event as the forty-sixth [see on \*\*Psalm 46:1, title]. The writer celebrates the glory of the Church, as the means of spiritual blessing to the nation.

1. His — that is, God's

**foundation** — or, what He has founded, that is, Zion (\*\*Tsaiah 14:32).

*is in the holy mountains* — the location of Zion, in the wide sense, for the capital, or Jerusalem, being on several hills.

- **2.** gates for the enclosures, or city to which they opened (\*\*\*Psalm 9:14 122:2; compare \*\*\*Psalm 132:13,14).
- **3.** spoken of thee or, "in thee," that is, the city of God (\*\*Psalm 46:4 48:2).
- **4.** This is what is spoken by God.

to them ... me — literally, "for My knowers," they are true worshippers (\*\*\*\*Psalm 36:10 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 19:21). These are mentioned as specimens.

this — that is, nation

was born there — Of each it is said, "This was born," or is a native of Zion, spiritually.

**5.** The writer resumes —

**This and that man** — literally, "man and man," or many (Genesis 14:10 Exodus 8:10,14), or all (Exodus 44:5 Exodus 3:28).

*the highest ... her* — God is her protector.

**6.** The same idea is set forth under the figure of a register made by God (compare (Saiah 4:3)).

7. As in a great procession of those thus *written up*, or registered, seeking Zion (\*\*Tsaiah 2:3 \*\*\*Jeremiah 50:5), "the singers" and "players," or pipers, shall precede.

**all my springs** — So each shall say, "All my sources of spiritual joy are in Thee" (\*\*Psalm 46:4 84:6).

#### PSALM 88:1-18.

Upon Mahalath — either an instrument, as a lute, to be used as an accompaniment (Leannoth, "for singing") or, as others think, an enigmatic title (see on "Psalm 5:1, "Psalm 22:1, and "Psalm 45:1, titles), denoting the subject — that is, "sickness or disease, for humbling," the idea of spiritual maladies being often represented by disease (compare "Psalm 6:5,6 22:14,15, etc.). On the other terms, see on "Psalm 42:1 and "Psalm 32:1. Heman and Ethan (see on "Psalm 89:1, title) were David's singers ("The International Ethan (see on "Psalm 89:1, title) were David's singers ("The International Ethan (see on Internati

- **1, 2.** Compare on the terms used, Psalm 22:2 31:2.
- 3. grave literally, "hell" ("Psalm 16:10), death in wide sense.
- **4.** *go* ... *pit* of destruction (<sup>◆®®®</sup>Psalm 28:1).
- as a man literally, "a stout man," whose strength is utterly gone.
- **5.** *Free* ... *dead* Cut off from God's care, as are the slain, who, falling under His wrath, are left, no longer sustained by His hand.
- **6.** Similar figures for distress in Psalm 63:9 69:3.
- 7. Compare Psalm 38:2, on first, and Psalm 42:7, on last clause.
- **8.** Both cut off from sympathy and made hateful to friends (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 31:11).
- **9.** *Mine eye mourneth* literally, "decays," or fails, denoting exhaustion (\*\*\*Psalm 6:7 31:9).

- *I* ... *called* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 86:5,7).
- stretched out for help ( Psalm 44:20).
- **10.** *shall the dead* the remains of ghosts.
- *arise* literally, "rise up," that is, as dead persons.
- **11, 12.** amplify the foregoing, the whole purport (as \*\*\*Psalm 6:5) being to contrast death and life as seasons for praising God.
- **13.** *prevent* meet that is, he will diligently come before God for help (\*\*\*Psalm 18:41).
- **14.** On the terms (\*\*Psalm 27:9 74:1 77:7).
- **15.** *from* ... *youth up* all my life.
- **16, 17.** the extremes of anguish and despair are depicted.
- **18.** *into darkness* Better omit "into" "mine acquaintances (are) darkness," the gloom of death, etc. (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 17:13,14).

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 89:1-52.

Of Ethan — (See on Season of great national distress, perhaps Absalom's rebellion. It contrasts the promised prosperity and perpetuity of David's throne (with reference to the great promise of Samuel 7:12-17), with a time when God appeared to have forgotten His covenant. The picture thus drawn may typify the promises and the adversities of Christ's kingdom, and the terms of confiding appeal to God provided appropriate prayers for the divine aid and promised blessing.

- **1.** *mercies* those promised ( Acts 13:34), and *faithfulness* that is, in fulfilling them.
- **3, 4.** The object of this faith expressed in God's words ( Samuel 7:11-16).

with — or literally, "to"

my chosen — as the covenant is in the form of a promise.

**6, 7.** This is worthy of our belief, for His faithfulness (is praised) by the congregation of saints or holy ones; that is, angels (compare Deuteronomy 33:2 Daniel 8:13).

sons of the mighty — (compare Psalm 29:1). So is He to be admired on earth.

**8-14.** To illustrate His power and faithfulness examples are cited from history. His control of the sea (the most mighty and unstable object in nature), and of Egypt (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 87:4), the first great foe of Israel (subjected to utter helplessness from pride and insolence), are specimens.

At the same time, the whole frame of nature founded and sustained by Him, Tabor and Hermon for "east and west," and "north and south," together representing the whole world, declare the same truth as to His attributes.

- **12.** *rejoice in thy name* praise Thy perfections by their very existence.
- **15.** His government of righteousness is served by "mercy" and "truth" as ministers (\*\*\*Psalm 85:10-13).

**know the joyful sound** — understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolized by the feasts to which the people were called by the trumpet (\*\*\*\*\*Leviticus 25:9, etc.).

walk ... countenance — live in His favor (\*\*Psalm 4:6 44:3).

**16, 17.** *in* — or, "by"

thy righteousness — Thy faithful just rule.

glory — or, "beauty."

of their strength — They shall be adorned as well as protected.

our horn — exalt our power (\*\*\*\*Psalm 75:10 \*\*\*\*Luke 1:69).

- **18.** (*Margin*). Thus is introduced the promise to "our shield," "our king," David.
- **19-37.** *Then* when the covenant was established, of whose execution the exalted views of God now given furnish assurance.

**thou ... to thy holy one** — or godly saint, object of favor (\*\*\*Psalm 4:3). *Nathan* is meant (\*\*\*\*\* Samuel 7:17 \*\*\*\*\* 1 Chronicles 17:3-15).

*laid help* — literally, "given help." David was chosen and then exalted.

- **20.** *I have found* having sought and then selected him (\*\*\* Samuel 16:1-6).
- 21. will protect and sustain ( saiah 41:10),
- **22-25.** by restraining and conquering his enemies, and performing My gracious purpose of extending his dominion —

- **25.** hand [and] right hand power (\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:7 60:5).
- sea, and ... rivers limits of his empire (\*\*\*Psalm 72:8).
- **26, 27.** *first-born* one who is chief, most beloved or distinguished (\*\*Exodus 4:22 \*\*Colossians 1:15). In God's sight and purposes he was the first among all monarchs, and specially so in his typical relation to Christ.
- **28-37.** This relation is perpetual with David's descendants, as a whole typical in official position of his last greatest descendant. Hence though in personal relations any of them might be faithless and so punished, their typical relation shall continue. His oath confirms His promise, and the most enduring objects of earth and heaven illustrate its perpetual force (\*\*TTPP Psalm 72:5,7,17).
- **35.** *Once* one thing (\*\*Psalm 27:4).

by my holiness — as a holy God.

that I will not lie — literally, "if I lie" — part of the form of swearing (1861) Samuel 24:6 2 Samuel 3:35).

- **37.** *It shall ... moon ... heaven* literally, "*As the moon*, and the witness in the sky is sure, that is, the moon."
- **38-52.** present a striking contrast to these glowing promises, in mournful evidences of a loss of God's favor.

cast off — and rejected (compare \*\*\*Psalm 15:4 43:2 44:9).

- **39.** An insult to the "crown," as of divine origin, was a profanation.
- **40-45.** The ruin is depicted under several figures a vineyard whose broken "hedges," and "strongholds," whose ruins invite spoilers and invaders; a warrior, whose enemies are aided by God, and whose sword's "edge" literally, "rock" or "strength" ("Doshua 5:2) is useless; and a youth prematurely old.
- **45.** *days of his youth* or, "youthful vigor," that is, of the royal line, or promised perpetual kingdom, under the figure of a man.
- **46.** *How long*, etc. (Compare \*\*Psalm 13:1 88:14 \*\* Deremiah 4:4).

- **47.** These expostulations are excited in view of the identity of the prosperity of this kingdom with the welfare of *all mankind* (\*\*Genesis 22:18 \*\*\*\* Psalm 72:17 \*\*\* Isaiah 9:7 11:1-10); for if such is the fate of this chosen royal line.
- **48.** What man literally, "strong man shall live?" and, indeed, have not all men been made in vain, as to glorifying God?
- **49-51.** The terms of expostulation are used in view of the actual appearance that God had forsaken His people and forgotten His promise, and the plea for aid is urged in view of the reproaches of His and His people's enemies (compare \*\*\*Tsaiah 37:17-35).
- **50.** *bear in my bosom* as feeling the affliction of the people (\*\*\*\*Psalm 69:9).

footsteps — ways (\*\*\*Psalm 56:6).

**52.** *Blessed*, etc. — denotes returning confidence (\*\*Psalm 34:1-3).

**Amen, and Amen** — closes the third book of Psalms.

#### PSALM 90:1-17.

Contrasting man's frailty with God's eternity, the writer mourns over it as the punishment of sin, and prays for a return of the divine favor. *A Prayer* [mainly such] *of Moses the man of God*— (\*\*Deuteronomy 33:1\*\*Doshua 14:6); as such he wrote this (see on \*\*Psalm 18:1, title, and \*\*Psalm 36:1, title).

- **1.** *dwelling-place* home (compare Ezekiel 11:16), as a refuge (Ezekiel 33:27).
- **2. brought forth** [and] **formed** both express the idea of production by birth.
- **3.** to destruction literally, "even to dust" (\*\*\*Genesis 3:19), which is partly quoted in the last clause.
- **4.** Even were our days now a thousand years, as Adam's, our life would be but a moment in God's sight (\*\*\*2 Peter 3:8).
- *a watch* or, third part of a night (compare Exodus 14:24).
- **5, 6.** Life is like grass, which, though changing under the influence of the night's dew, and flourishing in the morning, is soon cut down and withereth (\*\*Psalm 103:15\*\*\*\* Peter 1:24).
- **7, 8.** *For* A reason, this is the infliction of God's wrath.
- **troubled** literally, "confounded by terror" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:5). Death is by sin (\*\*\*\*Romans 5:12). Though "secret," the light of God's countenance, as a candle, will bring sin to view (\*\*\*\*Proverbs 20:27 \*\*\*\*\* 1 Corinthians 4:5).
- **9.** are passed literally, "turn," as to depart (\*\*\* Jeremiah 6:4).
- **spend** literally, "consume."
- as a tale literally, "a thought," or, "a sigh" (2000) Ezekiel 2:10).

- **10.** Moses life was an exception ( Deuteronomy 34:7).
- it is ... cut off or, "driven," as is said of the quails in using the same word (\*\*Numbers 11:31). In view of this certain and speedy end, life is full of sorrow.
- 11. The whole verse may be read as a question implying the negative, "No one knows what Thy anger can do, and what Thy wrath is, estimated by a true piety."
- **12.** This he prays we may know or understand, so as properly to number or appreciate the shortness of our days, that we may be wise.
- **13.** (Compare Psalm 13:2).

*let it repent* — a strong figure, as in Exodus 32:12, imploring a change in His dealings.

- **14.** *early* promptly.
- **15.** As have been our sorrows, so let our joys be great and long.
- **16.** *thy work* or, providential acts.
- *thy glory* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 8:5 45:3), the honor accruing from Thy work of mercy to us.
- **17.** *let the beauty* or sum of His gracious acts, in their harmony, be illustrated in us, and favor our enterprise.

#### 

David is the most probable author; and the pestilence, mentioned in Samuel 24:13-15, the most probable of any special occasion to which the Psalm may refer. The changes of person allowable in poetry are here frequently made.

- **1.** *dwelleth in the secret place* (\*\*Psalm 27:5 31:20) denotes nearness to God. Such as do so abide or lodge secure from assaults, and can well use the terms of trust in \*\*Psalm 91:2.
- **3.** *snares* ... [and] ... *noisome pestilence* literally, "plagues of mischiefs" (\*\*\*Psalm 5:9 52:7), are expressive figures for various evils.
- **4.** For the first figure compare Deuteronomy 32:11 Matthew 23:37.

**buckler** — literally, "surrounding" — that is, a kind of shield covering all over.

**5.** *terror* — or, what causes it (\*\*Proverbs 20:2).

by night — then aggravated.

*arrow* — that is, of enemies.

- **7, 8.** The security is more valuable, as being special, and, therefore, evidently of God; and while ten thousands of the wicked fall, the righteous are in such safety that they only see the calamity.
- **9-12.** This exemption from evil is the result of trust in God, who employs angels as ministering spirits (\*\*Hebrews 1:14).
- **13.** Even the fiercest, strongest, and most insidious animals may be trampled on with impunity.

**14-16.** God Himself speaks (compare \*\*Psalm 46:10 75:2,3). All the terms to express safety and peace indicate the most undoubting confidence (compare \*\*Psalm 18:2 20:1 22:5).

set his love — that of the most ardent kind.

**16.** show him — literally, "make him see" (\*\*\*Psalm 50:23 \*\*\*Luke 2:30).

#### PSALM 92:1-15.

A Psalm-song — (see on Psalm 30:1, title). The theme: God should be praised for His righteous judgments on the wicked and His care and defense of His people. Such a topic, at all times proper, is specially so for the reflections of the Sabbath day.

- **1.** sing ... name celebrate Thy perfections.
- **2.** in the morning, ... every night diligently and constantly (\*\*Psalm 42:8).

loving kindness — literally, "mercy."

*faithfulness* — in fulfilling promises (\*\*\*Psalm 89:14).

- **3.** In such a work all proper aid must be used.
- with a ... sound or, on Higgaion (see on Psalm 9:16), perhaps an instrument of that name, from its sound resembling the muttered sound of meditation, as expressed also by the word. This is joined with the harp.
- **4.** *thy work* that is of providence (\*\*Psalm 90:16,17).
- **5. great** ... **works** correspond to **deep** or **vast** thoughts (\*\*\*Psalm 40:5\*\*Romans 11:23).
- **6.** A brutish man knoweth not that is, God's works, so the Psalmist describes himself (\*\*Psalm 73:22) when amazed by the prosperity of the wicked, now understood and explained.
- **8.** This he does in part, by contrasting their ruin with God's exaltation and eternity.

**most high** — as occupying the highest place in heaven (\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:7 18:16).

- **9, 10.** A further contrast with the wicked, in the lot of the righteous, safety and triumph.
- **10.** horn ... exalt is to increase power ( Psalm 75:5).

anointed ... fresh — or, "new"

*oil* — (\*\*\*Psalm 23:5) a figure for refreshment (compare \*\*\*Luke 7:46). Such use of oil is still common in the East.

- **11.** see ... [and] ... hear my desire or, literally, "look on" my enemies and hear of the wicked (compare \*\*\*Psalm 27:11 54:7) that is, I shall be gratified by their fall.
- **12-14.** The vigorous growth, longevity, utility, fragrance, and beauty of these noble trees, set forth the life, character, and destiny of the pious;
- 15. and they thus declare God's glory as their strong and righteous ruler.

### **♥₱₱₽**PSALM 93:1-5.

This and the six following Psalms were applied by the Jews to the times of the Messiah. The theme is God's supremacy in creation and providence.

- **1.** God is described as a King entering on His reign, and, for robes of royalty, investing Himself with the glorious attributes of His nature. The result of His thus reigning is the durability of the world.
- **2-4.** His underived power exceeds the most sublime exhibitions of the most powerful objects in nature (\*\*\*\*Psalm 89:9).
- **5.** While His power inspires dread, His revealed will should secure our confidence (compare \*\*Psalm 19:7 25:10), and thus fear and love combined, producing all holy emotions, should distinguish the worship we offer in His house, both earthly and heavenly.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 94:1-23.

The writer, appealing to God in view of the oppression of enemies, rebukes them for their wickedness and folly, and encourages himself, in the confidence that God will punish evildoers, and favor His people.

- 1, 2. God's revenge is His judicial infliction of righteous punishment.
- show thyself (Compare Margin).
- **2.** *Lift up thyself* or, "Arise," both figures representing God as heretofore indifferent (compare \*\*Psalm 3:7 22:16,20).
- **3, 4.** In an earnest expostulation he expresses his desire that the insolent triumph of the wicked may be ended.
- **5, 6.** *thy people* [and] *thine heritage* are synonymous, the people being often called God's heritage. As justice to the weak is a sign of the best government, their oppression is a sign of the worst (\*\*Deuteronomy 10:18 \*\*\*Tsaiah 10:2).
- **7.** Their cruelty is only exceeded by their wicked and absurd presumption (\*\*\*Psalm 10:11 59:7).
- **8.** *ye brutish* (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 73:22 92:6).
- **9-11.** The evidence of God's providential government is found in His creative power and omniscience, which also assure us that He can punish the wicked in regard to all their vain purposes.
- **12, 13.** On the other hand He favors though He chastens, the pious, and will teach and preserve them till the prosperous wicked are overthrown.
- **14, 15.** This results from His abiding love ( Deuteronomy 32:15), which is further evinced by His restoring order in His government, whose right administration will be approved by the good.

- **16.** These questions imply that none other than God will help (\*\*\*\*Psalm 60:9),
- **17-19.** a fact fully confirmed by his past experience.

dwelt in silence — as in the grave (◆®™Psalm 31:17).

**19.** *my thoughts* — or, anxious cares.

**20.** *throne* — power, rulers.

*iniquity* [and] *mischief* — both denote evils done to others, as <sup>4992</sup>Psalm 94:21 explains.

22, 23. Yet he is safe in God's care.

*defense* — (⁴®®Psalm 59:9).

**rock of ... refuge** — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 9:9 18:2).

**23.** *bring* ... *iniquity* — (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 5:10 7:16).

in their ... wickedness — while they are engaged in evil doing.

## PSALM 95:1-11.

David (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 4:7) exhorts men to praise God for His greatness, and warns them, in God's words, against neglecting His service.

- **1.** The terms used to express the highest kind of joy.
- **rock** a firm basis, giving certainty of salvation (\*\*\*\*Psalm 62:7).
- **2.** *come* ... *presence* literally, "approach," or, meet Him (\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:13).
- **3.** *above* ... *gods* esteemed such by men, though really nothing (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 5:7 10:10-15).
- **4, 5.** The terms used describe the world in its whole extent, subject to God.
- **6.** *come* or, "enter," with solemn forms, as well as hearts.
- 7. This relation illustrates our entire dependence (compare \*\*\*Psalm 23:3 74:1). The last clause is united by Paul (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 3:7) to the following (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 81:8),
- **8-11.** warning against neglect; and this is sustained by citing the melancholy fate of their rebellious ancestors, whose provoking insolence is described by quoting the language of God's complaint (\*\*\*Numbers 14:11) of their conduct at *Meribah* and *Massah*, names given (\*\*\*\*Exodus 17:7) to commemorate their strife and contention with Him (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 78:18,41).
- **10.** *err in their heart* Their wanderings in the desert were but types of their innate ignorance and perverseness.
- *that they should not* literally, "if they," etc., part of the form of swearing (compare OHE) Numbers 14:30 OHE) Psalm 89:35).

#### PSALM 96:1-13.

The substance of this Psalm, and portions of the ninety-seventh, ninety-eighth, and hundredth, are found in Chronicles 16:7-36, which was used by David's directions in the dedication of the tabernacle on Mount Zion. The dispensation of the Messiah was typified by that event, involving, as it did, a more permanent seat of worship, and the introduction of additional and more spiritual services. Hence the language of these Psalms may be regarded as having a higher import than that pertinent to the occasion on which it was thus publicly used.

**1-3.** All nations are invited to unite in this most joyful praise.

**new song** — literally, "fresh," or new mercies (\*\*\*Psalm 33:3 40:3).

**2.** *show forth* — literally, "declare joyful tidings."

**salvation** — illustrates His glory in its wonders of love and mercy.

- **4, 5.** For He is not a local God, but of universal agency, while idols are nothing.
- **6.** *Honour and majesty* are His attendants, declared in His mighty works, while power and grace are specially seen in His spiritual relations to His people.
- **7-9.** *Give* or, "ascribe" (\*\*\*Psalm 29:1) due honor to Him, by acts of appointed and solemn worship in His house.
- **8.** *offering* of thanks.
- 9. beauty of holiness (\*\*PP salm 29:2).

**fear ... him** — (\*\*\*Psalm 2:11).

- **11-13.** For which reason the universe is invoked to unite in joy, and even inanimate nature (\*\*Romans 8:14-22) is poetically represented as capable of joining in the anthem of praise.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 97:1-13.

The writer celebrates the Lord's dominion over nations and nature, describes its effect on foes and friends, and exhorts and encourages the latter.

- **1, 2.** This dominion is a cause of joy, because, even though our minds are oppressed with terror before the throne of the King of kings (\*\*Exodus 19:16 \*\*Deuteronomy 5:22), we know it is based on righteous principles and judgments which are according to truth.
- **3-5.** The attending illustrations of God's awful justice on enemies (\*\*\*Psalm 83:14) are seen in the disclosures of His almighty power on the elements of nature (compare \*\*\*Psalm 46:2 77:17 \*\*\*\*Habakkuk 3:6, etc.).
- **6.** *heavens* or, their inhabitants (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 50:6), as opposed to "nations" in the latter clause (compare \*\*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 40:5 66:18).
- **7.** Idolaters are utterly put to shame, for if angels must worship Him, how much more those who worshipped them.
- all ye gods literally, "all ye angels" (\*\*\*Psalm 8:5 138:1 \*\*\*\*\*Hebrews 1:6,2:7). Paul quotes, not as a prophecy, but as language used in regard to the Lord Jehovah, who in the Old Testament *theophania* is the second person of the Godhead.
- **8, 9.** The exaltation of Zion's king is joy to the righteous and sorrow to the wicked.
- daughters of Judah (Compare \*Psalm 48:11).
- **9.** *above all gods* (\*\*\*Psalm 95:3).
- **10-12.** Let gratitude for the blessings of providence and grace incite saints (\*\*\*Psalm 4:3) to holy living. Spiritual blessings are in store, represented by light (\*\*\*\*Psalm 27:1) and gladness.

**11.** *sown* — to spring forth abundantly for such, who alone can and well may rejoice in the holy government of their sovereign Lord (compare Psalm 30:4 32:11).

### **♥♥♥**PSALM 98:1-9.

In view of the wonders of grace and righteousness displayed in God's salvation, the whole creation is invited to unite in praise.

**1.** *gotten* ... *victory* — literally, "made salvation," enabled Him to save His people.

right hand, and ... arm — denote power.

**holy arm** — or, "arm of holiness," the power of His united moral perfections (\*\*Psalm 22:3 32:11).

- **2.** *salvation* the result of His *righteousness* (\*\*\*Psalm 7:17 31:1), and both are publicly displayed.
- **3.** The union of *mercy* and *truth* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 57:3 85:10) secure the blessings of the promise (\*\*\*\*Genesis 12:3 18:18) to all the world (\*\*\*\*Tsaiah 52:10).
- **4-6.** make a loud noise or, "burst forth" ( Isaiah 14:7 44:23).

before ... King — hail Him as your sovereign; and while, with every aid to demonstrate zeal and joy, intelligent creatures are invited to praise, as in Psalm 96:11-13, inanimate nature is also summoned to honor Him who triumphs and rules in righteousness and equity.

## \*\*\*PSALM 99:1-9.

God's government is especially exercised in and for His Church, which should praise Him for His gracious dealings.

**1.** *sitteth ... cherubim* — (compare \*\*\*\* Samuel 4:4 \*\*\*\*\* Psalm 80:1).

*tremble* ... *be moved* — inspired with fear by His judgments on the wicked.

- **2.** great in Zion where He dwells (\*\*Psalm 9:11).
- 3. thy ... name perfections of justice, power, etc.

great and terrible name — producing dread (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 10:17), and to be praised by those over whom He is exalted (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 97:9).

it is holy — or, "He is holy" (\*\*\*Psalm 99:5,9 \*\*\*Isaiah 6:3).

**4, 5.** To His wise and righteous government all nations should render honor.

*king's ... judgment* — His power is combined with justice.

he is holy — (compare Psalm 22:3).

**6-8.** The experience of these servants of God is cited for encouragement.

among ... priests, among ... upon the Lord [and] He spake ... pillar — may be referred to all three (compare Exodus 18:19 Leviticus 8:15 Deuteronomy 5:5 Samuel 9:13).

7. cloudy pillar — the medium of divine intercourse (\*\*Exodus 33:9 Numbers 12:5). Obedience was united with worship. God answered. them as intercessors for the people, who, though forgiven, were yet chastened (\*\*Exodus 32:10,34).

Psalm 100:1-5.

As closing this series (see on \*\*Psalm 93:1), this Psalm is a general call on all the earth to render exalted praise to God, the creator, preserver, and benefactor of men.

- **1, 2.** With thankful praise, unite service as the subjects of a king (\*\*\*Psalm 2:11,12).
- **3.** To the obligations of a creature and subject is added that of a beneficiary (\*\*\*Psalm 95:7).
- **4.** Join joyfully in His public worship. The terms are, of course, figurative (compare \*\*\*Psalm 84:2 92:13 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 66:23).

**Enter** — or, "Come with solemnity" (\*\*\*Psalm 95:6).

**5.** The reason: God's eternal mercy and truth (\*\*\*Psalm 25:8 89:7).

### \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 101:1-8.

In this Psalm the profession of the principles of his domestic and political government testifies, as well as actions in accordance with it, David's appreciation of God's mercy to him, and His judgment on his enemies: and thus he sings or celebrates God's dealings.

- **2.** He avows his sincere purpose, by God's aid, to act uprightly (\*\*\*Psalm 18:30).
- 3. set ... eyes as an example to be approved and followed.

**no wicked thing** — literally, "word," plan or purpose of Belial (\*\*Psalm 41:8).

work of ... aside — apostates.

*not cleave to me* — I will not be implicated in it (compare \*\*\*Psalm 1:1-3).

- **4.** A froward heart or, "perverse heart" (\*\*\*Psalm 18:26). Such a temper I will not indulge, nor even know evil or wickedness.
- **5, 6.** The slanderers and haughty persons, so mischievous in society, I will disown; but —
- **6.** *Mine eyes* ... *upon* or, I will select reliable and honest men for my servants.
- 7. *not dwell* literally, "not sit," or tarry, or be established.
- 8. will early or, "diligently."

*city of the Lord* — or, "holy place" (\*\*\*Psalm 48:2), where wicked men shall not be tolerated.

#### \*\*PSALM 102:1-28.

A Prayer of the afflicted, etc. — The general terms seem to denote the propriety of regarding the Psalm as suitably expressive of the anxieties of any one of David's descendants, piously concerned for the welfare of the Church. It was probably David's composition, and, though specially suggested by some peculiar trials, descriptive of future times.

\*\*Overwhelmed\*\* — (compare \*\*OPP\*\* psalm 61:2). \*\*poureth out\*\* — pouring out the soul\*\* — (\*\*OPP\*\* psalm 62:8). \*\*complaint\*\* — (\*\*OPP\*\* psalm 55:2). The tone of complaint predominates, though in view of God's promises and abiding faithfulness, it is sometimes exchanged for that of confidence and hope.

- **1-3.** The terms used occur in Psalm 4:1 17:1,6 18:6 31:2,10 37:20.
- **4.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 121:6).
- so that I forget or, "have forgotten," that is, in my distress (\*\*\*\*Psalm 107:18), and hence strength fails.
- **5.** *voice* ... *groaning* effect put for cause, my agony emaciates me.
- **6, 7.** The figures express extreme loneliness.
- **8.** sworn against me or literally, "by me," wishing others as miserable as I am (\*\*Numbers 5:21).
- **9.** *ashes* a figure of grief, my bread; weeping or tears, my drink (\*\*\*\*Psalm 80:5).
- **10.** *lifted* ... *cast me down* or, "cast me away" as stubble by a whirlwind (<sup>2800</sup>Isaiah 64:6).
- **11.** *shadow ... declineth* soon to vanish in the darkness of night.
- **12.** Contrast with man's frailty (compare Psalm 90:1-7).
- thy remembrance that by which Thou art remembered, Thy promise.

13, 14. Hence it is here adduced.

for — or, "when."

*the set time*, etc. — the time promised, the indication of which is the interest felt for Zion by the people of God.

- **15-17.** God's favor to the Church will affect her persecutors with fear.
- **16.** When the Lord shall build or better, "Because the Lord hath built," etc., as a reason for the effect on others; for in thus acting and hearing the humble, He is most glorious.
- **18.** *people* ... *created* (compare \*Psalm 22:31), an organized body, as a Church.
- **19-22.** *For* or, "That," as introducing the statement of God's condescension. A summary of what shall be written.

to loose ... appointed — or, "deliver" them (\*\*Psalm 79:11).

- **21.** *To declare*, etc. or, that God's name may be celebrated in the assemblies of His Church, gathered from all nations (\*\*Zechariah 8:20-23), and devoted to His service.
- **23-28.** The writer, speaking for the Church, finds encouragement in the midst of all his distresses. God's eternal existence is a pledge of faithfulness to His promises.

*in the way* — of providence.

weakened — literally, "afflicted," and made fearful of a premature end, a figure of the apprehensions of the Church, lest God might not perform His promise, drawn from those of a person in view of the dangers of early death (compare \*\*Psalm 89:47). Paul (\*\*Thebrews 1:10) quotes \*\*Psalm 102:26-28 as addressed to Christ in His divine nature. The scope of the Psalm, as already seen, so far from opposing, favors this view, especially by the sentiments of \*\*Psalm 102:12-15 (compare \*\*Tsaiah 60:1). The association of the Messiah with a day of future glory to the Church was very intimate in the minds of Old Testament writers; and with correct views of His nature it is very consistent that He should be addressed as

the Lord and Head of His Church, who would bring about that glorious future on which they ever dwelt with fond delightful anticipations.

## \*\*\*PSALM 103:1-22.

A Psalm of joyous praise, in which the writer rises from a thankful acknowledgment of personal blessings to a lively celebration of God's gracious attributes, as not only intrinsically worthy of praise, but as specially suited to man's frailty. He concludes by invoking all creatures to unite in his song.

1. *Bless*, etc. — when God is the object, praise.

*my soul* — myself (\*\*\*Psalm 3:3 25:1), with allusion to the act, as one of intelligence.

all ... within me — ( Deuteronomy 6:5).

his holy name — (\*\*\*Psalm 5:11), His complete moral perfections.

- **2.** *forget not all* not any, none of His benefits.
- **3.** *diseases* as penal inflictions (\*\*Deuteronomy 29:22 \*\* Chronicles 21:19).
- **4.** redeemeth Cost is implied.

*destruction* — literally, "pit of corruption" (\*\*\*Psalm 16:10).

*crowneth* — or, "adorneth" (\*\*\*Psalm 65:11).

tender mercies — compassions (compare \*\*Psalm 25:6 40:11).

- **5.** By God's provision, the saint retains a youthful vigor like the eagles (\*\*Psalm 92:14; compare \*\*Isaiah 40:31).
- **6.** Literally, "righteousness and judgments," denoting various acts of God's government.
- 7. ways of providence, etc., as usual (\*\*PS\*\*Psalm 25:4 67:2).

acts — literally, "wonders" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:11 78:17).

**8-10.** God's benevolence implies no merit. He shows it to sinners, who also are chastened for a time (\*\*Exodus 34:6).

**keep** (anger) — in Leviticus 19:18, bear a grudge (anger)—in Schriffereniah 3:5,12).

- 11. *great* efficient.
- **12.** *removed* ... *from us* so as no longer to affect our relations to Him.
- **13.** *pitieth* literally, "has compassion on."
- **14. he** "who formed." Psalm 94:9.

knoweth our frame — literally, "our form."

we are dust — made of and tending to it (\*\*Genesis 2:7).

15, 16. So short and frail is life that a breath may destroy it.

it is gone — literally, "it is not."

**know it no more** — no more recognize him (\*\*\*\*Psalm 90:6 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 40:6-8).

- **17, 18.** For similar contrast compare \*\*\*Psalm 90:2-6 102:27,28.
- **18.** *such* ... *covenant* limits the general terms preceding.

*righteousness* — as usual (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:17 31:1).

- **19.** God's firm and universal dominion is a pledge that He will keep His promises (\*\*PPsalm 11:4 47:8).
- **20-22.** *do his commandments* ... *word* or, literally, "so as to hearken," etc., that is, their acts of obedience are prompt, so that they are ever ready to hear, and know, and follow implicitly His declared will (compare Deuteronomy 26:17 \*\* Luke 1:19).
- **21.** *ye his hosts* myriads, or armies, as corresponding to *angels* of *great power* (\*\*Psalm 103:20), denoting multitudes also.
- **22.** *all his works* creatures of every sort, everywhere.

## \*\*PSALM 104:1-35.

The Psalmist celebrates God's glory in His works of creation and providence, teaching the dependence of all living creatures; and contrasting the happiness of those who praise Him with the awful end of the wicked.

- **1.** God's essential glory, and also that displayed by His mighty works, afford ground for praise.
- **2.** *light* is a figurative representation of the glory of the invisible God (\*\*\*Matthew 17:2 \*\*\*\*\*1 Timothy 6:16). Its use in this connection may refer to the first work of creation (\*\*\*\*\*\*Genesis 1:3).
- stretchest out the heavens the visible heavens or sky which cover the earth as a curtain (2007 Isaiah 40:12).
- **3.** *in the waters* or, it may be "with"; using this fluid for the beams, or frames, of His residence accords with the figure of clouds for chariots, and wind as a means of conveyance.
- walketh or, "moveth" (compare Psalm 18:10,11 Mass 9:6).
- **4.** This is quoted by Paul (\*\*\*Hebrews 1:7) to denote the subordinate position of angels; that is, they are only messengers as other and material agencies.
- spirits literally, "winds."
- **flaming fire** (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 105:32) being here so called.
- **5.** The earth is firmly fixed by His power.
- 6-9. These verses rather describe the wonders of the flood than the creation (\*\*Genesis 7:19,20 \*\*\* Peter 3:5,6). God's method of arresting the flood and making its waters subside is poetically called a "rebuke" (\*\*\* Psalm 76:6 \*\*\* Isaiah 50:2), and the process of the flood's subsiding by undulations among the hills and valleys is vividly described.

- **10-13.** Once destructive, these waters are subjected to the service of God's creatures. In rain and dew from His chambers (compare \*\*Psalm 104:3), and fountains and streams, they give drink to thirsting animals and fertilize the soil. Trees thus nourished supply homes to singing birds, and the earth teems with the productions of God's wise agencies,
- 14, 15. so that men and beasts are abundantly provided with food.

*for the service* — literally, "for the culture," etc., by which he secures the results.

*oil* ... *shine* — literally, "makes his face to shine more than oil," that is, so cheers and invigorates him, that outwardly he appears better than if anointed.

strengtheneth ... heart — gives vigor to man (compare Judges 19:5).

- **16-19.** God's care of even wild animals and uncultivated parts of the earth.
- **20-23.** He provides and adapts to man's wants the appointed times and seasons.
- **24-26.** From a view of the earth thus full of God's blessings, the writer passes to the sea, which, in its immensity, and as a scene and means of man's activity in commerce, and the home of countless multitudes of creatures, also displays divine power and beneficence. The mention of
- **26.** *leviathan* (\*\*\*\*Job 40:20) heightens the estimate of the sea's greatness, and of His power who gives such a place for sport to one of His creatures.
- **27-30.** The entire dependence of this immense family on God is set forth. With Him, to kill or make alive is equally easy. To hide His face is to withdraw favor (\*\*Psalm 13:1). By His spirit, or breath, or mere word, He gives life. It is His constant providence which repairs the wastes of time and disease.
- **31-34.** While God could equally glorify His power in destruction, that He does it in preservation is of His rich goodness and mercy, so that we may well spend our lives in grateful praise, honoring to Him, and delightful to pious hearts (\*\*\*Posalm 147:1).

**35.** Those who refuse such a protector and withhold such a service mar the beauty of His works, and must perish from His presence.

**Praise ye the Lord** — The Psalm closes with an invocation of praise, the translation of a *Hebrew* phrase, which is used as an English word, "Hallelujah," and may have served the purpose of a chorus, as often in our psalmody, or to give fuller expression to the writer's emotions. It is peculiar to Psalms composed after the captivity, as "Selah" is to those of an earlier date.

## \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 105:1-45.

After an exhortation to praise God, addressed especially to the chosen people, the writer presents the special reason for praise, in a summary of their history from the calling of Abraham to their settlement in Canaan, and reminds them that their obedience was the end of all God's gracious dealings.

**1.** *call* ... *name* — (\*\*Psalm 79:6 \*\*Romans 10:13). Call on Him, according to His historically manifested glory. After the example of Abraham, who, as often as God acquired for Himself a name in guiding him, *called* in solemn worship upon the name of the Lord (\*\*Genesis 12:8,13:4).

among the people — or, "peoples" (\*\*\*Psalm 18:49).

deeds — or, "wonders" ("Psalm 103:7).

**3, 4.** Seeking God's favor is the only true mode of getting true happiness, and *His strength* (\*\*Psalm 105:4) is the only true source of protection (compare \*\*Psalm 32:11 40:16).

*Glory ... name* — boast in His perfections. The world glories in its horses and chariots against the Church of God lying in the dust; but *our* hope is in the name, that is, the power and love of God to His people, manifested in past deliverances.

- **5, 6. judgments ... mouth** His judicial decisions for the good and against the wicked.
- **6.** *chosen* rather qualifies "children" than "Jacob," as a plural.
- **7.** Rather, "He, Jehovah, is our God." His title, "JEHOVAH," implies that He, the unchangeable, self-existing Being, makes things to be, that is, fulfils His promises, and therefore will not forsake His people. Though specially of His people, He is God over all.

**8-11.** The covenant was often ratified.

word — answering to "covenant" (\*\*\*Psalm 105:9) in the parallel clause, namely, the word of promise, which, according to \*\*\*Psalm 105:10, He set forth for an inviolable law.

commanded — or, "ordained" (\*\*\* Psalm 68:28).

to a thousand generations — perpetually. A verbal allusion to Deuteronomy 7:9 (compare Exodus 20:6).

- 9. Which covenant or, "Word" (\*PATR Psalm 105:8).
- **10, 11.** Alluding to God's promise to Jacob (Genesis 28:13). Out of the whole storehouse of the promises of God, only one is prominently brought forward, namely, that concerning the possession of Canaan (GREPSalm 105:11). Everything revolves around this. The wonders and judgments have all for their ultimate design the fulfillment of this promise.
- **12-15.** *few* ... *in number* alluding to Jacob's words (<sup>coor</sup>Genesis 34:30), "I being *few in number*."

**yea**, **very few** — literally, "as a few," that is, like fewness itself (compare Isaiah 1:9).

**strangers** — sojourners in the land of their future inheritance, as in a strange country (\*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:9).

- **13.** *from one nation to another* and so from danger to danger; now in Egypt, now in the wilderness, and lastly in Canaan. Though a few strangers, wandering among various nations, God protected them.
- **14.** *reproved kings* Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech of Gerar (\*\*\*Genesis 12:17 20:3).
- **15.** *Touch not* referring to Genesis 26:11, where Abimelech says of Isaac, "He that *toucheth* this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

*mine anointed* — as specially consecrated to Me (\*\*Psalm 2:2). The patriarch was the prophet, priest, and king of his family.

*my prophets* — in a similar sense, compare <sup>dang</sup>Genesis 20:7. The "anointed" are those vessels of God, consecrated to His service, "in whom

(as Pharaoh said of Joseph, Genesis 41:38) the Spirit of God is [Hengstenberg].

**16.** God ordered the famine. God

*called for a famine* — as if it were a *servant*, ready to come at God's bidding. Compare the centurion's words, as to disease being God's servant (\*\*Matthew 8:8,9).

*upon the land* — namely, Canaan ( Genesis 41:54).

**staff of bread** — what supports life (\*\*\*\*Leviticus 26:26 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 104:15 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 3:1).

- **17-21.** Joseph was sent of God ( Genesis 45:5).
- **18.** hurt with fetters (\*Genesis 40:3).

was laid in iron — literally, "his soul" (see on Psalm 16:10), or, "he came into iron," or, he was bound to his grief (compare Psalm 3:2 11:1). The "soul" is put for the whole person, because the soul of the captive suffers still more than the body. Joseph is referred to as being an appropriate type of those "bound in affliction and iron" (Psalm 107:10).

**19.** *his word came* — His prophecy (Genesis 41:11-20) to the officers came to pass, or was fulfilled (GING) Judges 13:12,17 GENESIS Samuel 9:6, explain the form of speech).

the word of the Lord — or, "saying," or "decree of the Lord."

*tried him* — or, "proved him," by the afflictions it appointed him to endure before his elevation (compare "Genesis 41:40-43).

**22.** *To bind* — Not literally *bind;* but *exercise over them absolute control,* as the parallel in the second clause shows; also Genesis 41:40,44, in which not literal *fettering,* but *commanding obedience,* is spoken of. It refers to Salm 105:18. The soul that was once *bound* itself now *binds* others, even princes. The same moral *binding* is assigned to the saints (Spalm 149:8).

**teach ... senators wisdom** — the ground of his exaltation by Pharaoh was his *wisdom* (\*\*Genesis 41:39); namely, in state policy, and ordering well a kingdom.

23-25. *Israel* ... *and Jacob* — that is, Jacob himself is meant, as <sup>1962</sup> Psalm 105:24 speaks of "his people." Still, he came with his whole house (<sup>1966</sup> Genesis 46:6,7).

*sojourned* — (<sup>≪</sup>Genesis 47:4).

*land of Ham* — or, Egypt (<sup>♣</sup>Psalm 78:51).

- **25.** turned their heart God controls men's free acts (compare Samuel 10:9). "When Saul had turned his back to go from (God's prophet) Samuel, God turned (Margin) him another heart" (see Exodus 1:8, etc.). Whatever evil the wicked man plots against God's people, God holds bound even his heart, so as not to lay a single plan except what God permits. Thus Isaiah (Saiah 43:17) says it was God who brought forth the army of Pharaoh to pursue Israel to their own destruction (Sexotus 4:21 7:3).
- **26.** *Moses* ... *chosen* both what they were by divine choice (\*\*\*\*Psalm 78:70).
- **27.** *signs* literally, "words of signs," or rather, as "words" in *Hebrew* means "things," "things of His signs," that is, His marvellous tokens of power (\*\*\*Psalm 145:5, *Margin*). Compare the same Hebraism (\*\*\*\*Psalm 65:3, *Margin*).
- **28-36.** The ninth plague is made prominent as peculiarly wonderful.

they rebelled not — Moses and Aaron promptly obeyed God (\*\*\*Hebrews 11:27); (compare \*\*Exodus 7:1-11:10 and \*\*Psalm 78:44-51, with which this summary substantially agrees). Or, rather, the "darkness" here is figurative (\*\*Exodus 10:22,23) being only *alluded* to as the symbol of God's wrath which overhung Egypt as a dark cloud during all the plagues. Hence, it is placed first, out of the historical order. Thus, "They rebelled not (that is, no longer) against His word," refers to *the Egyptians*. Whenever God sent a

plague on them, they were ready to let Israel go, though refusing when the plague ceased.

*his word* — His command to let Israel go [HENGSTENBERG]. Of the ten plagues, only eight are mentioned, the fifth, the murrain of beasts, and the sixth, the boils, being omitted.

- **29-31.** He deprived them of their favorite "fish," and gave them instead, (\*\*\*Psalm 105:30) out of the water, loathsome "frogs," and (\*\*\*Psalm 105:31) upon their land tormenting "flies" (the dog-fly, according to Maurer) and "lice" (gnats, according to Hengstenberg).
- **32.** gave them referring to Eviticus 26:4. "I give you rain in due season." His "gift" to Israel's foes is one of a very different kind from that bestowed on His people.

**hail for rain** — instead of fertilizing showers, hail destructive to trees. This forms the transition to the vegetable kingdom. The locusts in Psalm 105:34 similarly are destructive to plants.

- **33.** *their coasts* all their land (\*\*\*Psalm 78:54).
- **34.** *caterpillars* literally, "the lickers up," devouring insects; probably the hairy-winged locust.
- **36.** *the chief* literally, "the firstlings." The ascending climax passes from the food of man to man himself. The language here is quoted from 78:51.
- **37.** with silver and gold presented them by the Egyptians, as an acknowledgment due for their labors in their bondage (compare Exodus 12:35).
- one feeble person or, "stumbler," unfit for the line of march. Compare "harnessed," that is, accoutred and marshalled as an army on march (\*\*Exodus 13:18; \*\*Isaiah 5:27).
- **38.** (Compare Exodus 12:33 Deuteronomy 11:25).
- **39.** *covering* in sense of protection (compare Exodus 13:21 Numbers 10:34). In the burning sands of the desert the cloud protected the congregation from the heat of the sun; an emblem of God's protecting

favor of His people, as interpreted by Isaiah (\*\*\*Tsaiah 4:5,6; compare \*\*Numbers 9:16).

#### **42-45.** The reasons for these dealings:

- (1) God's faithfulness to His covenant, "His holy promise" of Canaan, is the fountain whence flowed so many acts of marvellous kindness to His people (compare \*Psalm 105:8,11). Exodus 2:24 is the fundamental passage [Hengstenberg].
- (2) That they might be obedient. The observance of God's commands by Abraham was the object of the covenant with him (\*\*Genesis 18:19), as it was also the object of the covenant with Israel, that they might observe God's statutes.

**remembered ... and Abraham** — or, "remembered His holy word (that is, covenant confirmed) with Abraham."

**44.** *inherited the labor* — that is, the fruits of their labor; their corn and vineyards (4014)Joshua 21:43-45).

#### \*\*\*PSALM 106:1-48.

This Psalm gives a detailed confession of the sins of Israel in all periods of their history, with special reference to the terms of the covenant as intimated (\*\*Psalm 105:45). It is introduced by praise to God for the wonders of His mercy, and concluded by a supplication for His favor to His afflicted people, and a doxology.

- **1.** *Praise*, etc. (See on Psalm 104:35), begins and ends the Psalm, intimating the obligations of praise, however we sin and suffer Chronicles 16:34-36 is the source from which the beginning and end of this Psalm are derived.
- **2.** His acts exceed our comprehension, as His praise our powers of expression (\*\*Romans 11:33). Their unutterable greatness is not to keep us back, but to urge us the more to try to praise Him as best we can (\*\*\*Psalm 40:5 71:15).
- **3.** The blessing is limited to those whose principles and acts are right. How "blessed" Israel would be now, if he had "observed God's statutes" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 105:45).
- **4, 5.** In view of the desert of sins to be confessed, the writer invokes God's covenant mercy to himself and the Church, in whose welfare he rejoices. The speaker, *me*, *I*, is not the Psalmist himself, but the people, the present generation (compare \*\*PYOP\*Psalm 106:6).

visit — (Compare Psalm 8:4).

**5.** see the good — participate in it (\*\*\*Psalm 37:13).

**thy chosen** — namely, Israel, God's elect (\*\*\*Isaiah 43:20 45:4). As God seems to have *forgotten* them, they pray that He would "remember" them with the favor which *belongs* to His own people, and which once they had enjoyed.

thine inheritance — (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 9:29 32:9).

**6.** Compare AINST 1 Kings 8:47 Daniel 9:5, where the same three verbs occur in the same order and connection, the original of the two later passages being the first one, the prayer of Solomon in dedicating the temple.

**sinned** ... **fathers** — like them, and so partaking of their guilt. The terms denote a rising gradation of sinning (compare \*\*\* Psalm 1:1).

with our fathers — we and they together forming one mass of corruption.

**7-12.** Special confession. Their rebellion at the sea ( <sup>QUAL</sup>Exodus 14:11) was because they had not remembered nor understood God's miracles on their behalf. That God saved them in their unbelief was of His mere mercy, and for His own glory.

the sea ... the Red Sea — the very words in which Moses' song celebrated the scene of Israel's deliverance (\*Exodus 15:4). Israel began to rebel against God at the very moment and scene of its deliverance by God!

- 8. for his name's sake (\*\*Ezekiel 20:14).
- **9.** *rebuked* (\*\*Psalm 104:7).

as through the wilderness — (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 63:11-14).

- **12.** *believed* ... *his words* This is said not to praise the Israelites, but God, who constrained even so unbelieving a people momentarily to "believe" while in immediate view of His wonders, a faith which they immediately afterwards lost (\*PYS) Psalm 106:13 \*\*Exodus 14:31 15:1).
- **13-15.** The faith induced by God's display of power in their behalf was short lived, and their new rebellion and temptation was visited by God with fresh punishment, inflicted by leaving them to the result of their own gratified appetites, and sending on them spiritual poverty (\*\*Numbers 11:18).

**They soon forgat** — literally, "They hasted, they forgat" (compare Exodus 32:8). "They have turned aside *quickly* (or, *hastily*) out of the way." The haste of our desires is such that we can scarcely allow God one

day. Unless He immediately answers our call, instantly then arise impatience, and at length despair.

his works — (\*\*Deuteronomy 11:3,4 \*\*Daniel 9:14).

*his counsel* — They waited not for the development of God's counsel, or *plan for their deliverance*, at His own time, and in His own way.

- **14.** Literally, "lusted a lust" (quoted from Numbers 11:4, *Margin*). Previously, there had been impatience as to *necessaries* of life; here it is *lusting* (Psalm 78:18).
- **15.** but sent leanness rather, "and sent," that is, and thus, even in doing so, the punishment was inflicted at the very time their request was granted. So \*\*\*Psalm 78:30, "While their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them."
- the animal soul, which craves for food (\*\*\*Numbers 11:6 \*\*\*\*Psalm 107:18). This soul got its wish, and with it and in it its own punishment. The place was therefore called *Kibroth-hattaavah* ("the graves of lust," Numbers 11:34) because there they buried the people who had lusted. Animal desires when gratified mostly give only a hungry craving for more (\*\*\*\*Deremiah 2:13).
- **16-18.** All the congregation took part with Dathan, Korah, etc., and their accomplices (\*\*Will\*Numbers 16:41).

**Aaron the saint** — literally, "the holy one," as consecrated priest; not a moral attribute, but one designating his office as *holy* to the Lord. The rebellion was followed by a double punishment:

- (1) of the *non-Levitical* rebels, the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, etc. (\*\*Deuteronomy 11:6 \*\*Numbers 26:10); these were swallowed up by the earth.
- **17.** *covered* "closed upon them" ("Numbers 16:33).
  - (2) Of the *Levitical* rebels, with Korah at their head (\*\*Numbers 16:35 26:10); these had *sinned* by fire, and were punished by fire, as Aaron's (being high priest) sons had been (\*\*\*Eviticus 10:2\*\*\*Numbers 16:1-35).

**19-23.** From indirect setting God at naught, they pass to direct.

*made* — though prohibited in Exodus 20:4,5 to *make a likeness*, even of the true God.

calf — called so in contempt. They would have made an ox or bull, but their idol turned out but a *calf;* an imitation of the divine symbols, the cherubim; or of the sacred bull of Egyptian idolatry. The idolatry was more sinful in view of their recent experience of God's power in Egypt and His wonders at Sinai (Exodus 32:1-6). Though intending to worship Jehovah under the symbol of the calf, yet as this was incompatible with His nature (Exodus 4:15-17), they in reality gave up Him, and so were given up by Him. Instead of the Lord of heaven, they had as their glory the image of an ox that does nothing but eat grass.

**23.** *he said* — namely, to Moses (\*\*Deuteronomy 9:13). With God, *saying* is as certain as *doing;* but His purpose, while full of wrath against sin, takes into account the mediation of Him of whom Moses was the type (\*\*Exodus 32:11-14\*\*Deuteronomy 9:18,19).

Moses his chosen — that is, to be His servant (compare \*\*\*Psalm 105:26).

in the breach — as a warrior covers with his body the broken part of a wall or fortress besieged, a perilous place (\*\*Ezekiel 13:5 22:30).

to turn away — or, "prevent"

his wrath — (\*\*\*\*Numbers 25:11 \*\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 78:38).

**24-27.** The sin of refusing to invade Canaan, "the pleasant land" (\*\*\*Deremiah 3:19 \*\*\*Ezekiel 20:6 \*\*\*Daniel 8:9), "the land of beauty," was punished by the destruction of that generation (\*\*\*Numbers 14:28), and the threat of dispersion (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:25 28:32) afterwards made to their posterity, and fulfilled in the great calamities now bewailed, may have also been then added.

despised — (\*\*Numbers 14:31).

believed not his word — by which He promised He would give them the land; but rather the word of the faithless spies (compare \*\*\* Psalm 78:22).

- **26.** *lifted up his hand* or, "swore," the usual form of swearing (compare Numbers 14:30, *Margin*).
- **27.** *To overthrow* literally, "To make them fall"; alluding to the words (\*\*Numbers 14:39).
- among ... nations ... lands The "wilderness" was not more destructive to the fathers ("Psalm 106:26) than residence among the heathen ("nations") shall be to the children "Eviticus 26:33,38 is here, before the Psalmist's mind, the determination against the "seed" when rebellious, being not expressed in "Numbers 14:31-33, but implied in the determination against the fathers.
- **28-30.** sacrifices of the dead that is of lifeless idols, contrasted with "the living God" (\*\*\*\* Psalm 115:4-7 \*\*\*\* Psalm 115:4-7 \*\*\*\* Corinthians 12:2). On the words,
- joined themselves to Baal-peor see \*\* Numbers 25:2,3,5.
- **Baal-peor** that is the possessor of Peor, the mountain on which *Chemosh*, the idol of Moab, was worshipped, and at the foot of which Israel at the time lay encamped (\*\*Numbers 23:28). The name never occurs except in connection with that locality and that circumstance.
- **29.** *provoked* excited grief and indignation (\*\*Psalm 6:7 78:58).
- **30.** *stood* as Aaron "stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed" (\*\*Numbers 16:48).
- executed judgment literally, "judged," including sentence and act.
- **31.** *counted* ... *righteousness* "a just and rewardable action."
- for or, "unto," to the procuring of righteousness, as in Romans 4:2 10:4. Here it was a particular act, not faith, nor its object Christ; and what was procured was not justifying righteousness, or what was to be rewarded with eternal life; for no one act of man's can be taken for complete obedience. But it was that which God approved and rewarded with a perpetual priesthood to him and his descendants (Numbers 25:13 Chronicles 6:4, etc.).
- **32, 33.** (Compare Numbers 20:3-12 Deuteronomy 1:37 3:26).

- went ill with literally, "was bad for"
- *Moses* His conduct, though under great provocation, was punished by exclusion from Canaan.
- **34-39.** They not only failed to expel the heathen, as God
- **commanded** (\*\*Exodus 23:32,33), literally, "said (they should)," but conformed to their idolatries (\*\*Psalm 106:36) and thus became spiritual adulterers (\*\*\*Psalm 73:27).
- **37.** *unto devils Septuagint*, "demons" (compare "In Corinthians 10:20), or "evil spirits."
- **38.** *polluted with blood* literally, "blood," or "murder" (\*\*\*Psalm 5:6 26:9).
- **40-43.** Those nations first seduced and then oppressed them (compare Judges 1:34 2:14 3:30). Their apostasies ungratefully repaid God's many mercies till He finally abandoned them to punishment (ESS).
- **44-46.** If, as is probable, this Psalm was written at the time of the captivity, the writer now intimates the tokens of God's returning favor.
- **45.** *repented* (compare \*\*Psalm 90:13).
- **46.** *made* ... *pitied* (\*\*\*\*Daniel 1:9). These tokens encourage the prayer and the promise of praise (\*\*\*\*Psalm 30:4), which is well closed by a doxology.

## **№** 107:1-43.

Although the general theme of this Psalm may have been suggested by God's special favor to the Israelites in their restoration from captivity, it must be regarded as an instructive celebration of God's praise for His merciful providence to all men in their various emergencies. Of these several are given — captivity and bondage, wanderings by land and sea, and famine; some as evidences of God's displeasure, and all the deliverances as evidence of His goodness and mercy to them who humbly seek Him.

- **1, 2.** This call for thankful praise is the burden or chorus (compare Psalm 107:8,15, etc.).
- 2. redeemed of the Lord (compare \*\* Isaiah 35:9,10).

say — that is, that His mercy, etc.

hand of — or, "power of enemy."

**3.** *gathered* — alluding to the dispersion of captives throughout the Babylonian empire.

**from the south** — literally, "the sea," or, Red Sea (\*\*Psalm 114:3), which was on the south.

**4-7.** A graphic picture is given of the sufferings of those who from distant lands returned to Jerusalem; or,

*city of habitation* — may mean the land of Palestine.

- **5.** *fainted* was overwhelmed (\*\*\*\*Psalm 61:3 77:3).
- **8, 9.** To the chorus is added, as a reason for praise, an example of the extreme distress from which they had been delivered extreme hunger, the severest privation of a journey in the desert.

**10-16.** Their sufferings were for their rebellion against (Psalm 105:28) the words, or purposes, or promises, of God for their benefit. When humbled they cry to God, who delivers them from bondage, described as a dark dungeon with doors and bars of metal, in which they are bound in iron — that is, chains and fetters.

**shadow of death** — darkness with danger (\*\*\*Psalm 23:4).

- **16.** broken literally, "shivered" ( Staiah 45:2).
- **17-22.** Whether the same or not, this exigency illustrates that dispensation of God according to which sin brings its own punishment.

are afflicted — literally "afflict themselves," that is, bring on disease, denoted by loathing of food, and drawing near unto the gates of death (\*\*Psalm 107:18).

**18.** *near unto* — literally, "even to"

gates — or, "domains" (\*\*\*Psalm 9:13).

**20.** *sent his word* — that is, put forth His power.

**their destructions** — that is, that which threatened them. To the chorus is added the mode of giving thanks, by a sacrifice and joyful singing (\*\*Psalm 50:14).

**23-32.** Here are set forth the perils of seafaring, futility of man's, and efficiency of God's, help.

go ... sea — alluding to the elevation of the land at the coast.

- **24.** *These see* ... *deep* illustrated both by the storm He raises and the calm He makes with a word (\*\*\*\*Psalm 33:9).
- **25.** waves thereof literally, "His waves" (God's, \*Psalm 42:7).
- **27.** *are* ... *end* literally, "all their wisdom swallows up itself," destroys itself by vain and contradictory devices, such as despair induces.
- **29-32.** *He maketh* ... *calm* or, "to stand to stillness," or "in quiet." Instead of acts of temple-worship, those of the synagogue are here described, where the people with the

*assembly* — or session of elders, convened for reading, singing, prayer, and teaching.

- **33-41.** He turneth rivers into a wilderness, etc. God's providence is illustriously displayed in His influence on two great elements of human prosperity, the earth's productiveness and the powers of government. He punishes the wicked by destroying the sources of fertility, or, in mercy, gives fruitfulness to deserts, which become the homes of a busy and successful agricultural population. By a permitted misrule and tyranny, this scene of prosperity is changed to one of adversity. He rules rulers, setting up one and putting down another.
- **40.** wander ... wilderness reduced to misery (\*\*\*\*Job 12:24).
- **42, 43.** In this providential government, good men will rejoice, and the cavils of the wicked will be stopped (\*\*\*\*Isaiah 52:15), and all who take right views will appreciate God's unfailing mercy and unbounded love.

### \*\*\*\*PSALM 108:1-13.

This Psalm is composed of Psalm 108:1-5 of Psalm 57:7-11; and Psalm 108:6-12 of Psalm 60:5-12. The varieties are verbal and trivial, except that in Psalm 108:9, "over Philistia will I triumph," differs from Psalm 60:8, the interpretation of which it confirms. Its altogether triumphant tone may intimate that it was prepared by David, omitting the plaintive portions of the other Psalms, as commemorative of God's favor in the victories of His people.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 109:1-31.

The writer complains of his virulent enemies, on whom he imprecates God's righteous punishment, and to a prayer for a divine interposition in his behalf appends the expression of his confidence and a promise of his praises. This Psalm is remarkable for the number and severity of its imprecations. Its evident typical character (compare Psalm 109:8) justifies the explanation of these already given, that as the language of David respecting his own enemies, or those of Christ, it has respect not to the penitent, but to the impenitent and implacable foes of good men, and of God and His cause, whose inevitable fate is thus indicated by inspired authority.

- **1.** God of my praise its object, thus recognizing God as a certain helper. Be not silent (compare \*\*Psalm 17:13 28:1).
- **2.** For the mouth ... opened or, "They have opened a wicked mouth" against me literally, "with me," that is, Their intercourse is living, or, they slander me to my face (\*\*\*Matthew 26:59).
- **3.** (Compare Psalm 35:7 69:4).
- **4, 5.** They return evil for good (compare Psalm 27:12 Proverbs 17:13).

*I give myself unto prayer* — or literally, "I (am) prayer," or, "as for me, prayer," that is, it is my resource for comfort in distress.

- **6.** over him one of his enemies prominent in malignity (\*\*\*Psalm 55:12).
- **let Satan stand** as an accuser, whose place was the right hand of the accused (\*\*\*Zechariah 3:1,2).
- **7.** The condemnation is aggravated when prayer for relief is treated as a sin.

- **8.** The opposite blessing is long life (\*\*Psalm 91:16 \*\*Proverbs 3:2). The last clause is quoted as to Judas by Peter (\*\*Acts 1:20).
- **office** literally, "charge," *Septuagint*, and Peter, "oversight" [ Peter 5:2].
- **9, 10.** Let his family share the punishment, his children be as wandering beggars to prowl in their desolate homes, a greedy and relentless creditor grasp his substance, his labor, or the fruit of it, enure to strangers and not his heirs, and his unprotected, fatherless children fall in want, so that his posterity shall utterly fail.
- **13.** *posterity* literally, "end," as in "Psalm 37:38, or, what comes after; that is, reward, or success, or its expectation, of which posterity was to a Jew a prominent part.
- **14, 15.** Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered, etc. Added to the terrible overthrow following his own sin, let there be the imputation of his parents' guilt, that it may now come before God, for His meting out its full consequences, in cutting off the memory of them (that is, the parents) from the earth (\*\*PSBEP\*) salm 34:16).
- **16.** Let God remember guilt, because he (the wicked) did not remember mercy.

**poor and needy ... broken in heart** — that is, pious sufferer (\*\*\*\*Psalm 34:18 35:10 40:17).

- **17-19.** Let his loved sin, cursing, come upon him in punishment (\*\*\*Psalm 35:8), thoroughly fill him as water and oil, permeating to every part of his system (compare \*\*Numbers 5:22-27), and become a garment and a girdle for a perpetual dress.
- **20.** Let this ... reward or, "wages," pay for labor, the fruit of the enemy's wickedness.

from the Lord — as His judicial act.

**21, 22.** *do* ... *for me* — that is, kindness.

wounded — literally, "pierced" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 69:16,29).

- 23. like the shadow (Compare Psalm 102:11).
- tossed up and down or, "driven" (\*\*Exodus 10:19).
- **24**, **25**. Taunts and reproaches aggravate his afflicted and feeble state (\*\*\*Psalm 22:6,7).
- **26, 27.** Let my deliverance glorify Thee (compare \*\*Psalm 59:13).
- **28-31.** In confidence that God's blessing would come on him, and confusion and shame on his enemies (\*\*\*Psalm 73:13), he ceases to regard their curses, and anticipates a season of joyful and public thanksgiving; for God is near to protect (\*\*\*Psalm 16:8,34:6) the poor from all unrighteous judges who may condemn him.

#### PSALM 110:1-7.

The explicit application of this Psalm to our Savior, by Him (\*\*Matthew 22:42-45) and by the apostles (\*\*Acts 2:34 \*\*\*Contains 15:25 \*\*\*Mebrews 1:13), and their frequent reference to its language and purport (\*\*Dephesians 1:20-22 \*\*\*Philippians 2:9-11 \*\*\*Mebrews 10:12,13), leave no doubt of its purely prophetic character. Not only was there nothing in the position or character, personal or official, of David or any other descendant, to justify a reference to either, but utter severance from the royal office of all priestly functions (so clearly assigned the subject of this Psalm) positively forbids such a reference. The Psalm celebrates the exaltation of Christ to the throne of an eternal and increasing kingdom, and a perpetual priesthood (\*\*\*Zechariah 6:13), involving the subjugation of His enemies and the multiplication of His subjects, and rendered infallibly certain by the word and oath of Almighty God.

**1.** *The Lord said* — literally, "A saying of the Lord," (compare Salm 36:1), a formula, used in prophetic or other solemn or express declarations.

my Lord — That the Jews understood this term to denote the Messiah their traditions show, and Christ's mode of arguing on such an assumption (\*\*Matthew 22:44) also proves.

Sit ... at my right hand — not only a mark of honor (\*\*100) Kings 2:19), but also implied participation of power (\*\*100) Psalm 45:9 \*\*100) Mark 16:19 \*\*100) Ephesians 1:20).

**Sit** — as a king (\*\*Psalm 29:10), though the position rather than posture is intimated (compare \*\*\*Acts 7:55,56).

until I make, etc. — The dominion of Christ over His enemies, as commissioned by God, and entrusted with all power (\*\*Matthew 28:18) for their subjugation, will assuredly be established (\*\*\*I Corinthians 15:24-28). This is neither His government as God, nor that which, as the

incarnate Savior, He exercises over His people, of whom He will ever be Head.

*thine enemies thy footstool* — an expression taken from the custom of Eastern conquerors (compare \*\* Joshua 10:24 \*\* Judges 1:7) to signify a complete subjection.

**2.** the rod of thy strength — the rod of correction (\*\*\*Isaiah 9:4 10:15 \*\*\*Isaiah 48:12), by which Thy strength will be known. This is His Word of truth (\*\*\*Isaiah 2:3 11:4), converting some and confounding others (compare \*\*\*TRESTANDING TRESTANDING 2:8).

out of Zion — or, the Church, in which God dwells by His Spirit, as once by a visible symbol in the tabernacle on Zion (compare \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 2:6).

*rule thou*, etc. — over enemies now conquered.

in the midst — once set upon, as by ferocious beasts (\*\*\*Psalm 22:16), now humbly, though reluctantly, confessed as Lord (\*\*\*Philippians 2:10,11).

**3.** Thy people ... willing — literally, "Thy people (are) free will offerings"; for such is the proper rendering of the word "willing," which is a plural noun, and not an adjective (compare Exodus 25:2 Psalm 54:6), also a similar form (UND Judges 5:2-9).

in the day of thy power — Thy people freely offer themselves (\*\*\*Romans 12:1) in Thy service, enlisting under Thy banner.

in the beauties of holiness — either as in \*\*Psalm 29:2, the loveliness of a spiritual worship, of which the temple service, in all its material splendors, was but a type; or more probably, the appearance of the worshippers, who, in this spiritual kingdom, are a nation of kings and priests (\*\*\*P1 Peter 2:9 \*\*\*Revelation 1:5), attending this Priest and King, clothed in those eminent graces which the beautiful vestments of the Aaronic priests (\*\*\*P1 Leviticus 16:4) typified. The last very obscure clause —

from the womb ... youth — may, according to this view, be thus explained: The word "youth" denotes a period of life distinguished for strength and activity (compare \*\*DEcclesiastes 11:9) — the "dew" is a constant emblem of whatever is refreshing and strengthening (\*\*Proverbs 19:12 \*\*\*Hosea

- 14:5). The Messiah, then, as leading His people, is represented as continually in the vigor of youth, refreshed and strengthened by the early dew of God's grace and Spirit. Thus the phrase corresponds as a member of a parallelism with "the day of thy power" in the first clause. "In the beauties of holiness" belongs to this latter clause, corresponding to "Thy people" in the first, and the colon after "morning" is omitted. Others prefer: Thy youth, or youthful vigor, or body, shall be constantly refreshed by successive accessions of people as dew from the early morning; and this accords with the New Testament idea that the Church is Christ's body (compare "Micah 5:7).
- **4.** The perpetuity of the priesthood, here asserted on God's oath, corresponds with that of the kingly office just explained.
- after the order (\*\*\*Hebrews 7:15) after the similitude of Melchisedek, is fully expounded by Paul, to denote not only perpetuity, appointment of God, and a royal priesthood, but also the absence of priestly descent and succession, and superiority to the Aaronic order.
- **5.** at thy right hand as Psalm 109:31, upholding and aiding, which is not inconsistent with Psalm 110:1, where the figure denotes participation of power, for here He is presented in another aspect, as a warrior going against enemies, and sustained by God.

strike through — smite or crush.

**kings** — not common men, but their rulers, and so all under them (\*\*\*Psalm 2:2,10).

**6.** The person is again changed. The Messiah's conquests are described, though His work and God's are the same. As after a battle, whose field is strewn with corpses, the conqueror ascends the seat of empire, so shall He "judge," or "rule," among many nations, and subdue

**the head** — or (as used collectively for "many") "the heads," *over many lands*.

wound — literally, "smite," or "crush" (compare \*\*Psalm 110:5).

**7.** As a conqueror, "faint, yet pursuing" (\*\*\*Judges 8:4), He shall be refreshed by *the brook in the way*, and pursue to completion His divine and glorious triumphs.

#### **♥BIO**PSALM 111:1-10.

The Psalmist celebrates God's gracious dealings with His people, of which a summary statement is given.

**1.** *Praise ye the Lord* — or, *Hallelujah* (\*\*Psalm 104:35). This seems to serve as a title to those of the later Psalms, which, like this, set forth God's gracious government and its blessed fruits. This praise claims the

whole heart — (\*\*\*Psalm 86:12), and is rendered publicly.

*upright* — a title of the true Israel (\*\*\*Psalm 32:11).

2. His works — that is, of providence and grace are

**sought** — or, carefully studied, by all desiring to know them.

- **3, 4.** *honorable and glorious* literally, "honor and majesty," which illustrate His glorious perfections.
- **righteousness** (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 7:17 31:1), which He has made memorable by wonders of love and mercy, in supplying the wants of His people according to covenant engagements.
- **6-8.** His power was shown especially in giving them the promised land, and His faithfulness and justice thus displayed are, like His precepts, reliable and of permanent obligation.
- **9.** The deliverance He provided accorded to His established covenant. Thus He manifested Himself in the sum of His perfections (\*\*\*Psalm 20:1,7 22:3) worthy of reverence.
- **10.** And hence love and fear of such a God is the chief element of true wisdom (compare Proverbs 1:7 9:10).

#### \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 112:1-10.

This Psalm may be regarded as an exposition of \*\*\*Psalm 111:10, presenting the happiness of those who fear and obey God, and contrasting the fate of the ungodly.

- 1. True fear produces obedience and this happiness.
- **2, 3.** Temporal blessings follow the service of God, exceptions occurring only as they are seen by God to be inconsistent with those spiritual blessings which are better.
- **4.** *light* figurative for relief (\*\*\*\*Psalm 27:1 97:11).
- *the upright* are like God (\*\*\*\*Luke 6:36 \*\*\*\*Psalm 111:4).
- **5-9.** Generosity, sound judgment in God, form a character which preserves from fear of evil and ensures success against enemies. While a man thus truly pious is liberal, he increases in substance.
- **6.** *not be moved* (compare <sup>◆930</sup> Psalm 13:4 15:5).
- **8.** heart is established or, firm in right principles.
- see his desire (<sup>№</sup>Psalm 50:23 54:7).
- **10.** Disappointed in their malevolent wishes by the prosperity of the pious, the wicked are punished by the working of their evil passions, and come to naught.

#### **♥PROF**PSALM 113:1-9.

God's majesty contrasted with His condescension and gracious dealings towards the humble furnish matter and a call for praise. The Jews, it is said, used this and Psalms 114-118 on their great festivals, and called them the *Greater Hallel*, or *Hymn*.

**1-3.** Earnestness and zeal are denoted by the emphatic repetitions.

*servants of the Lord* — or, all the people of God.

*name of the Lord* — perfections ( Psalm 5:11 111:9).

- **3.** *From the rising*, etc. all the world.
- **4-6.** God's exaltation enhances His condescension;
- 7, 8. which condescension is illustrated as often in raising the worthy poor and needy to honor (compare Samuel 2:8 SPS Psalm 44:25).
- **9.** On this special case, compare samuel 2:21. Barrenness was regarded as a disgrace, and is a type of a deserted Church (saiah 54:1).

*the barren woman ... house* — literally, "the barren of the house," so that the supplied words may be omitted.

#### **♥BOO**PSALM 114:1-8.

The writer briefly and beautifully celebrates God's former care of His people, to whose benefit nature was miraculously made to contribute.

- **1-4.** of strange language (compare \*\*\*Psalm 81:5).
- **4.** *skipped* ... *rams* (\*\*Psalm 29:6), describes the waving of mountain forests, poetically representing the *motion* of the mountains. The poetical description of the effect of God's presence on the sea and Jordan alludes to the history (\*\*PExodus 14:21 \*\*Joshua 3:14-17). *Judah* is put as a parallel to *Israel*, because of the destined, as well as real, prominence of that tribe.
- **5-8.** The questions place the implied answers in a more striking form.
- **7.** at the presence of literally, "from before," as if affrighted by the wonderful display of God's power. Well may such a God be trusted, and great should be His praise.

#### **PSALM** 115:1-18.

The Psalmist prays that God would vindicate His glory, which is contrasted with the vanity of idols, while the folly of their worshippers is contrasted with the trust of God's people, who are encouraged to its exercise and to unite in the praise which it occasions.

- **1-3.** The vindication of God's mercy and faithfulness (\*\*Psalm 25:10 36:6) is the "glory" of His "name," which is desired to be illustrated in the deliverance of His people, as the implied mode of its manifestation. In view of the taunts of the heathen, faith in His dominion as enthroned in the heaven (\*\*Psalm 2:4 11:4) is avowed.
- **2.** Where is now, etc. "now" is "not a particle of time, but of entreaty," as in our forms of speech, "Come now," "See now," etc.
- **4-7.** (Compare Isaiah 40:18-20 44:9-20).
- 7. speak ... throat literally, "mutter," not even utter articulate sounds.
- **8.** every one that trusteth they who trust, whether makers or not.
- **9-13.** The repetitions imply earnestness.
- **14.** Opposed to the decrease pending and during the captivity.
- **15-17.** They were not only God's peculiar people, but as living inhabitants of earth, assigned the work of His praise as monuments of divine power, wisdom, and goodness.
- **18.** Hence let us fulfill the purpose of our creation, and evermore show forth His praise.

## PSALM 116:1-19.

The writer celebrates the deliverance from extreme perils by which he was favored, and pledges grateful and pious public acknowledgments.

- **1, 2.** A truly grateful love will be evinced by acts of worship, which *calling on God* expresses (\*\*\*Psalm 116:13 \*\*\*\*Psalm 55:16 86:7; compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 17:6 31:2).
- **3, 4.** For similar figures for distress see Psalm 18:4,5.

gat hold upon me — Another sense ("found") of the same word follows, as we speak of disease finding us, and of our finding or catching disease.

- **5-8.** The relief which he asked is the result not of his merit, but of God's known pity and tenderness, which is acknowledged in assuring himself (his "soul," \*\* Psalm 11:1 16:10) of rest and peace. All calamities (\*\* Psalm 116:8) are represented by *death*, *tears*, and *falling of the feet* (\*\* Psalm 56:13).

land of the living — (\*\*Psalm 27:13).

- **10, 11.** Confidence in God opposed to distrust of men, as not reliable (\*\*\*Psalm 68:8,9). He speaks from an experience of the result of his faith.
- **11.** *in my haste* literally, "terror," or "agitation," produced by his affliction (compare \*\*Psalm 31:22).
- **12-14.** These are modes of expressing acts of worship (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 116:4 \*\*\*\*Psalm 50:14 Jon 2:9).
- **13.** *the cup of salvation* the drink offering which was part of the thank offering (\*\*\*Numbers 15:3-5).

- **14.** *now* (compare Psalm 115:2). "Oh, that (I may do it)" in the presence, etc.
- **15, 16.** By the plea of being a homeborn servant, he intimates his claim on God's covenant love to His people.
- **17-19.** An ampler declaration of his purpose, designating the place, the Lord's house, or earthly residence in Jerusalem.

## PSALM 117:1,2.

This may be regarded as a doxology, suitable to be appended to any Psalm of similar character, and prophetical of the prevalence of God's grace in the world, in which aspect Paul quotes it (\*\*\*Romans 15:11; compare\*\*\*Psalm 47:2 66:8).

2. is great toward us — literally, "prevailed over or protected us."

#### ◆PROFPSALM 118:1-29.

After invoking others to unite in praise, the writer celebrates God's protecting and delivering care towards him, and then represents himself and the people of God as entering the sanctuary and uniting in solemn praise, with prayer for a continued blessing. Whether composed by David on his accession to power, or by some later writer in memory of the restoration from Babylon, its tone is joyful and trusting, and, in describing the fortune and destiny of the Jewish Church and its visible head, it is typically prophetical of the Christian Church and her greater and invisible Head.

**1-4.** The trine repetitions are emphatic (compare \*\*\*Psalm 118:10-12,15,16 115:12,13).

**Let ... say** — Oh! that Israel may say.

**now** — as in \*\*\*Psalm 115:2; so in \*\*\*Psalm 118:3,4. After "now say" supply "give thanks."

that his mercy — or, "for His mercy."

- **5.** *distress* literally, "straits," to which "large place" corresponds, as in Psalm 4:1 31:8.
- **6, 7.** Men are helpless to hurt him, if God be with him (\*\*\*\*Psalm 56:9), and, if enemies, they will be vanquished (\*\*\*\*Psalm 54:7).
- **8, 9.** Even the most powerful men are less to be trusted than God.
- **10-12.** Though as numerous and irritating as bees (\*\*Psalm 118:12), by God's help his enemies would be destroyed.
- **12.** *as the fire of thorns* suddenly.

in the name, etc. — by the power (\*\*\*\*Psalm 20:5 124:8).

- **13-16.** The enemy is triumphantly addressed as if present.
- **15.** *rejoicing and salvation* the latter as cause of the former.
- **16.** *right hand* ... *is exalted* His power greatly exerted.
- 17, 18. He would live, because confident his life would be for God's glory.
- **19-21.** Whether an actual or figurative entrance into God's house be meant, the purpose of solemn praise is intimated, in which only the righteous would or could engage.
- 22, 23. These words are applied by Christ ( Matthew 21:42) to Himself, as the foundation of the Church (compare Acts 4:11 Ephesians 2:20 Peter 2:4,7). It may here denote God's wondrous exaltation to power and influence of him whom the rulers of the nation despised. Whether (see on Psalm 118:1) David or Zerubbabel (compare Haggai 2:2 Zechariah 4:7-10) be primarily meant, there is here typically represented God's more wonderful doings in exalting Christ, crucified as an impostor, to be the Prince and Savior and Head of His Church.
- **24.** *This is the day* or period distinguished by God's favor of all others.
- **25.** Save now Hebrew, "Hosanna" (compare \*\*\*\* Psalm 115:2, etc., as to now) a form of prayer (\*\*\*\* Psalm 20:9), since, in our use, of praise.
- **26.** *he that cometh* ... *Lord* As above intimated, this may be applied to the visible head of the Jewish Church entering the sanctuary, as leading the procession; typically it belongs to Him of whom the phrase became an epithet (\*\*\*Malachi 3:1 \*\*\*Matthew 21:9).
- **27-29.** *showed us light* or favor (\*\*\*Psalm 27:1 97:11). With the sacrificial victim brought bound to the altar is united the more spiritual offering of praise (\*\*\*Psalm 50:14,23), expressed in the terms with which the Psalm opened.

## PSALM 119:1-176.

This celebrated Psalm has several peculiarities. It is divided into twentytwo parts or stanzas, denoted by the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza contains eight verses, and the first letter of each verse is that which gives name to the stanza. Its contents are mainly praises of God's Word, exhortations to its perusal, and reverence for it, prayers for its proper influence, and complaints of the wicked for despising it. There are but two verses (\*\*Psalm 119:122,132) which do not contain some term or description of God's Word. These terms are of various derivations, but here used, for the most part, synonymously, though the use of a variety of terms seems designed, in order to express better the several aspects in which our relations to the revealed word of God are presented. The Psalm does not appear to have any relation to any special occasion or interest of the Jewish Church or nation, but was evidently "intended as a manual of pious thoughts, especially for instructing the young, and its peculiar artificial structure was probably adopted to aid the memory in retaining the language."

### **ALEPH.** (\*\*\*PSALM 119:1-8).

**1.** *undefiled* — literally, "complete," perfect, or sincere (compare Psalm 37:37).

*in* — or, "of"

the way — course of life.

walk — act

*in the law* — according to it (compare \*\*Luke 1:6).

*law* — from a word meaning "to teach," is a term of rather general purport, denoting the instruction of God's Word.

**2.** *testimonies* — The word of God is so called, because in it He *testifies* for truth and against sin.

**seek him** — that is, a knowledge of Him, with desire for conformity to His will.

- **3.** *his ways* the course He reveals as right.
- **4-6.** *precepts* are those directions which relate to special conduct, from a word meaning "to inspect."

*statutes* — or ordinances, positive laws of permanent nature. Both words originally denote rather positive than moral laws, such as derive force from the divine appointment, whether their nature or the reasons for them are apprehended by us or not.

*commandments* — or institutions. The term is comprehensive, but rather denotes fundamental directions for conduct, both enjoining and forbidding.

*have respect unto* — or regard carefully as to their whole purport.

- **7.** *judgments* rules of conduct formed by God's judicial decisions; hence the wide sense of the word in the Psalms, so that it includes decisions of approval as well as condemnation.
- **8.** Recognizes the need of divine grace.

## BETH. (\*\*PSALM 119:9-16).

**9.** The whole verse may be read as a question; for,

by taking heed — is better, "for" taking heed, that is, so as to do it. The answer is implied, and inferable from Psalm 119:5,10,18, etc., that is, by God's grace.

**10-16.** We must carefully treasure up the word of God, declare it to others, meditate on it, and heartily delight in it; and then by His grace we shall act according to it.

#### GIMEL. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:17-24).

- **17-20.** Life is desirable in order to serve God; that we may do so aright, we should seek to have our eyes opened to behold His truth, and earnestly desire fully to understand it.
- **21-24.** God will rebuke those who despise His word and deliver His servants from their reproach, giving them boldness in and by His truth, even before the greatest men.

#### DALETH. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:25-32).

- **25-27.** Submitting ourselves in depression to God, He will revive us by His promises, and lead us to declare His mercy to others.
- **28-32.** In order to adhere to His word, we must seek deliverance from temptations to sin as well as from despondency.

enlarge — or, "expand"

my heart — with gracious affections.

#### HE. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:33-40).

**33-38.** To encourage us in prayer for divine aid in adhering to His truth, we are permitted to believe that by His help we shall succeed.

*the way of thy statutes* — that is, the way or manner of life prescribed by them. The help we hope to obtain by *prayer* is to be the basis on which our *resolutions* should rest.

**37.** *Turn away mine eyes* — literally, "Make my eyes to pass, not noticing evil."

*vanity* — literally, "falsehood;" all other objects of trust than God; idols, human power, etc. (\*\*\*\*Psalm 31:6 40:4 60:11 62:9).

**quicken** ... in thy way — make me with living energy to pursue the way marked out by Thee. Revive me from the death of spiritual helplessness (\*\*Psalm 119:17,25,40,50 \*\*Psalm 116:3).

- **38.** who is devoted to thy fear or better, "which (that is, Thy word) is for Thy fear," for producing it. "Which is to those who fear Thee." God's word of promise belongs peculiarly to such (compare Genesis 18:19 Kings 2:4 8:25) [HENGSTENBERG].
- **39, 40.** Our hope of freedom from the *reproach of inconsistency* is in God's power, quickening us to live according to His Word, which He leads us to love.

for thy judgments are good — The time must therefore be at hand when Thy justice will turn the "reproach" from Thy Church upon the world (\*\*\*Tsaiah 25:8 66:5 \*\*\*\*Zephaniah 2:8-10).

### VAU. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:41-48).

- **41-44.** The sentiment more fully carried out. God's mercies and salvation, as revealed in His Word, provide hope of forgiveness for the past and security in a righteous course for the future.
- **42.** The possession of God's gift of "salvation" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 119:41) will be the Psalmist's answer to the foe's "reproach," that his hope was a fallacious one.
- **45-48.** To freedom from reproach, when imbued with God's truth, there is added "great boldness in the faith" [SUBB] Timothy 3:13], accompanied with increasing delight in the holy law itself, which becomes an element of happiness.
- **48.** *My hands* ... *lift up unto* ... *commandments* that is, I will *prayerfully* (\*\*Psalm 28:2) direct my heart to keep Thy commandments.

## ZAIN. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:49-56).

- **49-51.** Resting on the promises consoles under affliction and the tauntings of the insolent.
- **upon which** rather, "Remember Thy word unto Thy servant, because," etc. So the Hebrew requires [HENGSTENBERG].
- **50.** for rather, "This is my comfort ... that," etc. [MAURER].

**hath quickened** — What the Word has already done is to faith a pledge of what it shall yet do.

**52-56.** The pious take comfort, when harassed and distressed by wickedness of men who forsake God's law, in remembering that the great principles of God's truth will still abide; and also God's

*judgments of old* — that is, His past interpositions in behalf of His people are a pledge that He will again interpose to deliver them; and they become the theme of constant and delightful meditation. The more we keep the more we love the law of God.

- **53.** *Horror* rather, "vehement wrath" [HENGSTENBERG].
- **54.** *songs* As the exile sings songs of his home (\*\*\*Psalm 137:3), so the child of God, "a stranger on earth," sings the songs of heaven, his true home (\*\*\*\*Psalm 39:12). In ancient times, laws were put in verse, to imprint them the more on the memory of the people. So God's laws are the believer's songs.

house of my pilgrimage — present life (\*\*\*Genesis 17:8 47:9 \*\*\*\*Hebrews 11:13).

**56.** Rather, "This is peculiarly mine (literally, to me), *that* I keep Thy precepts" [Hengstenberg and Maurer].

#### CHETH. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:57-64).

- **57-60.** Sincere desires for God's favor, penitence, and activity in a new obedience, truly evince the sincerity of those who profess to find God a portion (\*\*Numbers 18:20 \*\*\*Psalm 16:5 \*\*\*Lamentations 3:24).
- **58.** *favor Hebrew*, "face" (\*\*\*Psalm 45:12).
- **59.** So the prodigal son, when reduced to straits of misery (\*\*\*Luke 15:17,18).
- **61, 62.** This the more, if opposition of enemies, or love of ease is overcome in thus honoring God's law.

*have robbed me* — better, surrounded me, either as forcible constraints like fetters, or as the cords of their nets. HENGSTENBERG translates, "snares."

- **62.** At midnight HENGSTENBERG supposes a reference to the time when the Lord went forth to slay the Egyptian first-born (\*\*Exodus 11:4 12:29; compare \*\*Job 34:20). But it rather refers to the Psalmist's own praises and prayers in the night time. Compare Paul and Silas (\*\*Acts 16:25; compare \*\*Psalm 63:6).
- **63.** The communion of the saints. Delight in their company is an evidence of belonging to them (\*\*\*Psalm 16:3 \*\*\*\*Amos 3:3 \*\*\*\*Malachi 3:16).
- **64.** While opposed by the wicked, and opposing them, the pious delight in those who fear God, but, after all, rely for favor and guidance not on merit, but mercy.

#### TETH. (\*\*PSALM 119:65-72).

- **65-67.** The reliance on promises (\*\*\*Psalm 119:49) is strengthened by experience of past dealings according with promises, and a prayer for guidance, encouraged by sanctified affliction.
- **66.** *Teach me good judgment and knowledge* namely, in Thy word (so as to fathom its deep spirituality); for the corresponding expression (\*\*PSalm 119:12,64,68), is, "Teach me Thy statutes."
- **67.** Referred by HENGSTENBERG to the chastening effect produced on the Jews' minds by the captivity (\*\*\* Jeremiah 31:18,19). The truth is a general one (\*\*\* Job 5:6 \*\*\* John 15:2 \*\*\* Hebrews 12:11).
- **68.** Compare as to the Lord Jesus (\*\*Acts 10:38).
- **69, 70.** The crafty malice of the wicked, in slandering him, so far from turning him away, but binds him closer to God's Word, which they are too stupid in sin to appreciate. Hengstenberg refers the "lie" to such slanders against the Jews during the captivity, as that in \*\*DEZra 4:1-6, of sedition.
- **70.** *fat as grease* spiritually insensible (\*\*\*\*Psalm 17:10 73:7 \*\*\*\*\*Isaiah 6:10).

**71, 72.** So also affliction of any kind acts as a wholesome discipline in leading the pious more highly to value the truth and promises of God.

### JOD. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:73-80).

- **73.** As God made, so He can best control, us. So as to Israel, he owed to God his whole internal and external existence (\*\*Deuteronomy 32:6).
- **74.** So when He has led us to rely on His truth, He will "make us to the praise of His grace" by others. "Those who fear Thee will be glad at my prosperity, as they consider my cause their cause" (\*\*Psalm 34:2 142:7).
- 77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me As I am not able to come unto them. But the wicked will be confounded.
- **78.** and so shall not be "ashamed," that is, put to shame (\*\*\*Psalm 119:80).
- **79, 80.** Those who may have thought his afflictions an evidence of God's rejection will then be led to return to Him; as the friends of Job did on his restoration, having been previously led through his afflictions to doubt the reality of his religion.
- **80.** *Let my* ... *be sound* that is, perfect, sincere.

ashamed — disappointed in my hope of salvation.

## CAPH. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:81-88).

- **81-83.** In sorrow the pious heart yearns for the comforts of God's promises (\*\*\*Psalm 73:26 84:2).
- **82.** *Mine eyes fail for thy word* that is, with yearning desire for Thy word. When the eyes fail, yet faith must not.

- **83.** bottle in the smoke as a skin bottle dried and shriveled up in smoke, so is he withered by sorrow. Wine bottles of skin used to be hung up in smoke to dry them, before the wine was put in them [MAURER].
- **84-87.** The shortness of my life requires that the relief afforded to me from mine enemies should be speedy.
- **85.** *pits* plots for my destruction.
- **which** rather, "who," that is, "the proud"; "pits" is not the antecedent.
- **87.** *consumed me upon earth* HENGSTENBERG translates, "in the land"; understanding "me" of the *nation* Israel, of which but a small remnant was left. But *English Version* is simpler; either, "They have consumed me so as to leave almost nothing of me on earth"; or, "They have almost destroyed and prostrated me on the earth" [MAURER].

### LAMED. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:89-96).

*is settled in* — that is, stands as firmly as the heaven in which it dwells, and whence it emanated.

- **90.** thou hast established the earth, and it abideth (\*\*\*\*Psalm 33:9).
- **91.** They the heaven (\*\*\*Psalm 119:89) and the earth (\*\*\*Psalm 119:90). HENGSTENBERG translates, "They stand *for* thy judgment," that is, ready, as obedient servants, to execute them. The usage of this Psalm favors this view. But see \*\*\*Jeremiah 33:25.

**92-94.** Hence the pious are encouraged and inclined to seek a knowledge of it, and persevere amidst the efforts of those planning and *waiting* to destroy them.

*my delights* — plural, not merely *delight*, but equal to all other delights.

93. The bounds of created perfection may be defined, but those of God's law in its nature, application, and influence, are infinite. There is no human thing so perfect but that something is wanting to it; its limits are narrow, whereas God's law is of infinite breadth, reaching to all cases, perfectly meeting what each requires, and to all times (\*\*Psalm 19:3,6,7-11\*\*Ecclesiastes 3:11). It cannot be cramped within any definitions of man's dogmatical systems. Man never outgrows the Word. It does not shock the ignorant man with declared anticipations of discoveries which he had not yet made; while in it the man of science finds his newest discoveries by tacit anticipations provided for.

## MEM. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:97-104).

- **97.** This characteristic love for God's law (compare Psalm 1:2) ensures increase.
- **98-100.** of knowledge, both of the matter of all useful, moral truth, and an experience of its application.

wiser than mine enemies — with all their carnal cunning (\*\*\*Deuteronomy 4:6,8).

*they are ever with me* — The *Hebrew* is, rather *singular*, "it is ever with me"; the commandments forming ONE *complete whole*, Thy law.

- **99.** *understanding* is practical skill (\*\*\*Psalm 2:10 32:8).
- **100.** *more than the ancients* Antiquity is no help against stupidity, where it does not accord with God's word [LUTHER] (\*\*\*Job 32:7-9). The Bible is the key of all knowledge, the history of the world, past, present, and to come (Psalm 11 1:10). He who does the will of God shall know of the doctrine (\*\*\*TJohn 7:17).
- **101-104.** Avoidance of sinful courses is both the effect and means of increasing in divine knowledge (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 19:10).

#### NUN. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:105-112).

**105.** Not only does the Word of God inform us of His will, but, as a light on a path in darkness, it shows us how to follow the right and avoid the wrong way. The lamp of the Word is not the sun. He would blind our eyes in our present fallen state; but we may bless God for the light shining as in a dark place, to guide us until the Sun of Righteousness shall come, and we shall be made capable of seeing Him (\*\*OB\*2\*\*) Peter 1:19 \*\*Revelation 22:4). The lamp is fed with the oil of the Spirit. The allusion is to the lamps and torches carried at night before an Eastern caravan.

**106-108.** Such was the national covenant at Sinai and in the fields of Moab.

**108.** *freewill offerings* — the spontaneous expressions of his gratitude, as contrasted with the *appointed* "offerings" of the temple (\*\*\*\*Hosea 14:2\*\*\*Hebrews 13:15). He determines to pursue this way, relying on God's quickening power (\*\*\*\*Psalm 119:50) in affliction, and a gracious acceptance of his "spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 50:5 14,23).

109, 110. In the midst of deadly perils (the phrase is drawn from the fact that what we carry in our hands may easily slip from them, Judges 12:3 Samuel 28:21 Samuel 13:14; compare Samuel 19:5), and exposed to crafty enemies, his safety and guidance is in the truth and promises of God.

**111, 112.** These he joyfully takes as his perpetual heritage, to perform the duties and receive the comforts they teach, evermore.

## SAMECH. (\*\*PPSALM 119:113-120).

113. vain thoughts — better, "unstable persons," literally, "divided men," those of a *divided*, doubting mind (\*\*\*\*James 1:8); "a double-minded man" [HENGSTENBERG], skeptics, or, skeptical notions as opposed to the certainty of God's word.

114. hiding-place — (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 27:5).

shield — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 3:3 7:10).

*hope in thy word* — confidently rest on its teachings and promises.

**115-117.** Hence he fears not wicked men, nor dreads disappointment, sustained by God in making His law the rule of life.

**Depart from me** — Ye can do nothing with me; for, etc. ( Psalm 6:8).

**118-120.** But the disobedient and rebellious will be visited by God's wrath, which impresses the pious with wholesome fear and awe.

*their deceit is falsehood* — that is, all their cunning deceit, wherewith they seek to entrap the godly, *is in vain*.

#### AIN. (\*\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:121-128).

- **121-126.** On the grounds of his integrity, desire for God's word, and covenant relation to Him, the servant of God may plead for His protecting care against the wicked, gracious guidance to the knowledge of truth, and His effective vindication of the righteous and their cause, which is also His own.
- **122. Be surety** Stand for me against my oppressors ( Genesis 43:9 Isaiah 38:14).
- **127,128.** *Therefore* that is, In view of these benefits, or, Because of the glory of Thy law, so much praised in the previous parts of the Psalm.

*I love* ... [and] *Therefore* (repeated) — All its precepts, on all subjects, are estimable for their purity, and lead one imbued with their spirit to hate all evil (\*\*Psalm 19:10). The Word of God admits of no eclecticism; its least title is perfect (\*\*\*Psalm 12:6\*\*Matthew 5:17-19).

#### PE. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:129-136).

- **129.** *wonderful* literally, "wonders," that is, of moral excellence.
- **130.** *The entrance* literally, "opening"; God's words, as an open door, let in light, or knowledge. Rather, as HENGSTENBERG explains it, "*The opening up*," or, "*explanation* of thy word." To the natural man the doors

of God's Word are shut. Luke 24:27,31 Acts 17:3 Ephesians 1:18, confirm this view, "opening (that is, explaining) and alleging," etc.

*unto the simple* — those needing or desiring it (compare \*\*Psalm 19:7).

**131-135.** An ardent desire (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 56:1,2) for spiritual enlightening, establishment in a right course, deliverance from the wicked, and evidence of God's favor is expressed

*I opened my mouth, and panted* — as a traveler in a hot desert pants for the cooling breeze (\*\*\*\*Psalm 63:1 84:2).

**132.** *Look ... upon me* — opposed to hiding or averting the face (compare Psalm 25:15 86:6 102:17).

as thou usest to do — or, "as it is right in regard to those who love Thy name." Such have a right to the manifestations of God's grace, resting on the nature of God as faithful to His promise to such, not on their own merits.

**133.** *Order my steps* — *Make firm*, so that there be no halting (\*\*\*Psalm 40:2).

any iniquity — \*\*\*Psalm 119:34 (favors HENGSTENBERG, "any iniquitous man," any "oppressor"). But the parallel first clause in this (\*\*\*Psalm 119:33) favors *English Version* (\*\*\*Psalm 19:13). His hope of deliverance from *external* oppression of man (\*\*\*Psalm 119:34) is founded on his deliverance from the *internal* "dominion of iniquity," in answer to his prayer (\*\*\*Psalm 119:33).

**136.** Zealous himself to keep God's law, he is deeply afflicted when others violate it (compare \*\*Psalm 119:53). Literally, "Mine eyes come down (dissolved) like water brooks" (\*\*\*Lamentations 3:48 \*\*\*\*Jeremiah 9:1).

because, etc. — (Compare Ezekiel 9:4 Isremiah 13:17).

TZADDI. (\*\*\*Psalm 119:137-144).

**137-139.** God's justice and faithfulness in His government aggravate the neglect of the wicked, and more excite the lively zeal of His people.

- **139.** (\*\*\*Psalm 69:9).
- **140.** *very pure* literally, "refined," shown pure by trial.
- **141.** The pious, however despised of men, are distinguished in God's sight by a regard for His law.
- **142-144.** The principles of God's government are permanent and reliable, and in the deepest distress His people find them a theme of delightful meditation and a source of reviving power (\*\*\*Psalm 119:17,116).

*law is the truth* — It therefore cannot deceive as to its promises.

*everlasting* — (\*\*Psalm 111:3), though to outward appearance seeming dead.

#### KOPH. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:145-152).

- **145-149.** An intelligent devotion is led by divine promises and is directed to an increase of gracious affections, arising from a contemplation of revealed truth.
- **147.** *prevented* literally, "came before," anticipated not only the *dawn*, but even the usual periods of *the night*; when the night watches, which might be expected to find me asleep, come, they find me awake (\*\*\*Psalm 63:6 77:4 \*\*\*Lamentations 2:19). Such is the earnestness of the desire and love for God's truth.
- **149.** *quicken me* revive my heart according to those principles of justice, founded on Thine own nature, and revealed in Thy law, which specially set forth Thy mercy to the humble as well as justice to the wicked (compare \*\*Psalm 119:30).
- **150-152.** Though the wicked are *near* to injure, because *far* from God's law, He is *near* to help, and faithful to His word, which abides for ever.

## RESH. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:153-160).

**153-155.** Though the remembering of God's law is not meritorious, yet it evinces a filial temper and provides the pious with promises to plead,

while the wicked in neglecting His law, reject God and despise His promises (compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 9:13 43:1 69:18).

**154.** *Plead*, etc. — HENGSTENBERG translates, "Fight my fight." (See Psalm 35:1 43:1 Micah 7:9).

**156.** (See on Psalm 119:149).

**157.** (Compare Psalm 119:86,87,95).

**158.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 119:136).

transgressors — or, literally, "traitors," who are faithless to a righteous sovereign and side with His enemies (compare \*Psalm 25:3,8).

**159.** (Compare Psalm 119:121-126,153-155).

*quicken me, O Lord, according to thy lovingkindness* — (\*\*Psalm 119:88). This prayer occurs here for the ninth time, showing a deep sense of frailty.

**160.** God has been ever faithful, and the principles of His government will ever continue worthy of confidence.

from the beginning — that is, "every word from Genesis (called so by the Jews from its first words, 'In the beginning') to the end of the Scriptures is true." HENGSTENBERG translates more literally, "The sum of thy words is truth." The sense is substantially the same. The whole body of revelation is truth. "Thy Word is nothing but truth" [LUTHER].

### SCHIN. (\*\*\*\*PSALM 119:161-168).

**161-165.** (Compare Psalm 119:46,86).

awe — reverential, not slavish fear, which could not coexist with love (\*\*Psalm 119:163 \*\*\* John 4:8). Instead of fearing his persecutors, he fears God's Word alone (\*\*\*Luke 12:4,5). The Jews inscribe in the first page of the great Bible, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (\*\*\*Genesis 28:17).

**162.** (Compare Matthew 13:44,45). Though persecuted by the mighty, the pious are not turned from revering God's authority to seek their favor,

but rejoice in the possession of this "pearl of great price," as great victors in spoils. Hating falsehood and loving truth, often, every day, praising God for it, they find peace and freedom from temptation.

- **163.** *lying* that is, as in Psalm 119:29, unfaithfulness to the covenant of God with His people; apostasy.
- **165.** *nothing shall offend them* or, "cause them to offend" (compare *Margin*).
- **166-168.** As they keep God's law from motives of love for it, and are free from slavish fear, the are ready to subject their lives to His inspection.
- **168.** *all my ways are before thee* I wish to order my ways as before Thee, rather than in reference to man (\*\*Genesis 19:1 \*\*Psalm 73:23). All men's ways are under God's eye (\*\*Proverbs 5:21); the godly alone realize the fact, and live accordingly.

#### TAU. (\*\*\*PSALM 119:169-176).

- **169,170.** The prayer for *understanding* of the truth precedes that for *deliverance*. The fulfillment of the first is the basis of the fulfillment of the second (\*\*\*Psalm 90:11-17). On the terms "cry" and "supplication" (compare \*\*\*Psalm 6:9 17:1).
- **171, 172.** *shall utter* or, "*pour* out praise" (compare "Psalm 19:2); shall cause Thy praises to stream forth as from a bubbling, overflowing fountain.
- **172.** *My tongue shall speak of thy word* literally, "answer Thy Word," that is, with praise, *respond to Thy word*. Every expression in which we praise God and His Word is a response, or acknowledgment, corresponding to the perfections of Him whom we praise.
- **173, 174.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 119:77,81,92).
- *I have chosen* in preference to all other objects of delight.
- **175.** Save me that I may praise Thee.
- thy judgments as in Psalm 119:149,156.

**176.** Though a wanderer from God, the truly pious ever desires to be drawn back to Him; and, though for a time negligent of duty, he never forgets the commandments by which it is taught.

**lost** — therefore utterly helpless as to recovering itself ( \*\*\*Termiah 50:6 \*\*\*Luke 15:4). Not only the sinner before conversion, but the believer after conversion, is unable to recover himself; but the latter, after temporary wandering, knows to whom to look for restoration. \*\*\*Psalm 119:175,176 seem to sum up the petitions, confessions, and professions of the Psalm. The writer desires God's favor, that he may praise Him for His truth, confesses that he has erred, but, in the midst of all his wanderings and adversities, professes an abiding attachment to the revealed Word of God, the theme of such repeated eulogies, and the recognized source of such great and unnumbered blessings. Thus the Psalm, though more than usually didactic, is made the medium of both parts of devotion — prayer and praise.

#### **№PSALM 120:1-7.**

This is the first of fifteen Psalms (Psalms 120-134) entitled "A Song of Degrees" ("Psalm 121:1 — literally, "A song *for* the degrees"), or *ascents*. It seems most probable they were designed for the use of the people when *going up* (compare "I Kings 12:27,28) to Jerusalem on the festival occasions ("Deuteronomy 16:16), three times a year. David appears as the author of four, Solomon of one ("Psalm 127:1), and the other ten are anonymous, probably composed after the captivity. In this Psalm the writer acknowledges God's mercy, prays for relief from a malicious foe, whose punishment he anticipates, and then repeats his complaint.

**2, 3.** Slander and deceit charged on his foes implies his innocence.

tongue — as in \*\*\*\*Psalm 52:2,4.

**4.** Sharp arrows of the mighty — destructive inflictions.

**coals of juniper** — which retain heat long. This verse may be read as a description of the wicked, but better as their punishment, in reply to the question of \*\*Psalm 120:3.

- **5.** A residence in these remote lands pictures his miserable condition.
- **6, 7.** While those who surrounded him were maliciously hostile, he was disposed to peace. This Psalm may well begin such a series as this, as a contrast to the promised joys of God's worship.

#### **♥001**PSALM 121:1-8.

God's guardian care of His people celebrated.

- **1.** *I will lift up mine eyes* expresses desire (compare \*\*Psalm 25:1), mingled with expectation. The last clause, read as a question, is answered,
- **2.** by avowing God to be the helper, of whose ability His creative power is a pledge (\*\*\*Psalm 115:15), to which,
- **3, 4.** His sleepless vigilance is added.

to be moved — (Compare Psalm 38:16 66:9).

- **5.** upon thy right hand a protector's place (\*\*\*Psalm 109:31 110:5).
- **6-8.** God keeps His people at all times and in all perils.

**nor the moon by night** — poetically represents the dangers of the night, over which the moon presides (\*\*Genesis 1:16).

**8.** thy going out, etc. — all thy ways (Deuteronomy 28:19 Psalm 104:23).

evermore — includes a future state.

#### \*\*PSALM 122:1-9.

This Psalm might well express the sacred joy of the pilgrims on entering the holy city, where praise, as the religious as well as civil metropolis, is celebrated, and for whose prosperity, as representing the Church, prayer is offered.

- **1, 2. Our feet shall stand** literally, "are standing."
- **2.** *gates* (Compare \*\*Psalm 9:14 87:2).
- **3-5.** *compact together* all parts united, as in David's time.
- **4.** *testimony* If "unto" is supplied, this may denote the ark (\*\*Exodus 25:10-21); otherwise the *act of going* is denoted, called a *testimony* in allusion to the requisition (\*\*Deuteronomy 16:16), with which it was a compliance.
- **5.** there are set thrones or, "do sit, thrones," used for the occupants, David's sons (\*\*\*\* Samuel 8:18).
- **6, 7.** *Let peace* including prosperity, everywhere prevail.
- **8, 9.** In the welfare of the city, as its civil, and especially the religious relations, was involved that of Israel.

**now** — as in Psalm 115:2.

**9.** Let me say — *house of* ... *God* — in wider sense, the Church, whose welfare would be promoted by the good of Jerusalem.

### **♥CON**PSALM 123:1-4.

An earnest and expecting prayer for divine aid in distress.

**1.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 121:1).

**thou that dwellest** — literally, "sittest as enthroned" (compare \*\*\*Psalm 2:4 113:4,5).

- **2.** Deference, submission, and trust, are all expressed by the figure. In the East, servants in attending on their masters are almost wholly directed by *signs*, which require the closest observance of the hands of the latter. The servants of God should look
  - (1) to His directing hand, to appoint them their work;
  - (2) to His supplying hand (Psalm 104:28), to give them their portion in due season;
  - (3) to His protecting hand, to right them when wronged;
  - (4) to His correcting hand (2001 Saiah 9:13 4001 Peter 5:6; compare 4000 Genesis 16:6);
  - (5) to His rewarding hand.
- **3.** *contempt* was that of the heathen, and, perhaps, Samaritans (\*\*\*Nehemiah 1:3 2:19).
- **4.** *of those that are at ease* self-complacently, disregarding God's law, and despising His people.

### **♥♥♥♥** PSALM 124:1-8.

The writer, for the Church, praises God for past, and expresses trust for future, deliverance from foes.

- **1, 2.** *on our side* for us (\*\*\*\*Psalm 56:9).
- now or, "oh! let Israel"
- **2.** rose ... against, etc. (\*\*Psalm 3:1 56:11).
- **3.** *Then* that is, the time of our danger.
- quick literally, "living" ("Numbers 16:32,33), description of ferocity.
- **4, 5.** (Compare \*Psalm 18:4,16).
- **5.** The epithet *proud* added to *waters* denotes insolent enemies.
- **6, 7.** The figure is changed to that of a rapacious wild beast (\*\*\*\*Psalm 3:7), and then of a fowler (\*\*\*\*Psalm 91:3), complete escape is denoted by breaking the net.
- **8.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 121:2).

**name** — in the usual sense (\*\*\*Psalm 5:11 20:1). He thus places over against the great danger the omnipotent God, and drowns, as it were in an anthem, the wickedness of the whole world and of hell, just as a great fire consumes a little drop of water [Luther].

### **♥**\$\$\P\$ALM 125:1-5.

God honors the confidence of His people, by protection and deliverance, and leaves hypocrites to the doom of the wicked.

**1, 2.** *Mount Zion* — as an emblem of permanence, and locality of Jerusalem as one of security, represent the firm and protected condition of God's people (compare \*\*Psalm 46:5), supported not only by Providence, but by covenant promise. Even the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but God's kindness shall not depart, nor His covenant of peace be removed (\*\*Isaiah 54:10).

**They that trust** — are "His people," (\*\*C\*\*Psalm 125:2).

3. Though God may leave them for a time under the "rod," or power (\*\*Psalm 2:9), and oppression of the wicked for a time, as a chastisement, He will not suffer them to be tempted so as to fall into sin (\*\*OB\*1\*). The wicked shall only prove a correcting rod to them, not a destroying sword; even this rod shall not *remain* ("rest") on them, lest they be tempted to despair and apostasy (\*\*Psalm 73:13,14). God may even try His people to the uttermost: when nothing is before our eyes but pure despair, then He delivers us and gives life in death, and makes us blessed in the curse (\*\*OB\*2\* Corinthians 1:8,9) [LUTHER].

**the lot** — the possession, literally, "Canaan," spiritually, the heavenly inheritance of holiness and bliss which is appointed to the righteous. Sin's dominion shall not *permanently* come between the believer and his inheritance.

- **4.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 7:10 84:11).
- **5.** Those who turn aside (under temptation) permanently show that they are hypocrites, and their lot or portion shall be with the wicked (\*\*\*PSalm 28:3).

*crooked ways* — (Compare \*\*\*Deuteronomy 9:16 \*\*\*\*Malachi 2:8,9).

**their** — is emphatic; the "crooked ways" proceed from *their own* hearts. The true Israel is here distinguished from the false. Scripture everywhere opposes the Jewish delusion that mere outward descent would save (
Romans 2:28,29 9:6,7 Galatians 6:16). The byways of sin from the way of life.

#### **→ PSALM 126:1-6.**

To praise for God's favor to His people is added a prayer for its continued manifestation.

**1-3.** *When the Lord*, etc. — The joy of those returned from Babylon was ecstatic, and elicited the admiration even of the heathen, as illustrating God's great power and goodness.

turned again the captivity — that is, restored from it (\*\*\*\*\*\*Job 39:12\*\*\*Proverbs 12:14). HENGSTENBERG translates: "When the Lord turned Himself to the turning of Zion" (see *Margin*), God returns to His people when they return to Him (\*\*\*\*Deuteronomy 30:2,3).

- **4.** All did not return at once; hence the prayer for repeated favors.
- as the streams in the south or, the torrents in the desert south of Judea, dependent on rain (\*\*\*\*Joshua 15:9), reappearing after dry seasons (compare \*\*\*\*\*Job 6:15 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 68:9). The point of comparison is joy at the reappearing of what has been so painfully missed.
- **5, 6.** As in husbandry the sower may cast his seed in a dry and parched soil with desponding fears, so those shall reap abundant fruit who toil in tears with the prayer of faith. (Compare the history, Ezra 6:16,22).
- **6.** *He that goeth forth* literally, better, "He goes he comes, he comes," etc. The repetition implies there is no end of weeping here, as there shall be no end of joy hereafter (\*\*\*Isaiah 35:10).

**precious seed** — rather, seed to be drawn from the seed box for sowing; literally, "seed-draught." Compare on this Psalm, "Seed-draught." Jeremiah 31:9, etc.

### **№001**PSALM 127:1-5.

The theme of this Psalm, that human enterprises only succeed by the divine blessing, was probably associated with the building of the temple by Solomon, its author. It may have been adopted in this view, as suited to this series especially, as appropriately expressing the sentiments of God's worshippers in relation to the erection of the second temple.

- 1, 2. suggest the view of the theme given.
- **2.** so he giveth his beloved sleep that is, His providential care gives sleep which no efforts of ours can otherwise procure, and this is a reason for trust as to other things (compare 400 Matthew 6:26-32).
- **3-5.** Posterity is often represented as a blessing from God (Genesis 30:2,18 Genesis 1:19,20). Children are represented as the defenders (arrows) of their parents in war, and in litigation.
- **5.** adversaries in the gate or place of public business (compare 5.4 Psalm 69:12).

#### ◆ PSALM 128:1-6.

The temporal blessings of true piety. The eighth chapter of Zecariah is a virtual commentary on this Psalm. Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 128:3 with \*\*\*\*Zechariah 8:5; and \*\*\*\*\*Zechariah 8:10; and \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 128:6 with \*\*\*\*Zechariah 8:4.

- **1.** (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 1:1).
- **2.** For thou shalt eat that is, It is a blessing to live on the fruits of one's own industry.
- 3. by the sides or, "within" (\*\*\*Psalm 48:2).

  olive plants are peculiarly luxuriant (\*\*\*\*Psalm 52:8).
- **5.** In temporal blessings the pious do not forget the richer blessings of God's grace, which they shall ever enjoy.
- **6.** Long life crowns all other temporal favors. As \*\*TPsalm 125:5, this Psalm closes with a prayer for peace, with prosperity for God's people.

### **→900**PSALM 129:1-8.

The people of God, often delivered from enemies, are confident of His favor, by their overthrow in the future.

- **1, 2.** may Israel now say or, "oh! let Israel say" (\*\*\*Psalm 124:1). Israel's youth was the sojourn in Egypt (\*\*\*\*IPJeremiah 2:2 \*\*\*\*Hosea 2:15).
- **2.** *prevailed* literally, "been able," that is, to accomplish their purpose against me (\*\*\*Psalm 13:4).
- **3, 4.** The *ploughing* is a figure of scourging, which most severe physical infliction aptly represents all kinds.
- **4.** *the cords* that is, which fasten the plough to the ox; and *cutting* denotes God's arresting the persecution;
- **5, 6.** The ill-rooted roof grass, which withers before it grows up and procures for those gathering it no harvest blessing (\*\*Ruth 2:4), sets forth the utter uselessness and the rejection of the wicked.

#### \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 130:1-8.

The penitent sinner's hope is in God's mercy only.

- **1, 2. depths** for great distress (\*\*\*Psalm 40:2 69:3).
- 3. shouldest mark or, "take strict account" (\*\*\*\*Job 10:14 14:16), implying a confession of the existence of sin.

who shall stand — (\*\*\*\*Psalm 1:6). Standing is opposed to the guilty sinking down in fear and self-condemnation (\*\*\*\*Malachi 3:2 \*\*\*\*Revelation 6:15,16). The question implies a negative, which is thus more strongly stated.

- **5, 6.** wait for the Lord in expectation (\*Psalm 27:14).

watch for, etc. — in earnestness and anxiety.

**7, 8.** *Let Israel*, etc. — that is, All are invited to seek and share divine forgiveness.

from all his iniquities — or, "punishments of them" (\*\*Psalm 40:12, etc.).

### **♥DOO**PSALM 131:1-3.

This Psalm, while expressive of David's pious feelings on assuming the royal office, teaches the humble, submissive temper of a true child of God.

**1.** eyes lofty — a sign of pride (\*\*\*Psalm 18:27).

exercise myself — literally, "walk in," of "meddle with."

**2.** *Surely*, etc. — The form is that of an oath or strongest assertion. Submission is denoted by the figure of a weaned child. As the child weaned by his mother from the breast, so I still the motions of pride in me (\*\*Matthew 18:3,4 \*\*Insaiah 11:8 28:9). Hebrew children were often not weaned till three years old.

**soul** — may be taken for desire, which gives a more definite sense, though one included in the idea conveyed by the usual meaning, *myself*.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 132:1-18.

The writer, perhaps Solomon (compare Psalm 132:8,9), after relating David's pious zeal for God's service, pleads for the fulfillment of the promise (Samuel 7:16), which, providing for a perpetuation of David's kingdom, involved that of God's right worship and the establishment of the greater and spiritual kingdom of David's greater Son. Of Him and His kingdom both the temple and its worship, and the kings and kingdom of Judah, were types. The congruity of such a topic with the tenor of this series of Psalms is obvious.

**1-5.** This vow is not elsewhere recorded. It expresses, in strong language, David's intense desire to see the establishment of God's worship as well as of His kingdom.

**remember David** — literally, "remember for David," that is, all his troubles and anxieties on the matter.

- **5.** *habitation* literally, "dwellings," generally used to denote the sanctuary.
- 6. These may be the "words of David" and his pious friends, who,
- at Ephratah or Beth-lehem (Genesis 48:7), where he once lived, may have heard of the ark, which he found for the first time

in the fields of the wood — or, Jair, or Kirjath-jearim ("City of woods") (4000) Samuel 7:1 4000) Samuel 6:3,4), whence it was brought to Zion.

- 7. The purpose of engaging in God's worship is avowed.
- **8, 9.** The solemn entry of the ark, symbolical of God's presence and power, with the attending priests, into the sanctuary, is proclaimed in the words used by Solomon (\*\*Color Chronicles 6:41).

- **10-12.** For thy servant David's sake that is, On account of the promise made to him.
- turn ... anointed Repulse not him who, as David's descendant, pleads the promise to perpetuate his royal line. After reciting the promise, substantially from Samuel 7:12-16 (compare Acts 2:30, etc.), an additional plea,
- **13.** is made on the ground of God's choice of Zion (here used for Jerusalem) as His dwelling, inasmuch as the prosperity of the kingdom was connected with that of the Church (\*\*CTB\*Psalm 122:8,9).
- **14-18.** That choice is expressed in God's words, "I will sit" or "dwell," or sit enthroned The joy of the people springs from the blessings of His grace, conferred through the medium of the priesthood.
- **17.** *make the horn* ... *to bud* enlarge his power.
- *a lamp* the figure of prosperity (\*\*\*Psalm 18:10,28 89:17). With the confounding of his enemies is united his prosperity and the unceasing splendor of his crown.

### \*\*\*\*PSALM 133:1-3.

The blessings of fraternal unity.

- **1, 2.** As the fragrant oil is refreshing, so this affords delight. The holy anointing oil for the high priest was olive oil mixed with four of the best spices (\*\*Exodus 30:22,25,30). Its rich profusion typified the abundance of the Spirit's graces. As the copious dew, such as fell on Hermon, falls in fertilizing power on the mountains of Zion, so this unity is fruitful in good works.
- **3.** *there* that is, in Zion, the Church; the material Zion, blessed with enriching dews, suggests this allusion the source of the influence enjoyed by the spiritual Zion.

*commanded the blessing* — (Compare \*\*Psalm 68:28).

### **♥DOO!**PSALM 134:1-3.

1, 2. The pilgrim bands arriving at the sanctuary call on the priests, who

stand in the house of the Lord — at the time of the evening sacrifice, to unite in praising God in their name and that of the people, using appropriate gestures, to which the priests reply, pronouncing the Mosaic blessing which they alone could pronounce. A fit epilogue to the whole pilgrim-book, Psalms 120-134.

**by night** — the *evening* service (\*\*\*Psalm 141:2), as opposed to *morning* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 92:2).

- **2.** *Lift up your hands* (Compare \*Psalm 28:2).
- **3.** After the manner directed (Numbers 6:23).

*out of Zion* — the Church, as His residence, and thus seat of blessings. Thus close the songs of degrees.

#### **♥■■PSALM 135:1-21.**

A Psalm of praise, in which God's relations to His Church, His power in the natural world, and in delivering His people, are contrasted with the vanity of idols and idol-worship.

- **1-3.** In the general call for praise, the priests, *that stand in the house of the Lord*, are specially mentioned.
- **4-7.** God's choice of Israel is the first reason assigned for rendering praise; the next, His manifested greatness in creation and providence.
- **6.** heaven, and ... seas, and all ... ends of the earth denote universality.
- **8, 9.** The last plague [\*\*Exodus 12:29] is cited to illustrate His "tokens and wonders."
- **10-12.** The conquest of Canaan was by God's power, not that of the people.
- 13. heritage or, "possession."
- *name ... memorial* Each denote that by which God is made known.
- **14.** *will judge* do justice ( Psalm 72:2).
- *repent himself* change His dealings (\*\*Psalm 90:13).
- **15-18.** (Compare Psalm 115:4-8).
- **18.** are like unto them or, "shall be like," etc. Idolaters become spiritually stupid and perish with their idols (\*\*Tsaiah 1:31).
- **19-21.** (Compare Psalm 115:9-11). There we have "trust" for "bless" here.
- **21.** *out of Zion* (Compare \*\*Psalm 110:2 134:3). From the Church, as a center, His praise is diffused throughout the earth.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 136:1-26.

The theme is the same as that of Psalm 135. God should be praised for His works of creation and providence, His deliverance and care of His people, and judgments on their enemies, and His goodness to all. The chorus to every verse is in terms of that of \*\*Psalm 106:1 118:1-4, and was perhaps used as the \*Amen\* by the people, in worship (compare \*\*\*The Chronicles 16:36 \*\*\*Psalm 105:45).

- **1-3.** The divine titles denote supremacy.
- **4.** *alone* excluding all help.
- **5, 6.** by wisdom or, "in wisdom" (\*\*Psalm 104:24).

made — literally, "maker of."

above the waters — or, "higher than the waters" (\*\*\*Psalm 24:2).

- **12.** Compare similar expressions (\*\*\*Exodus 3:20 \*\*Deuteronomy 4:34, etc.).
- **15.** *overthrew* literally, "shook off," as in Exodus 14:27, as a contemptuous rejection of a reptile.
- 23. remembered us or, "for us" (\*\*\*\*Psalm 132:1).

our low estate — that is, captivity.

- **24.** *And hath redeemed us* or, literally, "snatched us" alluding to the sudden deliverance effected by the overthrow of Babylon.
- **25.** To the special favors to His people is added the record of God's goodness to all His creatures (compare Matthew 6:30).
- **26.** *God of heaven* occurs but once (Jon 1:9) before the captivity. It is used by the later writers as specially distinguishing God from idols.

### \*\*\*\*\*PSALM 137:1-9.

This Psalm records the mourning of the captive Israelites, and a prayer and prediction respecting the destruction of their enemies.

- **1.** *rivers of Babylon* the name of the city used for the whole country.
- remembered Zion or, Jerusalem, as in <sup>→DTP</sup>Psalm 132:13.
- **2.** *upon the willows* which may have grown there then, if not now; as the palm, which was once common, is now rare in Palestine.
- **3, 4.** Whether the request was in curiosity or derision, the answer intimates that a compliance was incongruous with their mournful feelings (Proverbs 25:20).
- **5, 6.** For joyful songs would imply forgetfulness of their desolated homes and fallen Church. The solemn imprecations on the *hand* and *tongue*, if thus forgetful, relate to the cunning or skill in playing, and the power of singing.
- **7-9.** Remember ... the children of Edom (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 132:1), that is, to punish.
- *the day of Jerusalem* its downfall (\*\*\*\*Lamentations 4:21,22 \*\*\*\*Obadiah 1:11-13).
- **8.** daughter of Babylon the people (\*\*\*Psalm 9:13). Their destruction had been abundantly foretold (\*\*\*Isaiah 13:14 \*\*\*\*Isaiah 51:23). For the terribleness of that destruction, God's righteous judgment, and not the passions of the chafed Israelites, was responsible.

#### \*\*\*\*PSALM 138:1-8.

David thanks God for His benefits, and anticipating a wider extension of God's glory by His means, assures himself of His continued presence and faithfulness.

**1.** I will praise thee with my whole heart — (Compare \*\*\*Psalm 9:1).

**before the gods** — whether *angels* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 8:5); or *princes* (\*\*\*\*Exodus 21:6 \*\*\*\*Psalm 82:6); or *idols* (\*\*\*\*Psalm 97:7); denotes a readiness to worship the true God alone, and a contempt of all other objects of worship.

**2.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 5:7).

thy word above all thy name — that is, God's promise (\*\*\*\*2 Samuel 7:12-16), sustained by His mercy and truth, exceeded all other manifestations of Himself as subject of praise.

- **3-5.** That promise, as an answer to his prayers in distress, revived and strengthened his faith; and, as the basis of other revelations of the Messiah, it will be the occasion of praise by all who hear and receive it (\*\*Psalm 68:29,31 \*\*\*Isaiah 4:3).
- **5.** *for great is the glory* or, "when the glory shall be great," in God's fulfilling His purposes of redemption.
- **6, 7.** On this general principle of God's government (\*\*Thisaiah 2:11 57:15 66:2), he relies for God's favor in saving him, and overthrowing his enemies.

knoweth afar off — their ways and deserts (\*\*\*\*Psalm 1:6).

**8.** God will fulfill His promise.

### \*\*\*\*PSALM 139:1-24.

After presenting the sublime doctrines of God's omnipresence and omniscience, the Psalmist appeals to Him, avowing his innocence, his abhorrence of the wicked, and his ready submission to the closest scrutiny. Admonition to the wicked and comfort to the pious are alike implied inferences from these doctrines.

### PSALM 140:1-13.

The style of this Psalm resembles those of David in the former part of the book, presenting the usual complaint, prayer, and confident hope of relief.

- **1.** evil man Which of David's enemies is meant is not important.
- **2-5.** This character of the wicked, and the devices planned against the pious, correspond to Psalm 10:7 31:13 58:4, etc.
- **3.** *sharpened* ... *like a serpent* not like a serpent does, but they are thus like a serpent in cunning and venom.
- **5.** *snare* [and] *net* for threatening dangers (compare \*\*\*Psalm 38:12 57:6).
- **6.** (Compare Psalm 5:1-12 16:2).
- 7. day of battle literally, "of armor," that is, when using it.
- **8.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 37:12 66:7).

*lest they exalt themselves* — or, they will be exalted if permitted to prosper.

- **9.** Contrasts his head covered by God (\*\*Psalm 140:7) with theirs, or (as "head" may be used for "persons") with them, covered with the results of their wicked deeds (\*\*\*Psalm 7:16).
- **10.** (Compare Psalm 11:6 120:4).

cast into the fire; into deep pits — figures for utter destruction.

- **11.** *an evil speaker* or, "slanderer" will not be tolerated (\*\*Psalm 101:7). The last clause may be translated: "an evil (man) He (God) shall hunt," etc.
- **12.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 9:4).

**13.** After all changes, the righteous shall have cause for praise. Such **shall dwell** — shall sit securely, under God's protection (\*\*PPS alm 21:6 41:12).

### **♥POPSALM 141:1-10.**

This Psalm evinces its authorship as the preceding, by its structure and the character of its contents. It is a prayer for deliverance from sins to which affliction tempted him, and from the enemies who caused it.

### ◆●●PSALM 142:1-7.

Maschil — (See on \*\*\*Psalm 32:1, title). When he was in the cave — either of Adullam (\*\*\*Psalm 22:1), or En-gedi (\*\*\*Psalm 24:3). This does not mean that the Psalm was composed in the cave, but that the precarious mode of life, of which his refuge in caves was a striking illustration, occasioned the complaint, which constitutes the first part of the Psalm and furnishes the reason for the prayer with which it concludes, and which, as the prominent characteristic, gives its name.

- **1.** with my voice audibly, because earnestly.
- **2.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 62:8).

*I poured out my complaint* — or, "a sad musing."

- 3. *thou knewest ... path* The appeal is indicative of conscious innocence; knowest it to be right, and that my affliction is owing to the snares of enemies, and is not deserved (compare \*Psalm 42:4 61:2).
- **4.** Utter desolation is meant.

*right hand* — the place of a protector (\*\*Psalm 110:5).

cared for — literally, "sought after," to do good.

- **5.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 31:14 62:7).
- **6.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 17:1).
- **7.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 25:17).

**that I may praise** — literally, "for praising," or, "that Thy name may be praised," that is, by the righteous, who shall surround me with sympathizing joy (\*\*\*Psalm 35:27).

#### ◆●●PSALM 143:1-12.

In structure and style, like the preceding (Psalms 104-142), this Psalm is clearly evinced to be David's. It is a prayer for pardon, and for relief from enemies; afflictions, as usual, producing confession and penitence.

- **1.** *in thy faithfulness* ... *and* ... *righteousness* or, God's regard to the claims which He has permitted His people to make in His covenant.
- **2.** *enter* ... *judgment* deal not in strict justice.
- **shall no ... justified** or, "is no man justified," or "innocent" (\*\*\*\*Job 14:3 \*\*\*Romans 3:20).
- **3, 4.** The exciting reason for his prayer his afflictions led to confession as just made: he now makes the complaint.
- as those that have been long dead deprived of life's comforts (compare Psalm 40:15 88:3-6).
- **5, 6.** The distress is aggravated by the contrast of former comfort (\*Psalm 22:3-5), for whose return he longs.
- a thirsty land which needs rain, as did his spirit God's gracious visits (\*\*\*Psalm 28:1 89:17).
- 7. *spirit faileth* is exhausted.
- **8.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 25:1-4 59:16).
- **the way ... walk** that is, the way of safety and righteousness (\*\*\*\*Psalm 142:3-6).
- **9.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 31:15-20).
- **10.** (Compare Psalm 5:8 27:11).

*land of uprightness* — literally, "an even land" ( Psalm 26:12).

- **11.** (Compare Psalm 23:3 119:156).
- **12.** God's mercy to His people is often wrath to His and their enemies (compare \*Psalm 31:17).

thy servant — as chosen to be such, entitled to divine regard.

### **♥BEO**PSALM 144:1-15.

David's praise of God as his all-sufficient help is enhanced by a recognition of the intrinsic worthlessness of man. Confidently imploring God's interposition against his enemies, he breaks forth into praise and joyful anticipations of the prosperity of his kingdom, when freed from vain and wicked men.

### ◆PEOPSALM 145:1-21.

A Psalm of praise to God for His mighty, righteous, and gracious government of all men, and of His humble and suffering people in particular.

**1, 2.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 30:1).

**bless thy name** — celebrate Thy perfections (\*Psalm 5:11). God is addressed as king, alluding to His government of men.

**3.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 18:3 48:1).

greatness — as displayed in His works.

- **4.** *shall declare* literally, "they shall declare," that is all generations.
- **5.** *I will speak* or, "muse" (⁴™Psalm 77:12 119:15).

thy wondrous works — or, "words of thy wonders," that is, which described them (\*\*Psalm 105:27, *Margin*).

- **6.** terrible acts which produce dread or fear.
- **7.** *memory* (\*\*\*Psalm 6:5), remembrance, or what causes to be remembered.

*righteousness* — as in ⁴ Psalm 143:1, goodness according to covenant engagement.

**8, 9.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 103:8 111:4).

over all, etc. — rests on all His works.

- **10.** *bless* as in \*\*Psalm 145:1, to praise with reverence, more than merely to praise.
- **11, 12.** The declaration of God's glory is for the extension of His knowledge and perfections in the world.

- **13.** (Compare Daniel 4:3,34).
- **14.** (Compare \*\*\*\*Psalm 37:17 54:4).
- **15, 16.** eyes of ... thee or, look with expecting faith (\*\*\*\*Psalm 104:27,28).
- **17.** *holy* ... *works* literally, "merciful" or "kind, goodness" (\*\*E\*\*Psalm 144:2) is the corresponding noun.
- **righteous** in a similar relation of meaning to "righteousness" (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 145:7).
- **18, 19.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 34:7,10).
- **20.** Those who fear Him (\*\*\*Psalm 145:19) are those who are here said to love Him.
- **21.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 33:21).
- **all flesh** (\*\*\*Psalm 65:2). The Psalm ends, as it began, with ascriptions of praise, in which the pious will ever delight to join.

### PSALM 146:1-10.

An exhortation to praise God, who, by the gracious and faithful exercise of His power in goodness to the needy, is alone worthy of implicit trust.

### ◆●FOPPSALM 147:1-20.

This and the remaining Psalms have been represented as specially designed to celebrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem (compare Nehemiah 6:16 12:27). They all open and close with the stirring call for praise. This one specially declares God's providential care towards all creatures, and particularly His people.

- **1.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 92:1 135:3).
- **2.** (Compare Psalm 107:3 Saiah 11:12).
- **3.** Though applicable to the captive Israelites, this is a general and precious truth.

wounds — (Compare Margin).

**4, 5.** God's power in nature (and 15saiah 40:26-28), and often) is presented as a pledge of His power to help His people.

telleth ... stars — what no man can do (\*\*Genesis 15:5).

- **6.** That power is put forth for the good of the meek and suffering pious, and confusion of the wicked (\*\*\*Psalm 146:8,9).
- **7-9.** His providence supplies bountifully the wild animals in their mountain homes.

**Sing ... Lord** — literally, "Answer the Lord," that is, in grateful praise to His goodness, thus declared in His acts.

- **10, 11.** The advantages afforded, as in war by the strength of the horse or the agility of man, do not incline God to favor any; but those who fear and, of course, trust Him, will obtain His approbation and aid.
- **13.** *strengthened* ... *gates* or, means of defense against invaders,
- **14.** maketh ... borders or, territories ( Genesis 23:17 Isaiah 54:12).

*filleth thee*, etc. — (Compare *Margin*).

- **15-18.** God's Word, as a swift messenger, executes His purpose, for with Him to command is to perform (\*\*Genesis 1:3 \*\*\*Psalm 33:9), and He brings about the wonders of providence as easily as men cast crumbs.
- **17.** *morsels* used as to food ( Genesis 18:5), perhaps here denotes hail.
- **19, 20.** This mighty ruler and benefactor of heaven and earth is such especially to His chosen people, to whom alone (\*\*Deuteronomy 4:32-34) He has made known His will, while others have been left in darkness. Therefore unite in the great hallelujah.

#### 

The scope of this Psalm is the same as that of the preceding.

- **1.** *heavens* [and] *heights* are synonymous.
- **2.** *hosts* (compare \*\*Psalm 103:21).
- **4.** *heavens of heavens* the very highest.

*waters* — clouds, resting above the visible heavens (compare Genesis 1:7).

**5.** *praise the name* — as representing His perfections.

*he commanded* — "He" is emphatic, ascribing creation to God alone.

- **6.** The perpetuity of the frame of nature is, of course, subject to Him who formed it.
- a decree ... pass His ordinances respecting them shall not change (\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 36:31), or perish (\*\*\*\*\*Job 34:20 \*\*\*\*\*Psalm 37:36).
- **7-10.** The call on the earth, as opposed to heaven, includes *seas* or *depths*, whose inhabitants the dragon, as one of the largest (on leviathan, see on Psalm 104:26), is selected to represent. The most destructive and ungovernable agents of inanimate nature are introduced
- **8.** *fulfilling his word* or, law, may be understood of each. Next the most distinguished productions of the vegetable world.
- **9.** *fruitful trees* or, "trees of fruit," as opposed to forest trees. Wild and domestic, large and small animals are comprehended.
- 11, 12. Next all rational beings, from the highest in rank to little children.

*princes* — or, military leaders.

13. *Let them* — all mentioned.

excellent — or, exalted ( saiah 12:4).

his glory — majesty (\*\*\*Psalm 45:3).

above the earth and heaven — Their united splendors fail to match His.

**14.** *exalteth the horn* — established power (\*\*\*Psalm 75:5,6).

*praise of* — or literally, "for"

*his saints* — that is, occasions for them to praise Him. They are further described as "His people," and "near unto Him," sustaining by covenanted care a peculiarly intimate relation.

### \*\*\*\*PSALM 149:1-9.

This Psalm sustains a close connection with the foregoing. The chosen people are exhorted to praise God, in view of past favors, and also future victories over enemies, of which they are impliedly assured.

- **1.** (Compare \*\*Psalm 96:1).
- **2.** God had signalized His relation as a sovereign, in restoring them to their land.
- **3.** in the dance (\*\*\*Psalm 30:11). The dance is connected with other terms, expressive of the great joy of the occasion. The word may be rendered "lute," to which the other instruments are joined.

sing praises — or, sing and play.

**4.** *taketh pleasure* — literally, "accepts," alluding to acceptance of propitiatory offerings (compare \*\*\*E7\*\*IPsalm 147:11).

**beautify**, etc. — adorn the humble with faith, hope, joy, and peace.

- **5.** *in glory* the honorable condition to which they are raised.
- *upon their beds* once a place of mourning (\*\*\*Psalm 6:6).
- **7.** The destruction of the incorrigibly wicked attends the propagation of God's truth, so that the military successes of the Jews, after the captivity, typified the triumphs of the Gospel.
- **9.** *the judgment written* either in God's decrees, or perhaps as in Deuteronomy 32:41-43.

*this honor* — that is, to be thus employed, will be an honorable service, to be assigned

his saints — or, godly ones (\*\*\*\*\*Psalm 16:3).

### PSALM 150:1-6.

This is a suitable doxology for the whole book, reciting the "place, theme, mode, and extent of God's high praise."

**1.** *in his sanctuary* — on earth.

*firmament of his power* — which illustrates His power.

**2.** *mighty acts* — (\*\*Psalm 145:4).

excellent greatness — or, abundance of greatness.

- **3, 4.** *trumpet* used to call religious assemblies;
- **4.** *organs* or pipe, a wind instrument, and the others were used in worship.
- **5.** *cymbals* suited to loud praise (\*\*\*\*Nehemiah 12:27).
- 6. LIVING VOICES SHALL TAKE UP THE FAILING SOUNDS OF DEAD INSTRUMENTS, AND AS THEY CEASE ON EARTH, THOSE OF INTELLIGENT RANSOMED SPIRITS AND HOLY ANGELS, AS WITH THE SOUND OF MIGHTY THUNDERS, WILL PROLONG ETERNALLY THE PRAISE, SAYING: "ALLELUIA! SALVATION, AND GLORY, AND HONOR, AND POWER, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD"; ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH." AMEN!