

Against sell-
ing Hebrews
for slaves; and
stealing.

"Whoever shall privately sell a Hebrew into slavery shall be put to death; and he who steals from another either gold or silver, shall make a twofold restitution.

Theft.

"He shall not be subjected to the punishment of the law who shall kill a man in the act of stealing, or making forcible entry into an habitation, in order to rob the same.

Stealing cat-
tle.

"The penalty for stealing a labouring beast shall be four times the value of the property stolen, except the creature be an ox, and in that case the fine shall be quintuple: the robber not being able to discharge the penalty, shall be made a slave to the party he has injured.

Hebrews to
serve only six
years.

"One Hebrew being sold to another, shall serve for the term of six years, and be then emancipated: but in case of his having issue in the dwelling of his master, by any fellow-servant, and shall be inclined to continue in his servitude, himself, his wife, and children, shall be freed in the year of jubilee.

Goods found
to be restored.

"A man who shall find gold or silver upon the way, shall inquire for the owner, and restore it to him: and in regard to cattle, the person who shall find such as have gone astray, shall keep them till the proprietor can be discovered, calling heaven to witness that he covets not the goods of another man. It is contrary to the principles of humanity to take advantage of the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures.

Not to insult
the unfortunate.

The traveller
to be set right
in the way.

"Let those who observe a traveller to be at a loss upon the road, direct and advise him, according to the best of their knowledge and ability. To make a traveller the object of sport, and to impede the progress of his journey, and thereby delay his business, argues a cruelty of disposition.

Against back-
biters, &c.

"Speak not injuriously of absent persons, or of those labouring under the affliction of deafness.

Law concern-
ing assaults,
&c.

"If, in a quarrel, a man shall strike another, and not with a sword, the aggressor shall be punished by a number of blows equal to those constituting his offence. If the party assaulted linger for some days, and then expire, no action for murder shall ensue; but if he recover, the whole expence incidental to his cure shall be defrayed by the assailant. A man who by assaulting a woman shall cause her to miscarry, shall be adjudged to a forfeiture for the loss of a subject; and a further penalty shall be inflicted upon him, as a gratuity to the husband. If the woman die, the sentence of death shall be executed upon her destroyer; for the crime of taking away the life of a fellow-creature requires that the life of the offender be forfeited.

"Whoever shall be found with any poisonous preparation in his custody, shall suffer death, as a just punishment of his malicious designs.

Punishment of
poisoners.

"He who shall wilfully strike out the eye of another, shall make satisfaction in kind; unless the injured party shall be inclined to accept of a sum of money, as a compensation for the hurt he has sustained; the law, in this instance, leaving him to his option.

Law relating
to maiming.

"The owner of a vicious ox shall be obliged to kill him. If the animal chance to gore any person to death, let him be stoned, and let no man eat of his flesh; and, in this case, if it be proved that the owner of the beast had been made acquainted with his mischievousness, he shall himself be put to death, for neglecting to take proper precaution to prevent the above calamity. The master of an ox that hath killed either a male or a female slave, shall pay thirty shekels* to the owner of such slave. If one of those animals chanced to kill another, they shall both be sold, and the produce of the sale shall be equally divided between the two owners.

Vicious oxen
to be killed.

"Whoever digs a pit, or a well †, shall lay boards over it, and raise a mound about it, not with the view of excluding others from a participation of the water, but to prevent any accident which might happen therefrom either to man or beast; and if, in failure of such precaution, any animal shall unfortunately fall into such pit or well, the proprietor of the ground shall make good the value of the creature so lost.

Pits, &c. to be
covered.

"Whoever receives either money or effects in trust for another shall preserve the deposit inviolate, nor shall he suffer himself to be persuaded to deliver it to any person but the legal proprietor thereof, upon any consideration whatever. For, although there should be no witness either to the deposit, or to the peculation, in case he may have been guilty of it, yet his conscience will assuredly supply that defect, and will either condemn or acquit him in the sight of God, who cannot be deceived by the utmost exertion of human artfulness and fallacy. But if the deposit should be lost, without any bad design on the side of the person in whose hands it was entrusted, he shall present himself before the seven judges, of whom we have already spoken, and shall make a solemn declaration, upon oath, that he is not privy, in any respect whatever, to the manner in which it was lost; and he shall thus acquit himself of any imputation of fraud in the execution of his trust. But should any proof arise, in future, that he had converted the smallest part of the deposit to his own use, he shall be subjected to the payment of the whole.

Deposits left
in trust not to
be violated.

* This was the price of a slave; and can any thing give us a clearer idea of the malice and indignity expressed by the Jews, who when asked by Judas, what they would give him to betray his master? answered, Thirty pieces of silver; by that means degrading their king to the meanness of a slave!

† It is a common practice in those hot countries to dig for springs, and make large pits or cisterns, as receptacles for rain-water, which if left uncovered, cattle might easily fall into them, and be maimed or destroyed thereby.

Poor labour-
ers to be
punctually
paid.

"Ye shall observe the strictest punctuality in the payment of the labourers whom you employ; neither defrauding them of the smallest part of their just demands, nor delaying payment thereof a day beyond the time that the work is finished.

Children and
parents to be
punished for
their own sins.

"It were injustice to punish the children for the offences of their fathers: on the contrary, if their own disposition be naturally good, the circumstance of their parents' misconduct ought to be considered as a misfortune to them; and we are bound rather to revere them for their own virtues, than to despise them on account of the vices of others. Nor should we, in all cases, impute the wickedness of the children to those from whom they derive their birth; for there are some tempers so unaccountable as not to be influenced either by precept, example, or even by the severity of the punishment.

All castration
forbidden.

"Some persons, influenced by horrid and unnatural passion, voluntarily render themselves eunuchs, and thereby, as far as in them lies, counteract the design of nature and providence in the creation of the different sexes; rescinding, at the same time, the means of population, and, consequently, depriving the world, to the utmost of their power, of the benefit of posterity. Their minds also, must doubtless have been totally corrupted and debilitated, previously to their making this infamous experiment on their bodies. Avoid these wretches as monsters in nature; nor suffer any creature to be castrated, either of the human or brute species, as you, in that case, depart from the first institute of nature.

"The foregoing laws I have formed for the regulation of your conduct in times of peace; and I hope that both yourselves and your posterity will ever religiously adhere to them. Yet, as it must be expected that accidents will naturally arise in the best regulated states, I shall endeavour, in the fewest words possible, to give you such advice, as shall enable you to provide against all contingencies.

"May you possess in peace the land which God hath destined for your residence, and may you quietly reap the fruit of your toil and perseverance, unexposed to the attempts either of foreign enemies, or of more dangerous domestic foes; as an internal schism would hazard the destruction of the ancient form of government, both civil and religious, which was established by your ancestors, and is founded on such ordinances as they received from God himself: and from these you must never depart.

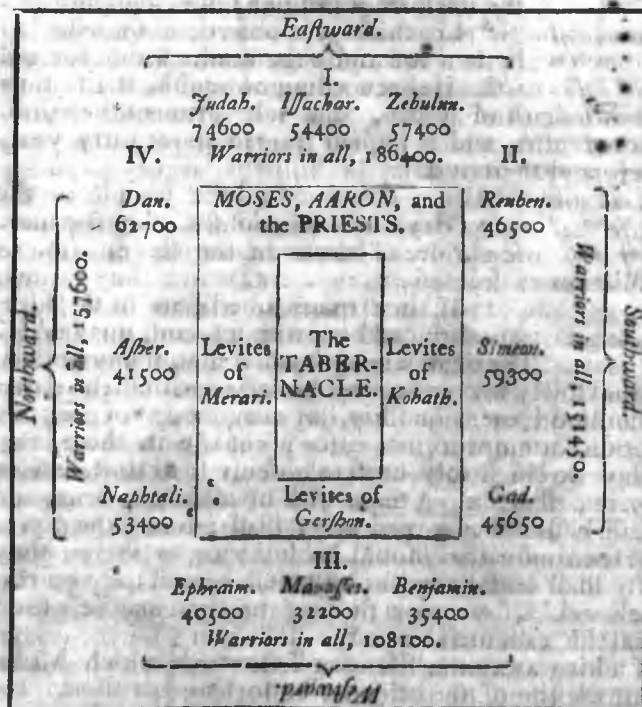
Advice in case
of war.

"If, however, either yourselves or your posterity should at any time be compelled to enter into a war, I sincerely wish it may be with a foreign foe. To avoid the blame of rashness and precipitation, let your proceedings be regulated in proper form. In the first place, send ambassadors to reason with your opponents, on the injustice of their conduct towards you; for it is but right that you should endeavour to settle your differences by a negotiation, without proceeding to force.

You may represent to them that it is not your desire to enrich yourselves with plunder, that you wish not to push matters to extremes, but are willing to accept of any terms which may be consistent with justice and reason; not arrogantly presuming on the superior advantages you enjoy in a numerous and well-disciplined army, plentifully provided with all kinds of military stores, or, what excels all, on the favour and protection of an Almighty Power, who will constantly fight on your side. But if your antagonists should determine to risk the event of a war, meet them boldly in the field, putting yourselves under the direction of the Almighty, and, next to him, of the most experienced and valiant man you can select from your whole army. Entrust the supreme direction of the war in the hands of a few only; for a multiplicity of leaders is prejudicial; not only on account of the dissensions, but also of the delays which too commonly arise from thence. Be careful in the choice of your soldiers, for their courage must be equal to their strength; as a defect of resolution in a few may suffice to dispirit and seduce a whole army*.

* It may not be amiss, in this place, to exhibit, at one view, the whole form, order, and manner of incampment of the Israelites, with the disposition of the twelve tribes, and the respective number of each, as in the following

T A B L E.



There was a peculiar banner or standard to each of these camps; and every standard had its motto or inscription, and likewise a distinct figure marked thereon. Reuben's standard was distinguished by the figure of a man; Judah's, that of a lion; Ephraim's, that of an ox; and Dan's, of an eagle. Ezekiel has also adopted the same four animals, in the description of his first vision. See Ezek. i. 10. and p. 64.

"But

Exemptions.

"But these following persons shall be excused from military service: the masters of new-built houses, in which they have not yet resided the term of one year intire; all such persons as have planted vineyards, the produce of which they have not yet tasted; and men lately married, who have not yet brought home their wives, lest such should devote those hours to dalliance which ought to be employed in the service of their country.

Discipline.

Fruit-trees to be spared.

"Let your troops be kept under the strictest discipline. If at any time during a siege, you should want wood, for the construction of military engines, or for any other purpose, ye shall not cut down any fruit-trees; seeing that they were both created and planted for uses very different from that to which you mean to apply them. Were they endued with the gift of speech, they would complain bitterly for the injustice of destroying them, who were guiltless of the cause of the war, or, with the view of promoting its progress; and would add, that, could they be permitted to change their situation, they would transplant themselves to some distant part of the earth.

Of giving quarter.

"When you have obtained a victory, put those to death who shall resist you, but save the lives of the rest, and render them your tributaries; excepting the Canaanites alone, the whole race of whom you shall utterly extirpate.

Dress to be distinct.

"No man shall be permitted to wear the dress of a woman, nor shall any woman, in battle particularly, assume that of a man."

Such were the laws and regulations which formed the basis of the Hebrew commonwealth, at the time of the death of Moses, who left various other ordinances also, which he had framed about forty years before that period.

Charge given by Moses.

Moses convened all the people on the next day, and obliged not only the men, women, and children, but even the slaves also, to enter into a solemn engagement, which they ratified by an oath, to pay the strictest obedience to the foregoing laws, unseduced by promises, and unawed by threats. They likewise promised that, if any person, how closely soever he was connected with them, either by blood or friendship, or any body of people, should attempt to introduce a change in those laws, they would firmly unite themselves against him or them; persecuting them with unceasing ardour, and utterly destroying their habitations: but, if the power of the innovators should be superior to theirs, they would at least enter their protest against the impiety, and would, by every possible means, manifest their utter detestation thereof.

This was the substance of the oath which Moses administered to the people on this occasion. He also gave them the necessary instructions relative to the manner of performing sacrifice; and recommended to them to undertake no enterprize of conse-

quence, till they should first have learnt how far the Almighty favoured their design, by observing the appearance of the precious stones in the breast-plate of Aaron, according to the manner before prescribed.

Moses then gave his instructions to Joshua, relative to the plan of operations which he was to pursue in the ensuing war against the Canaanites; giving him the strongest assurances that God would grant him success in his undertaking, and predicting many circumstances of the future prosperity of the people, of whom he afterwards took his leave in the following speech:

"I must acknowledge my own obligations to God's goodness, for the assistance he has been graciously pleased to afford me in all my endeavours to promote your happiness and welfare, in effecting which I have had no other share than as being an instrument in the hand of God. Let me remind you of the duty and reverence which you are bound to pay to that Supreme Power, who alone is intitled to your adoration. I would recommend it to you also to set a just estimate on the laws he hath communicated to you, through me, as being the most valuable and sacred of all his bounties. An earthly law-giver would naturally resent a neglect of his ordinances, and a contempt of his authority: judge then what will be the indignation of the supreme Being, who is your heavenly legislator, when he shall call you to account for your disregard of his commandments."

After having pronounced this speech, and blessed the several tribes, Moses proceeded to the spot where he was to die; and desired that the multitude would not follow him, to interrupt the tranquillity of his last moments. They obeyed; but still pursued his steps with weeping eyes and afflicted minds, till they could no longer discern him. He proceeded forwards, accompanied solely by the elders, with Eleazar the high-priest, and Joshua, whom it had pleased God to appoint as his successor. When he had reached the top of Abarim*, which is a very high mountain situated opposite to Jericho, he spent some short time in contemplating the prospect which lay before him of the fertile land of Canaan, and then dismissed the elders; retaining with him only Eleazar and Joshua. Having bid a final adieu to these two persons, and exchanged many reciprocal embraces, he was taken from their sight in a cloud, and conveyed into a neighbouring valley. It is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, that he died, lest the world should give into a notion that, on account of his eminent virtues, he had been translated immediately to heaven. He lived to the age of one hundred and twenty years; during a third part of which time, within one month, he possessed the supreme authority among the Hebrews. He died on the first day of the month Dystrus, as it is named by the Macedonians, and by us Adar: which is the concluding month of the year.

* In the country of the Moabites, between the rivers Arnon and Jordan, there were mountains which commanded a most extensive

and beautiful prospect of Canaan, which Moses was favoured with a view of, before his death.

This man excelled in wisdom, was a consummate orator, and possessed so admirable a command over his passions, that they seemed to form no part of his composition: as a general and a prophet, he surpassed all who have either preceded or followed him. The mourning for him continued thirty days; and the people were more affected by the loss of this great

* The character of Moses has been investigated by various writers, sacred as well as profane, who all agree in ascribing to him every quality necessary for a legislator and historian. He had undoubtedly a difficult part to act, and had as stubborn and rebellious a generation to govern, as any we read of in the whole compass of history. He was eminently endowed with meekness and patience, which were set

and virtuous man, than by any other misfortune that they had ever experienced. Nor was this the character which he had obtained among his contemporaries alone; but he has acquired as great reputation with posterity by his writings, as he did with those who lived in his own time, by the fame of his actions*.

in opposition to the turbulence and impetuosity of the Israelites; and was an eminent pattern of Him, who he predicted should in future rise out of his brethren, and who should be the founder of a new system as superior to that established by Moses, as the meridian splendor of the sun exceeds in brightness the glimmering light and feeble dawns of the day.

B O O K V.

Including TRANSACTIONS from the YEAR of the WORLD 2493, to 2850.

C H A P. I.

After the Death of MOSES, JOSHUA succeeds to the supreme Command; subdues the CANAANITES, and divides their Lands, by Lot, among the Tribes. The Death of JOSHUA.

Joshua dispatches spies to Jericho

THE last duties having been paid to the memory of Moses, and the time of mourning for him being now expired, Joshua commanded the people to prepare themselves for marching, and secretly dispatched certain persons to Jericho, to gain intelligence of the disposition of the inhabitants, and the strength of the place.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, having been permitted to settle themselves in the country of the Amorites, which includes a seventh part of the land of Canaan, Joshua assembled the leaders of those tribes on the present occasion, and, after reminding them of their obligations to Moses, urged them to fulfil the promises which they had formerly given him, and to afford their brethren the Hebrews every assistance in their power; with which they cheerfully engaged to comply, and, accordingly, joined the army with a body of fifty thousand men. Joshua then quitted Abila, and marched sixty furlongs nearer the river Jordan: the tents were scarcely pitched, when the spies which had been sent to Jericho returned, and gave the following account of what had befallen them in the execution of their commission.

That under the garb of strangers, they obtained a free access to the city, and were indulged in examining the walls, gates, and fortifications of the place, without the least molestation or hindrance; that, to-

wards evening, they retired to a house, in a quarter of the city adjoining to the wall, where they refreshed themselves; that, having finished their supper, while they were consulting on the means of effecting their retreat from the city, intelligence was brought them that the king had been made acquainted with their arrival, and with their concealment in the house of Rahab, and had ordered them to be instantly seized and put to the rack, for the purpose of extorting from them a confession of their designs; that, in consequence of this intelligence, Rahab conducted them to a retired part of the house, where she covered them over with a quantity of flax, and told the officers of justice, when they came to search for them, that it was true such strangers had come to her house that evening, about sun-set, but that they had departed immediately after supper, and, if instant pursuit were made after them, they might easily be overtaken; that the apparent simplicity of the woman so effectually imposed on the officers, that they retired without searching the house, and hastened towards the river Jordan, in hopes of discovering them; that, when the confusion which this alarm had occasioned was in some measure subsided, Rahab represented to them the great danger to which she had exposed both herself and her family, by secreting them, and exacted from them an oath, to preserve herself and her relations from the universal destruction in which, it had been revealed to her by the Almighty, the whole city was to be involved; that they cautioned her to be careful when the city should be attacked by the Hebrews, to remain closely shut up with her kindred in her own house, which she should distinguish from the rest by a scarlet thread affixed to the door, the intent of which signal should

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And Joshua said unto all the People, behold, this
Stone shall be a witness to us

be communicated to the general, who would, doubtless, protect from harm all those who should be found within the walls of that house; and that, having returned her repeated thanks for her kindness, they then departed, being let down from the top of the wall by a cord*, which Rahab had provided for that purpose. Eleazar the high-priest, and the elders, having been consulted how far the promise of safety which the spies had given to Rahab was binding, formally pronounced that it could not by any means be dispensed with.

As the city of Jericho was situated on the other side of the river Jordan, the waters of which were particularly rapid at that time, Joshua, being totally destitute of the means of passing his army over, became greatly dispirited at the prospect of these apparently insurmountable obstacles to his success; but God was pleased to revive his courage, by giving him a full assurance that those difficulties should be removed, and that the river should be rendered fordable.

Jordan miraculously divided. On the second day after receiving this revelation, the promise was made good to him, and the army passed over. During the whole time that the army was passing over, the priests remained in the midst of the channel; and when they also had landed, the waters resumed their former state.

The army then marched forwards to the distance of about fifty furlongs, and encamped within ten furlongs of the walls of Jericho. Joshua erected an altar on this spot, consisting of twelve stones, which twelve princes of the several tribes had, by his order, collected from the bottom of the channel of Jordan, with the view of perpetuating the remembrance of this miraculous separation of the waters. On this altar he offered sacrifices, and celebrated the feast of the passover in the place where he was then encamped. The corn being ripe, and the whole face of the country overspread with flocks and herds, the manna, which had been their only food for the space of forty years in the wilderness, failed them at this juncture: but the loss of this sustenance was amply compensated by the great abundance which they found themselves at full liberty to enjoy.

Joshua lays siege to Jericho The conduct of the inhabitants of Jericho, in suffering the Israelites to ravage the open country, while they continued close shut up within their walls, convinced Joshua that no consideration would be sufficient to induce them to meet him in the field; and he, therefore, determined to lay siege to the city. On the first day of the above festival, Joshua commanded a procession to be made

round the walls of the city, in the following order: seven priests, blowing horns or trumpets, to rouse the ardour of the troops, led the way: these were followed by others of the same function, carrying the ark on their shoulders, and attended by a numerous guard of soldiers: the procession was closed by the elders: when they had made the circuit of the city, they returned to the camp. This was repeated for six days successively; and on the seventh, Joshua, addressing himself to the army and people, acquainted them that they would become masters of the place on that very day, without the least effort on their part; as the walls would fall spontaneously, and leave the city utterly defenceless: enjoining them, at the same time, to put every living creature they should find therein to the sword, Rahab and her family only excepted, without reserving to their use the smallest part whatever of the plunder. He farther ordered that all the gold and silver should be collected together, and offered up to the Almighty, as the first-fruits of their conquests in the land of Canaan.

Having given them these instructions, The city taken. he advanced with his army towards the city, and, after having gone in procession seven times round the walls, with the priests, the elders, and the soldiers, in the manner mentioned above, they halted, and the walls suddenly fell to the ground, without the agency of any kind of engine, or other means to effect their fall. The consternation of the inhabitants was so great on the occasion, that they were deprived thereby of all power to defend themselves: and the Hebrews, entering the city without the least opposition, put all without distinction to the sword, save Rahab and her friends and family, Rahab and her family saved. who were preserved by the spies formerly mentioned, and conducted by them to Joshua, who made her many acknowledgements for the essential service she had rendered his agents, and rewarded her with a liberality becoming his high station.

After the total extinction of the inhabitants, the city itself was reduced to ashes, and a prophetic curse was denounced against those who should presume to rebuild it; purporting, that he who should lay the first stone of a new foundation should lose his eldest, and he who completed the undertaking, his youngest son. The gold, silver, and brass, which was found in the city, amounted to an immense value: and Joshua delivered the whole of it, without the least diminution, to the priests, to be deposited in the sacred treasury.

But, notwithstanding the strict precaution of Joshua, it so happened that Achar, Achar's theft.

* Rahab's house was fortunately situated on the town-wall, from whence, as soon as it was dark, she let them down by a cord from one of her windows which faced the country, the gates being shut by the king's orders. The cord she used for this purpose probably consisted of threads twisted together, so as to be able to sustain a man's weight; the Hebrew word *shanab* not signifying colour, but any thing twisted, from *shanab* to double.

† This anathema was pronounced, that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might be perpetually remembered. Hiel, in

the reign of Ahab, was so pleased with the beauty of its situation, that he rebuilt Jericho, 1 Kings xvi. 34. but in the attempt to lay the foundation, he lost his first-born, and his youngest son when he set up the gates of it; however, it afterwards became famous on many accounts. Here the prophet Elisha sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it and the neighbouring country; here Herod built a sumptuous palace; and here the great Redeemer of mankind wrought several miracles.

the son of Zebedee, of the tribe of Judah, having discovered among the plunder the king's cloak, which was of gold tissue, and an ingot of the same metal, weighing two hundred shekels, secreted the whole for his own private use. To palliate the action, he argued thus: that it was ridiculous to offer up to God such things as he could not possibly stand in need of; and that he had ventured his life to obtain this booty, which would be of infinite service to him: he therefore buried the articles in a hole which he dug in his tent; vainly imagining that he might deceive the Almighty with the same facility as he imposed on mankind. At this period, the army lay encamped at a place to which the Hebrews had given the name of Gilgal, signifying *liberty*; for they considered themselves as being fully secured from all attempts of the Egyptians, and from all misfortunes similar to those which they had experienced in the wilderness.

The Hebrews defeated.

In a short time after the destruction of Jericho, a body of three thousand men was detached by Joshua to possess themselves of the city of Ain, which was situated a small distance only from the former; but on this occasion the Hebrews were repulsed with the loss of thirty-six men. The news of this check threw the Israelites into the greatest consternation imaginable; not so much in consideration of the number killed, though they were all choice men, as of the bad effects which it might produce; for, having flattered themselves with a course of uninterrupted successes (in consequence of the promise they had received from God) they perceived that the spirits of their enemies were now revived, and this reflection induced them to set apart a whole day to the purpose of fasting and humbling themselves before God. So universal was the despondency with which the army was affected, that Joshua addressed himself to the Almighty on the occasion with more than usual importunity.

Joshua remained prostrate on the ground, whilst he prayed; at the conclusion God commanded him to rise, and to purify the army from a pollution which it had contracted, by a secret and sacrilegious theft, for which atonement must be made; enjoining him, at the same time, to cast lots for the discovery of the offender, who should instantly be put to death; after which the Israelites should infallibly obtain the victory over their enemies. Joshua, having received these instructions and assurances, communicated them to the people; and, in the presence of Eleazar the high-priest, and the princes of the several tribes, cast lots as he had been commanded; taking first the tribes, secondly, the families of each tribe, and lastly, the individuals of each family; when, in the conclusion, the lot fell upon Achar, who was of the family of Zacharis, of the tribe of Judah. He was immediately seized, and, finding himself detected, acknow-

Achar's crime discovered, and punished.

ledged the fact, and delivered up the effects he had secreted in the sight of all present. He was instantly dragged away to an ignominious death; and his body, like that of a common malefactor, was interred without any of the customary honours.

The army being thus purified, Joshua led them against the city of Ain* or Ai, having previously planted a body of troops in ambuscade, and the next morning at day-break offered the enemy battle. The people of Ain were so elated with their recent success, that with the most daring intrepidity they attacked the Israelites, who, on their side, feigned to give ground, till they had drawn their foes to a convenient distance from the city; when, upon a signal given, they halted, and, at the same instant, the troops which had been placed in ambuscade, suddenly entered the city, with little or no resistance on the part of the inhabitants, the majority of whom had got upon the walls to be spectators of the battle; imagining, from the appearance of matters, that the victory was already nearly won. A dreadful slaughter, however, ensued in the city; and those troops which had marched out to the attack, having been, in the intermediate time, totally defeated by the army of Joshua, retreated towards Ain for shelter; but, when they perceived the disaster which had befallen their city, they fled, in the utmost confusion, to seek an asylum in the fields and woods; but of those who escaped in this manner, the number was very inconsiderable. The booty taken on this occasion was of an immense value; consisting of a vast number of women, children, and bond slaves, a prodigious quantity of plate and costly furniture, numerous flocks and herds, and coined money to a very large amount. Both the city, and all the adjacent country, in short, abounded in riches, and the plunder was divided among the troops which were encamped in Galgala.

Ain taken and plundered.

The Gibeonites, whose country was situated at a small distance from Jerusalem, having learnt the wretched fate of the two cities of Jericho and Ain, began to reflect that a like doom, in all probability, would soon befall themselves, unless they could devise some expedient to ward off the impending danger. They proposed to their neighbours, the Cephirites, and to the people of Kerjath-jearim, to unite with them in a solicitation to the Hebrews for an alliance, representing to them, that, if they should not succeed in their views, their common interest required that they should join their forces, in mutual assistance of each other. The proposal was adopted, and a deputation was sent to Joshua, consisting of such persons as were deemed the best qualified for the task of executing such a commission. These deputies were instructed cautiously to conceal from Joshua the knowledge of their being Canaanites, but, on the contrary, to insinuate

Fraudulent conduct of the Gibeonites.

to go up, though before they thought it might be taken by three thousand men, because their former defeat should not intimidate them, and because they might all enjoy the benefit of the plunder.

that

* God would not destroy Ai by a miracle, as he had done Jericho, because the people were now to appear formidable to other nations, both on account of their courage and policy. They were all

to go up, though before they thought it might be taken by three thousand men, because their former defeat should not intimidate them, and because they might all enjoy the benefit of the plunder.

that they came from a distant land, and that they held no connection whatever with the people of that country. They were farther instructed to pretend, that the same which the Hebrews had acquired had induced them to come thus far, to form an alliance with them; observing that the condition of their cloaths evinced the great length of the journey they had taken; being now worn to tatters, although quite new when they first departed from home. The garments themselves, also, were adapted, both in point of materials, and every other particular, to favour the deception. They accordingly presented themselves, thus habited, before the assembly of the chiefs of the Hebrews, in the quality of deputies from the Gibeonites, the Cephirites, and the people of Kerjath-jearim; requesting to be admitted to the honor of an alliance with them, and offering them their friendship and assistance, on the sole condition of being secured in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges; adding, that they were apprized of the promises of God to the Israelites, to put them in possession of the whole land of Canaan, and sincerely congratulated them on this predilection of the Almighty for their nation. Joshua was so far deceived by the specious pretext and appearance of these men, that he readily entered into a treaty with them, to which the high-priest and the elders acceded at the same time; and it was afterwards ratified, in the most solemn manner, in the presence and with the consent of the whole multitude assembled. Having thus insidiously effected their purpose, the deputies now returned to their respective cities†. Soon afterwards Joshua advanced with the army to that part of the land of Canaan which borders upon the plains.

Their artifice discovered. Here he learnt that those Gibeonites and their confederates were of the Canaanitish race, and dwelt not far from Jerusalem. He, therefore, commanded the attendance of some of the principal men of the country, and reproached them with the dissimulation of their late conduct; which they vindicated in the best manner they were able upon the plea of necessity. When the high-priest and the elders were consulted as to the validity of a treaty thus surreptitiously obtained, they were clearly of opinion that it could not in justice be dispensed with; but proposed, by way

Their punishment. of modification, that the Gibeonites and the rest should be condemned to the most servile offices of labour, to which condition they gladly submitted for the preservation of their lives.

When this revolt of the Gibeonites, and their alliance with the Hebrews, was communicated to the king of Jerusalem, he was so highly incensed on the occasion, that, joining his troops with those of the kings of four of the neighbouring districts, he laid siege to their city; encamping his army near a certain fountain not far distant from the walls of the place. In this emergency the Gibeonites applied to Joshua for assistance; being thus compelled to have recourse to those who had taken up arms against them, to preserve them from the attacks even of their own countrymen and neighbours. Joshua hastened to their aid, and, after marching night and day, attacked the enemy early in the morning, at the very instant they were about to assault the place; totally routed, and pursued them through a considerable extent of country, as far as the valley of Bethorah. Never did the Almighty manifest himself more strongly in favour of the Hebrews, than on the present occasion; for, exclusive of a violent storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with hail of a surprising size, which lasted during the whole time of the battle, the sun itself, to the utter amazement of every spectator, stood still in the firmament, and thus prolonged the day far beyond its usual extent; that the Hebrews might have sufficient day-light to complete their victory over their enemies. The five kings fled for safety to the cave of Makkada, where they were all discovered by Joshua, who put them to death. The circumstance of the progress of the sun being stopped is fully authenticated in the copies of the sacred writings, which are deposited in the temple. After this victory, Joshua marched the army back to the hilly part of Canaan, where he put great numbers of the people to the sword, acquired a large booty in cattle, and then returned with his troops to Gilgal.

League against the Gibeonites.
They apply to Joshua,
who overcomes the confederate kings.

The same of the military actions of the Hebrews spread universal terror through the land. Nevertheless, the kings of that part of the country of Canaan which lies contiguous to Mount Libanus, and to the

of the same of him, and all that he did in Egypt, &c. The idea which they had conceived should have put them upon some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have inquired into the cause of God's severity against them; they should have acknowledged that it was their grievous sins which drew down his heavy judgments upon their nation; and after they had repented, they should have left the rest to Providence.

† Puffendorff observes, that "the artifice of the Gibeonites had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deserve the name of a lie: for what crime is there in any one's making use of an innocent fiction, in order to elude the fury of an enemy, that would destroy all before them? Nor indeed did the Israelites properly receive any damage from this imposture; for what does any one lose, in not shedding the blood of another, after having so weakened and disarmed him, that he is no longer able to rebel against him? Had the Israelites, indeed, been only a company of banditti, who were carrying blood and desolation into countries where they had no right; or had the Gibeonites been ignorant that a miraculous Providence conducted those conquerors; the fraud which they here practised, might have been deemed innocent. But the case of the Israelites was particular: and if, in other things, they went contrary to truth, in this they certainly adhered to it, when they told Joshua, We are come because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard

of the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, &c. The idea which they had conceived should have put them upon some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have inquired into the cause of God's severity against them; they should have acknowledged that it was their grievous sins which drew down his heavy judgments upon their nation; and after they had repented, they should have left the rest to Providence.

plains,

plains, as also the kings of the Philistines, united their forces, with the view of attacking the Hebrews, and encamped, with an army consisting of three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and two thousand chariots, near a city named Beerothe, which is situated at a small distance from the Upper Coedelia, in the province of Galilee. The formidable appearance of this army greatly dispirited both the Israelites and their general; insomuch that their fear fell little short of desperation: but the Almighty reproaching them with their cowardice, and dilidence of his power to protect them, and renewing his assurances of victory, he enjoined them to hamstring the horses, and consume the chariots of the enemy with fire; thus encouraged, they quickly recovered their resolution, and boldly marched against the foe, with the fullest confidence of success. On the fifth day the armies joined battle, and the contest was maintained for a considerable time, with

The Canaanites subdued and exterminated, and their country possessed by the Israelites.

equal obstinacy. The Canaanites were, however, at length broken and put to flight, and the slaughter of them was so great as almost to exceed belief: all the kings being killed, and their whole army in a manner annihilated: and such was the

fury of the victors, that when there remained none of the enemy to kill, they wreaked their vengeance on the horses and chariots. This decisive victory put Joshua in possession of the whole country. He made himself master of their cities, and destroyed the inhabitants where-ever he could find them. The very nation became, at length, extinct, save a small number of persons, who fortunately effected their retreat to certain places of considerable strength. And all these successes were obtained in the short space of five years.

After this victory Joshua marched from Gilgal, and encamped on the mountains near Siloe, where he fixed the tabernacle, and proposed to remain till an opportunity should offer for erecting a temple; the situation of the place being perfectly adapted to that design. From thence he repaired, accompanied by all the people, to Sichem,

Joshua erects an altar at Sichem.

where, according to the command and prediction of Moses, he erected an altar. He then separated his army into two bodies, one of which he posted on Mount Garizim, and the other on Mount Geba; assigning to each an equal number of the priests and levites; and on the latter of the two mountains he built another altar. On this altar they sacrificed, and, after denouncing the maledictions formerly recited, and causing them to be inscribed upon the altar, they returned back to Siloe.

Joshua was now far advanced in years, and, reflecting that the Canaanites still retained possession of several places, which art and nature had combined to

render in a manner impregnable. Joshua convened a general assembly of the people at Siloe, which was very numerous, and all their proceedings were conducted with the utmost harmony. Joshua, in a very concise speech, acquainted them with the cause of their being summoned together. He began with representing to them the numerous successes with which God had been pleased already to favour them, in consequence of their religious observance of his laws; one and thirty monarchs having been dispossessed by them of their dominions: he observed, however, that the Canaanites still retained possession of many strong cities, the conquest of which would necessarily take up a considerable time; and that, for this reason, he thought it adviseable to permit those tribes which had come to their assistance from the other side of Jordan, to return home. He also recommended that a certain number of persons should be selected out of each tribe, of reputed probity and skill, who should be employed to take a survey of the whole land of Canaan, and to return a faithful report thereof, with all possible dispatch.

In a general assembly, Joshua reminds the people of God's goodness to them.

This proposal was unanimously approved, and, proper persons being immediately chosen for the execution of this commission, Joshua appointed several able geometricians to attend and assist them.

They were also instructed, exclusive of the estimate which they were to make of the extent of the country, to form another of the comparative fertility of the soil in different parts: for in Canaan there are many long tracts of land, which, when set in competition with some others, may be deemed fruitful, but which bear no proportion in fertility to the ground in the neighbourhood of Jericho and Jerusalem. The persons who were commissioned to execute this business, were ten in number; answering to the tribes which were to partake in the division of the country. These commissioners, after an absence of seven months, returned to Siloe with the estimates they had formed, at which place the tabernacle still remained.

Joshua, hereupon, in the presence of Eleazar the high-priest, the elders, and the princes of the tribes, divided the whole country by lot between the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manasses; proportioning each share to the number of persons in the tribe to which it was allotted.

Canaan divided by lot among the tribes.

Joshua was now rendered incapable, by age and infirmities, to discharge the duties of his station; and, perceiving that they to whom he intrusted the direction of affairs, as well as they who were destined to succeed him in the supreme command, were totally regardless of the public welfare, he strictly enjoined each tribe respectively, utterly to exterminate such of the

Joshua enjoins the people to extirpate the Canaanites.

§ The first lot that came up was for the tribe of Judah, that the prophecy of Jacob, with regard to the preeminence of that tribe, might be fulfilled. This lot was only a quantity of land for the whole

tribe; unto every family of which a portion was assigned by Joshua, and those who were appointed to see that none were neglected, and that they had every one a just portion.

Canaanites

Canaanites as might remain in the several quarters which they had obtained for an inheritance; reminding them also of the earnestness with which Moses had recommended to them this measure; and expressing his confidence of their paying all due attention to the advice of their late legislator. He strictly charged them to put the Levites in possession of the remaining thirty-eight, out of the forty-eight cities assigned them by Moses; they having already obtained those ten cities which were situated in Amorrrhæa, on the other side of the river Jordan. Of these cities three were appointed as places of refuge: in the district belonging to the tribe of Judah, the city of Hebron was set apart for the above purpose; in that of the tribe of Ephraim, the city of Sichem; and Cedese, in the Upper-Galilee, in the portion of the tribe of Naphtali: to all these regulations, from the great respect which they bore to the ordinances of Moses, the people very willingly consented. Joshua then proceeded to share the plunder which had been taken from the Canaanites among his troops; which plunder consisted of cattle and flocks, money, plate, household furniture, and other articles to an incredible amount; and every individual of the Hebrew army became enriched by the booty which fell to his lot on the present occasion.

Joshua's last exhortation to the people. Joshua, perceiving that the infirmities of age had now rendered him totally unfit for all public business, convened an assembly of the elders, the princes of the tribes, and the magistrates, together with as many of the commonalty as could conveniently attend. In a pious and pertinent discourse, which he had composed for that purpose, he represented to them the great obligations they were under to that Almighty Being, who, from the very abyss of misery and distress, had raised them to the highest pitch of reputation and plenty. He enjoined them so to conduct themselves in future, as to render themselves worthy of a continuance of the divine favour and protection; assuring them in the strongest terms, that their very existence as a nation depended on the due observance of the commands of the Almighty Power. He conjured them to pay a proper attention to the advice he had given them, as he was now on the verge of his departure from this world, and had conceived that he could not employ the last moments of his life in any manner more to their advantage, than in exhorting them to the strictest observance of their duty to God. He then took a great stone, and set it up under an oak, to be a witness against them, in case they denied their God, and worshipped idols.

His death; Having pronounced these words, he expired, in the one hundred and tenth year of his age, forty of which he had spent under the tutorage of Moses, and had governed the people, in

† Several of the Canaanitish kings remaining still unconquered, and the number of the Israelites being greatly multiplied, they determined to drive out the Canaanites; and, in order to this, asked of God by Urim and Thummim which of the tribes should begin the No. 5.

quality of his successor, for twenty-six years. He was particularly eminent for his political knowledge, and for his admirable faculty of expression and persuasion; equally qualified to conduct the most important operations either of war or peace; and, in short, a person in every respect adapted to the execution of the high office to which God had appointed him. Nearly about this time also died, Eleazar and that of the high-priest, who was succeeded by his son Phinehas. The tomb of Eleazar is still to be seen in the city of Gabatha.

The people having consulted Phinehas relative to the farther prosecution of the war against the Canaanites †, received for answer that it was God's pleasure that they should continue it, but that they should commit the supreme management and direction thereof to the tribe of Judah. This tribe associated to themselves the tribe of Simeon; and it was agreed, that they should mutually assist each other in extirpating the Canaanites who still remained unsubdued in their respective districts.

C H A P. II.

The CANAANITES defeated, and King ADONIBEZEC made Prisoner. The ISRAELITES besiege JERUSALEM, and take HEBRON by Assault. Melancholy History of a LEVITE, and his Wife. The War of the BENJAMITES.

ADONIBEZEC was at this period at the head of a formidable army in the neighbourhood of the city of Bezece, waiting for an opportunity to engage the enemy, over whom they expected to obtain an easy conquest on account of the loss they had sustained in the death of their general. The tribes of Judah and Simeon gave them battle, which was supported with surprising bravery on both sides, but at length, ten thousand of the Canaanites were put to the sword, many taken prisoners, and the rest fled from the fury of their conquerors. Adonibezec was among the number of captives, and he was condemned to have his fingers and toes cut off; he admitted this sentence to be a merited judgment of heaven, for having himself inflicted the same species of cruelty upon seventy-two kings. When this sentence had been executed, he was conveyed to Jerusalem, where he died and was buried.

The Israelites traversed the country, laying waste the towns, and ravaging the parts through which they directed their course; they at length laid siege to Jerusalem, and gained possession of the lower town, the inhabitants of which they put to death: but the situa-

tion. war. Judah was ordered to attack the mountainous country, which was in the lot of his inheritance; according to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 8.

tion of the city itself, the strength of the walls and the fortifications proving obstacles not to be surmounted, Hebron taken by storm. they retreated to Hebron, to which place they laid siege and conquered it by assault, great numbers of the people falling victims to the rage of the assailants. Among the dead were found many bodies of the race of giants, who were a people so greatly surpassing the rest of mankind in bulk and stature, and in other respects so widely differing from them, that great numbers who beheld them, imagined them to be a different species. The bones of some of this gigantic race have been reserved, and exposed as prodigies.

The town of Hebron, which was a place of some importance, with two thousand cubits of the circumjacent ground, was assigned to the Levites; the other part of the territory having been granted to Caleb, in conformity to the determination and appointment which had been made by Moses. Caleb was one of the persons whom Moses had deputed to reconnoitre the land of Canaan. A portion of land was also given to the sons of Jethro the Midianite, who was father-in-law to Moses, as a gratuity for having abandoned their native country and joined the Israelites, sharing the hazard of the war and the troubles which they encountered in the desert.

The Israelites now declined the resolution of proceeding to a war against the people of Canaan, whom they determined to employ in the occupation of husbandry, expecting to reap very considerable advantage from their labour. But being violently addicted to avarice and luxury, they soon became wholly regardless of their duty to God, and of the discipline and legislative institutions of their forefathers, yielding an implicit sway to their inordinate appetites. God is displeased with the Israelites for their sloth and luxury. The Almighty being highly offended by this depravity of conduct, signified to them, that they should meet a speedy retribution ~~in~~ having neglected to prosecute the war, and that the Canaanites themselves should execute the punishment denounced against them for their unseasonable lenity. They were so lost to the principles of religion, that though this revelation of the divine will gave them some alarm, it was not sufficient to induce them to commence hostilities. Their luxurious indulgences had enervated them, and destroyed their genius and inclination for military exploits; and the profit derived from the tribute and labour of the Canaanites proved an additional motive to continue them in a state of inactivity*. No regularity was observed in the election of the senators and other magistrates, nor obedience paid to the authority of the elders; the people endeavouring only to promote their separate interests, without regard to the public welfare; and

* Though the extraordinary providence of the Deity might have ceased for a time, and though the Israelites were left to effect by natural means what they had hitherto effected by divine assistance, it is evident from this verse, that they were able to dispossess the Canaanites, had they not been unwilling. Their allowing them to become tributaries, when they were under an obligation to extirpate

the government having arrived to a state of total dissolution, an insurrection happened on the following occasion, and the consequence was an intestine war:

In the lot of Ephraim was a Levite, who had married a woman of the city of Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah, for whom History of the Levite's wife, abused by the Benjamites. he entertained the most tender and ardent affection; but as she did not manifest an equal return of passion, frequent differences happened between them; and in the fourth month after their nuptials, she eloped, and returned to her parents. Grieved at this unfortunate circumstance, he hastened in pursuit of her, and was entertained with the greatest hospitality and kindness by her relations; and a reconciliation being effected between him and his wife, he proposed to return on the fifth day, but the friends being unwilling to leave each other, their departure was delayed to a late hour. An ass being provided to carry the woman, they set out, attended only by one servant, who, when they had proceeded about thirty furlongs, advised them to take an opportunity of securing a lodging at some adjacent place, that they might avoid the danger to which they would be exposed by travelling by night, and in the country of an enemy; urging, that being observed on the road at a late hour, might subject them to injurious suspicions. The city being at this time in possession of the Canaanites, the husband was not inclined to take up his residence there, but resolved to travel twenty furlongs further, in order to obtain an asylum among his friends and allies.

On the road towards Gabaa, a city in possession of the tribe of Benjamin, they found themselves, at a late hour of the night, destitute of all probability of procuring a lodging; but they were met by an eminent man of the tribe of Ephraim, who was returning from the country to his house at Gabaa, and he enquired the reason of their being abroad at so unseasonable a time; in answer to which, the husband said he was a Levite, and conducting his wife from her father's house to their own house, in the lot of Ephraim. From a principle of hospitality, and a regard to the tribe of which the travellers were members, the old man invited them to take shelter in his dwelling. This offer being accepted, some dissolute young men of the town observed in the woman an uncommon share of beauty, and when she had entered the house, they knocked at the door, and insisted that she should be delivered to them. The old man expostulated with them on the heinous crime of violating the principles of religion, humanity and common justice, by perpetrating any violence upon his guest, who, being his kinswoman and the wife of a Levite, he was bound to protect. But these arguments were treated with contempt, and they obli-

them if they did not quit their idolatry, argued a great propensity to their superstitions, was a direct violation of the divine command, was an act of open rebellion against God, considered as their king, and involved them in all that train of miseries and corruptions, which had been denounced as the punishment, and were the natural effects of their pusillanimous lenity.

nately

nately persisted in their demand of having the woman resigned to them, uttering the most horrid imprecations, and threatening to cut the old man's throat if he continued to protect her. In this extremity, he offered them his own daughter instead of the Levite's wife; judging it to be most eligible thus to preserve the rights of hospitality, and the faith of society, at the expence of the reputation of a private family.

Shocking conduct of the men of Gabaa.

But so determined were they on the execution of their brutal design, that neither intercession or argument would prevail; and in this disposition they seized the woman, and forcibly conveyed her to their quarters, where the night was spent in scenes of the most profligate lewdness; and in the morning they suffered her to return. The unhappy event which had befallen her, overwhelmed her with grief, shame, and indignation against the spoilers of her honour, and considering herself to be branded with the indelible stamp of infamy, she dreaded an interview with her husband; and so sensibly affected was she by the peculiar delicacy of her situation, that upon approaching him, she suddenly dropt down, and instantly expired. At first her husband supposed her to be oppressed with fatigue, or attacked with a fainting fit, and endeavoured to revive her, speaking in the most tenderly affectionate terms, expressive of his unabating regard, and uttering the most soothing and pathetic assurances, that notwithstanding the violence which had been offered to her, he did not consider her as being degraded from the dignity of unblemished virtue. But at length, he discovered that the animal powers were exhausted; and on this alarming occasion he manifested a remarkable instance of fortitude: he put the corpse on the ass which his wife had rode, and conveyed it to his habitation; where he separated it into twelve parts, which he distributed among the twelve tribes. The persons employed to deliver the parts of the body to the different tribes, were directed circumstantially to relate the barbarity which had been offered to the deceased, and to particularise the parties concerned in the horrid wickedness.

Indignation of the other tribes thereat.

The people were so much exasperated against the perpetrators of this unparalleled act of cruelty, that they assembled before the tabernacle at Siloe, determining immediately to assault the city of Gabaa, and execute an exemplary punishment upon the ravishers. Hereupon the elders assuaged the first impulse of their rage, by representing the impudence of a precipitate declaration of war against their allies, and recommending a scrutiny into the merits of the cause in dispute. They urged that the laws and customs of the Israelites would not admit of having recourse to hostilities, previous to a negotiation for a compromise: they, therefore, advised that application might be made for

giving up the offenders for the purpose of subjecting them to a punishment adequate to their guilt, urging that, in case of a refusal, they might then appeal to the sword for redressing the wrongs they had sustained.

In consequence of this advice, the Israelites demanded the ravishers; and they alleged, that they had determined to punish the particular persons who had been guilty of the offence, rather than involve the community in the cause of these profligate individuals. But the inhabitants of Gabaa gave an absolute refusal, declaring, that they held it not consistent with the principles of honour to yield submission from an apprehension of a war; that they were not deficient in point either of power or military skill; and that they were unanimously determined to maintain their common defence with unremitting ardor. Highly incensed by this reply, the Israelites joined in a solemn covenant against contracting marriage with the tribe of Benjamin, and to prosecute a war against that people with a degree of vigour equal to that manifested by their progenitors against the Canaanites.

Compact of the Israelites against Benjamin.

In consequence of this resolution, they marched against the enemy, the army being composed of four hundred thousand men; and they were opposed by the Benjamites with a force of twenty-five thousand six hundred, including five hundred slingers, so particularly dextrous in their profession, that they were equally certain of their mark, whether using their implements with the left or right hand. The armies joined battle in the neighbourhood of Gabaa, and the Benjamites obtained a victory, and put twenty-two thousand of their enemies to death, and the slaughter would in all probability, have been much more considerable had not a suspension of hostilities been caused by the appearance of night. The Benjamites returned triumphant to the city, and the Israelites repaired to their camp, in the utmost disorder, and under a great depression of spirits. On the following day the battle was renewed; and in this contest also, the Israelites were defeated, with the loss of eighteen thousand men. So greatly were they affected by these misfortunes, that they removed towards Bethel, observing a solemn fast on the next day, and, by the agency of Phinehas * the high-priest, supplicating the Almighty to remove his displeasure from them, and to grant them a superiority over the Benjamites.

They are twice defeated by the Benjamites.

The Almighty having listened to the prayers of the prophet and returned him a favourable answer; the army was separated into two bodies, one of which was drawn up in order of battle, and the other sub-divided into parties of ambush, encompassing

The Israelites, supplicating the divine aid, obtain a promise of victory.

* This was the same person whose zeal for the glory of God was manifested on a former occasion. The proper epocha of this war must have been between the death of Joshua and the appointment

of the first judge; for if we place it after the death of Samson, (as in the book of Judges,) Phinehas must have been upwards of 300 years old.

the city. With a view to entice the Benjamites from the town, on the first attack the Israelites retreated, continuing to lose ground in proportion as the enemy advanced; imagining victory to be secure, they evacuated the town, in expectation of obtaining plunder; but when they had arrived within a certain space of the ambush, the Israelites faced about, and giving a signal for the other part of the army to fall upon the rear, fought with great fury, pursuing the Benjamites to a valley, where they were surrounded, and twenty-five thousand of them put to the sword. A chosen body of six hundred intrepid men, who had cut their passage through the midst of the enemy's troops, took up their quarters in an adjacent mountain.

Gabaa, &c.
taken by the
Israelites.

The Israelites now proceeded to burn the city of Gabaa, and, without distinction of age or sex, they sacrificed the inhabitants; and many other cities belonging to the Benjamites shared the same fate; and so implacable was the animosity consequent on this dispute, that they detached a party of twelve thousand men against Jabes, a city of Gilead, which they subdued, and, on account of the inhabitants having refused to espouse the cause of the Israelites in the war against the Benjamites, they were all massacred, excepting only four hundred virgins.

Deplorable
state of the
fugitive Ben-
jamites.

The tribe of Benjamin being in a manner cut off from the main body, the Israelites experienced some compunction at having carried their revenge to so great an extremity: and they proposed the observance of a fast, but not intending thereby to indicate a consciousness of having done wrong by inflicting a punishment upon the offenders against the law. They dispatched messengers to invite the return of the six hundred men who had escaped to the mountains. They were found upon a rock called Rhoa, by the persons

The Israelites
relent and in-
vite them to
return.

commissioned to treat with them. As a means to induce them to return, the messengers pleaded the unhappiness of their relations consequent on their departure, sympathizing with them in their own distresses, and representing that the tribe to which they belonged would inevitably be destroyed if they longer persisted to oppose the desired re-association; adding, that, on condition of their compliance, their lands, cattle, and other effects should be faithfully restored. They accepted the proposals made by the messengers, acknowledged the punishment inflicted upon them to be a righteous judgment of heaven for the offences they had committed, and submitting themselves to the authority of their superiors, again connected themselves in a fellowship with their tribe.

Previous to the war, the Israelites had engaged, by the solemnity of an oath, not to intermarry with the tribe of Benjamin; some expedient, therefore, be-

came necessary for providing wives for these six hundred men. One party were of opinion, that as the oath was made under the impulse of sudden passion, it necessarily became void; others held that the pressing exigency of the matter depending, effectually discharged the obligation, alledging that the commission of perjury could not be construed to be a criminal act, if the party was not influenced by a malicious motive, and that it would be more acceptable to the Almighty to dispense with the observance of the obligation, than to exact a rigid obedience to it, and thereby expose a whole tribe to imminent danger. But the elders declared themselves utterly averse to the very idea of perjury, and would not admit the force of any palliative circumstances. The four hundred virgins who were preserved from the slaughter at Jabes, were given in marriage to four hundred of the Benjamites; and for providing wives for the other two hundred, without violating the oath, one of the senators recommended the following expedient: on an approaching festival*, which was celebrated three times a year at Siloe, he advised that the Benjamites might be allowed to take such virgins to wife as they might be able to carry off; adding that, if the fathers of the virgins should apply for justice, the answer to them should be, that they ought to have prevented the mischief by a more circumspect attention to the safety of their daughters; and that the ill-policy of creating disagreements between the Israelites and Benjamites had been already proved by fatal experience. On the arrival of the festival above alluded to, the two hundred Benjamites remained in an unmarried state, dispersed themselves in the town, and as the maidens were repairing towards the place where the customary solemnity was to be celebrated, they were surprized by the Benjamites, each man seizing one of them, and conveying her to his plantation. They now assiduously applied themselves to the business of husbandry, and were, at length retrieved from a miserable and desponding condition to a state of great opulence and power.

Expedient for
providing
wives for the
remaining
Benjamites.

The Israelites now entirely relinquished the profession of arms, and employed themselves in rural occupations. The Canaanites availed themselves of this change of disposition, and formed a conspiracy, intending so effectually to reduce them as to prevent all probability of their reviving into a formidable enemy. They trained up the people in the discipline of war, raised a powerful army, and provided chariots and other martial implements; they prevailed upon Ascalon and Accaron, and several cities in the plains, to espouse their cause. The Danites judging that they could not safely continue to reside in the campaign country, fled for sanctuary to the mountains. Their force was not sufficient successfully to maintain a war,

The Canaan-
ites dispossess
the Danites.

* All the three great festivals were to be observed at the place where God had settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh. Probably the feast here meant was that of tabernacles, which was a

time of great joy, and was also the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance.

nor would the produce of the land they possessed afford a subsistence in a tranquil state: they, therefore, dispatched five of their people to discover some favourable spot for fixing their residence in the inland part of the country. Adjacent to mount Libanus and the head of the lesser Jordan, these commissioners, after a day's journey, perceived a fertile, and every way commodious situation; of which they made an immediate report to their tribe, who speedily marched to the place, and there erected a city, giving it the name of *Dan*, from one of Jacob's sons by whose name the whole tribe was distinguished.

The Israelites were now shamefully abandoned to indolence and luxury, and degenerated from a due observance of the laws and religion of the Almighty; and, in short, the corruption and vices of the Canaanites prevailed amongst them without controul, so that the government seemed to be threatened with a speedy dissolution.

C H A P. III.

The Judgment of God upon the ISRAELITES, who are subdued by, and kept Eight Years in Subjection to CHUSARTH.

Depavity of the Israelites.

THE impiety and moral turpitude of the Israelites proved so highly offensive to God, that he withdrew his protection and support from them, and left them destitute of all hope of enjoying that state of happiness which they had employed so many years of painful industry to obtain. While they were engaged in this profligate course of life, war was declared against them by Chusarth, king of the Assyrians, who put to death a great number of the Israelites; conquered many of their towns by assault; rendered others subject to him by treaty; imposed burthensome taxes on the people, and continually annoyed them with various indignities and persecutions. They remained in this miserable situation for the space of eight years: but they were, at length, relieved from this oppression, in the following manner.

They are delivered from bondage by Kenaz.

Kenaz, a man of the tribe of Judah, distinguished for the strength of his understanding and his great courage, being animated by a divine impulse, determined to attempt some bold enterprize in favour of the Israelites, who were reduced to the greatest extremity of distress. This resolution he communicated to such of his particular associates as he was persuaded he might safely entrust with so important a secret, and whom he knew to be men of steady and intrepid dispositions, and dissatisfied with the measures pursued in conducting the affairs of the government. It was

agreed, when the matter in question had been deliberately considered, that the first step towards effecting the relief of the Hebrews, should be to surprize the royal guards, and put the troops of the garrison to death: and this being accordingly executed, with a singular degree of bravery, they acquired a high share of martial reputation, and their party having gained considerable strength, they found themselves in a condition to engage in a fair battle with the Assyrians, over whom they obtained a complete victory, obliging them to cross the Euphrates, and restoring the Hebrews to the inestimable blessings of liberty.

They returned the most grateful acknowledgments to Kenaz for the important service he had rendered them, highly applauding the courage and conduct which he displayed in effecting their deliverance; and, as an instance of their gratitude, they unanimously elected him to preside over them in the character of governor: he accepted this office, which he held for the space of forty years, and then expired.

Being again destitute of a ruler, the Israelites degenerated from a due reverence to God, and obedience to the laws. Their impolitic and irregular proceedings encouraged Eglon, the king of the Moabites†, to commence a war against them; and he proved victorious in several engagements, and so effectually humbled them as to render them tributaries to him. Having accomplished this, he established his court at Jericho, and for the space of eight years, kept them in a miserable and almost starving condition, inflicting continual oppressions upon them. But the Almighty attended to their supplications, and in commiseration of their sufferings, delivered them from the persecution of the Moabites in the following manner:

The Israelites degenerating, are oppressed by Eglon.

Ehud, a young man of Jericho, son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin, was of a particularly athletic make, and of a resolute disposition; and he had the advantage of using either hand with great dexterity, but he was most expert with the left. By means of presents and other courtly offices, this man insinuated himself into the favour of the king, who repaid the attention shewn to him with familiarity and professions of friendship, which gained Ehud a considerable interest at court. Having furnished himself with a poniard, which he girded to his right-side, he repaired to the palace, being attended by two servants, who were directed, if occasion should require, to assist in concealing the weapon; and under pretence of making the king a present, he was admitted to him, in the middle of the day, at which time the guards were withdrawn, and most of the people retired to dinner. Ehud presented a gift to the king, who afterwards retired for refreshment to a cooler apartment. He now requested a private audience with Eglon, who,

Humbling themselves, they are delivered by Ehud.

† This was the next enemy who oppressed the children of Israel; for, since they worshipped the gods of the people round about them, it was fit they should be punished by those very people. He possessed himself of Jericho; for though Joshua had destroyed the town,

yet it is probable fortifications were erected on the spot where it stood, that they might the better keep that fertile country in subjection.

being seated on the throne, dismissed the attendants. He now prepared to strike the fatal blow; and being apprehensive lest he should miss his aim, he determined to occasion the king to rise that he might be at a greater certainty of striking with effect. Pretending that he had a matter to communicate from the Almighty, respecting a late dream, the king was exceedingly anxious to learn what he had to divulge, He kills Eglon. and rising, for the conveniency of attending, Ehud seized that opportunity to strike the pointed into his heart, and, leaving the deadly instrument in the wound, he effected an escape, having closed the doors as he retreated from the building. During these transactions, the attendants remained quiet, lest they should disturb the king, whom they imagined to be in a sleep.

Ehud repaired immediately to Jerusalem, and caused it to be privately circulated that, with a view to restore the people to the enjoyment of freedom, he had put the king to death. This circumstance proved highly agreeable to them; and they dispersed men to sound trumpets through the country, which was the method of assembling the people. Towards evening the king's attendants became apprehensive that some extraordinary accident had occurred, and upon going into the apartment, they perceived that their royal master had been murdered, and experienced an astonishment beyond the power of words to describe. Signals were immediately given for the guards to assemble, but before they could be collected, great numbers of the Israelites forced into the palace, and in the first impulse of their rage, slaughtered many of the enemy, about ten thousand of whom endeavoured to escape to the country of Moab, but the fords and passes being previously possessed by the Israelites, their retreat was so effectually intercepted, that not a single man escaped. Thus were the Hebrews released from the tyrannous yoke of the Moabites; and as an acknowledgment for the benefits derived from the conduct of Ehud, they invested him with the government. He continued in the administration eighty years, and then died. Exclusive of the merit of the above noble exploit, on various accounts his memory deserves to be honourably transmitted to posterity. He was succeeded by Shamgar, the son of Anath, who died before the expiration of the first year of his government.

CHAP. IV.

The HEBREWS, oppressed by JABIN, are set free by DEBORAH and BARAK.

Incorrigibility of the Israelites.

SUCH was the perverseness of the Israelites, that, notwithstanding they found themselves continually involved in

* This word, in some places, denotes a person inspired by God to foretell future events, and work miracles; in others, it signifies one endued with extraordinary talents for understanding the word

great calamities, the natural consequence of their disregard of every institution, divine and human, they could not be induced to alter their conduct, and to return to their obedience. They were no sooner freed from the bondage of one nation, than they became the slaves of another; and, in the present instance, passed from under the tyranny of Eglon, king of Moab, to that of Jabin, king of the Canaanites.

The city of Azor, situated on the banks of the lake Samachonitis, was the metropolis of the dominions of Jabin, whose army consisted of three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and three thousand chariots, the command of which was conferred on Sisera, who after repeatedly defeating the Hebrews in various pitched battles, at length reduced them to subjection, and rendered them tributary to his sovereign. In this abject condition, as a punishment for their impiety and ingratitude, they were suffered to continue for the space of twenty years. However, at the expiration of that period, they manifested some signs of repentance, and appeared to be convinced that the miseries to which they had been so long exposed, were the natural consequence of their apostasy from the religion of their ancestors. Under this conviction, they applied themselves to a certain eminent prophetess*, named Deborah, requesting her to intercede in their behalf with the Almighty, that he would be pleased to deliver them from the persecutions of their merciless oppressors. God was pleased to condescend to her request, and ordered her to enjoin the Israelites, in his name, to elect Barak one of the chiefs of the tribe of Naphtali, for their commander. Deborah intercedes for them.

Deborah, accordingly, sent for Barak, and directed him to assemble a body of 10,000 choice men, and to lead them against the enemy without delay; deeming the smallness of the number a matter of no kind of consequence, as God had promised to grant them victory. Barak, nevertheless, peremptorily refused to engage in the enterprize unless she would accompany him; to which, after reproaching him severely for thus relinquishing to a woman the honour of the command to which God had appointed him, she at length consented. Barak made commander. This matter being settled, Barak assembled his troops and took post on Mount Tabor; and Sisera, by the command of Jabin, marched out to give him battle. For a short time, the two armies lay encamped within sight of each other; but the Hebrews were so terrified at the great disparity of numbers between their enemy's army and their own, that both the soldiers and their leader were on the point of retiring in the most dastardly manner, without even striking a blow: when Deborah, by the force of exhortations, and assurances of God's favour and

of God, and explaining it to others. Deborah was a prophetess in the latter sense, and was endued with the gift of wisdom, which qualified her to instruct, to direct, and to govern.

protection,

protection, prevailed on them, with no small difficulty, to abide the event of a battle. At the very commencement of the attack there arose a violent storm of rain and hail, which, being driven by the wind full in the face of the Canaanites, obliged them to shut their eyes, to preserve them from the fury of the tempest; rendered their bows and slings totally useless; and benumbed their hands to that degree, as to prevent them from availing themselves of those weapons which were adapted to the purpose of a close fight. This tempest, which so much annoyed the Canaanites, proved of not the least prejudice to the Hebrews; but, on the contrary, served to increase their confidence in the divine aid. In short, the Canaanites were totally routed; and, reckoning those who fell in the engagement, those who were trod to death by the horses, those who were crushed to pieces by the chariots, and those who were killed in the pursuit, the whole of this immense army was utterly destroyed.

The Canaanites overthrown, When Sisera perceived that his troops were flying on all sides in the utmost disorder and confusion, and that the day was inevitably lost, he leaped from his chariot, and took refuge at the house of a woman named Jael, by birth a Kenite, who received him with every outward demonstration of friendship and kindness. Being totally exhausted with the toil and fatigue of the day, he requested her to give him some drink, and she, accordingly, brought him a draught of sour milk, which he swallowed with the utmost eagerness, and immediately fell into a profound sleep. When Jael perceived the situation he was in, she took an iron nail*, and, approaching him without the least noise, drove it through his temple into the ground; in which condition she exposed his body to the view of the Israelites, who came soon afterwards to her house in search of him. Thus was the prediction of Deborah to Barak verified: that the honour of the victory should in part be due to a woman.

Barak afterwards directed his march towards Azor, and meeting with Jabin on the way, encountered and slew him. He next made himself master of the city, which he razed from the very foundation; and from this time continued to govern Israel for the space of about forty years.

The Midianites, &c. reduce and enslave the Israelites. Soon after the deaths of Deborah and Barak, which happened nearly about the same time, the Midianites uniting their forces with those of the Amalekites and the Arabians, attacked the Israelites, and vanquished them in several battles; plundering and laying waste their country, for the full term of seven successive years. The Israelites were at length compelled to abandon their habitations on the plains, and to fly

for refuge to the mountains, where they dug vaults and caves, both for the purpose of sheltering themselves from the pursuit of their enemies, and of secreting such of their effects and provisions as they had been able to save from the general depredation. The Midianites, however, did not attempt to obstruct them from cultivating their land in the winter; but constantly deprived them of the fruits of their toil when the harvest season arrived. Thus were the Hebrews reduced to the most abject state of misery and want, and, in this extremity, placing all their hopes of relief in prayers and supplications to the Almighty, as their last resort, were delivered, as related in the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

GIDEON delivers the HEBREWS from the Bondage of the MIDIANITES.

AS Gideon, the son of Joas, and one of the chiefs of the tribe of Manasses, was on a certain occasion secretly threshing a small quantity of corn in a place where he had been accustomed to press his grapes; not daring to make use of his threshing floor for that purpose, lest he should be detected by the Midianites; an angel appeared to him, in the shape of a young man, and felicitated him on his happiness, in possessing the favour of the Almighty in an eminent degree. "It is hardly credible," replied Gideon, "that a man in my distressed circumstances should be thus distinguished by the Creator of the universe." The vision bade him take courage, and, from that hour, to employ all his thoughts in devising the means of delivering his countrymen from the bondage under which they had so long groaned. "Both my own incapacity," said Gideon, "and the weakness, in point of numbers, of the tribe to which I belong, effectually cut off all hopes of success in an enterprize of this nature." The angel made answer, that God would supply whatever might be deficient in him, and that under his conduct the Israelites should certainly prove victorious. The particulars of this affair having been communicated by Gideon to several of his companions, they expressed the fullest confidence in the prediction, and, accordingly, quickly assembled an army of ten thousand choice men, who were determined to encounter every danger in support of the common cause.

Mean time, the Almighty appeared to Gideon in a dream, and gave him further instructions in what manner to proceed, in words to the following effect: "In order to give you the

* That is, one of the nails or great pins with which tents are fastened to the ground. The original is very emphatical, and seems to have lost some of its force by the insertion of the particles in our version; for, according to the Hebrew, the latter part

of the verse in our translation should be, "And smote the nail into his temples, and it fastened itself into the ground; and he was fast asleep, and he was wearied, and he was dead."

strongest conviction that victory is derived from above, and that all human strength is vain without the divine aid, lead your army, in the most scorching time of the day, to the banks of the river Jordan, and take particular notice of the manner in which the soldiers drink. Such of them as shall lay themselves along upon the ground, and shall drink with apparent composure and unconcern*, you may depend upon as men of courage and resolution, and fit for the design you have in meditation; but, with respect to those who drink in haste, and with visible marks of confusion in their countenances, they are actuated by a fear of the enemy, and must not, on any account, be confided in." Gideon obeyed, and upon trial found no more than three hundred men who answered to the first description. With this handful of men he took post on the banks of the river: but not without strong apprehensions respecting the event of the enterprize. To calm his fears, the Most High ordered him to go secretly over to the enemy's camp that night, accompanied by one of his soldiers, where he should learn some particulars which should revive his drooping courage. He accordingly repaired to the camp of the Midianites, taking with him his own servant Phuran.

Gideon's stratagem in attacking the enemy.

Gideon divided his little army into three bodies of one hundred men each, and having received orders from God to attack the enemy during the night, at the expiration of the fourth watch, he led them to the charge; each man carrying in one hand a pitcher containing a burning lamp, in order that they might attack the foe by surprise, and in the other a ram's horn, to serve instead of a trumpet. The prodigious number of camels which the enemy had, and the variety of nations of which their army was composed, each being distinctly posted, necessarily occasioned their camp to take up a very considerable extent of ground; the whole, being enclosed within one common line of circumvallation. The Hebrews were ordered by Gideon, upon their arrival at the enemy's camp, to break their pitchers, and, sounding their horns, each man with his lamp in his hand, to begin the attack with loud shouts. In full confidence that God would grant them a complete victory, they strictly adhered to the orders they had received, and the enemy, by this stratagem, were thrown into so great a confusion and consternation, to which the darkness of the night, the medley of languages, and those impressions of terror which would not permit them to distinguish be-

* The means for this end was to lessen the numbers of Gideon's army, and this expedient was well adapted to that purpose. The season of the year was sultry, the generality of the soldiers were weary, were faint, were thirsty; and it was probable that the greatest number, when led to the refreshing stream, would indulge themselves in drinking copious draughts of water. Few of them could be supposed temperate enough to resist the temptation; and it was highly probable that this expedient would contribute to thin the army. This seems to be the intention of this experiment, and explains the text in a more natural and consistent manner, than the opinion of some, as Theodoret, Grotius, &c. who imagine that they who lapped the water were of a timorous disposition, and were chosen as the properest instruments to aggrandize the idea of the divine

tween friend and foe, all greatly contributed, that they turned their arms upon each other, every man imagining the person next him to be an enemy. The slaughter, in short, was amazingly great; yet the number of those slain by the Israelites bore but a small proportion to that of those who fell by the hands of their own associates. When the rest of the Israelites inhabiting the country received intelligence of this signal defeat, they instantly dispatched various parties of troops, to take possession of all the passes and passages of the mountains, rivers, and torrents, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy, vast numbers of whom they put to the sword, and among the rest, two of their kings, Oreb and Zeb.

The wretched remains of this vast body of men, consisting of about eighteen thousand, with much difficulty effected a retreat, and took post on a spot as far distant as they conveniently could from the Hebrew camp. Although the army of Gideon had undergone great fatigue in the late action, he nevertheless continued the pursuit of this remnant of the Midianites, and, coming up with them, totally routed the whole party; taking prisoners their two commanders, the princes Zebin and Hezabon; and putting the rest to the sword. In these different engagements there fell, of the Midianites and their allies, nearly one hundred and twenty thousand men; and the booty taken by the Israelites, consisting of gold, silver, rich stuffs, camels, asses, and other articles, was of an immense value. Gideon upon his return home put to death the two Midianite princes mentioned above.

The tribe of Ephraim, however, to which he belonged, jealous of the great reputation which he had acquired, affected to be highly offended at his conduct in engaging the enemy without their privity or concurrence, and were on the point of raising arms against him; but Gideon, whose modesty and moderation were equal to his valour, averted the impending storm, by representing to them that throughout the whole of the late transactions he had acted under the immediate direction of the Almighty; and that they were equally entitled with himself to a share in the honour of the victory, although it had pleased God to allot to him the most active part therein.

Having thus accomplished the deliverance of his country, Gideon would gladly have relinquished the command with which he had been invested†; but he suffered him-

Gideon practices the murdering Ephraimites.

He is continued governor till his death.

Omnipotence; whereas it is evident from the context, that they who were of a fearful disposition had been dismissed before: the conjecture of Jarchi, that they who kneeled down were by that means discovered to have been the worshippers of Baal, and were rejected upon that account, is a far-fetched conceit, which has not the least foundation in Scripture.

† It seems, they wanted to make him a king; but Gideon, who was too well acquainted with the nature of the theocracy to be corrupted with the prospect of a crown, piously rejects their offer: an offer which at the same time, as it dignifies the character of Gideon, shews the Israelites to be lost to every principle of gratitude towards their heavenly king, who had rescued them from misery and destruction by an inexpressible series of miracles.

self,

self, at length, to be prevailed on, by the earnest intreaties and importunities of the people, to continue in his office as judge; which he held for the space of forty years; enacting laws, and administering justice with such strict impartiality, that not one instance occurred of an appeal from his decisions, throughout the whole period during which he governed Israel. He died in an advanced age, and was buried in his native place, the land of Ephraim.

CHAP. VI.

Cruelty and tyrannical Conduct of ABIMELECH. The AMMONITES and PHILISTINES subdue the HEBREWS. They are rescued from Slavery by JEPHTHAH. ABSAN, ELON, and ABDON, successively govern ISRAEL.

Abimelech usurps the government and kills all his brethren, except Jothan, who escapes.

THE issue which Gideon left were seventy legitimate sons, by various women, and one natural son by his concubine Druma, whom he named Abimelech. Soon after the death of Gideon, Abimelech repaired to Sichem, where the kindred of his mother resided. From them he obtained a supply of money, and, finding them to be men of dissolute lives, and qualified for the perpetration of any manner of wickedness, he engaged a certain number of them to accompany him on his return. Immediately upon his arrival at his father's house he put all his brethren to death, except Jothan, who fortunately escaped his cruelty, by concealing himself so secretly as to baffle every endeavour to discover his retreat. Having by this means seized on the supreme power; Abimelech openly professing the utmost contempt of every ordinance, divine and human, exercised his authority in a manner which drew upon him the universal odium. During these transactions, Jothan, who had escaped the general massacre of his brethren, for the space of three years was compelled to lead a wandering life among the mountains, through fear of the resentment of Abimelech. In a short time subsequent to this event; the Sichemites being impressed with a due sense of the barbarity which had been executed on the sons of Gideon, banished Abimelech from their city and tribe; which indignity he sought every means to revenge.

Zebul causes Gaal to be expelled the city.

Zebul, one of the principal men among the Sichemites, and who had formerly been the host of Abimelech, contrived to give him private notice of the practices which Gaal was carrying on against him; advising him, at the same time, to endeavour to seize his person, by stationing a party of his troops in ambush near the city; engaging to lure him into the snare, and, when that design should be effected, to reinstate Abimelech in

the favour of the citizens. This advice was adopted; and Gaal, having imprudently remained too long in the suburbs, in company with Zebul, observed the troops of Abimelech advancing towards the city, and mentioned the circumstance to Zebul; but the latter pretended to be of a contrary opinion, and endeavoured to persuade him that it was the shadow of the mountains which he saw. Gaal, however, persisted in his former assertion, and was reproached by his companion with timidity, in thus retreating before Abimelech, whom he had so repeatedly branded with cowardice. This reproof induced him to lead his troops, though in some disorder, against the enemy; but he was repulsed at the first onset, and, after having lost a few of his men, retired within the walls of the city. From this incident Zebul took occasion to represent him to the people as a person deficient in valour, and thereby procured his expulsion.

Abimelech led his army against Thebes, of which city he made himself master by assault; but the garrison retired into the citadel. Having advanced to the very gates of this edifice, with a full determination either to force them or set them on fire, a woman let drop from the top of the wall a large piece of a mill-stone, which, falling on his head, beat him from his horse. Perceiving, when he had in some degree recovered himself from the blow, that the wound which he had received was mortal, he ordered his armour-bearer to dispatch him instantly, that it might not be said that he died by the hands of a woman. He was obeyed; and paid the forfeit of his barbarities to his brethren and the Sichemites. Immediately after the death of Abimelech, his army disbanded; each man returning to his own habitation.

Abimelech killed by a woman.

A Gileadite named Jair, of the tribe of Manasse, was the next who undertook the government of Israel. This man, in every instance, enjoyed great happiness, but particularly in the possession of a numerous and deservent progeny; being the father of thirty sons, equally famed for their virtue and bravery, and of high rank and authority in the country in which they dwelt. He officiated in this post twenty-two years, died in an advanced age, and was buried in the city of Camon, in the land of Gilead.

Jair made governor.

At this period the Hebrews were become totally regardless of their duty both to God and man; and this extreme depravity rendered them so despicable in the eyes of their neighbours, the Ammonites and Philistines, that they invaded their country with a powerful army, and with great facility made an entire conquest of all that part thereof which lies on this side Jordan, intending to pass the river, and subdue the remainder. In this dilemma, the Israelites, as was customary with them when they chanced to be involved in any great calamity, again had re-

* He must not be considered as a judge, much less appointed by God; but as an usurper, who dared to alter the divine government, by making himself a king. Probably the ambition of Abi-

melech, and his dreadful end, so terrified the Israelites, that they did not attempt to elect another king; but wisely submitted to those judges whom God was pleased to place over them.

course to sacrifices and supplications to God for deliverance; and even this extorted repentance procured from the Almighty a promise of pardon and assistance. The Ammonites having at this time invaded the land of Gilead, the inhabitants took up arms with a view of repelling their attacks, and being destitute of a leader, solicited Jephthah, a man highly esteemed among them both for his courage and conduct, and who kept a considerable body of troops in his own pay, to take upon him for life the command of their army.

He is succeeded by Jephthah: Jephthah refused, at first, to comply with their request; upbraiding them with baseness, in thus applying to him in their distress, to whom they had formerly denied all assistance at a time when he stood in the utmost need of aid against the cruel persecutions of his brethren. The Israelites, however, still importuning him to espouse their cause, he at length yielded to their solicitations, and was accordingly invested with the supreme command of their troops.

who marches against the Ammonites. Having incorporated his own forces with those of the Hebrews, Jephthah marched to Mispah, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to the king of the Ammonites, to represent to him the injustice of which he was guilty, in thus invading the country to which he had no reasonable pretension. This charge the king retorted upon the Israelites, who, he observed, after their departure from Egypt, had, without any other right than merely that of conquest, possessed themselves of the country of the Ammonites; peremptorily enjoining them to quit the same, and to seek some more distant residence. Jephthah replied, that the Ammonites, instead of complaining that the Hebrews had established themselves in Amorrhæa, ought rather to acknowledge the moderation of that people in permitting them to retain the possession of their own country of Ammon, from which Moses might have expelled them; concluding with a declaration, that the Hebrews would not, upon any account, relinquish those lands, in which they had been settled for the term of three hundred years, but would, with the divine aid, maintain themselves therein against every effort of their enemies to dispossess them. The peremptoriness of this declaration at once put an end to the treaty, and both parties prepared for war.

When the two armies were in sight of each other, Jephthah made a vow, that, if God should be pleased to permit him to return a conqueror, he would offer up in sacrifice the first living creature he should meet with upon his entrance into the city in which

he resided. He afterwards engaged the enemy, and put them totally to the rout; pursuing them, with great slaughter, as far as the city of Manaith. He also made an irruption into the land of Ammon; taking and destroying several cities, and dividing the booty, which was very considerable, among his troops. This victory, in short, emancipated the Hebrews from a bondage under which they had groaned for the term of eighteen years.

He defeats them. The conduct of Jephthah, throughout the whole of this war, acquired him great and deserved reputation; but upon his return home, an incident befel him which suddenly converted all his satisfaction into the deepest sorrow. For, when he was on the point of entering the city in which he resided, the first person whom he discovered was his only daughter, who, with a heart filled with joy, had come forth to meet him, and to congratulate him on his return. He was struck with inexpressible horror at the sight, and, in the utmost anguish of mind, acquainted her with the particulars of his fatal vow. Unmoved at the dreadful tale, she nobly replied that she would cheerfully submit to death, for the sake of preserving her father's honour, and of assuring the freedom of her country; requesting only, that he would allow her two months to prepare herself, and to bid farewell to the virgins, her companions, after which he might perform his vow whenever he should think proper. This request was granted, and, at the expiration of the above term, this immaculate and self-devoted victim yielded up her life at the altar, in compliance with the will of her father; who, hurried away by a blind zeal, manifested on the occasion an utter disregard of every consideration of justice and common sense.

In consequence of a rash vow, he sacrifices his daughter. Jephthah died in the seventh year of his administration, and was interred at Sebeth, the place of his birth, in the land of Gilead. He was succeeded by Abfan, of the tribe of Judah, who dwelt in the city of Bethlehem, and governed Israel seven years; but no incident happened during that period, of sufficient consequence to be recorded. He left ninety children, sixty of whom were males, and thirty daughters; all of whom were married at the time of his decease. To him succeeded Elon, of the tribe of Zebulon, who ruled the people ten years; nor was his government distinguished by any memorable event. The next person who governed Israel was Abdon, the son of Heliel, of the tribe of Ephraim, and a native of the city of Pharithon. He had a numerous progeny, consisting of

* This passage has opened a spacious field for controversy, in which the commentators have ranged themselves on opposite sides: the whole stream of antiquity positively asserts that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter; while several great names among the moderns have contended as warmly to prove that he did not. The difficulty arises wholly from Jephthah's saying, verse 31. *Whatsoever cometh forth—shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt-offering.* But, as Grotius pertinently observes, supposing a

dog or an ass had met him, could he have offered up them for a burnt-offering? He could not have done it; and therefore his promise or vow must mean, that if it was any thing that *could be offered for a burnt-offering*, he would offer it; if not, whatever it was, *it should be the Lord's*: and were the particle translated *and*, in the sentence *shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it*, translated, as in the margin, and as it signifies many times, *or*, all the difficulty would certainly be removed.

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Jephthah's rash Vow.

forty sons and thirty grandsons, all of whom were expert horsemen; and of these his ordinary guard was composed: but the tranquillity of the times during his administration, afforded no incident worthy of being transmitted to posterity. He died at a great age, and was buried with much pomp and solemnity in the city of Pharathon.

C H A P. VII.

*The PHILISTINES subjugate the ISRAELITES.
Birth of SAMSON, and his wondrous Exploits.*

The Hebrews
are enslaved
by the Philis-
tines.

THE Philistines, after the death of Absan, held the Hebrews in subjection nearly for the space of forty years; but they at length obtained their liberty in the manner following:

A person whose name was Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, a man of high rank and reputation in his own country, had married a woman of superlative beauty, but, to his own unspeakable grief, she proved childless. He had a house situated on a lonely spot, in the midst of an extensive plain, to which he frequently repaired with his wife, and in this solitude he spent the greatest part of his time in importuning heaven for the blessing of a child. It chanced on a certain day, when the woman was at the house alone, an angel appeared to her, under the shape of a tall young man, and, bidding her to console herself, predicted to her, that she should bear a male child, who, when he should arrive at the years of maturity, should be remarkable for the gracefulness of his person, and for his superior strength, and should greatly humble the pride of the Philistines; enjoining her, in the name of God, neither to cut his hair, nor to suffer him to drink any thing besides water; and having given her these instructions, the vision instantly disappeared. On the arrival of her husband, she acquainted him with the particulars of this vision.

The angel, in a few days after, again presented himself before her, in the same place in which she had first seen him, and she begged his permission to fetch her husband; who instantly came with her to the spot. He then earnestly pressed the angel again to confirm the prediction which he had before communicated to his wife; but this the angel declined; observing to him, that it was sufficient his wife had been already made acquainted therewith. He also solicited the angel to declare to him his name and quality, that, when he should have obtained the promised blessing of a child, he might know to whom to pay his acknowledgments. The vision replied, that he neither expected nor desired any gratification for the tidings he brought. Manoah, with some difficulty, prevailed on him, however, to stay and partake of a kid, which he had killed and given to his wife to dress.

* Some derive his name from *Shemesh*, the sun, because his birth prognosticated the rising of the Hebrews, and setting of the Philis-

When every thing was in readiness, the angel ordered the flesh and bread to be placed without dishes, on an adjacent rock; which being done, with a wand which he held in his hand, he touched the flesh, and instantly a flame issued therefrom, which totally consumed both it and the bread; and the angel ascended to heaven in the smoke which arose from this preternatural fire. Manoah expressed a strong apprehension that this prodigy boded some great evil to them; but his wife endeavoured to dispel his fears, confidently assuring him, that it would be productive of the greatest comfort and happiness to them both. She soon afterwards perceived herself to be pregnant, and from that hour carefully kept in mind the instructions which she had received from the angel.

In due course of time she was delivered Birth of Sam-
son. of a son, whom they named Samson*, signifying, in the Hebrew tongue, *robust*. As he grew up, the comeliness of his person, and the rigid temperance which he observed in his manner of living, gave him an appearance of something more than mortal.

Having repaired on the celebration of a solemn festival, to Timnah, a city belonging to the Philistines, he there saw a damsel of whom he became passionately enamoured; and urgently solicited his father to obtain her for him in marriage. His father, at first, refused to comply with his request; representing to him, that, by the Hebrew laws, all marriages with women of foreign nations were strictly forbidden; and that there were many women of his own nation with whom a matrimonial connection would be far more eligible than the party with whom he sought an alliance. But the impetuosity of the son's passion, proved an over-match for all the discretion and authority of the father, and Samson was permitted to contract himself to the damsel in question. Being one day on the road which He kills a
lion. led to the place of residence of his intended bride, he chanced to meet a lion. Totally unmoved by the unexpected sight of this terrible animal, he undauntedly advanced towards him, and though destitute of every kind of weapon, he attacked the creature, and quickly strangled him, throwing the body afterwards into an adjacent thicket.

Some few days afterwards, he chanced to pass along the same path again, on a second visit to his mistress; and stepping out of the road to take a view of the carcass of the lion, he found it occupied by a swarm of bees, who were employed in working their wax and honey. He took three of the combs, which he presented, together with some other articles which he had procured for the purpose, to his mistress. On the day of the nuptials, he was attended by thirty of the stoutest young men of the country, whom the friends of the bride, conscious of his amazing strength, had selected for that office, under the pretext of doing him honour; but, in reality, to prevent any bad

times. Our author, indeed, says it signifies *robust*; but upon what authority he founds his assertion, cannot be discovered.

effects which might otherwise happen, from his making too free a use of the juice of the grape. In the

^{His riddle.} midst of their jollity, Samson informed the company that he had a riddle to propose to them, and that as many of them as should solve it in the course of seven days, should each man receive from him a coat and a shirt; and at once acquire both reputation and profit. The whole company, being animated, some with a desire of manifesting their penetration, and others with a thirst of gain, eagerly requested him to propound the **enigma**; which he accordingly did, in the following words: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and from the strong was produced sweetness †."

When the Philistines had in vain racked their imaginations for the space of three days, to discover the meaning of this riddle they applied themselves to the newly-espoused wife of Samson; enjoining her, at the peril of being burnt alive, to obtain from her husband an explanation of the whole mystery. He for some time resisted all her importunities; but on her reproaching him with a want of affection for her, in thus refusing to confide the secret to her, he disclosed all the circumstances relative to his combat with the lion, and to the honey-combs which he brought her; and he communicated every particular to the Philistines. The day being now arrived which had been appointed for the solution of this riddle, the Philistines assembled before sun-set, and repairing in a body to Samson, gave him the explanation in the subsequent terms: "No creature possesses more strength than a lion, nor can any thing be sweeter than honey."

Samson so highly resented the conduct of his wife on this occasion, that he formally repudiated her; and she, from a motive of revenge, espoused the person who had been the chief promoter of their union. This action Samson considered as so heinous an affront, that he vowed vengeance not only on the woman, but also on the whole nation of the Philistines; and an opportunity soon afterwards offered for the ample execution of his design. The time of harvest being now just at hand, Samson procured three hundred foxes, and, tying them tail to tail, with a fire-brand between each two of them, he turned the whole number loose into the fields of the Philistines, where they presently destroyed all the corn which was then ripe for cutting*. When the princes of the Philistines learnt who was the author of this outrage, and the motives by which he had been instigated to it, they immediately repaired to Timnah, and, seizing Samson's late wife, with her father, and all her kindred, publicly burnt them alive.

† It was an ancient practice (among the Greeks especially) to propose enigmas, and it has continued to this day in a greater or less degree. As symbolic writing, the more it receded from the proper hieroglyphic, the more it became obscure; so it was with this parable, which grew the more mysterious, till it became a riddle, which exactly corresponded with the enigmatical hieroglyphic. This, in sacred scripture, is called a dark saying, by way of cuni-

Samson had now fixed his residence on the rock of Etam, a place of prodigious strength, and from thence made frequent incursions into the lands of the Philistines, destroying great numbers of the inhabitants. This rock was situated in the district of the tribe of Judah, against whom the Philistines, in revenge for the continual depredations of Samson, were on the point of commencing hostilities. It was in vain that these unfortunate people pleaded in their justification, that they had demeaned themselves peaceably, had regularly paid the tribute which had been imposed upon them, and were perfectly free from all participation in the guilt of Samson and his associates; for the Philistines peremptorily declared to them, that unless they delivered up the person of Samson, they must expect to be considered, and to be punished also, as the abettors of his crimes.

To clear themselves from every imputation on this head, they assembled a body of three thousand armed men, and marched to the spot where he resided, and there entered into conference with his companions, representing to them the danger to which the violences of Samson had exposed the Hebrew nation, by exciting against them the resentment of a powerful enemy, who, if not timely appeased, might probably be induced to extirpate their whole race; adding, that their sole design in coming thither was to secure the person of Samson, and to deliver him into the hands of the Philistines; to which they exhorted him to submit voluntarily, both for their sakes and for his own. Samson hereupon descended from the rock, and, having obtained a solemn oath from them that they would be satisfied with delivering him up to the Philistines, without offering him any personal injury themselves, surrendering himself to his countrymen, who bound him, and led him away to a spot before agreed on, which was then of no particular note, but which a memorable action afterwards performed there by Samson rendered deservedly famous to posterity. At a small distance from the camp of the Philistines, they were met by a numerous body of people, who expressed their joy at seeing this dreaded foe in their power, with the loudest shouts and acclamations.

Samson in the mean time snapping asunder the cords with which he was bound, seized the jaw-bone of an ass which happened to lie near him, and suddenly attacking the Philistines, slew nearly a thousand of them on the spot, and put the rest to flight. He was so much elated with this victory, that he arrogated to himself the honour of that action, without considering that it was

Samson returns to the rock Etam.

An armed force is sent to demand him.

He slays a thousand Philistines.

nence. In the interpretation of these riddles consisted old eastern wisdom, according to the observation, Prov. i. 5.

* Foxes, it is well known, are beasts of prey, and extremely cunning: Samson did the country service by collecting so many, and putting them together in the manner he did, and thereby destroying so great a number of those rapacious creatures. This in some measure compensated for the damage done to the corn.

to God alone, to whom the glory of the achievement out to have been ascribed. But, in the midst of this impious vaunting, he found himself suddenly attacked by a violent thirst, which convinced him of the vanity of his boasts, by demonstrating to him that all his successes did not exempt him from the common accidents of human nature. He therefore humbled himself before God, acknowledging his former presumption in assuming to himself the victory, requesting pardon for his crimes, and promising in future to rely solely upon the power and goodness of the Almighty for deliverance in all his distresses. Nor was his penitence ineffectual: for immediately there gushed from a neighbouring rock a stream of the purest water, for the relief of his raging thirst; and this rock to the present time bears the name of *the jaw*, in allusion to the above-mentioned exploit of Samson.

He now held the power of the Philistines in such utter contempt, that he scrupled not to go publicly to Gaza, and to take up his abode at a common inn. The circumstance of his arrival having been communicated to the governor of the city, he stationed a number of soldiers and spies about the house, to prevent his escape. Samson having received some intimation of the design, rose at midnight, and, taking the gates of the city off their hinges, conveyed them away on his shoulders, with all their appurtenances of frames, bolts, and locks, as far as mount Hebron, where he left them.

By degrees, Samson had now acquired so strong a distaste to the laws and customs of his own country, and, consequently, such a propensity to those of the neighbouring nations, as, in the sequel, proved his destruction. He unfortunately conceived a violent passion for a common prostitute, in the land of the Philistines, whose name was Dalilah; and with this woman he openly cohabited. The princes of the country, perceiving to how great a degree he was infatuated by his infamous passion, secretly wrought upon this mercenary woman, by the force of bribes and promises*, to unite with them in the design of effecting his ruin. The part which they assigned her to act in this plot was, to obtain from him a confession where that invincible strength was seated, of which he had given so many extraordinary proofs. She, accordingly, took every opportunity, in his hours of ebriety and dalliance, to express her admiration of his strength and activity, and to importune him to acquaint her in what part of his body that excellency lay, which rendered him so infinitely superior to all other men. But Samson retained as yet so much prudence, as enabled him to perceive and to counterwork the artifices of his mistress; and he replied, that if his hands were bound with seven green withs,

or creepers of the vine, he should then possess no greater degree of force than the rest of mankind.

This information Dalilah immediately communicated to the magistrates of the place, who, in consequence, secretly dispatched a band of soldiers to the house in which Samson resided, with orders to secure his person the first opportunity that should offer. Finding him intoxicated and asleep, they bound him in the manner before described; but Samson being awakened by the outcries of Dalilah, that the Philistines were upon him, instantly snapped the withs, like so many threads, and, putting himself in a posture of defence, obliged the assailants to make a precipitate retreat. Dalilah affected to be highly incensed at the deception which had been put upon her, and bitterly reproached Samson with a want of affection for her; adding, that she thought herself greatly injured by his suspicions that she was less capable of keeping a secret than any of her sex. She, however, still persisted in soliciting him to reveal to her what she desired to know, and he again deceived her, on two subsequent occasions, with feigned stories; telling her at first, that if he were to be bound with seven cords, he should be deprived thereby of all power of resistance: and, afterwards, that the same effect would be produced by filleting and braiding his hair.

Though thus thrice baffled, Dalilah was not yet discouraged; but, partly through resentment, and partly from a principle of obstinacy, she continued to urge him so earnestly with intreaties and caresses, that in an evil hour, he disclosed to her the important secret in these words: "That supreme Being, from whom I derive my existence, and who has been pleased to distinguish me in a particular manner by his favour, has strictly commanded me never to suffer my hair to be cut; as in the preservation thereof intirely consists my safety and strength." Having made this discovery, she soon afterwards deprived him of his locks whilst he slept, and, in this defenceless condition, delivered him into the hands of the Philistines, who put out his eyes, and led him about as a public spectacle.

A considerable time had now elapsed, when a festival was celebrated by the Philistines, at which were assembled all the princes and nobility of the country. In the height of their merriment, it was proposed to send for Samson, to make sport for the company. The roof of the edifice in which they were regaling, was supported by two large pillars only. Samson, whose hair was now grown again, meditating vengeance on his enemies, was now brought into the assembly; and feigning to be weary with walking, he desired the boy by whom he was attended to lead him to one of the pillars, that he might rest himself against it.

* The text informs us, that every one of the lords of the Philistines engaged to give her eleven hundred shekels, on delivering Samson into their hands. Now by "pieces of silver" is generally understood No. 6.

stood shekels; so that the whole sum amounted to five thousand five hundred shekels, or about three hundred and forty-three pounds sixteen shillings sterling.

In revenge he pulls down the grand hall of the Philistines, when himself and the whole company perish.

His request being complied with, Samson, exerting his utmost strength, shook the pillar with such force, that he soon brought down the building on the heads of all those who were therein, amounting to full three thousand persons; himself perishing with the rest†.

Thus died Samson in the twentieth year of his administration. He was famed for his amazing strength and courage, and acquired great honour by the exertion of those qualities against the enemies of his country. It must be acknowledged that he suffered himself to be deluded by the artifices of a wicked woman; but this is a frailty inherent in the very nature of mankind. His corpse was conveyed by his relations to Sarafa, where it was interred in the burial place of the family.

C H A P. VIII.

Containing the History of NAOMI, RUTH, and BOOZ.

A famine in Judah obliges Abimelech and his family to retire to Moab.

AFTER the death of Samson, Eli the high-priest succeeded to the government, and in his time there arose a dreadful famine in the land. In consequence of this dearth, Abimelech, a citizen of Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah, accompanied by his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Malloah and Chellion, retired with his effects into the land of Moab. Here every thing went favourably with him, and his sons contracted themselves to two women of the country, whose names were Orpha and Ruth. At the expiration of ten years, Abimelech and his sons died, all within a short time of each other. Naomi seeing herself thus deprived of those persons, her affection for whom had been the sole motive which had induced her to quit her own country, determined to return thither, especially as she had learnt that matters were now in a better state than when she came away. The widows of her sons were very urgent with her to suffer them to accompany her; but to this she absolutely refused to consent; alledging the length of the journey, and her incapacity to provide for them on their arrival at Bethlehem, as reasons for her refusal. These objections satisfied Orpha: but no arguments could induce Ruth to abandon her mother-in-law; and Naomi therefore departed, taking Ruth with her.

Naomi and Ruth return. They were received on their arrival at Bethlehem by Booz or Boaz, a relation of the deceased Abimelech; and, the people calling Naomi by her name, and welcoming her on her

return home, she replied that, instead of Naomi, they ought rather to call her Mara; the first signifying *happiness*, and the latter *grief*. It being now the time of harvest, Ruth went with the permission of her mother, into the fields to glean; and wandering by accident into a field which belonged to Booz, he chanced to come thither himself quickly afterwards, and inquired of his head-servant what he knew of her. The servant acquainted him with such particulars concerning her situation as he had learnt from herself; and Booz, being highly pleased with the affection which she manifested for her mother-in-law, and her regard for the memory of her deceased husband, ordered that she should not only be permitted to glean, but also to reap and carry away as much corn as she thought proper, and that she should be daily furnished with a like portion of meat and drink with the rest of his servants. Ruth carefully saved a part of the provisions which were given her, and carried it home at night, together with her gleanings, to her mother-in-law; and Naomi made a like reserve for Ruth out of what she obtained from her charitable neighbours.

Kind behaviour of Booz to Ruth.

Ruth acquainted her mother with the kindness of Booz towards her†; adding that, as he was a person of considerable property, and famed for his virtue and piety, it was probable that he might commiserate their misfortunes, and take them under his care. Ruth still continued to repair every day during the harvest season to the fields of Booz, to glean with his maid-servants; and for the space of a few days, while his people were employed in threshing the corn, Booz took up his lodging in his own barn. This circumstance coming to the knowledge of Naomi, she advised Ruth to convey herself privately into the barn, during the night, and to lay herself down to rest at the feet of Booz; imagining thereby to promote the advantage of both parties.

Ruth, from a scrupulous regard to the orders of her mother, obeyed; and Booz chancing to wake about midnight, and perceiving a woman lying near him, asked her who she was. Having been satisfied in this point, no further discourse passed between them till morning, when he bid her to take as much corn as she pleased, and to return home, before his servants should rise to their work; observing that, in such-like cases, persons could not be too cautious, however innocent their intentions were, to prevent discovery. He further told her that, as there was a person then residing in Bethlehem, who was still nearer related to her than himself, he would advise her to insist upon his receiving her as his wife, according to the law of

Ruth complies with Naomi's proposal to her.

† Our great architect Sir Christopher Wren, speaking of this transaction, says, "I conceive this building was an oval amphitheatre; the scene in the middle, where a vast roof of cedar beams resting round upon the walls, centered all upon one short architrave, that united two cedar pillars in the middle. Now if Samson, by his miraculous strength, pressing upon these pillars, removed them from their bases, the whole roof must of necessity fall.

‡ The communion with heathen nations was peculiarly forbidden by the *Mosaic law*, as the grand barrier against idolatry. Some zealous adherents to the letter of the law carried this principle too far, nay, so far as to abstain from every kind of intercourse and beneficence. A stranger and an idolater, in the ideas of a Jew, were the same; Ruth, therefore, meeting with so much tenderness from Boaz, did not without reason express her surprise.

Moses; and that, if he should refuse to comply with her demand, he himself should then be at liberty to espouse her. With these instructions Ruth returned to her mother, to whom she communicated all the above particulars; and Naomi offered up her most grateful acknowledgments to heaven, for this favourable change in their affairs.

Booz treats with Ruth's kinsman. On the same day, about noon, Booz convened an assembly of the magistrates of Bethlehem, having previously given notice of attendance to Ruth and her kinsman. Upon their appearance, he questioned the latter, whether the estates of Abimelech, and his two sons, Mallon and Chellion, did not devolve to him after their decease. Having received an answer in the affirmative, he then reminded him, that the same law which gave him possession of the estate, provided also that he should marry the relict of the deceased; and pointing to Ruth, "That woman," said he, "is the widow of Mallon: determine, therefore, whether you will receive her in marriage, or relinquish the possessions of her late husband, which you now enjoy." The kinsman declined to espouse her, alledging, that he was already married, and had several children; and in due form, resigned to Booz, who, next to himself, was the nearest of kin to her, all pretensions both to the woman and the estate. Booz caused this renunciation to be registered, and then ordered Ruth to loose the shoe of her kinsman who had refused to espouse her, and to spit in his face, according to a form practised in all similar cases.

Marriage of Booz and Ruth, and their offspring. Booz afterwards married her, and, before the expiration of the year, she bore him a son, who was named Obed, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies assistance; alluding to the assistance which it was hoped he would render to Naomi in her old age. Obed was the father of Jesse, from whom descended David, king of Israel; in whose family the supreme government remained throughout twenty-one generations.

CHAP. IX.

SAMUEL is born. The PHILISTINES obtain several Victories over the HEBREWS.

Notorious profligacy of Eli's sons. THE Hebrews were now involved in an unsuccessful war against the Philistines. Hophni and Phineas, the two sons of Eli, the high-priest, were men totally divested of every sentiment of religion and morality. Not satisfied with the customary gratuities and presents which they received from the people, they were guilty of the greatest excesses of extortion and rapine. They scrupled not to debauch women, even when engaged in the exercise of their devotions; and would often prefer their infamous suit at the very altar; and

The mild conduct of Eli towards his children was highly culpable; for, instead of reproving them in the tender language of an indulgent father, he ought to have exerted the authority of a zealous

in the undistinguishing commission of these enormities they manifested an effrontery scarcely to be paralleled. Eli observed, with the deepest sorrow, the profligacy of his children; being under continual apprehensions that some dreadful judgment would befall them, as a punishment for their wickedness. Nor was he much less affected by the wretched condition of the people, who groaned under the intolerable oppressions of these merciless tyrants; but when God was pleased to reveal to the unhappy father, by the prophet Samuel, who was as yet but a child, the miserable end which awaited those men, he abandoned himself to his lamentations for them, as for persons who were to be considered as already dead.

Elkanah, a Levite, dwelling at Ramath in the district of the tribe of Ephraim, had two wives, whose names were Hannah and Phenannah. The latter bore him several children; but the former, for a considerable time appeared to be barren; which circumstance, however, did not in the least lessen his regard for her. Having repaired on a certain occasion to Shiloh, where the tabernacle then was, he allotted to each of his wives a portion of the provisions he had brought with him; Phenannah and her children eating at a separate table. This circumstance so much affected Hannah, who considered it as a reflection on her barrenness, that she could not refrain from tears. It was in vain that her husband and the rest of her friends endeavoured to comfort her; and, in the anguish of her mind, she immediately hastened to the tabernacle, and, with the utmost fervency and devotion, addressed her prayers to the Almighty, that he would be pleased to grant her the blessing of a son; promising in the most solemn manner to dedicate him solely to his service. Eli, who chanced to be sitting before the tabernacle at the time, concluding, from the length and earnestness of her prayer, that she was intoxicated, reproached her with coming thither in such a condition, and ordered her to be gone. She assured him that she was perfectly guiltless of the charge, being accustomed to drink nothing but water, and that the agitation of her mind arose from the want of children, which had been the subject of her supplications to God. Eli, hereupon, dismissed her with an assurance that God would grant her request. Hannah, thus encouraged, returned with a joyful heart to her husband, recovered her appetite, of which she had long been totally deprived, and in a short time went back with him to the place of their residence, where she soon after conceived, and was in due time delivered of a son, who was named Samuel, which signifies, in our language, *asked of God*. When the parents of the child went again to Shiloh, to make the usual oblations, Hannah, being mindful of her vow, delivered her son into the hands of Eli, to be dedicated to the service of God. His hair was

judge, by punishing them in an exemplary manner for such notorious crimes as they were guilty of.

suffered

suffered to grow, and he was not permitted to taste of any other liquor than water; was appointed to officiate, also, in the temple, and in time became a prophet of great reputation among the people. Hannah afterwards bore to Elkanah several sons and three daughters.

Samuel, when he had attained his thirteenth year, began to prophesy; and, lying one night on his bed, he heard a voice which called him by his name. Imagining it was the voice of Eli, he immediately went to him, to know his will; but Eli assured him that he had not called him. This was repeated three times; and Eli, perceiving, at length, where the mistake lay, ordered him, if the voice should call him again, to answer in these words: "Say on, Lord, for thy servant heareth." At the next call, Samuel replied as he had been instructed, and the voice then

Divinedenun-
ciation against
Eli and his
sons.

proceeded in these words: "As thou art willing to listen to my injunctions, I will now give thee to know, that the Hebrews are, at this moment, on the verge of a calamity so dreadful as not to be expressed, and almost surpassing conception. In the course of a single day, the two sons of Eli shall be slain; and the high-priesthood shall be for ever taken away from his family, and transferred to that of Eleazar; for Eli hath manifested a greater regard for his sons, than for my service, and hath thereby involved both himself and them in one common destruction." Samuel was very unwilling to acquaint Eli with what had been communicated to him by the Almighty; but, being adjured by the high-priest to conceal nothing from him of all that had passed, he gave him a circumstantial account of the revelation; thereby leaving him no room to doubt of the unavoidable ruin of his profligate children*. From this period, the reputation of the predictions of Samuel increased in the most rapid manner imaginable.

The Israelites
defeated by
the Philis-
tines.

The troops of the Philistines had now proceeded without opposition as far as Amphik, and, continuing to advance farther into the country of the Israelites, a battle at length ensued between the two armies, in which the Hebrews were shamefully defeated, with the loss of four thousand men on the spot, and were pursued even to their camp. This unexpected overthrow plunged the Hebrews in the deepest despondency, and they dispatched messengers in all haste to Shiloh, with a request to the high-priest and elders, to cause the ark to be sent without delay to the army, that through its presence they might be enabled to obtain a victory over their enemies; being totally unconscious that they were devoted

ed to destruction by a power far superior to that of the ark; even by that eternal Being, on whose account alone the ark itself was held in reverence. Their request was, however, complied with; and the two sons of Eli were commissioned by their father to convey the ark to the army, himself being too feeble to attend on the occasion, with a strict injunction never to see his face again, unless they brought back their charge in safety. On the arrival of the ark, the Hebrews resumed their courage, as if victory had been inseparably connected with its presence; and their opponents, on the other hand, considered it as a presage of their destruction. The event, however, proved, that both the hopes of the one party, and the fears of the other were equally ill-founded; for, in a second engagement, which soon afterwards ensued between the two armies, the Hebrews fled in the most dastardly manner on the very first onset; leaving thirty thousand of their men dead on the spot, among whom were the two sons of Eli, and abandoning the ark of God to the possession of the enemy.

C H A P. X.

The Loss of the Ark occasions the immediate Death of ELI. ICHABOD is born.

A Young Benjamite, who escaped from the battle, having brought the dreadful news of this defeat, and the consequent loss of the ark †, to Shiloh, the whole city was filled with the bitterest sorrow and lamentation. This being observed by Eli, who was sitting in a chair at one of the gates, he directly suspected that some disaster had befallen the army; and, calling the young man to him, learnt from him all the particulars of what had happened. The loss of men which the Hebrews had sustained in the battle, and the death of his sons, were circumstances of which, as we have before observed, he had already been forewarned by a revelation from heaven; and he therefore supported this part of the intelligence with a becoming fortitude. But, when he learnt that the ark of God had fallen into the enemy's hands, he sunk under the unexpected shock, and, falling backwards from his seat, yielded up his life, in the ninety-eighth year of his age, and the fortieth of his government. When the wife of Phineas, who was at that time in the seventh month of

The Philis-
tines again
victorious.
Sons of Eli
slain; and he
expires, on
hearing of the
capture of the
ark.

* The foregoing sentence, pronounced by an artless child, was much more terrible to Eli than the message before delivered by the prophet; for he now humbly acknowledges the justice of God, and submits to his sentence with a penitent resignation.

† The heathens who held the doctrine of tutelary gods, carried these arks or ambulatory temples in their armies, imagining by these means to secure the protection of their gods. They likewise fancied

that if they could, by any means, propitiate or bribe the local god of their adversary, their success would be certain. With this view the Philistines seized on the ark, and supposed that, by possessing themselves of the palladium of the Israelites, they should deprive them of the assistance of their local and tutelary god, and at the same time secure his protection to themselves.

Engraved for D. BRADSHAW'S New Edition of JOSEPHUS.



Eli falls down dead upon the news of the Ark being taken.

her pregnancy, received the news of her husband's death, she instantly fell in labour, and died on the same day. The child, however, survived, and was

named Ichabod; signifying *shame* and *ignominy*, in allusion to the disgrace which the Israelites had incurred by the above defeat.

B O O K VI.

Including the PERIOD from the YEAR of the WORLD 2850. to 2890.

C H A P. I.

The PHILISTINES take the Ark, which is removed to Five Cities, which are plagued thereby.

Dagon falls before the ark.

THE Philistines conveyed the ark in triumph to Ashdod, and deposited it among other trophies in the temple of Dagon. Upon repairing to the temple the next morning, in order to perform their devotions, the Philistines perceived that the figure of Dagon, which they worshipped as their god, had fallen from its pedestal, and was lying before the ark. They replaced the idol; but on their return the following day, again found it on the floor of the edifice, in a posture of adoration to the ark; and this was the case for several successive days. They were greatly surprised at this preternatural moving of the image, which they considered as an indication of ill-fortune. In short, the sacrilegious temerity of the people of the city and province of Ashdod was punished by a terrible plague, which destroyed great numbers of them. This plague was a violent dysentery, and rapid decay of the entrails, attended with the most excruciating tortures. They were also visited with another plague by their lands being infested by surprising numbers of mice, which intirely destroyed their corn, and the other fruits of the earth. Being at length convinced that their impious violence upon the ark was the cause of these judgments, they dispatched messengers to the people of Ascalon, to solicit them to remove the ark from their city. This offer was joyfully accepted, but in a short time the people had occasion severely to repent their conduct; for when the ark had been conveyed to Ascalon, that place was visited with the same plagues which had prevailed at Ashdod. It remained not long in this city, but was conveyed to different places, till it had passed through five of the Philistine cities, being constantly attended in its progress by the calamities above-mentioned.

A council of the principal men of the five cities of Gath, Ekron, Ascalon, Gaza, and Ashdod, was assembled, to determine upon measures for disposing of the ark. It was recommended by the one party, to return it to the people by whom it was originally possessed; for they believed that the God who had spread such devastation in their cities would still continue to exercise his displeasure upon those who should keep the ark in their possession. Others would not allow this to be the cause of the public calamities; and they argued, that it was not probable the Lord entertained the respect which was pretended for the ark, as he had suffered the Israelites to be deprived of it, by an enemy, and especially as that enemy professed a different religion; and they advised that the prevailing troubles might be considered as occurrences produced in the common course of nature. A third party adopted sentiments between the extremes of the two preceding: they proposed, that for each of the above-mentioned cities a golden image should be provided, and that these five images should be consecrated to the honour of God, as an instance of gratitude for having relieved them from the terrible affliction of the plagues, which human means were not able to eradicate. They also proposed five golden mice, thereby referring to the vermin which had destroyed the produce of their grounds*; and that a carriage, in the form of a waggon, should be constructed for the purpose of receiving the ark, upon which was to be laid a box containing the images and golden mice; this carriage was to be drawn by two milch-kine, their calves being taken from them and confined, that they might not cause them to delay their progress. The vehicle was taken to a spot branching into three roads, and the beasts being allowed to pursue their own course, it was to be understood that if they pursued the Hebrew road, the misfortunes

The Philistines resolve to dispose of the ark.

* It was a custom among the ancients, when any country was infected with disease, plague, or noxious animals, to erect an image No. 6.

of it under celestial influence, which they believed would remove their cause of complaint.

which the people of the five cities had sustained, proceeded from the ark; but if they took any other direction, the public calamities were to be attributed to some different cause.

CHAP. II.

Rejoicings of the ISRAELITES, on the recovery of the Ark. Defeat of the PHILISTINES.

The Israelites recover the ark.

THE animals being allowed the liberty of following their own course, immediately struck into the Hebrews road*, and, with as much regularity as if they had been impelled by the direction of a driver, proceeded towards a village belonging to the tribe of Judah, called Bethshemeth, where they stopped, notwithstanding a fertile and extensive plain seemed to invite them to continue their journey. At this time the people were busily occupied in getting in the harvest, but they left their work, and being joined by great numbers from the town, proceeded towards the ark, the return of which afforded them inexpressible pleasure. They took the ark and the box containing the images and golden mice from the carriages, and having placed them on a large stone, sacrificed the vehicle on which the ark was conveyed, and the beasts which drew it, as a burnt-offering to the Lord. A number of the Philistines who had followed the ark, waited till the conclusion of the above ceremony, and then returned to their companions.

The Bethshemites punished.

Seventy of the Bethshemites incurred the displeasure of God on the above occasion, by touching the ark, which was a liberty granted only to those invested with the authority and qualification of priesthood. In the midst of their rejoicings, the spirits of the multitude were exceedingly depressed by the fate of these men, whom they lamented, not as having discharged the common debt of nature, but as falling judicial victims to their own temerity. This calamity convinced them, that they were unworthy to be entrusted with the care of so sacred a deposit; and they, therefore, dispatched messengers to the Hebrews, to inform them that the ark was brought back. Upon this intelligence being communicated, it was conveyed to Kirjath-jearim, in the neighbourhood of Bethshemeth, and deposited in the house of a Levite named Aminidab, who, being a man of strict piety and exemplary morals, was considered worthy of the sacred trust. To this man and his sons the care of the ark was assigned, and, excepting the four months when it was detained by the Philistines, it remained twenty

* Here was a remarkable instance of divine interference: it was unnatural for the kine to go tractably in yoke together, having never before been used to such labour; therefore it were highly probable that they would have returned to their calves, out of natural affection; and it was very unlikely also that they should go in the Hebrew road, when there were several other ways to take.

years in their possession; and so worthily did they execute the office conferred upon them, that the public acknowledged themselves to be perfectly satisfied with their conduct, and bestowed upon them a high degree of reputation.

Samuel summoned the people to assemble at the city called Mizpeh, and at this place they performed sacrifice, offering supplications to the Lord, and observing the day as a solemn fast. The Philistines gained information of this meeting, and advanced towards the spot with a powerful army, intending to make an attack by surprise. The formidable appearance of the foe threw them into the greatest consternation, and they repaired to Samuel, to whom they alledged, that they dreaded the event of engaging an enemy by whom they had been so frequently vanquished; adding, that in compliance with his direction, they had assembled at Mizpeh for the purposes of offering up sacrifices and supplications to the Lord, and entering into a solemn engagement of fidelity; and that they now found themselves in a defenceless state, exposed to the mercy of the Philistines; wherefore they intreated him to exert his endeavours to prevail with the Lord to deliver them from the impending danger, which they could not hope to escape but through the intervention of the Divine Providence. Samuel encouraged them to hope for success, saying, that God would indisputably grant them the protection which he had been graciously pleased to promise. After this, he offered a sucking lamb as a sacrifice in the name of the Hebrews; supplicating the Lord to preserve them from the calamities threatened by the Philistines. This sacrifice proved agreeable to the Lord, who, in reply to the request of Samuel, promised that the Hebrews should obtain a complete victory over their enemies. Before the sacrifice was intirely consumed, the Philistines formed themselves into the order of battle; and as they had not afforded the Hebrews time to put themselves in a state of defence, they entertained the most confident expectation of conquest. But the issue of this matter proved so contrary to the expectation of the Philistines, that it would scarcely have been credited, had it been predicted by an oracle.

On the spot where the Philistines were stationed, the Almighty caused a violent trembling of the earth, which opened in different places and swallowed up great numbers; at the same time the most terrible thunder roared in the heavens†, and the lightnings descended upon them in continual flashes, so dreadfully scorching them, that they could neither make use of their arms against the Hebrews, nor see how to avoid the danger. They fled in the greatest consternation to Chore, and were pursued by the He-

Samuel sacrificing, the Philistines are discomfited.

† The Philistines proposed to attack the Israelites at a time when they were not prepared to receive them, being only gathered together before the Lord, and, probably, destitute of arms. But God soon convinced the uncircumcised army, that in his hands are the issues of life and death, by attacking them with the artillery of heaven.

brews, who committed a great slaughter upon them in their retreat. At this place Samuel caused a monumental stone to be fixed, for the purpose of denoting the bounds of the spot whereon the victory and pursuit took place; and he distinguished it by the name of the *strong*, in commemoration of the powerful support, which was manifested by the Almighty in behalf of the Hebrews.

These events so effectually depressed the spirits of the Philistines, that they never re-assumed courage sufficient to renew hostilities against the Hebrews. Samuel continued to make incursions upon the enemy, till he reduced them to a state of hopeless subjection. He recovered the whole tract of country between Gath and Ekron, which had been conquered by the Philistines. Previous to this period, the war between the Canaanites and the Hebrews had subsided.

CHAP. III.

SAMUEL resigns the Government in Favour of his Sons, JOEL and ABIAH.

Samuel resigns the government.

HAVING re-inflated the people in their possessions, and made some progress towards introducing a regularity of government, Samuel established a plan for the administration of public justice. Certain towns were appointed, wherein the judicial business was to be transacted; and to each of these he resorted twice a year, in order to enforce an inviolable observance of the laws of his nation. For a long series of time, this system of policy was practised: but when the infirmities of advanced life had rendered him unequal to the arduous task of conducting the public affairs, he retired from the administration, and invested his authority in his sons, Joel and Abiah. He commanded them to divide the people into two bodies, over each of which they were respectively to preside; and that, at Bethel and Beersheba, they should each establish a court for the purpose of attending to legislative appeals.

From the conduct of Joel (who was the elder son of Samuel) and his brother Abiah, we may learn,

* The crimes of Samuel's sons were less atrocious than those of Eli's sons, because there is no comparison between taking bribes and openly profaning the tabernacle, thus rendering religion itself despicable. Besides, the crimes of the sons of Eli were perpetrated in his own sight; and by not preventing, he was in some sense the accessory or encourager of them: but Samuel's sons were at a distance from him, and possibly their crimes might not reach his ears.

† Samuel had now, by a wise and painful direction of affairs, restored the purity of religion; and rescued his nation from the power of the Philistines, and their other hostile neighbours, against whom they were utterly unable to make head, when he entered upon the administration. At this very time, the people, debauched as usual by power and prosperity, took the pretence of the corrupt conduct

that children do not always inherit the good qualities of their parents, and that a virtuous offspring may derive their origin from profligate ancestors. These degenerate sons proceeded in a course diametrically opposite to the instructions and example of their father. They prostituted the judicial character to interested considerations; for it was not according to the merits of the cause, but the estimated worth of the bribe, that judgment was pronounced. At the times they should have been employed in the distribution of public justice, they were indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance; and in every instance their conduct was a direct violation of the laws of God, and equally contrary to the commands of their father*, whose attention had not been more materially engaged on any subject, than the observance of a necessary subordination of the people towards their superiors, and common justice among themselves.

The licentious conduct of the sons of Samuel incensed the people to so high a degree, that, when he repaired to Ramah, where he then resided, they loudly complained to him of the mal-administration of his children, and earnestly pressed him, in consideration of his own infirmities, which rendered him incapable of supporting the weight of the government; and of the insufferable disorders committed by his sons; that he would appoint a king to reign over them, under whose command they might revenge the injuries which they had so long sustained from the Philistines.

In consequence of instruction from heaven, Samuel convened an assembly of the people, and gave them a positive assurance that he would assign them a king; but first of all acquainted them with the evils and inconveniencies which they must expect to endure under that peculiar form of government. The people were totally deaf to all he could say upon the subject; alledging, that they could not preserve themselves from a foreign bondage under any other form of government, and justifying their choice by the example of all the neighbouring nations.

When Samuel perceived that all his arguments had not the least effect upon them, he dismissed the assembly, with a promise that he would call them together again as soon as God should have revealed to him on whom he would be pleased to confer the regal dignity†.

CHAP.

of the prophet's two sons, to go in a tumultuous manner and demand a king: but the secret spring of their rebellion was the ambition of their leaders, who could live no longer without the splendor of a royal court and household. "Give me," say they, in Hosea xiii. 10. "a king and princes" where every one of them might shine a distinguished officer of state. They could get nothing, when their affairs led them to their judge's poor residence, in the schools of the prophets, but the gift of the holy spirit; which a courtier, I suppose, would not prize even at the rate Simon Magus held it, of a paltry piece of money.—This it was, and this only, that made their demand criminal: for the choosing regal, rather than aristocratic viceroys, was a thing plainly indulged to them by the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 14, 15. The clause, "whom the Lord thy God shall

C H A P. IV.

SAUL is proclaimed King. The City of JABESH is besieged by NABASH, King of the AMMONITES.

Saul and Samuel meet.

KISH, a person of virtuous character, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a son named Saul, who was equally famed for his personal and mental qualifications. The father having lost some asses, which were of a good breed, sent Saul, accompanied by one of his servants, to seek for them. After a long and fruitless search, Saul determined to return home, being apprehensive that his longer absence would create an uneasiness in the mind of his father. When they approached near to Ramah, the servant advised Saul to have recourse to a certain famous prophet who lived in that city, for intelligence concerning the asses. Saul replied, that he was totally destitute of money to gratify the prophet for his information, having expended the whole of what he brought from home. The servant answered, that he had himself a quarter-shekel still remaining, which he imagined would be sufficient for the purpose: for he was not apprised that this man did not, like some others, make a traffic of his knowledge in hidden matters. Upon their arrival at Ramah, they met a number of damsels at one of the gates, who were coming out of the city to draw water. By them they were directed to the residence of the prophet; and the maidens further advised them to lose no time in repairing to his house, as in case of delay they would not be able to obtain a conference with him that night, he having invited a number of guests to sup with him.

Samuel had already been informed of God, that the person whom he was to proclaim king over Israel was a young man of the tribe of Benjamin, and that he should come to his house that evening; and he was, in consequence, waiting at home in expectation of the stranger's arrival. At the precise hour appointed by the Almighty, Saul arrived at the house of Samuel, who immediately discovered, by inspiration, that he was the person whom God had chosen. Saul, addressing Samuel with great courteousness, desired to be introduced to the prophet. Samuel replied, that he was the person; and, inviting him to partake of the repast which he had provided, informed him not only that the asses which he sought were safe, but also that he was on the point of being advanced to the very summit of power. Saul answered, with great modesty, that both his family

and his tribe were too inconsiderable to permit him to indulge the most distant hopes of acquiring so transcendent an honour. At supper, Saul was seated above the rest of the guests, consisting of seventy persons, with his servant next him, and Samuel ordered the attendants to set before Saul a royal mess. At the hour of rest the company retired, but Saul and his servant remained with the prophet that night.

The next morning by sun-rise, Samuel ^{Saul anointed} dismissed his guest, accompanying him a ^{king} small distance on his way home. Being come to a convenient spot, the prophet desired Saul to send his servant a little way on before, as he had something of consequence to communicate to him in private. His request being complied with, he took out of his pocket a phial of oil, and, pouring it upon his head, pronounced and saluted him king of Israel; at the same time admonishing him, that this distinguished honour was conferred on him, to the intent that he might revenge the injuries which the Hebrews had received from the Philistines, and defend them from all future attacks of their enemies.

When Saul returned home, he was closely questioned by his kinsman Abner, for whom he entertained a particular friendship, relative to the incidents of his journey; all of which he readily communicated to him, save that which regarded his advancement to the regal dignity; being apprehensive, from his knowledge of the frailty of human nature, that, if this circumstance should obtain belief, he should draw upon himself the envy and jealousy of his relations, or incur the censure of being a weak and vain young man.

An assembly of the people being soon afterwards convened at Mizpeh, Samuel reminded them of the obligations they were under to the God of Israel, and to the observance of his laws: that they had rejected the government of God, when they desired a king; and in compliance with their wishes, he had anointed one to rule over them. They obeyed; and Saul, the son of Kish, of the family of Matri, of the tribe of Benjamin, was thus elected to the high office in question*. The very moment that the election was finished, Saul privately withdrew himself from the assembly, in order to avoid the congratulations of his new subjects. A rare example of modesty and prudence, in one thus suddenly advanced from a private station to the supreme government of a numerous and mighty people!

The prophet, upon the appearance of Saul, presented him to the people, who received him with the

shall chuse, plainly signifies that they should take care, when they demanded a king, that they thought of none other than such a king, who was to be God's deputy. As therefore court ambition was only in the wicked view of the ringleaders of these mal-contentes, and no foolish fears for the state, or hopes of bettering the public administration, it is evident to all acquainted with the genius of this time and people, that compliance with their demand must have ended in the utter destruction of the Mosical religion as well as law. But it was God's purpose to keep them separate, in order to preserve the memory of himself amidst an idolatrous world; and this not be-

ing to be done but by the preservation of their religion and law, we must needs conclude he would not give way to their rebellious demand.

* But we are told, 1 Sam. x. 27. "that the children of Belial (or of iniquity) despised him, and brought him no presents," they did not come to wish him a happy reign, or to pay him homage. They were probably men of power and fortune, who despised him on account of his tribe and family: but as he passed by their affront without notice, he shewed both his magnanimity and his prudence.

loudest acclamations of joy; Samuel noticed to them, at the same time, the superior height of his person, and his majestic mien. The prophet afterwards returned to Ramah, the place of his abode, and Saul repaired to Gibeah, his native city. A numerous train of persons accompanied him thither, from motives of duty and respect; but with these were intermingled a number of profligate wretches, who behaved with the most contemptuous insolence, not only towards their loyal fellow-subjects, but even towards the prince himself.

Within the course of a month after the accession of Saul to the supreme authority, a war broke out between the Ammonites and the Hebrews, in the course of which he acquired considerable renown. Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, invaded the country of the Israelites beyond Jordan with a powerful army, where he subdued several cities, and spread desolation throughout the land. This prince, not contented with reducing the inhabitants to slavery, in order to prevent even the possibility of their revolting, put out the right eye not only of his prisoners, but also of those who yielded themselves on capitulation; and thus, as in battle the left eye was constantly covered with the buckler, rendered them totally incapable of serving in the field.

Nahash sends an insulting message to the Gileadites.

Nahash afterwards marched his army into the country of the Gileadites, situated on this side Jordan, and encamped near Jabelsh, the capital of the province. He sent a summons to the inhabitants, peremptorily requiring them to submit without delay to the cruel conditions above-mentioned, and threatening, in case of refusal, to destroy the place, and to put the citizens to the sword. These people were at first much divided in their sentiments, whether they should return a resolute or a submissive answer to this summons; and they at length determined to steer a middle course, and sent a message to Nahash, requesting that he would grant them a truce for seven days, during which time they might send to their allies for assistance; and promising, in case their applications should prove unsuccessful, either to yield themselves upon the terms proposed by him, or to march out and give him battle. To these conditions Nahash, influenced by the most consummate contempt of the whole Hebrew nation, readily assented*.

The Gileadites, accordingly, dispatched expresses to all parts of the country, to acquaint their neighbours with the imminent danger to which they were exposed; but, though their situation was universally deplored, yet no one dared to stir in their defence; and the people of Gibeah, where Saul kept his court, were not less infected than the rest with this extreme dread and apprehension of the power of the Ammonites.

* Saul, indeed, had been appointed king; but not having as yet taken upon him the government, he lived in the same private manner as before: so that Nahash was persuaded he could not

Saul, who had been some time absent from the capital, chanced to return just at this time; and, having learnt the cause of the apparent sorrow and consternation of the people, he, actuated by a divine impulse, sent back some of the messengers, with orders to assure their fellow-citizens that he would deliver them from their enemies in the course of three days, and that the rising sun should behold the total defeat and destruction of the haughty foe; and the rest he retained with him, to serve him in the capacity of guides.

CHAR V.

SAUL defeats the AMMONITES, and is again anointed, and proclaimed King.

SAUL perceiving the great aversion of the people to engage in this war, and being satisfied that in the present case, the utmost dispatch was necessary in assembling an army, devised the following expedient to induce them to take up arms: he first cut off the legs of a certain number of his own oxen, and then issued a proclamation, that the same should be done to the oxen of all such persons as should either refuse or neglect to appear in arms on the next day, on the banks of the river Jordan; thence to follow him and Samuel where-ever it should be deemed requisite to lead them. The fear of incurring the above penalty influenced the people to that degree, that, at the precise time, they assembled to the number of 70,000 effective men, exclusive of a separate body of 70,000, which were furnished by the tribe of Judah; as appeared by a muster made near the city of Balam, which was the appointed place of rendezvous.

With this army Saul crossed the river Jordan, and, after a march of about ten schæni during the night, at length halted on the spot which he had before fixed on for that purpose. At break of day the next morning, he separated his army into three divisions, and, suddenly breaking in upon the enemy's camp, defeated them with incredible slaughter; their king, Nahash, being among the number of the slain. He pursued the glorious advantage he had gained, and marched with his troops into the country of the Ammonites, which he utterly laid waste, and re-conducted his army home, crowned with victory, and enriched by the spoils of their enemies. These successes acquired him great reputation; and those of his subjects who had before taken every opportunity to manifest their contempt of him, were now the most zealous in his praise.

Saul defeats the Ammonites.

levy an army in so short a space as seven days, and, consequently, that there was no danger in granting them the respite they desired.

At this period, Samuel proposed that a second convention of the people should be held, with the view of confirming again the advancement of Saul to the supreme authority. They, accordingly, assembled at Gilgal, where the same ceremonies were repeated as had been used at the former election, in the sight and hearing of all present. Thus was the Hebrew government changed, from a republican to a monarchic form. During the whole term of the administration of Moses and Joshua, it was aristocratic, and for the space of eighteen years after the death of the latter, no one being invested with the supreme authority, the whole nation was involved in an absolute anarchy. They were afterwards governed, for a considerable term of years, by certain magistrates, who were denominated *judges*; and to this form succeeded that of the regal government.

CHAP. VI.

The PHILISTINES are defeated by JONATHAN. SAUL's rash Vow. His Offspring.

BEING established in the regal authority, Saul assembled three thousand men, selected from the body of the people; and two thousand of them he commanded to accompany him to his residence at Beth-el, as a guard for his personal safety: he appointed the other thousand to attend his son Jonathan, whom he had ordered to repair to Gibeah; near to which place Jonathan, with these thousand men, attacked and conquered a castle belonging to the Philistines.

The Philistines oppress the Hebrews. When the Philistines inhabiting the parts adjacent to Gibeah obtained advantage over the Hebrews, they did not only dispossess them of their arms, but enjoined them against practising any handicraft branch, in which iron was a material; thereby subjecting them to the necessity of employing Philistine workmen to provide the iron-work, even for their domestic utensils and implements of husbandry. The Philistines possessed themselves of the fords and passes, and having fortified their towns, they came into the field with an army of three hundred thousand foot, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horse, and established their quarters at Michmash. When Saul had gained intelligence of these preparations, he repaired to Gilgal, and issued proclamations for all his people to take up arms against the enemy, whom he represented to be less formidable than they were in reality; but upon obtaining authentic information as to the military prowess of the Philistines, an universal terror

prevailed among the Hebrews, the greatest part of whom passed the river Jordan, and fled to the tribes of Gad and Reuben for protection; the rest concealed themselves in caves, vaults, and such other places as they imagined would shelter them from the vigilance of their adversaries.

At this juncture Saul applied to the prophet Samuel, requesting his advice for the regulation of his conduct in the present distressful state of affairs. Samuel instructed him to remain in his present situation, and to prepare offerings to the Lord, saying, that at the expiration of seven days, he would himself attend the ceremony of oblation; after which he might give battle to the enemy. The appointed time was now arrived, and being continually abandoned by his soldiers, Saul became exceedingly impatient, and proceeded to offer up his sacrifice; immediately upon the conclusion of which ceremony, the arrival of the prophet was announced. He censured Saul for having arrogated to himself the office of performing sacrifice to God*. To extenuate the fault alledged against him, Saul urged, that he had waited the appointed time, but that the enemy having quitted Michmash, and directed their march towards Gilgal, had greatly intimidated his men, many of whom had deserted; and that on these considerations, he was compelled to offer up the sacrifice, lest he should be intirely abandoned by his followers. In reply to this, Samuel reprov'd him for having neglected a rigid observance of his direction, which he declared to be a message from the Almighty himself; adding, that a compliance therewith would have effectually secured the government to him and his posterity; and he then returned home, much displeased with the conduct of Saul. Attended only by six hundred men, and his son Jonathan, Saul removed to Gibeah, the Hebrews having been prohibited (as before observed) the manufacturing of iron, and the majority of his followers being destitute of arms.

The Philistine army, being divided into three bodies, penetrated into the country of the Hebrews by three different roads, and, as they proceeded, ravaged and laid waste the territories of their afflicted adversaries. Saul, Jonathan, and Abiah, the high-priest, beheld the merciless devastation from an eminence, and severely regretted that they were not in a state sufficiently formidable to repel the invaders. These outrages so exasperated Jonathan, that he determined upon a brave enterprise for the preservation of his country; and questioned his armour-bearer, whether he would share with him the danger and glory of the generous attempt. He consented, and bound himself by the solemnity of an oath, to put his life on the issue of

* The wickedness of Saul, on this occasion, consisted partly in his encroaching upon the office of the priest and prophet, in not waiting for Samuel, in his endeavouring to palliate his fault by throwing it upon the prophet, and not shewing any signs of remorse, compunction, or repentance. Samuel had expressly promised to come and offer sacrifice; but Saul offered the sacrifice himself. Sa-

muel had enjoined him to wait seven days for him; but he offered on the seventh day in the morning: and, lastly, Samuel had assured him, that he would direct him what measures to take; but, instead of this, he intended to commence his military operations without the prophet's advice.

the plot. Jonathan proposed, that they should secretly gain admittance to the camp of the enemy, and endeavour to throw them into confusion by a sudden and unexpected attack. The Philistines were encamped on a spot of ground of a triangular shape, bounded on all sides by rocks, which rendered it nearly inaccessible. Jonathan, to encourage his armour-bearer to behave himself courageously on the occasion, told him, that if, in climbing up the rocks, they should be discovered and spoken to by the enemy, he might consider the circumstance as a certain preface of their success; but, if the contrary should happen, they must abandon the enterprise.

When they had nearly reached the camp, they were espied by some of the Philistines, who observed to each other in derision, that there were two of the Israelites who had ventured out of their lurking-places, calling to Jonathan and his companion to draw near, to receive the reward of their rashness.

Valiant exploit of Jonathan. This incident afforded Jonathan the greatest satisfaction; and having, with much danger and difficulty, at length attained the top of the rocks, he and his armour-bearer suddenly entered a part of the camp where the enemy were asleep, and slew about twenty before they were sensible of his approach. The boldness of this attempt threw the Philistines into inexpressible confusion; some abandoning their arms, and endeavouring to save themselves by flight; some part of the army being composed of different nations, fell by the hands of each other, their terror not permitting them to distinguish friend from foe; many rushed upon death, merely from the very apprehension of it; and the number of those who perished by these various means was very considerable.

Saul, having by this time received intelligence that an extraordinary commotion prevailed in the camp of the Philistines, ordered instant inquiry to be made whether any of his own people were absent; and being informed that Jonathan and his armour-bearer had secretly withdrawn themselves, he commanded the high-priest to habit himself in his sacerdotal vestments, and to offer up prayers to God for instructions how to proceed on the occasion. This being done, the high-priest acquainted Saul, that it was God's pleasure that he should immediately attack the enemy, in full confidence of obtaining a complete victory; which injunction Saul joyfully obeyed. In the intermediate time, such of the Hebrews as had concealed themselves in the hidden places of the rocks, having learnt what had happened in the camp of the Philistines, assembled to the number of nearly ten thousand men, and putting themselves under the conduct of their king, attacked the enemy with such impetuosity, that they soon put them to the rout, and pursued them to a considerable distance with great slaughter. But Saul, either through inadvertency, or infatuated perhaps with this unexpected and signal success, fell into

Saul's rash execution censured.

an error which nearly proved of the most fatal consequence to his repose, and embittered even the sweets of conquest. From a strong desire of taking a complete revenge on the enemy, he ordered that the pursuit should be continued, without intermission, till night; and vowed to punish with death any person who should allow himself the leisure even to eat or drink, till the chase should be at an end†; and this denunciation was ratified by all the people who were with him at the time. Jonathan, however, who was totally unacquainted with the foregoing circumstance, in passing soon afterwards through a wood, in the district of the tribe of Ephraim, perceived some bees at work, and taking a honey-comb, began to suck it; but, being informed by those who were next him of all the particulars relative to his father's vow, he instantly desisted, and threw the comb to the ground; but not without some reflections on the impropriety of his father's conduct, in interdicting such refreshment to the people as might enable them to pursue the enemy with the greater alacrity.

Saul was very desirous of exterminating the wretched remainder of the Philistines; nor were the troops less anxious to effect this point than their leader. But he determined to consult the will of God, with respect to the matter in question, before he should proceed in his design; and he therefore ordered Archibob, the high-priest, to make application to God for his instructions on this head. Archibob returned for answer, that the oracle was silent. Saul observed, that the silence of the Almighty, in this case, certainly proceeded from some secret and important cause, as, at other times, he had been accustomed to intimate his pleasure to them, without any application on their part; adding, with a solemn oath, that he would put to death that person who should be found by his iniquity to have subjected them to this dilemma, even should his own son Jonathan be discovered to be the offender.

This declaration was highly applauded by the people, and Saul ordered the lot to be cast; himself and his son standing, during the time, some little distance from the rest. When it was perceived that the lot had fallen upon Jonathan, his father bid him recollect what secret crime he had lately committed, and to make an open confession thereof before all the people. Jonathan replied, that he had no fault to charge himself with, save that of having tasted, during the pursuit on the day before, a little honey; being totally ignorant, at the time, of the prohibition issued by his father. Saul assured him, with an oath, that his life should pay the forfeiture of his disobedience: as he preferred the religious observance of his vow, before every consideration of parental tenderness and affection.

The generous youth, not at all dismayed at the prospect of death, calmly answered, that he should readily relinquish his life, for the sake of enabling his father to release

Jonathan rescued by the people.

under an execration to cut the threat of his son Jonathan, for casting a little honey, without knowing that he had incurred his father's curse upon account of it.

himself

† The execration of Saul was fit only for a madman to utter, and than which nothing could be more extravagant, unless it was what immediately followed in this passage, namely, by his laying himself

himself from the obligation of a sacred bond; and that the reflection that he had been, in some degree, instrumental in revenging the injuries which the Hebrews had so long sustained from the Philistines, would afford him ample consolation under all his sufferings. The noble constancy manifested by Jonathan on this trying occasion, affected the people to that degree, that they forcibly rescued him out of the hands of his enraged father; unanimously declaring, with the most solemn oaths, that they would not permit the least injury to be done to the man to whom they were so largely indebted for the victory of the preceding day; beseeching God to pardon a fault, into which he had been misled by ignorance alone.

After this remarkable victory, in which the number slain on the side of the Philistines amounted to nearly sixty thousand men, Saul returned to his capital, where he long enjoyed an uninterrupted series of prosperity, and acquired immortal fame by the repeated advantages which he obtained over the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, the Edomites, and the people of Zoba†. He had three sons, whose names were Jonathan, Joshua, and Melchishui; and two daughters, the eldest of whom was named Merab, and the other Michal. His army was commanded by Abner, the son of his uncle, Ner; Kish, the father of Saul, and Ner, were the sons of Abiel. He had a numerous army of infantry, cavalry, and chariots; and from every encounter with his enemies, he constantly returned victorious. His guards were remarkable for their martial appearance and deportment. In short, under his reign, the Israelites attained to a height of reputation and power, which rendered them at once both the envy and terror of all the neighbouring nations.

CHAP. VII.

SAMUEL delivers a Message from the LORD, enjoining SAUL to destroy the AMALEKITES. SAUL incurs the Displeasure of GOD for sparing the Life of King AGAG.

THE prophet Samuel represented to Saul, that he had received an express command from the Almighty, to remind him of his duty to the Creator of the universe, and the King of kings, who had exalted him to the regal dignity; and that it was the pleasure of God he should prosecute a war against the Amalekites, and utterly extirpate the whole race; that no advantage should be made of the property of the people, and that their cattle, goods, and other possessions, should be intirely destroyed, and, according to the prediction of Moses, even the name of Amalek expunged from the history of mankind. These judgments were denounced against the Amalekites, as a just punishment for their iniquities.

† The kingdom of Zoba was a part of Syria, bounded by the river Euphrates on the east, and by Damascus and the land of Canaan

Saul engaged to execute with all possible dispatch the instructions delivered to him by Samuel. He now assembled his followers at Gilgal, and upon a review of his forces, they appeared to consist of forty thousand men, exclusive of the tribe of Judah, which mustered thirty thousand. With this army Saul prepared to attack the Amalekites: he stationed ambushes upon the passes of the rivers and woods, so that the enemy could not move from their quarters without danger of being attacked by surprise. After some skirmishes, a general battle took place, and the Amalekites were totally defeated; great part of them being slaughtered during the battle, and excepting a very inconsiderable number, the rest were effectually cut off in the pursuit. After this victory, in conformity to the divine prediction, Saul proceeded to attack the walled and fortified towns, and other places of strength. Some of these he subdued by siege, and others by stratagem.

King Agag was taken prisoner, and, Saul's criminal lenity, in sparing Agag. merely from his being of an agreeable person, Saul determined to preserve him from the common ruin: and this act of disobedience was the foundation of the calamities afterwards experienced by the Hebrews. A conduct similar to that of the king was adopted by the people, who converted the cattle and other valuable effects to their own use, and destroyed only what was not worth preservation. Saul ravaged and laid waste the whole country, extending from Pelusium, on the confines of Egypt, to the Red Sea.

After these great achievements, Saul returned home, apparently reconciled to the idea that, in the important work of reducing the Amalekites, he had inviolably observed the directions communicated by the prophet Samuel. But the Lord was incensed against Saul, for having disregarded his commission in sparing the life of Agag, and suffering the people to make advantage of the plunder; and he was pleased to inform Samuel, that as Saul had proved himself inclined to pursue the dictates of his own inclination, rather than fulfil the orders intrusted to him, he repented having advanced him to the sovereignty. The prophet was so greatly distressed by this revelation, that he employed the following night in fervent supplications in favour of Saul. In answer to these intercessions, the Lord was pleased to say, "that to excuse offences of such magnitude as those committed by Saul, would be an ill-placed mercy, and an encouragement for the perpetration of additional crimes."

Finding his prayers for obtaining the pardon of Saul to be ineffectual, he, the next morning, repaired to Gilgal. Upon his arrival, the king embraced him, and after a congratulatory thanksgiving for the late successes, he observed, that he had, in every instance, acted in conformity to his commission. Upon this, Samuel inquired respecting the bleating of sheep which he heard in the camp. The king replied, that

on the west. We are told in scripture, that it was under the government of several kings, 1 Sam. xiv. 27.

the sound proceeded from some beasts which the people had reserved for sacrifice; and said, he had so effectually destroyed the Amalekites*, that only one man remained alive, and that he kept him prisoner, that he might be instructed in what manner to dispose of him. Samuel said, it was not sacrifices, but the righteousness of mankind that proved acceptable to the Almighty; who accounted the only true sacrifice an observance of his sacred will, without which the fat of beasts, and offerings of gold and silver, he considered as ostentations of pretended piety: but that from those who inviolably observed the divine commandments, the most trifling offerings were received by the supreme Being with infinitely greater satisfaction than all the pomp of ceremony unaccompanied by a pious integrity of heart.

Samuel denounces God's displeasure against Saul for disobedience.

"I am now to reveal to you, said Samuel, that you have incurred the displeasure of the Almighty, by the contempt which you have shewn towards his commandments. As a punishment for your disobedience to the declared pleasure and express command of God, you are doomed to be deprived of the sovereignty, and of the authority which you have grossly abused, in violation of the reverence due to the supreme Being, by whom you were exalted to the regal state." Saul admitted that he had been guilty of an heinous transgression, in exceeding the commission delivered to him by the prophet; and in extenuation of his crime, he used no other argument, than that the soldiers were so resolutely determined to plunder the enemy, that he dreaded the consequence of an attempt to restrain their violence: and he intreated Samuel to obtain a pardon from the Lord, promising, that the offence of which he had been guilty should be a warning for the better regulation of his future conduct. Having made this declaration of his sincere repentance, he endeavoured to prevail upon Samuel to continue with him some longer time, in order to avert the vengeance of heaven; but, being sensible that his mediation would prove ineffectual, the prophet expressed his unwillingness to comply with that request.

CHAP. VIII.

SAUL is rejected, and DAVID proclaimed King of ISRAEL.

WHEN Samuel was about to leave Saul, the latter, in order to delay his departure, caught

* The excision of the Amalekites had been determined by God about four hundred years before this transaction. Balaam in his vision confirms this doom. The order to cut them intirely off was renewed by God several years afterwards; and agreeable to this order, Saul set out on this expedition. It may be observed also, that they continued inveterate enemies to the Hebrews, and joined with their adversaries, whenever they could, to enslave and destroy them; particularly with the Midianites, *Judg. vi. 2. 3. 33.* Nay, this very order to Saul, utterly to destroy them, seems to have been given because they had, together with Moab, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, invaded and spoiled them; *chap. xiv. 48.*

hold of the garment of the prophet, who endeavoured to disengage himself, and in the contest the mantle was rent; which accident Samuel applied by an allusion, telling Saul, that the government of the kingdom would be torn from him, and a man of piety, justice and probity, appointed as the successor to his throne. "This sentence, (said he,) is passed, and the threatening of God concerning you is irrevocable." Having confessed that the displeasure of the Almighty was due to his iniquities, Saul intreated the prophet to return with him, that he might humble himself before his offended Creator: Samuel complied, and they joined in the worship of the Lord. The devotions being concluded, Agag, the king of the Amalekites, was brought forth. He had been heard to make use of some expressions concerning the terrors of death, and these were retorted upon him by the prophet, who said to him: "Many an Hebrew mother hath been overwhelmed with affliction by thy destructive sword; it is, therefore, just that thy mother be numbered among those who are childless." Having given orders for putting Agag immediately to death, the prophet returned to Ramah. This was the last interview between Saul and Samuel.

Saul repaired to his palace at Gibea, in the full persuasion that his contempt of the divine commands had produced his sad reverse of fortune. Samuel was greatly distressed on account of the separation: but the Lord commanded him to suppress his uneasiness, and, providing himself with a cruse of holy oil, to repair to Bethlehem, and there anoint one of the sons of Jesse, the son of Obed, king of Israel; saying, that the party adjudged worthy to support the regal dignity, should be distinguished to him from his brethren. On the arrival of the prophet, the people of Bethlehem anxiously inquired as to the cause of his journey: he gave them a general answer, saying, that his business was to perform sacrifice.

The holy ceremony being concluded, the prophet invited Jesse and his sons to dine with him. He was struck with admiration by the graceful form and deportment of the elder son; and concluded that he was the person destined to fill the throne. But upon asking whether he was the man to be anointed, he was answered in the negative; and told, that the Almighty judged not from external excellencies: but that the qualifications most acceptable to him, were piety, justice, fortitude, and the other virtues which harmonise and compose the beauty of the hu-

God commands Samuel to anoint David king.

The Israelites, therefore, had a right to revenge themselves on them, as they were aggressors by the law of nature and nations, and utterly to extirpate them too, if that was necessary for their own preservation; and were obliged to do it, if God commanded them. God did command it. And will any man dispute the right of God to destroy an incorrigible nation by pestilence, earthquake, storm, or famine? As no sensible person can deny this, how then can he deny the right of God to destroy them by the sword? If this right in God be allowed, then his giving it in command to Saul, by Samuel, was not unworthy of him, and Saul ought to have done it in the full extent of his commission.

man soul. Upon this, Samuel requested the attendance of the other sons, and five more appeared, who, in point of personal advantages, he found in no respect inferior to their elder brother.

The names of these six sons of Jesse were Eliab, Abinadab, Samma, Nathanael, Rael, and Asa. Samuel, having consulted the Almighty on which of these brethren he had determined to confer the sovereignty, received for answer, that neither of them was the man on whom he had fixed his choice. The prophet then inquired of Jesse, what other sons he had; who replied, that he had only one more, who was employed in tending his flocks, and was named David. Samuel desired that he might be sent for; saying, it was but right that he should be admitted to partake of the repast. The physiognomy of this youth prepossessed every beholder in his favour; he being of a florid complexion, with something of a martial air, and a countenance highly expressive of modesty and benevolence. Immediately upon his entrance, Samuel whispered Jesse that this was the youth whom God had destined to reign over his people. The prophet seated him next himself; the father and the rest of his children taking their places below him. Samuel then anointed* David, and told him in a whisper, it was the pleasure of the Almighty that he should assume the government of the kingdom; enjoining him to a strict administration of justice, and a due reverence to the commands of God; and assuring him, that, by such a conduct, he would establish himself in the government, subdue the Philistines, and all his other enemies, and perpetuate his name to the latest posterity.

CHAP. IX.

GOLIATH, the Champion of the PHILISTINES, defies the ISRAELITES, and is slain by DAVID.

The Philistines renew the war.

SOME short time afterwards, the Philistines entered the country of the Hebrews, and encamped with a vast army between the cities of Shechoth and Azekah. Saul obliged them to quit this situation; and they established their quarters on a mountain, opposite to that which was occupied by the Israelites. In the army of the Philistines was a man of prodigious stature and strength, named Goliath, a native of Gath. He measured in height six cubits and a span, and the armour which he wore was proportioned to his vast bulk and force: his coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels, and the head of his spear, which was of iron, six hundred shekels: this spear he bore upon his shoulder,

* He singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him: for it is plain, from what is said before, that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publicly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David, after this, 1 Sam. xvii. 28. it is evident, that he did not know him to be anointed king over Israel. David himself might be as ignorant of

it being too ponderous to be carried in the hand, as lances generally are.

Thus equipped, this prodigy of nature descended into the valley between the above-mentioned mountains, accompanied by a numerous body of armed Philistines, and, with a voice in the highest degree expressive of his extraordinary size and strength, he uttered the following defiance in the ears of the Hebrews: "Prompted by a desire of preventing the effusion of human blood, I come hither, ye men of Israel, to propose to you a decision of the contest between the two nations, by single combat. I here offer myself as a champion on the part of the Philistines; and if you will send some person with a like commission from your nation, the prevailing differences may easily be settled, without proceeding to a general battle. If he chance to vanquish me, then will we be your servants; but if I prove victorious, ye shall be subjected to us: for it is better that one man only should be exposed to destruction, than a whole army." At the conclusion of his speech, he returned to the camp; and this defiance he regularly repeated during the course of forty days; the Hebrews being highly chagrined to remain thus long inactive, in sight of the enemy.

Among the troops of Saul, were three of the sons of Jesse; but David had been sent back to his father, at the commencement of the war, to his former employ of tending the sheep. Having been dispatched to the camp, by Jesse, on a certain day, to carry provisions to his brethren, and to inquire after their welfare, he chanced to hear Goliath reproaching and execrating the Israelites, with more than usual virulence, for their cowardice in declining his repeated challenges. David, who was engaged at the time in conversation with his brethren, could not contain his emotion on the occasion, and resolutely declared his willingness to encounter this haughty boaster; but Eliab, the eldest son of his brethren, sharply reprehended him for his rashness; bidding him, in derision, return to the care of his flocks, as being far the more suitable employment for one so young and inexperienced.

From respect for his brother, David was silent for the present; but, when he was about to quit the camp, having again mentioned, in the hearing of several of the foldiers, his desire to engage the giant, they immediately carried the intelligence to Saul, who ordered him to be brought before him, and questioned whether he had made any declaration of the kind related by the foldiers. David replied in the affirmative; and assured the king, that, with his permission, he would quickly render this arrogant Philistine as contempti-

David desires to fight the giant.

the precise intention of Samuel in this ceremony as his brethren, because it was customary to anoint a person for the Prophetic office as well as the Regal. Samuel's not revealing this secret to David, shewed his prudence, because, if it had got wind before the proper crisis, it would have endangered both their lives.

ble as he at present appeared to be formidable; adding, that the glory redounding to the nation from such a conquest would be the greater, as being obtained by a raw and inexperienced youth. Saul was struck with amazement at the courage of David, but he dared not intrust the decision of so important a cause to one whom he deemed, from his want of years and judgment, to be so inadequate to the task.

David, clearly perceiving in the countenance of the king what passed in his mind, endeavoured to dispel his doubts by the following words: "It is not, Sire, so much the Hebrew army, as the omnipotence of heaven itself which this wretch dares thus impiously to defy; nor should the combat be considered as a contest between Goliath and David, but between Goliath and the Lord of Hosts, who sometimes deigns to effect the most glorious purposes by the agency of the weakest and meanest instruments. I confide in that almighty power, for the like aid and protection which he has been graciously pleased to afford me on former occasions. It chanced on a time, as I was tending the flocks of my father, that a lion entered the fold, and carried off a lamb: I pursued the furious beast, and, seizing him by the tail, dashed him against the ground with so much force, that he instantly yielded up his life at my feet. In the like manner I, some time afterwards, encountered a bear with similar success. I do not consider this Philistine as a more formidable foe than a lion or a bear; but, on the contrary, am firmly persuaded, that God will make me the humble instrument of that punishment which he will inflict on this audacious and blaspheming wretch."

Saul consents, and arms him for the combat.

Saul was now convinced, from the manner in which these words were uttered, that the youth was actuated by a divine impulse, and therefore no longer hesitated to grant the requested permission. To prepare him for the combat, he equipped him in his own suit of armour; but David found, that these arms were likely to prove rather an incumbrance than a defence to him, and therefore desired leave to lay them aside; modestly observing, that they were better adapted to the use of the skilful warrior, than of the inexperienced shepherd. Having resumed his own habit, he took his shepherd's staff and his sling*; and putting five smooth stones, which he had collected from the brook, into his wallet, he advanced towards his antagonist, who ran, as well as he was able under so cumbersome a load of armour, to meet him. When Goliath perceived the diminutive stature of his adversary, and the uncommon weapons

with which he had provided himself for the encounter, he asked him, with ineffable contempt, whether he imagined that he was come thither to beat a dog, or to engage in combat with one skilled in the use of arms. David replied, that he considered him as far worse than a dog. These words inflamed the Philistine with such violence of rage, that he vented the most bitter execrations against David, and declared that he would give his dead carcase for food to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. "You," said David, "come to the field clad in a coat of mail, and armed with a sword and spear; but my armour is the commission which I have received from the living God, who will this day, by my agency, deliver both yourself and your army into the hands of the Hebrews; and I shall, ere night, separate your head from your body, and throw your carcase upon the dunghill, to be devoured by dogs, of whose nature you so nearly partake. And this event shall convince mankind, that the God of the Israelites makes the safety of his people his peculiar care; and that neither arms nor numbers can afford any protection to those who incur his resentment." Goliath was so much prepossessed with a contempt of the youth, and the inexperience of his antagonist, that these words made not the least impression on him, and he eagerly pressed forward to the combat.

C H A P. X.

The Death of GOLIATH. The PHILISTINES are pursued and defeated by the HEBREWS. SAUL conceives a mortal Envy and Hatred against DAVID.

THE eagerness which David manifested to proceed to action was not at all inferior to that of his adversary, being incited by his all-powerful and invisible Protector; and, when the combatants had advanced within a certain distance of each other, David took one of the stones from his wallet, and, placing it in his sling, hurled it with such force at the giant, that it fractured his skull, and killed him. David instantly ran towards the spot, and, unsheathing his enemy's sword, struck off his head therewith.

David kills Goliath with a stone and a sling.

The army of the Philistines was thrown into so great a consternation by this defeat of their champion, that they instantly fled in the utmost confusion; and were pur-

The Philistines are overcome with great slaughter.

* Though we should not urge David's confidence in the divine assistance to clear him from the imputation of rashness in this glorious undertaking, yet his conduct may be vindicated. So far is there from any appearance of rashness, that David seems rather to have had the advantage. The Philistine was armed with heavy armour, a sword, a spear, and a shield; and therefore David, though a stripling, was quite safe whilst he kept the stalking monster from coming near him; and had this peculiar advantage over him, that he could strike him at a distance, and if he had missed him once, had more chances of hitting him, and at last could have run away;

whereas the sword, the spear, and the shield of his enemy, were wholly insignificant, as these could only be employed against him in a close encounter. David was dexterous at his sling, according to the custom of those times, and could scarce fail of his blow whilst he had so huge an object to aim at. The sling was an offensive weapon used in war, and it was reckoned an exceeding useful qualification for a soldier to be exercised in it. They were brought up to, and frequently exercised in it, and attained to an amazing dexterity in the use of it; inasmuch that we read, that they "could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss."

sued by the Hebrews as far as the frontiers of Gath, and to the very gates of Ascalon. On this occasion full thirty thousand of the Philistines were slain, and the wounded amounted to nearly double that number. The Hebrews, upon their return from the pursuit, plundered the enemy's camp, and afterwards set it on fire. The head of Goliath was preserved by David as a trophy, and he offered the sword as an oblation to the Lord.

When Saul was upon his return with the army, he was met upon the road by the women and maidens of the several cities through which he passed, who came out in troops, to gratulate him on his successes, with music and songs of triumph; the women leading the chorus with the words, "Saul has slain his thousands!" and the virgins replying, "And David his ten thousands!" From this circumstance, Saul conceived the ridiculous notion, that he should be no longer safe on his throne, while David continued about his person; and he, therefore, removed him from the post he held in his guards, and advanced him to the command of a thousand men, in hopes that he might fall in some of the enterprises in which, from the nature of his new dignity, he would be frequently engaged.

David, on the other hand, was so highly favoured by the Almighty, that he escaped all the snares spread for his destruction; and not only acquired the universal esteem of the people for his valour and conduct, but also made a strong impression on the heart of Michal, the king's youngest daughter. Saul soon perceived the growing passion of the maiden, and would sometimes insinuate, in the course of conversation, that he should not be altogether averse to the match, on certain conditions: meaning by this conduct, to lure David into a snare which might lead to his destruction, to which point all his machinations tended.

Saul, at this time, made a declaration to some of his courtiers, that he was willing to give his daughter in marriage to David, on condition that he should bring him the heads of six hundred Philistines. This proposal he supposed would naturally engage David, who he knew was ever ready to attend the calls of glory, in some dangerous enterprise against the Philistines; preferring that he should be taken off by their hands, rather than by his own immediate command. He also employed some of his emissaries to sound David on the subject of the match in question; who represented to him, that the favour which he had acquired both with the prince and the people was such, that a report was current, that Saul intended to confer his daughter on him in marriage; but David rejected their intelligence, as improbable.

* The only just reasons that could vindicate Saul in commanding, and David in executing his command, to cut off such a number of Philistines, were either God's order, or their being at war with the Philistines, or the necessity of it to weaken their enemies, the safety of their country, the security of their liberty, and such like motives: and if these motives concurred to justify David in accepting the condition of becoming Saul's son-in-law, by bringing the

They were a second time dispatched by Saul, on the same business, with instructions to acquaint David, in his name, that the want of riches he should consider as no objection in the person whom he should consent to accept as a son-in-law; being determined to bestow, and not to sell his daughter, whenever he should part with her; and that he required nothing further from him, than to bring him the heads of six hundred of the Philistines*; which would be the most acceptable present he could offer, both to himself and his daughter; and would, moreover, by the bravery of the action, fully justify her in her choice to the world. David, totally unaware of the sinister design of Saul in this proposal, gave himself no concern with respect to the difficulty and danger of the enterprise, but instantly concerted the proper measures with his companions for carrying it into execution. He accordingly gave battle to the enemy, routed them with great slaughter, and delivered to the king the number of slain required.

Saul lays a snare for David.

C H A P. XI.

Evil Practices of SAUL against the Life of DAVID, whom JONATHAN warns of his Danger.

ALTHOUGH Saul, to avoid the reproach of a breach of faith, had now given his daughter to David in marriage, yet this close alliance did not in the least alter his disposition towards him. For, remarking that David increased daily in the favour and esteem of God and man, he became violently apprehensive, that both his crown and life were in danger, from the attempts of the youth; and, to secure both, resolved to put him to death in the most secret manner possible; to the performance of which office he destined his own son Jonathan, and a certain number of his most faithful domestics. Jonathan was greatly amazed to see the late affection which his father bore to David, thus suddenly converted into the extremity of hatred; and, struck with horror at the base and treacherous design meditated by Saul, instantly communicated to David the whole matter; and advised him to fly with all speed, as the only means of preserving his life. Jonathan further promised to learn from his father the cause of this extraordinary enmity towards the youth, and to endeavour to influence him in his favour; observing, that he knew of no fault committed by David, which could justify the king's indignation; and that, should he accidentally have fallen into any trifling errors, the services which he had rendered both to his sovereign and to

stipulated number, his bringing more was yet a higher service to the public; and so far from being any breach of the rules of religion and morality, as that it was a proof of real patriotism and public spirit, highly merited the thanks of his king and country, and rendered him worthy of the honor intended him. In 1 Sam. xviii. cc. Saul's demand is an hundred fore-skins (not heads) of the Philistines.

his

his country, made ample compensation for them all. He then assured David, that he would, from time to time, give him intelligence of his father's proceedings; after which they separated, and David, in conformity to the advice of Jonathan, retired to a place of safety, to avoid the resentment of the king.

On the following day, Jonathan, observing that his father was in a placid disposition of mind, took the opportunity to speak to him in favour of David. "It appears to me," said he, "very extraordinary, that you should have conceived so violent a hatred against this young man, without the least apparent cause. Our whole nation is highly indebted to him, not only for the destruction of the Philistines, but for his victory over the giant, whose repeated challenges, for the term of forty successive days, so deeply affected our national honour; and which no one had courage sufficient to vindicate, save the youth in question. He is doubly entitled to your esteem, both as a man of great personal courage, and also as being your son-in-law; an honour which he purchased on your own terms, by presenting you with the heads of six hundred Philistines. Reflect, I pray thee, on the grief which our whole family must feel for the loss of this worthy youth; particularly your own daughter, who, by his death, will be reduced to the pitiable condition of widowhood before she has experienced the happiness of the maternal state. Be pleased to recollect also, the relief which you have received from him in those hours when possessed with that malignant spirit which has so often of late deprived you of your repose; and to entertain sentiments more worthy of yourself, and of the man to whom our family is so highly obligated." These arguments made so strong an impression on the mind of Saul, that he declared, with a solemn oath, that he would never, in the slightest degree, be guilty of any violence towards David, for the time to come. This welcome intelligence Jonathan immediately communicated to David, who returned with him, thereupon, to court, and resumed his attendance on the person of the king*.

CHAP. XII.

The PHILISTINES are again vanquished by DAVID. He is preserved by MICHAL from the Designs of SAUL, who had again determined to put him to Death. JONATHAN and DAVID contract a solemn League of Friendship. DAVID resorts to NOB, and also to GATH; at the former of which Places, he is kindly received by ABIMELECH. This Circumstance being communicated to SAUL, he, in consequence, puts to Death not only ABIMELECH,

* The reader will observe, that Jonathan ever considers David as an innocent person, and pleads for him to his father, not as a rebel or notorious offender, to obtain his pardon, but as having never done any thing to forfeit Saul's favour, or his own life; and therefore No. 6.

but also the whole Sacerdotal Race, save ABIA-THAR, who escapes by Flight. The miraculous Deliverances of DAVID; and Death of SAMUEL. DAVID takes to Wife ABIGAIL, the Widow of NABAL. He is received by ACHISH, who puts him in Possession of ZICKLAG, and retains him in his Service.

NEARLY about this period, the Philistines again commenced hostilities against the Hebrews, and were defeated in a pitched battle by David, to whom Saul had entrusted the command of the army. Upon the arrival of David at court, with the intelligence of this glorious victory, he was received by the king with a sullen and gloomy air, and in a manner little consonant either to his expectation or his deserts: for Saul was constantly apprehensive of the increasing reputation of David with the people.

The Philistines again defeated by David.

On a certain day, Saul, being seized with a return of his old disorder, sent for David, to sing and play on the harp, as usual; and, whilst the latter was employed in the above manner, Saul, suddenly starting from his couch, with the utmost effort of his strength, threw at him a javelin which he held in his hand, and which must have put a period to his life, had not David providentially avoided the blow, by slipping on one side. He immediately retired, in all haste, to his own house, where he remained for the rest of the day. When night arrived, a guard of soldiers were sent to the house, with orders from the king to prevent his escape, and to seize his person in the morning, in order to his being put to death with all the formalities of a public execution. But Michal, who had received intimation of her father's design, gave David instant warning of his danger; advising him to fly before day-light; and, after mutual endearments and lamentations, she let him down from a window at the back part of the house; and thus he escaped the imminent peril to which he was exposed.

The envy and jealousy of Saul still continues.

When the soldiers whom her father had sent entered the house, and inquired for her husband, Michal answered, that he had been very ill during the night, and was just then fallen asleep; and to confirm her assertion, shewed them the bed, under the coverlet of which she had purposely placed the liver of a kid newly killed, which, by its palpitation they supposed to be the body of the sick person. They, therefore, returned to Saul with an account of these particulars; but were instantly sent back again, with orders to bring David away with them, in whatever condition they might find him; Saul being determined, at all events, to put him to death. Having repaired a second time to the house of David, they discovered the deception which

Michal favours David's escape.

fore Jonathan must be commended in disobeying his father's order to David's hurt, and doing all he could to prevent his purpose to kill him.

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had been put upon them; and, acquainting the king therewith, he severely chid his daughter for thus leaguings against her father with his greatest enemy. But Michal excused herself, on the plea that her husband had compelled her to conceal him, and to assist him in his escape, by threats of instant death, if she refused; and by this pretence she pacified her father's wrath. In the mean time, David fled to Ramah, where Samuel then resided, and acquainted the prophet with all the particulars of Saul's conduct towards him; assuring him, at the same time, that he had been guilty of no fault which could afford the slightest pretext for the king's present inveteracy against him.

Samuel, hereupon, in order to shelter David from the great danger with which he was now threatened, repaired with him to Galbaah, where they remained together for some time. But no sooner was Saul made acquainted with the place of their retreat, than he dispatched thither a number of armed men, with orders to seize the person of David, and to bring him away in chains. When the messengers arrived at Galbaah, they found Samuel in company with several other prophets; and, the Spirit of God falling upon them at the instant, they also began to prophesy with the rest; and the like happened to those also whom Saul sent afterwards on the same business. Saul, at length, went thither himself; but, as soon as he came within sight of Samuel, he found himself possessed with the same spirit; and, upon a nearer approach, he threw off his garments, and prophesied naked before Samuel and David, for the space of a whole day and a night.

David, conscious of the irreproachableness of his conduct, bitterly complained to Jonathan of the injustice of the king in seeking his life. Jonathan assured him, that he had been misled by the reports which he had heard on that subject; as the king his father never formed any resolution of importance without acquainting him therewith, previously to the carrying it into execution. But David persisted, with an oath, that his fears were too well founded; adding that, as Saul was acquainted with the strict friendship which subsisted between them, it was not probable that he should communicate to his son any design of a like tendency to that in question. Jonathan was at length convinced; and desired his friend to consider in what manner he might render him the most effectual service.

Jonathan directed David to a certain spot without the city, there to remain concealed till his return; promising that, when he should have discovered the dis-

position of his father towards him, he would come to the place with his bow and arrows, attended by one page only; that he would let fly three arrows, and, if the intelligence he brought him was favourable, he would order the page to fetch them again to him; but, if he gave him no such order, David was from thence to conclude, that his person was in danger from the king's resentment.

At the festival of the following day, Saul, having first purified himself in the customary forms, took his seat at the table, with Jonathan on his right hand, and Abner, the general of his army, on his left; the seat which, in virtue of his office, belonged to David remaining vacant. Saul observing this circumstance, imagined that David had not regularly purified himself, and therefore passed it over in silence; but, remarking that he still did not attend on the second day of the festival, Saul, with a considerable degree of asperity, questioned Jonathan why David had thus absented himself, for two successive days, on so solemn an occasion. Jonathan replied, that he had granted him permission to repair to Bethlehem, to solemnize the festival with his own tribe; adding that, from the sincere affection which he bore to the young man, he should be glad to have his majesty's leave to repair thither to him.

These last words so highly irritated Saul, that he could no longer conceal his hatred to David; and, loading his son with the injurious epithets of traitor, and confederate with the enemy of his family, he ordered him forthwith to send some persons to Bethlehem, to bring David from thence, that he might be punished according to his demerits; observing, that it must be apparent to every one who did not wilfully shut his eyes against the truth, that his personal safety could be no otherwise secured than by the death of David. Jonathan, in the most respectful manner, desired his father to inform him by what heinous offence David had thus drawn upon himself his resentment: but the question had nearly cost him his life: for Saul, seizing a javelin which stood near, would infallibly have killed him therewith on the spot, but for the interference of some of the attendants, who wrested it out of his hand.

This action clearly evinced to Jonathan the violence of that hatred which his father had conceived against David; and he immediately retired from the company, deeply affected with the reflection on the danger, which threatened both his friend and himself. Having spent the night in sleepless anxiety, he rose at an early hour in the morning, and, taking with him his bow and arrows, he repaired, with one page only, to the spot where David was concealed.

Saul resents Jonathan's good-will to David.

* The change in the messengers of Saul was great; but that which was wrought in Saul himself was astonishing. He came to wreak his vengeance: but instead of a murderer, he becomes a prophet; puts himself naked intirely into the hands of Samuel, the prophets, and David, who might have made what advantages they pleased of an adventure so fortunate, even to have cut off Saul, and raised David to the throne. But they abhorred the thought; and as the spirit of the Lord kept Saul in that condition till David was safe,

so Saul was safe during the time that he was naked (i. e. destitute of his royal military robe.) A noble evidence this of the innocence and loyalty of Samuel, the prophets, and David; whilst at the same time it affords a pleasing instance, to a generous compassionate mind, of the care of Providence over persecuted virtue, and of the impotence of human malice towards those whom God is determined to preserve.

He first discharged his arrows, and in token that the intelligence he brought was unfavourable, instead of sending the page to pick them up, he re-dispatched him into the city, on a feigned errand, that he might be at liberty to converse with his friend with the greater privacy.

The two friends part, to meet no more. Immediately upon the departure of the lad, David came forth from his hiding-place, and prostrated himself at the feet of his benefactor, who raised him up in the most affectionate manner; and they joined in deploring the malignity of their fate, which thus compelled them to a separation, to which death itself was, in the opinion of each, far preferable. After some time spent in these mutual condolences, and in renewing, with the most solemn protestations, the league of friendship they had formerly contracted, they took a final leave of each other*, and Jonathan returned to the city.

David repairs to Abimelech, the priest, at Nob, who gives him money and arms. In order to avoid the unceasing persecution of Saul, David fled to Nob, the residence of Abimelech the high-priest. As he came without a single attendant, Abimelech could not conceal his surprize at the circumstance; but David informed him that, being charged by the king with the execution of a commission of a most secret and important nature, he had, for the greater privacy, dismissed his suit for the present, and had appointed them a certain place where they should meet him. Under this pretext he obtained from Abimelech a supply of money, and also the sword of Goliath, which had been hung up in the temple, and dedicated to God; and, being thus provided, he retired to Gath in the land of the Philistines, where Achish, the king of the country, then kept his court. It chanced, that the whole of the foregoing conversation between David and Abimelech was overheard by a Syrian, named Doeg, who was employed by Saul in the capacity of a groom.

David arrives at Gath. Immediately upon the arrival of David at Gath, he was recognized by several of the king's servants, who seized him, and conducted him before their master, with loud complaints of the many signal injuries which their nation had sustained from this man. David, now perceiving himself involved in a worse dilemma than before, suddenly assumed the behaviour of an idiot; drivelling at the mouth, and using other actions of a like kind; which expedient succeeded so well, that Achish, in a violent passion, bid his servants remove him from his presence, and drive him out of the city: and thus David escaped the imminent danger to which he had been exposed.

He retires to a district of Judah. From Gath he retired into the district of the tribe of Judah, where he remained concealed for some time, in a cave situ-

ated in the field of Adullam. Hither numbers of his friends, relations, and other persons repaired to him, some being influenced thereto by an affection for himself, others by their hatred and fear of Saul, and others again by the hopes of retrieving their ruined fortunes; and with these, amounting in the whole to about four hundred persons, he put himself under the protection of the king of Moab, who entertained him and his followers with the greatest hospitality, during the whole time that they remained in his dominions, from whence, by the advice of the prophet Samuel, they removed to Hareth in the land of Judah.

Saul quickly received the alarming intelligence, that David had been seen at the head of an armed force; and, being well acquainted with the courage and enterprising genius of the man, he was greatly apprehensive that he might enter upon some attempt, which might, at least, perplex the peace of his kingdom, and might probably endanger even the security of his crown and government.

Saul chides Abimelech. Saul ordered Abimelech and the rest of the priests to be brought before him, and upon their arrival addressed the high-priest in these words: "What offence had I given you, that you should thus favourably receive the avowed enemy of my person and government; furnishing him with money and arms, and encouraging him in his perfidious designs, by communicating to him the responses of the oracle relative thereto? You cannot be unacquainted, that he is at the present time a fugitive, merely from the apprehension of receiving the punishment to which his inveterate malice against my person and family has justly rendered him obnoxious.

who clears himself. Abimelech did not attempt to disprove the charge, but alledged, in vindication of his conduct, that he had considered David, not as the enemy, but, on the contrary, as the friend and faithful servant, as well as the son-in-law of the king. He added, that it was in consideration of these qualities that he had afforded him the assistance he had requested, on the plea that he had been sent by the king to execute a commission, which required the utmost secrecy and dispatch; that, with respect to the circumstance of his consulting the oracle at the desire of David, it was nothing more than what he had repeatedly done on former occasions: and, finally, that, whatever designs it might appear David had formed against the person or government of the king, he beseeched his majesty to do him the justice to believe that, either directly or indirectly, he had not the least share or concern therein.

This justification, though highly plausible, Saul, being prepossessed by his fears, totally disregarded, and instantly commanded his guards to seize Abimelech and the rest of the priests, and to put them

* This adieu is the most pathetic and tender that ever was described. There was reason for David to be in sorrow (which in 1 Sam. xxi. 41. we are told, was the case), as he was now to be-

come an exile from his friends, from his wife, from his parents, from his kindred, from the people of God, and from all sacred solemnities.

to death on the spot*. But, it being prohibited by the law of Moses to spill the blood of any person invested with the sacerdotal function, the Hebrews unanimously and steadily refused to comply with the king's order; and the execution of this barbarous commission was, in consequence, committed to Doeg, the Syrian, and a band of ruffians whom he selected for that purpose: the number of those who were thus inhumanly massacred, amounted to three hundred and eighty-five persons.

Abimelech and the priests massacred by Saul's order. The vengeance of Saul not being yet sufficiently glutted, he dispatched his agents to Nob, the residence of the priesthood, with orders to put the inhabitants to the sword, without distinction either of sex or age: this savage commission was executed in its fullest extent; no one escaping the general destruction, save Abiathar, the son of Abimelech, who was preserved by a miraculous interposition of the divine providence. Thus was verified the revelation which God had disclosed to Eli the high-priest, intimating, that the guilt of his two sons would, in the course of time, be punished with the utter extirpation of his family.

Abiathar escaping, repairs to David. Abiathar, the son of Abimelech, who was the only person, that escaped the general massacre, repaired to David, with the afflicting intelligence of all that had passed. David condoled with him on the occasion; expressed great sorrow to have been in any respect the cause of so dreadful a calamity, of which he had from the first been apprehensive, from the circumstance of Doeg's being present at the interview between him and Abimelech; and concluded with recommending it to Abiathar to continue with him, as the best means of sheltering himself from the pursuits of Saul.

David succours Keilah. Nearly at this period David received intelligence, that the Philistines had invaded the province of Keilah with a numerous army, spreading universal devastation wherever they came; he therefore resolved to oppose them, but previously consulted the oracle; and, having received a favourable answer, advanced with his small force against the enemy, routed them with a considerable slaughter, and acquired a valuable booty. After this victory, he continued some time at Keilah, to protect the inhabitants during the season of harvest. When the intelligence of this victory, which was represented much to the advantage of David, and the circumstance of his shutting himself up in the city of Keilah, were communicated to

Saul, he instantly dispatched a body of forces to besiege the place, with orders not to abandon the siege till David was delivered into their hands. But David, being forewarned, that if he continued at Keilah, the people would deliver him up, in order to make their peace with the king, he retired from thence, with his four hundred followers, and encamped upon a hill of great natural strength, named En-gedi, which was situated in the desert.

But, when Saul received information that David had quitted Keilah, he countermanded the orders which he had before given, respecting the siege; and David again changed his quarters, retiring to Cœna, in the district of Ziph. At this place he had an interview with Jonathan, who exhorted him to support himself with resolution under his present troubles; assuring him, that in a short time he would be invested with the supreme government; and representing to him, that such exalted dignities were not attainable without much toil and danger.

The people of Ziph, with the view of ingratiating themselves with the king, gave him notice of the place whither David had retired; and engaged, if Saul would furnish them with a body of troops, to seize his person; which, they alledged, might easily be effected, by securing certain passes, whereby his retreat would be rendered totally impracticable. Saul expressed his acknowledgments for this intelligence, and immediately dispatched a party to carry the design into execution; promising to follow them at the head of a larger force, with all convenient dispatch. The Ziphites served as guides to the troops sent by Saul, and afforded them every assistance in their power towards executing the commission with which they were charged.

But God would not permit these wicked designs to take effect; for David, having received information of the king's approach, retired to a large rock in the desert of Maon†. Hither he was so closely pursued by Saul, that he appeared to be deprived of every hope of escaping, when intelligence was brought to the king, that the Philistines had invaded his dominions, and were ravaging the country without controul. This circumstance induced Saul to abandon the pursuit of David, and to turn his arms against the invaders; considering it as highly imprudent to risk the total loss of his kingdom, merely for the sake of gratifying his revenge against a particular person. In this manner was David preserved, from the apparently

* Why should the priests have been involved in this barbarous massacre? Doeg mentions only Abimelech as being applied to by David; and in like manner Saul himself, in the charge he brings against Abimelech, accuses him and David: *Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse?* without a syllable of any other priests. As to the priests not acquainting Saul with David's flight, why should they do it, if they were not informed of it, but believed, as David had pretended, he was in haste upon the king's business? And if they had known the reason of it, it was

not in their power to have acquainted Saul with it time enough for him to have apprehended him: it is therefore evident, from Saul's charge against Abimelech, that his suspicion of the priests being in David's interest, arose merely from the information of Doeg, and not from any thing they had done, before this, contrary to their duty.

† Maon was a distant wilderness from Ziph, though they both lay in the tribe of Judah.

inevitable destruction with which he was threatened; and from hence he marched with his troops to the streights of En-gedi †.

Saul persists in persecuting David :

As soon as Saul had routed the Philistines, and compelled them to return to their own country, he selected three thousand of his choicest troops, and, putting himself at their head, renewed the pursuit of David, of whose retreat to En-gedi he had now obtained the most indisputable information. When he had arrived very near to the spot, he retired, for a short time, without any of his attendants, into a dark and spacious cave, in which it so happened that David and his companions were concealed; one of them recollecting the person of Saul, instantly acquainted David with his discovery, and advised him to avail himself of the opportunity which God had thus afforded him, of establishing his own safety by the death of his implacable foe. But David rejected this advice with horror, and contented himself with cutting off a piece of the skirt of Saul's robe; and even this action created a strong compunction in his breast, as he considered it as an unwarrantable violence committed against the person of one whom God had been pleased to set over him in the quality of his sovereign.

Immediately upon the departure of Saul from the cave, David followed him, and, in the most respectful manner, addressed him in these words: "It is the common misfortune of all princes, Sire, to be surrounded with numerous sycophants, whose constant practice it is to fill their minds with injurious suspicions of their sincerest and most approved friends. Professions may deceive, but the man who acts in conformity to his duty, gives an incontrovertible testimony of his affection and respect for his sovereign. I have been accused to your majesty of crimes which never entered into my imagination; and you, in consequence, pursue my life with the most unremitting ardour. But I trust, Sire, that the example of my conduct on the present occasion, will convince you how totally undeserving I am of the rigour which I have experienced at your hands. For it was equally in my power to have deprived you of your life, as to cut off this piece of your garment, which you now see in my hand: but even all the provocation which I have received, could not induce me to be guilty of so vindictive an action. Judge then, Sire, whether you can, without the most palpable injustice, continue to persecute me. I submit my conduct to the judgment of the Almighty, and he will decide by whom the charge of guilt hath been incurred."

† This strong hold, now called An-guedi, was a large village, situated in the deserts, which lay upon the western coast of the Salt or Dead-Sea, not far from the plains of Jericho. This country abounded in mountains and large caverns, and therefore was a very commodious place for David to retire to, and conceal himself from his jealous enemy.

Saul reflecting on the imminent peril which he had escaped, and on the great moderation exhibited by David on the oc-

Saul justifies David's conduct :

casion, observed that he had repaid all the benefits and services which he had received from him with the basest ingratitude and cruelty. He further acknowledged that David, by his conduct on that day, had proved himself to be possessed, in the highest degree, of the generous sentiments of their forefathers, who gloried in sparing the lives of such of their foes as Providence had delivered into their hands; adding, that he was from hence convinced, that it was the intention of the Almighty to confer on him the supreme government of the Hebrew nation; and conjuring him, when that period should arrive, to shew mercy to his children. After David had bound himself to the king, by a solemn oath, to a strict observance of his request, they separated, and David removed with his troops to the streights of Mizpeh*.

Nearly at this period the Hebrews were deprived of the prophet Samuel; a man whose numerous virtues had justly endeared him to the whole nation. He died at Ramah, his native city, and was interred with a magnificence highly expressive of the affection which the people entertained for him. He held the supreme authority twelve years subsequent to the death of Eli, and died in the nineteenth year after the introduction of the monarchical form of government.

Death of Samuel :

In the city of Bemma, situated in the district of Ziph, and near the spot on which David had encamped his troops, dwelt a certain person named Nabal, whose flocks were so numerous that they were computed to amount to three thousand sheep, and one thousand goats. David strictly prohibited his people from committing the slightest depredation on the possessions of this man, and even permitted them to assist the shepherds of Nabal in tending their flocks; flattering himself, that he should thereby confer an obligation on a person who was deserving of his favour. But the disposition of Nabal was naturally churlish and morose, whilst his wife was equally remarkable for the graces of her person and mind.

Story of Nabal and Abigail :

When the season of sheep-shearing arrived, David sent ten of his men to compliment Nabal, in his name, and to request a small supply of provisions, for which he would, when opportunity offered, make him ample compensation. They were further ordered to represent to him that, during the whole time of their abode in the desert, they had never once injured him in his

Nabal's churlish behaviour to David :

* That Saul should break his vows, and, what is worse, that he should ungratefully pursue his deliverer, with increasing thirst after his blood, is an extraordinary instance of the length in wickedness which some men are permitted to run. Saul imitated in this respect those who had sold themselves to work iniquity in the sight of the Lord.

property, but, on the contrary, had done him some service by the assistance which they had afforded his servants. Nabal enquired from whom they came, and, being informed that they were sent by David, the son of Jesse, he not only peremptorily refused to comply with their request, but accompanied his refusal with many opprobrious expressions respecting David, whom he styled a fugitive, who had left his master from an apprehension of receiving the punishment due to his crimes.

He vows revenge; When David was informed of this behaviour of Nabal, he instantly put himself at the head of a party of four hundred of his followers, and, leaving the remaining two hundred to guard the baggage, began his march towards the dwelling of this man, with a full determination utterly to extirpate his whole family, and destroy his habitation: and this he bound himself by an oath to perform before the next day's dawn. In the mean time, some of the servants of Nabal, who had been present at the conversation between their master and the persons sent by David, communicated to Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the particulars of all that had passed; at the same time suggesting to her their fears, lest this conduct of their master should be attended with fatal consequences to himself and his family. Upon this intelligence Abigail, without mentioning a syllable of her design to her husband, who was, at the time, in a state of intoxication, ordered a number of asses to be laden with refreshments of various kinds, and immediately began her journey to meet David on the way.

but is pacified by Abigail, When she arrived near the foot of the mountain, she perceived David and his men descending into the valley, and, upon a nearer approach, prostrated herself before him, and earnestly solicited him to pardon the contemptuous expressions uttered by Nabal, whose name strictly accorded with his disposition. She assured him, that she was not present when his messengers came to her husband; observed, that he ought to return thanks to heaven for preserving him, by her agency, from the guilt of blood, and expressed her wishes, that he might ever continue free from that pollution, as a means of securing the favour and assistance of God in all his contests with his enemies. She readily admitted the justice of his resentment, but earnestly besought him to set due bounds to his vengeance, and to reflect, that nothing gave so great a lustre to the character of a person destined to rule over others, as the virtues of moderation and clemency; concluding with a request, that he would condescend to accept from her hands the refreshments which she had brought with her, as a small token of her respect and good will.

* The heart of David was susceptible of the tenderest emotions. The amiable and lovely appearance of Abigail compensates for the brutal behaviour of her husband, and wins the affections of the Israelitish Champion, though he waited for the death of Nabal before he

David received her in the most favourable manner; accepted her presents, and assured her, that God himself had certainly inspired her with the design of atoning for her husband's offence in the manner she had adopted; and that she, otherwise, would never have seen the morning's light, as he had solemnly sworn, never to close his eyes till he had utterly destroyed the habitation of Nabal, and had put every individual of his family to the sword. He added, however, that, although he was content, upon her account, to pass over the affront which he had received from her husband, yet Nabal would certainly be punished in due time by the hands of the Almighty.

who obtains her request. Abigail, upon her return home, found her husband so much intoxicated, that she perceived it would be in vain to acquaint him that night with what had passed. When Nabal learnt, on the next day, the imminent danger which he had escaped, he was affected so strongly, that he was immediately seized with a numbness which pervaded his whole body; and, in this condition, he continued to the time of his death, which happened on the tenth day. When David was informed of this event, he observed, that Nabal had merited the punishment he had suffered; and returned thanks to God, for his goodness in preserving him from the guilt of blood.

Death of Nabal. David dispatched a messenger to the widow with proposals for taking her in marriage*. She replied, that she was unworthy even to wash the feet of David; but in compliance to his desire, she repaired to him, and they were espoused. The virtues of her mind, and the beauties of her person, obtained her this honourable preferment. Michal, the first wife of David, was disposed of by her father to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallem; after which he contracted a marriage with a woman of Abesar, named Ahinoam.

David marries Abigail. The people of Ziph informed Saul, that David was returned to their quarters, and that he might be repulsed with a moderate force. Hereupon Saul repaired immediately to Zicklag. David dispatched spies to learn the situation of the enemy, and upon receiving intelligence, that Saul had pitched his tents at Zicklag, he rose in the night, and attended only by Abishai, the son of his sister Zeruiah, and Abimelech the Hittite, privately departed and gained admittance to the royal tent, where he found the king asleep, Abner, his general, and his guards being in the same situation. Abishai was desirous of putting Saul to death, but this design was opposed by David, who said, that however iniquitous, considered as a man, the person of the king was sacred, since he had been exalted to a

David enters Saul's camp while he and his attendants were asleep, but refrains from violence.

acknowledged his passion. Had he used the same wisdom and justice in the affair of Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, he would have saved himself many bitter lamentations, and the cause of religion much disgrace.

throne

throne by the appointment and authority of the Almighty; and that for the abuse of power he was accountable only to the Supreme Being, by whom that power was delegated. He said, though he would not avail himself of the advantage afforded him, he would take away the lance and pitcher of water from the bed-side, as testimonies to prove how absolutely the king depended upon his mercy.*

He now left the camp, and, having crossed the river, ascended a mountain whence he called aloud to Abner and the guards: the general, surprised to hear himself thus addressed by name, demanded whence the voice proceeded. David acknowledged himself, and ironically asked Abner, whether the general of an army, the favourite of a prince, and the professed guardian of his personal safety, did not greatly exalt his character, by indulging himself in sleep at the time his master's life was in danger. He mentioned the circumstance of the lance and pitcher of water being taken from the king's tent, observing that, whether the opportunity of removing them was afforded through neglect or treachery, Abner had merited to be condemned to the loss of his head.

Saul knowing the voice of David, and finding that he had been a second time in the power of this generous friend, whom he considered as an implacable enemy, publicly thanked him for having spared his life; and desired him to return home, in full assurance, that all enmity should subside on his part; for he was convinced that his life and safety were not dearer to himself than they were to David, who, in return for repeated banishments and attempts upon his life, the loss of friends, and other injuries, had manifested a steady attachment towards him, by an uninterrupted series of friendly offices. David desired a messenger to be dispatched, by whom he might return the lance and the pitcher, calling God and man to witness, that when he took them from the tent, the king's life was equally in his power.

Saul now returned to his palace; and David, at the head of his six hundred men, marched into the land of the Philistines, from whom he had obtained permission to establish his residence among them. David and his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, met with a liberal reception from Achish, the king of Gath: but conceiving himself to be degraded, by remaining a burden on the public, his situation became extremely irksome, and he determined to petition Achish to grant him a portion of land. In consequence of his application, the king assigned Ziklag to himself and his heirs in perpetuity; and for this

place he entertained a great partiality, even after his exaltation to the throne.

David remained in Ziklag four months and twenty days, during which space he made frequent incursions upon the Sarites and the Amalekites, from whom he obtained great numbers of mules, camels, and other spoil; but he avoided taking any prisoners, lest they should betray his proceedings to Achish. He disposed of part of the booty in presents to the king, who often questioned him respecting the manner of his obtaining the gifts. His answer was, that he had made incursions on the southern parts of Judah*.

About this time, the Philistines were making preparations for commencing a war against the Hebrews, and a day was appointed for a general rendezvous at Rengam, whence Achish was to lead his troops to the encounter. The king requested the assistance of David, with his six hundred men; and to this he readily consented, observing that the period was approaching when he should be afforded an opportunity of making an honourable compensation for the bounties he had received. In return, the king promised, that if he proved victorious in the engagement, he would appoint David to the command of his guards, and invest him with every honourable distinction within the compass of his power.

The Philistines prepare for renewing the war.

C H A P. XIII.

The Ghost of SAMUEL foretells the Defeat of SAUL, and the Death of himself and his Sons. ZIKLAG pillaged and burnt by the AMALEKITES, who are pursued and cut off by DAVID.

SAUL had already banished from his kingdom the soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and all other vain pretenders to a skill in foretelling future events; but the prophets were not included in the proscription. Intelligence being communicated, that the Philistines had pitched their tents upon a plain at Sunem, Saul drew up his forces opposite to the camp of the enemy, near the mountain of Gilboah. The armies being in sight of each other, Saul observed, that the Philistines had a great superiority both in point of numbers and discipline; and his spirits being greatly depressed by this circumstance, he resolved to consult the prophets in relation to the issue of the expected engagement. The question being proposed, and no answer given, his uneasiness increased to absolute desperation; for he considered the silence of the oracle, as a certain indication of approaching calamity. Notwithstanding this, and a consciousness that

* The answer was true, but ambiguous; for all those people actually dwelt on the south of Judah. But Achish understood the answer as meaning that the incursion was made on Judah, on the Jerahmeelites and Kenites themselves, though David asserted no such thing. He therefore was not guilty of a falsity, as some writers suppose, and labour to palliate or condemn; and if in any thing he was to blame, it was for giving an ambiguous answer to a question

which he was not obliged to give a direct reply to. Achish well knew that David had made an incursion upon some of the neighbouring tribes, and in this David did not deceive him; but he thought he was no ways obliged to tell him who they were; and therefore said only in general, that they were such as dwelt on the south of Judah. And if Achish misunderstood him, I do not yet see that David was obliged to undeceive him.

he had forfeited the favour of the Almighty, he had recourse to wizards and conjurers, in order to obtain the knowledge of future events, and employed agents to find out some woman skilled in the mysteries of divination. Being informed that a woman of this description resided at Endor, he immediately repaired thither, being disguised, and attended by two confidants. Upon his arrival, he requested her to call up the spirit of a person he should name, as a proof of her skill. In consideration of the king's edict, which had prohibited this mode of divination, on the penalty of banishment, she declined a compliance, intreating him not to lead her into an act of disobedience, the discovery of which would inevitably prove her destruction. Saul continued his importunities in a more urgent manner, invoking the most bitter imprecations to befall him, if he should divulge any part of the proceeding; and on the credit of his assurances, she at length consented to gratify his desire.

Saul desired her to call up the ghost of Samuel. Being entirely unacquainted with the person of Samuel, she was greatly astonished by the divine figure of the spectre; and turning to Saul, she asked him, if he was not the king? (this Samuel had intimated to her): and he replied in the affirmative, desiring to know the cause of the confusion by which she appeared to be affected*. She said, the apparition caused her disorder, being the resemblance of an aged man, encompassed with a glory, and in the attitude of ascending from the earth. He questioned her as to the age, figure, and habit of the spectre; and was answered, that it appeared to be an ancient and venerable man, in a sacerdotal garment. Hence Saul concluded it to be the ghost of Samuel, and prostrated himself on the earth. The spirit asked Saul, for what reason he had called him from his peaceful abode; and the king replied, that being threatened with a powerful army, and having no prophets to consult with, or visions imparted for the regulation of his conduct, and being abandoned by the Lord, he was compelled into the present measure by the most urgent necessity, finding his last resource for advice to be in Samuel, whom he had, on various occasions, found to be steadily attached to his interest.

Saul rebuked by the spectre, and greatly terrified at his relation.

The ghost reproved Saul for his unreasonable desire of learning what should befall him; but added that, as he had expressed himself so anxiously on the subject, he would foretell his fate. The ghost

proceeded to inform Saul, that himself and his sons would be slain in battle the next day, and that David would succeed to the government, and effect an happy termination of the war; adding, that he was doomed to the loss of his crown and life for his disobedience to the commands of God, respecting his conduct towards the Amalekites.

Upon hearing this sentence pronounced, the king's vital powers seemed to desert him, and he fell to the ground; but whether this was the effect of sudden surprise, or having remained without food for the space of four and twenty hours, may admit of a doubt. However, upon his recovery, the woman urgently pressed him to take the necessary refreshment for the support of nature, that he might be able to return to the camp. Her repeated solicitations, at length, induced him to compliance; and she killed a calf, and, having dressed it, set it before her royal guest and his attendants. After the repast, the king departed, and the same night joined the army.

The Philistine troops were assembled, according to their several distributions, into tribes, kingdoms, and governments; Achish, the king of Gath, and his men, being drawn up behind the other forces, and David, with his party of six hundred, in the rear of him. The Hebrews being observed by the Philistine commanders, they demanded whence they came? by whose order? and for what purpose? Achish replied, that "the leader of the Hebrews, (pointing to David) had been servant to Saul, whose displeasure he had incurred; and, judging his life to be in danger, he fled into my dominions for sanctuary, attended by the party whom he now commands; in gratitude for the assistance I afforded him, and from a principle of resentment against his late master, he has engaged, on the present occasion, to exert his utmost efforts in support of our cause." The Philistines unanimously disapproved of reposing confidence in a declared enemy; urging that, in the important cause depending, the most dangerous consequences might arise from the treachery of the party in question; they, therefore, requested that Achish would order him to leave the army, and return to the place appointed for his residence†; adding, that David was the man by whom many thousands of the Philistines had been slaughtered, and whose exploits were so highly celebrated in the songs of the Hebrew virgins. These objections were so reasonably founded, that they were readily admitted by Achish. He assured David, that experience had convinced him of his bravery and steady attachment, and that on these con-

The Philistines being jealous of David, he is dismissed from the army.

* Magic, especially that part of it which was styled Necromancy, owed its origin to the shows which were exhibited in the Pagan mysteries; and this woman designed to have put the trick upon Saul, by passing some accomplice upon him for the prophet Samuel. But to her great astonishment the prophet now appearing, she was so surprised that she cried out. Saul, as she had told him before, had proscribed all the professors of magic; but by the appearance of Samuel, she collected that the person who consulted her was Saul himself; and reflecting on his severity, she could expect nothing

but death for exercising her trade: she might therefore well ask him, "Why hast thou deceived me?"

† The lords of the Philistines were suspicious of David's purposes, and insisted upon his dismissal. His pleasure must certainly have been great, to find himself extricated out of so delicate a situation as he had been in, when there might have been a struggle between his gratitude to his friend and his love to his country; and in which he could not possibly know what part he had to act, or was bound to act, till the two armies were nearly, or actually engaged.

fidérations

considerations he had received him as an ally; but he desired him to decline taking a further part in the present expedition, and to return to Zicklag, in order to guard the people against any advantage which might be meditated by the enemy during the absence of the army; observing, that by this commission he would be able to render himself as effectually serviceable, as by remaining with the troops. Achish having declared, that the friendship he had conceived had suffered no abatement, David departed for the place of his destination.

The Amalekites availed themselves of David's attendance upon the Philistine army, and attacked Zicklag, which they fired, and entirely destroyed, and committed great devastation in the adjacent country; after which they retired, making booty of all the effects which they were able to remove. David finding his habitation to be laid desolate, and that his wives, those of his fellow-soldiers, and their children, had been made prisoners, gave way to the most passionate lamentations, tearing his garments, and by other extravagant actions proving the excess of his sorrow. His companions were so exasperated on this occasion, that they formed a resolution of stoning David to death, as being the cause of their present distress, but they did not carry this design into execution.

When the violence of his grief had subsided, David requested Abiathar, the high-priest, to habit himself in his pontifical robes, and consult the Lord, whether, upon pursuing the enemy, it would be granted to the Hebrews to recover their women and children, and to take revenge for the injuries they had sustained. Abiathar directed him to follow the Amalekites, saying, success would attend the expedition. Thus encouraged, David put himself at the head of his troops, and closely pursued the enemy as far as the brook of Besor. At this place they perceived a man, who, it appeared, had lost his road in the desert, and was on the point of starving, having remained three days without sustenance. After taking some refreshment, the man said, in reply to the questions put to him by David, that he was an Egyptian, who had attended his master at the destruction of Zicklag, and that, on the return of the troops, his strength failed him, and he was left in the desert.

David appointed this man to be a guide in the pursuit of the Amalekites, whom he, at length, overtook, and found in a state of the utmost disorder; some being engaged in a vain contemplation of the

spoils they had obtained, others in the indulgence of gluttony, some unarmed, and those who were provided with weapons, so much intoxicated as to be unable to use them. In this confused situation, they were vigorously attacked by David and his followers, who committed so terrible a slaughter, that not more than four hundred men escaped, and these were indebted for their safety to the speed of their camels. The pursuit continued from noon till evening; and, during the action, the women and children belonging to David's party were recovered, as were the effects which had been pillaged from Zicklag.

On this expedition David was attended by only four hundred men, having stationed the other two hundred of his party as a guard to the baggage. The four hundred who were engaged in the action, objected to the other two hundred being admitted to share in what had been recovered from the enemy, insisting that their wives and children only should be restored. David remonstrated against arrogating to themselves the merit of the victory, which was to be attributed only to the Almighty; urging, the injustice of excluding the party of two hundred men from their proportion of the booty; as, while the others were engaged in pursuit of the enemy, they had guarded the baggage, the preservation of which was essentially necessary to the common cause. This determination was submitted to the authority of a law, which still remains in force, whereby such as guard the baggage, are declared to have an equal right to the spoil with those who are more actively engaged in the war*. Upon his return to Zicklag, David dispatched messengers with a part of the spoil, as presents to his friends in the tribe of Judah.

The armies of the Philistines and Hebrews joined battle in the neighbourhood of the mountain of Gilboa. Saul and his sons, Jonathan, Aminadab, and Melchi, fought with astonishing bravery: they foresaw that they must inevitably fall in the contest, but resolutely determined that the enemy should have but little cause to boast of the victory. They were oppressed by a great superiority of numbers; and when they had subdued one party, they were attacked by others in succession, till, at length, they yielded up their lives in the heat of the battle. Upon the death of Jonathan, Aminadab, and Melchi, the army fled, and was pursued by the Philistines with a terrible slaughter. Saul maintained a defence, at the head of a small party, some time longer: but from the wounds he had received from the darts and ar-

* The equity of this law appears not only from its being perpetuated, but likewise from the nature of things: for these two hundred were left behind by common consent to guard the baggage; they were part of the same corps, and belonged to the same nation; they were prevented by too great fatigue from being present at the engagement; and as they would otherwise have taken part in the battle, their will was accepted for the deed. By staying with the baggage they facilitated the conquest of their fellow-soldiers, who, when embarrassed and hindered with that impediment, could nei-

ther have charged with so much vigour, nor could have performed the necessary *manœuvres* and evolutions with so much dexterity and address. In this respect they might be considered in a remote view as having a share in the defeat of the enemy. Besides which it may be added, that they were equally exposed to danger with those who actually engaged the enemy; for if the four hundred had been defeated, the enemy would undoubtedly have marched up to them for the sake of booty, and would have cut them off as well as their main body.

rows of the Philistines, his strength was so much exhausted, that he became incapable of further resistance, and even of the power of depriving himself of life. In this extremity of his fate, he commanded his armour-bearer to dispatch him: but the man, from a veneration he entertained for the king, excused himself from the office; in consequence of which, Saul rushed on the point of his own sword; but this not fully answering his purpose, he applied to a young Amalekite, requesting him effectually to prevent his being taken alive by the enemy. The Amalekite immediately killed the king, and taking his crown and golden bracelets, made a precipitate retreat. When the armour-bearer perceived that his royal master was dead, he immediately put an end to his life; and of those who composed the king's guard not a man survived his royal master.

The Philistines dispossessed the Hebrews of their cities.

The Hebrews, inhabiting the valley beyond Jordan, and the cities upon the plains, having learnt the event of the battle, and that Saul and his sons had perished in the action, quitted their open towns and strong holds, and the Philistines possessed themselves of the places which the others had evacuated. On the day

following that of the battle, the Philistines returned to the field, and finding the bodies of Saul and his sons, they stripped them, cut off their heads, and exposed the bodies under the walls of the city of Bethlham, which at this time bears the name of Scythopolis. The people of Jabesh-Gilead being highly incensed against the Philistines for these violences, formed a party of enterprising men, who determined to take down the bodies; and after privately travelling all night, they arrived at the spot, and effected their purpose. The death of Saul and his sons† was severely regretted by the people of Jabesh, who afforded a testimony of their esteem, by a public interment of their remains in the chief part of the country. On this occasion, all ranks of people were enjoined to a strict observance of fasting and mourning for the space of seven days. Thus was Saul punished for his disobedience to the command of the Lord, respecting the war against the Amalekites, the massacre of Abimelech and his family, and the destruction of the sacerdotal city. Saul continued in the government eighteen years previous to the death of Samuel, and twenty-two years after that period.

† On perusing this narrative, no one will express much regret at the death of the cruel, unrelenting, and persecuting Saul, the first king of Israel; but that the amiable, generous-hearted Jonathan should fall a sacrifice at the same time, will sensibly affect the tender

feelings of the friendly and benevolent. It is one among a thousand other proofs, that, with respect to the affairs of this life, "One event happeneth to the righteous and to the wicked."

B O O K VII.

Containing the HISTORY of EVENTS from the YEAR of the WORLD 2890, to 2931.

C H A P. I.

DAVID expresses the deepest Sorrow for the Death of SAUL and JONATHAN. He is proclaimed King by the Tribe of JUDAH; but the other Tribes declare in favour of ISHBOSHETH. His Forces are defeated by those of DAVID, under the command of JOAB. ASAHIEL, the Brother of JOAB, is slain by ABNER. In consequence of a Reproof received from ISHBOSHETH, ABNER abandons his Interests, and joins the Party of DAVID; and is, soon afterwards, treacherously assassinated by JOAB.

THE battle, which proved so fatal to the Hebrews, was fought on the same day in which David obtained the victory over the Amalekites: and, on the third day after his return to Zicklag, a person arrived there, who had escaped from the encounter in which Saul and his sons were slain.

He presented himself before David with his garments rent in various parts, and his head covered with ashes, and acquainted him with the defeat of the Hebrews, and the death of the king and his sons; adding that he was an Amalekite by birth, and that Saul, after having received many wounds, attempted to thrust himself through with his own sword, in order to avoid the disgrace of falling alive into the enemy's hands; but, wanting strength to execute his purpose, he had earnestly requested him to perform the above office, with which request he found himself under the necessity of complying; and, in confirmation of the truth of his assertions he, at the same time, delivered into the hands of David the royal bracelets and diadem.

Upon receiving this intelligence, David rent his cloaths, and devoted the whole of that day to lamentation for the loss

David laments the death of Saul and Jonathan.
which

which both the nation and himself had sustained on the occasion. But his grief arose chiefly from the consideration of the sincere affection and friendship which had subsisted between him and Jonathan, to whom he had more than once been indebted for the preservation of his life. As a proof of the generous disposition of David, he not only thus publicly lamented the catastrophe of Saul, but, uninfluenced by any consideration of the manifold injuries which he had received from him, he also condemned to immediate death the wretch who had confessed himself to be his murderer; and who, by his principles, clearly evinced from what country he derived his birth. David composed various elegies and epitaphs, in praise of Saul and his son Jonathan, all which are still extant.

He fixes his residence at Hebron.

When the term of the mourning for Saul and his sons was expired, David consulted the oracle in which of the cities of Judah he should take up his residence; and was directed to fix upon the city of Hebron for that purpose. He accordingly repaired thither, with his two wives and those persons who constituted his body-guard, and was quickly followed by all his whole tribe, who, in an assembly held for that purpose, unanimously proclaimed him king of Israel.

Abner makes Ishboeth king.

Abner, the son of Ner, and the late general of the army of Saul, no sooner heard of the death of that prince and three of his sons, than he instantly repaired to the camp, in search of Ishboeth, another of the children of Saul, whom he conducted to the further side of Jordan, in order to preserve him from danger, and caused him to be acknowledged and proclaimed king of Israel, by all the tribes save that of Judah; fixing on Meanahaim, for the place of his residence. The conduct of the men of Judah, in electing David for their king, had given such offence to Abner, that, assembling a numerous army, he marched into their country, with the design of punishing them severely for their temerity. The forces of David were commanded by Joab, the son of Suri and Zeruiah, the sister of David; and Joab was accompanied in the expedition by his two brothers, Abishai and Hazael.

bloody contest between twelve men of each army.

When the two armies arrived in sight of each other, in the neighbourhood of Gibeon, they drew up in order of battle: but, previous to the commencement of a general engagement, Abner proposed that each party should select a certain number, to make trial of their valour in a separate combat. This proposal being accepted by Joab, twelve men on a side were chosen for the purpose; and, in the space between the two armies, they attacked each other first with their darts, and afterwards with their swords, with such fury, that, in the end, they all fell lifeless upon the spot. The two armies then joined battle, and, for a while, the contest was maintained with equal obstinacy;

but, at length, the troops of Abner were utterly defeated, and put to flight.

Afahel, the brother of Joab, possessed a swiftness of foot, in which he was surpassed by very few horses. This man, without paying any attention to the rest of the fugitives, confined himself wholly to the pursuit of Abner, who, perceiving that his adversary gained ground on him at a very considerable rate, repeatedly desired him to desist from following him, and offered to compensate him with a full suit of arms*; representing to him how unwilling he should be to kill him, even in the defence of his own life, as he was sensible that he should thereby draw upon himself the irreconcilable enmity of his brother Joab. But when Abner perceived that all his arguments were lost upon Afahel, he suddenly darted his lance at him, and laid him breathless on the ground.

Afahel killed by Abner.

The struggle for the supreme authority, between David and the son of Saul, produced a civil war which was of considerable duration, but terminated, at length, in favour of the former.

The valour, discretion, and popularity of Abner were, throughout the whole war, the chief support of the pretensions of Ishboeth; but that prince, having received information that a familiar connection subsisted between Abner and Rizpah, the daughter of Sibeth, who had formerly been one of the concubines of his late father Saul, reproached him on the subject with so much acrimony, that Abner, from that hour, determined, in revenge, to quit the party of Ishboeth, and to unite himself with that of David. In pursuance of this resolution, he dispatched one of his friends secretly to Hebron, with instructions to inform David that he was ready to ensure him the possession of the kingdom with the general consent of the whole people, by bringing over to his interests those tribes which had been hitherto adverse to his pretensions, on condition that he should bind himself by an oath to confer on him the office of prime minister, as soon as he should have made good his engagements. David eagerly closed with the proposal, and desired that Abner, as a proof of his sincerity, would cause his wife Michal, whom he had obtained from her father at the imminent hazard of his life, to be immediately restored to him. Michal was accordingly taken from Phalti, on whom her father had bestowed her after the disgrace of David, and was again delivered up to her first husband; and this was done with the privacy and consent of Ishboeth, who however expressed a strong conviction of the reasonableness of the requisition.

Abner, taking offence at Ishboeth, quits his party, and joins David.

After these proceedings Abner repaired to David at Hebron, with a band consisting of twenty persons, whom he had selected for the purpose; the intent of his journey being to settle matters with David in person, and to acquaint

Abner confers with David at Hebron.

* Kimchi imagines that Abner's real meaning was, that Afahel should take one of his attendants with his armour, and be content with the glory of carrying him off as a captive. Others suppose,

he bids him try his valour on one of the common soldiers, by endeavouring to disarm him, in order to divert him from attacking himself, who was an old soldier, and an experienced general.

him with the progress he had made towards the completion of his engagements. Upon his arrival at the court of David, he was received in the most friendly manner by that prince, who entertained him with the utmost magnificence for the space of three days, at the expiration of which time Abner requested to be dismissed, that he might finish the undertaking in which he had embarked.

During the above three days, Joab, the general of the army of David, was absent from Hebron; but he returned just at this juncture, and entered the city at one gate as Abner quitted it by another. Having been made acquainted with all that had passed during his absence, he instantly conceived a suspicion that Abner, with whose abilities he was well acquainted, would effectually supplant him in the king's favour, even, perhaps, to the depriving him of the honourable office of commander of the forces.

He endeavoured, therefore, at first to impress the mind of David with sentiments disadvantageous to Abner, whom he represented as a person, whose sole intention it was to mislead him by his professions, that he might with greater facility secure to the family of Saul the possession of the throne. When he perceived that all his suggestions were ineffectual, he formed the execrable design of ridding himself of his rival by assassination; and, accordingly, sent messengers after Abner, to desire him, in the name of David, to return immediately; he having omitted to mention a matter to him which was of great moment. Abner was overtaken by the messengers at Sirah, about twenty furlongs from Hebron, and, not suspecting any mischief, he readily accompanied them back to the latter city, at the entrance of which he was met by Joab and his brother Abishai, who, the better to conceal their infamous purpose, received him with the most flattering professions of regard and esteem.

When, under the pretext of private business, they had drawn him on one side, to a distance from his attendants, Joab suddenly thrust him through with his sword. He pretended to justify this base and treacherous deed on the plea of resentment for the death of his brother Afahel; but his sole motive to the commission of the fact was, the fear lest Abner, by his superior merit and services, should prove a dangerous rival to him in the favour of the king.

David expressed the greatest affliction for the untimely fate of Abner, and, in the most solemn manner, declared his utter ignorance of the barbarous design; venting, at the same time, the most bitter execrations on the perpetrators and abet-

David grieves for the murder of Abner, and denounces a curse on Joab for the horrid deed.

† If we translate the words used by David on this occasion, "Let the blood of Abner rest on the head of Joab, &c." in the future tense, instead of the imperative word, "It shall rest, &c." the character of David may be cleared from aspersions, and the sentence, instead of an execration, will become a prophetic prediction, which David delivered by divine inspiration, and which was, in the sequel, accomplished in its greatest extent. David had, indeed, the greatest reason for expressing his indignation in the most passionate manner for

tors of so nefarious an action†. He ordered all the honors of a public mourning to be paid to his memory, and attended his funeral in person, as chief mourner, accompanied by all the great officers of state. On this occasion his whole deportment manifested the real esteem he had entertained for Abner whilst living, and the sincere grief he felt for his death. He caused the body of Abner to be interred, with the utmost magnificence, at Hebron; and inscribed on his tomb an epitaph of his own composition, in which he highly extolled the bravery and other numerous virtues of the deceased. By this conduct David conciliated the affection of the people in general, but especially of the friends of Abner; and they unanimously exculpated him from all imputation of being accessory, either directly or indirectly, to the barbarous treachery of Joab.

C H A P. II.

ISHBOSHETH assassinated. The Conspirators carry his Head to DAVID, who causes them to be put to Death. The Tribes unanimously concur in electing DAVID for their King. He assembles an Army, and makes himself Master of JERUSALEM.

ISHBOSHETH was extremely afflicted at the loss of Abner, not only on account of his relationship, but also as by his interest and influence alone he had been advanced to the throne of his father. But that prince did not long survive him, being treacherously murdered by Baanah and Rechab the sons of Rimmon. These men, who were two of the principal persons of the tribe of Benjamin, vainly imagining that they should thereby recommend themselves to the highest preferments in the service of David, determined to assassinate Ishbosheth whenever an opportunity should offer. Accordingly, at a time when that unfortunate prince had retired to repose himself, on account of the violent heat of the weather, they entered his chamber, his attendants being all asleep, and, after having deprived him of life, they cut off his head, and then retired with the same privacy with which they had entered.

They immediately began their journey to Hebron, at which place, after travelling with the utmost expedition during the whole night, they arrived on the next day. But when they appeared before David, and presented him with the head of Ishbosheth, magnifying the service they had rendered him by thus ridding him of his competitor for the kingdom, he,

so foul an act. Abner was a man of great power and authority, and at that time the head of the opposite party, and therefore rendered it suspicious that David had some concern in the murder, as it was perpetrated by his first minister, and the general of his forces. Besides, as Abner had been reconciled to David, the breach of faith and hospitality was added to the crime of murder, which was sufficient to alienate the minds of the Israelites from him for ever.

to their great astonishment, expressed his utter abhorrence of their conduct. David ordered these men to be taken from his presence, and to be put to death: and he caused the head of Ishbosheth to be placed in the tomb of Abner, with such funeral solemnities as were due to the exalted station of the deceased.

The tribes
vow allegiance
to David at
Hebron.

Soon after this event, the principal persons of the tribes of Israel, and the officers of the army repaired in a body to Hebron, where they solemnly acknowledged David as their king, vowed allegiance to him, and made him a formal tender of their lives and fortunes; representing to him the predilection they had always manifested for him, even during the reign of Saul; adding, that they were convinced, from the declaration of the prophet Samuel, that he and his descendants were destined by the Almighty to rule over them for a succession of ages, and that the important work of subduing the Philistines, and, consequently, of establishing the kingdom on the firm and solid basis of peace and safety was reserved alone for him. David expressed his acknowledgments; and assured them, that he would exert all his endeavours to fulfil their expectations. After having regaled them with the utmost magnificence for the space of three days, he dismissed them, with instructions to select out of each tribe all those who were capable of bearing arms, and to conduct them, properly equipped, to Hebron.

David unani-
mously chosen
king.

These troops repaired to David at Hebron; bringing with them corn, wine, and all other necessaries in the greatest plenty. They unanimously saluted David with the title of king, and, after having spent three days in public rejoicings on the occasion, he put himself at their head, and marched against Jerusalem; which city was then inhabited by the Jebusites, who were descended from the ancient Canaanites. Upon the approach of David, they shut their gates, and, to shew their contempt of the force he had brought against them, they placed their blind and lame on the walls, thereby intimating also their confidence in the natural strength of the place. David was so highly incensed at this insult, that he determined to attack them in the most vigorous manner, without any further delay; hoping, by the capture of this place, to strike such a terror into the inhabitants of all the other cities, as should induce them to submit upon the very first summons.

He reduces
Jerusalem.

Having made the necessary dispositions, he advanced to the walls, at the head of a select body of his troops, and, by making a general

assault, soon became master of the place †: but the garrison retired into the citadel. This fortress was of very considerable strength, and David, considering how much his honour was concerned in the subjection of it, endeavoured to animate the courage of his soldiers and their leaders, by promises of pecuniary gratifications to the former, and by engaging to confer on him, among the latter, who should first make good his station on the parapet of the citadel, the post of commander in chief of all his forces. The prospect of these rewards inspired the Hebrews with so strong an emulation, that each man performed miracles of valour on the occasion: but it was the fortune of Joab to reach the top of the battlements, before any of his companions.

CHAP. III.

DAVID repairs and beautifies JERUSALEM, and establishes his Court there. The King of TYRE sends Embassadors to DAVID, and makes an Alliance with him.

AFTER the capture of the citadel, David repaired the fortifications of the place, and gave it the additional title of the city of David; and he removed his court thither, where it continued for the whole subsequent term of his reign. At the time of transferring his court from Hebron to Jerusalem, he had reigned over the tribe of Judah alone seven years and six months; and, by the continual embellishments which he bestowed on the latter place, it became, at length, the seat of the utmost splendor and magnificence.

Jerusalem re-
paired, and
also called the
city of David.

At this period ambassadors were sent by Hiram, king of Tyre, to solicit an alliance with David; and these persons brought with them a valuable present of cedar-wood, and also a number of ingenious workmen, in different branches, for the purpose of constructing a palace for his residence in Jerusalem. David united the fortress above-mentioned to the city, and encompassed both with a wall.

CHAP. IV.

DAVID gains several Victories over the PHILISTINES and their Allies. The Ark is conducted to JERUSALEM. UZZAH, for touching the Ark,

† David was of an enterprising genius, which he always employed for the honour and interest of his country. His siege of Jerusalem was founded in justice, and the taking it necessary to the safety of his government and people. It was situated in the middle of the tribe of Benjamin, and taken by the Hebrews soon after Joshua's death; not indeed the whole of it, but the lower city; for the Jebusites kept possession of the fortress of Zion, the Hebrews and Jebusites dwelling together in the other part of the city after it was rebuilt. The Hebrews dwelt in it in the reign of Saul, for David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; 1 Sam. xvii. 54. But the whole city, as well as the fort, was now in the hands of the Jebusites; for when David demanded the restitution of

the city, the Jebusites say, "Thou shalt not come in hither." How it came into the possession of the Jebusites, is not said. Probably they seized it during the war between Saul and the Philistines; or the contest between David and Ishbosheth, which lasted for above seven years. David therefore had a right to recover it, as the ancient possession and property of his people; and would have been an impolitic negligent prince, had he suffered so strong a fortress, in the midst of his dominions, to have remained in the hands of his enemies. And what fixed David the more in his resolution to become master of it, was the insult offered him by the Jebusites in the town and fortress, upon the supposition that it was impregnable.

is punished with instant Death. DAVID sings and dances before it; and is reproached by his Wife MICHAL, as acting unbecomingly.

The Philistines attack the Hebrews, who defeat them.

WHEN intelligence was communicated to the Philistines that the sovereignty of David had been recognized by all the tribes, they marched into the country of the Israelites, and encamped on a spot, situated at a small distance from Jerusalem, which bears the name of the Valley of the Giants. David having consulted the Oracle, as was his constant custom before he entered upon any enterprize of importance, and having received a favourable answer, immediately marched against the enemy, whom he surprised in their camp, and routed with a prodigious slaughter.

Although this victory was obtained with great facility, and with a very trifling loss of men on the side of the Israelites, it must not be from thence inferred that the enemy were deficient either in numbers or bravery; they having called to their aid the Syrians, Phœnicians, and several other warlike nations; their frequent losses in former contests with the Hebrews having rendered them incapable of supporting a war without such assistance. Their martial spirit, however, was not depressed, for they again appeared in the field, with an army thrice as numerous as that with which they last invaded the country of the Hebrews, and encamped on the same spot on which they had been defeated by that people.

David once more consulted the Oracle, and was ordered to post his army in a certain forest, named the Grove of Mourning, and to lie quiet till he should perceive a supernatural agitation in the leaves and branches of the trees, without the slightest breath of air to occasion it; immediately upon which signal he might attack the enemy, with the most perfect confidence of success. These orders David closely observed, and the Philistines gave way on the first onset, and fled in the utmost confusion as soon as the Israelites advanced so near as to be able to use their swords. The Hebrews continued the pursuit, with great slaughter, as far as Gazer, which is situated on the frontiers of the country of the Philistines; after which they returned to plunder the enemy's camp, where they found an immense booty, and also the idols of the Philistines, which they utterly destroyed.

This war being terminated so speedily and fortunately for the Israelites, David, with the advice of the elders and chief persons of the several tribes, determined to march with his whole army, accompa-

nied by the priests and Levites to Kirjath-jearim, for the purpose of conducting the ark of God from thence to Jerusalem; which city was destined to be the place at which the people were to assemble in future, to offer up their oblations, and to perform all the other offices of their religion; a proper observance of which duties, would have preserved Saul from the fatal catastrophe which he experienced.

When the necessary preparations had been made, the ark was removed from the house of Aminidab, by the priests and Levites, who placed it on a carriage constructed for the purpose, and drawn by oxen, and delivered it into the care of their sons, and the other persons of their families. David took the lead in the procession, and was followed by a numerous body of the people, dancing and singing hymns of praise to the Almighty, in which they were accompanied by various performers on the harp, cymbal, and other instruments. In this order they proceeded towards Jerusalem; and, when they arrived at the spot which is distinguished by the title of the Threshing-floor of Chidon, or Nachon, the oxen which drew the carriage chancing to stumble, Uzzah, who happened to be close to the ark at the time, put forth his hand to save it from falling, and was immediately struck dead by the judicial vengeance of heaven, in consequence of his presuming to touch it: a privilege enjoyed solely by the priests and Levites*. The unhappy fate of this man, greatly affected both David and the people in general; and the place was, from that day, intitled Perez-Uzzah, or *the Transgression of Uzzah*.

David makes preparations for bringing the ark to Jerusalem.

Uzzah's presumption punished with death.

The ark brought to the house of Obed-Edom.

The severity of the punishment inflicted on Uzzah so much alarmed David, that he was apprehensive lest a similar fate should attend himself, if he persisted in his design of removing the ark to Jerusalem: he, therefore, deposited it in the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite of great reputation for the sanctity of his manners, who lived in the open country, at some distance from that city, where it remained for the space of three months. During this period, Obed-Edom, whose circumstances had been hitherto much contracted, acquired a degree of wealth, which rendered him at once the envy and admiration of all who knew him. This incident being communicated to David, he no longer entertained any doubts of the propriety of conducting the ark to Jerusalem; and he, accordingly, gave immediate orders for its removal, which was performed in the following form:

A certain number of the priests went first, carrying the ark on their shoulders, and these were accompa-

* The ark ought not to have been drawn by oxen, but carried by the Levites on their shoulders, as we find it afterwards; and their neglecting to do it on this solemn occasion, and consulting their ease more than their duty, was an offence of no small aggravation. Besides this, the Levites were prohibited from touching the ark, under the express penalty of death, Numb. iv. 15—20. And as this is the first instance that we have of violating this prohibition, the penalty

of death was incurred, and therefore justly inflicted by him that threatened it, as an example to others, and to preserve a due reverence to the divine institution, and shews that the prohibition was divine; and as David himself and the whole house of Israel were present at the solemnity, the nature of the death, and the reason why it was inflicted, could not be concealed.

nied by a band of singing men, at the head of whom was the king himself, who danced and sung with the rest, to the sound of his harp; and the procession was closed by an infinite multitude of the people. Upon the arrival of the ark at Jerusalem, it was placed in the tabernacle which David had caused to be built purposely for its reception; and so numerous were the oblations offered up in consequence of this event, that each man, woman, and child, who were present at the ceremony, received a piece of flesh and a cake of bread.

The ark conveyed to Jerusalem.

When David returned to his palace, he was met by his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul; who could not refrain from reproaching him with an indecency of conduct, in dancing before the ark, in the manner above-mentioned, and thus exposing himself to the derision of his servants and handmaids. But David justified the action, as being, he maintained, pleasing to that Almighty Power, who had preferred him before the king her father, and all the rest of his countrymen.

David forms a design to build a magnificent temple.

The uninterrupted felicity which David now enjoyed, inspired him with the design of building a sumptuous temple for the public worship of the Deity; deeming it in an high degree criminal, any longer to permit the ark of God to remain in so unworthy a building as a tabernacle, at a time when he resided in a palace constructed and ornamented with the utmost profusion of elegance and splendor; and to this he was further incited, by an ancient prediction of Moses on that subject. Nathan the prophet also, to whom the king communicated the resolution which he had formed, highly approved of the design, and encouraged him to execute it with all convenient dispatch. But on the following night the Lord spake thus to Nathan: "Inform David, that I approve his proposal for dedicating a temple to my worship; but that on account of the hostilities in which he has been engaged, having rendered him a man of blood, I cannot consent to the design being carried into effect in his days. Instruct him, that on the conclusion of a long reign of felicity, he shall charge the execution of this important business to his son Solomon, who shall experience from me the tenderest care of a father towards an only child. You are further commissioned to say, that if Solomon shall degenerate into wickedness, the land shall be visited by sickness or famine, but that the government shall not be translated to another family." Nathan immediately repaired to David, and related this message from the Almighty. David prostrated himself before the ark, and worshipped the Lord. "Almighty God (said he) thou hast exalted thy servant from the sheep fold, to the eminence of regal power and dignity. For all thy benefits and mercies, glorified be thy holy name. I

Message from God, by the prophet Nathan, concerning it.

blest thee, O God, for thy providences towards myself, thy gracious promise to my posterity, and for the many protections and deliverances of thy people*." Having accompanied this benediction with an hymn to the honour of God, he departed.

CHAP. V.

The PHILISTINES, the MOABITES, and the SOPHENIANS subdued by DAVID.

BEING naturally averse to a life of inactivity, David determined to commence hostilities against the Philistines; and to prosecute this design, he was animated by the prediction, that having effectually vanquished all his enemies, he should leave the government to his successor in a state of perfect tranquillity.

In preparation for the conquest he had meditated, he called a general rendezvous of his forces; and when he judged them to be in a proper condition to march, he invaded the country of the enemy, and made seizure of very considerable tracts of land, which he annexed to the jurisdiction of the Israelites. He declared war against the Moabites, upon whom he committed a terrible slaughter. About one third of the enemy escaped the rage of battle, and they were rendered tributaries to David. Near the Euphrates he encountered, and obtained a complete victory over, Adrazar the son of Arach, who was king of the Sopherians. In this action he destroyed twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse. He took from the enemy a thousand chariots, one hundred of which he reserved, and the rest he burnt.

Some time after, Adad, king of Syria and Damascus, marched a formidable army to the assistance of his friend and ally Adrazar, expecting thereby to remove the seat of war from the country of the Sopherians. After some skirmishes, a general engagement ensued near the Euphrates, wherein twenty thousand of the troops of Adad were destroyed, and the rest were put to flight.

David overcomes Adad, king of Syria.

David subdued Damascus and the other parts of Syria, and established garrisons in such places as he judged to be convenient; and having subjected the whole country to contribution, he returned to Jerusalem, taking with him the golden quivers and other rich trophies obtained in the battle with Adad. He dedicated this spoil to the Lord, in gratitude for the victory obtained through his favour; and still continued to pursue his conquests under the evident assistance and protection of heaven. He besieged two of the most considerable cities in the dominions of Adrazar, which were called Bettea and Machon, and acquired gold and silver to

His further conquests.

* Abarhinel, in his explanation of this part of sacred writ, tells us, that the royal prophet, on this occasion, magnifies the goodness of the Lord, who had not only made him a powerful king, but had

promised that his seed for a long series of years, and at last, the great Messiah, the desire of all nations, should sit upon his throne.

an immense value, exclusive of a considerable quantity of a kind of brass, held in greater estimation even than gold itself; and this metal Solomon caused to be used in forming the beautiful basons and the extensive vessel called the sea, by which the temple was decorated.

Toi enters into a league with David.

Toi, the king of Hamath, having received intelligence that David had subdued the army of Adrazar, he judged it expedient to provide for his own safety by connecting himself to the victor in a league of amity. He furnished his son Joram with a variety of magnificent presents, consisting of antique vessels in gold, silver, and brass, curiously wrought, and in the highest perfection, and commissioned him to congratulate David on his victory over Adrazar, and to propose an alliance. The king graciously received the ambassador, accepted the presents, and gave him an honourable assurance that he acquiesced in the proposed alliance. These gifts, and the remaining part of the spoil obtained from the enemies he had conquered, he gratefully dedicated to the Lord, to whom he attributed the whole honour of his victories. David's success was not confined to those undertakings wherein he was personally engaged; for the Almighty favoured his cause in the enterprizes which were attempted by the officers he deputed, as will appear in the following instance: Abishai, the brother of Joab, being commissioned to lead an army against the Idumæans, encountered and cut off eighteen thousand of the enemy, and having secured the entire submission of the rest by the establishment of a number of garrisons, made them tributaries, and imposed a tax upon the whole people by the head.

Principal officers, &c.

David was a man of such strict integrity in the execution of his judicial character, that in all the appeals submitted to his decision he never pronounced a sentence that was not strictly consistent with the principles of justice. He appointed Joab, the son of Zeruah, to be his general; and Josephat, the son of Abilud, keeper of the records; from the house of Phinehas, he selected his friends Abiathar and Zadok to be his priests; and he nominated Seraiah his secretary; his personal guard, into which his elder sons were incorporated, was commanded by Benajah, the son of Jehoiada.

David inquires after Jonathan's issue.

Having regulated and established his domestic concerns, the king directed his attention towards his deceased friend Jonathan; inquiring what sons, friends, and relations he had left, with a view to make them the subjects for the exercise of his gratitude; for among his virtues was that of remembering past benefits, which he ever made it a point of conscience to acknowledge and requite*. A man named Ziba, who had been in the service of Saul, was brought to David as the most likely person to satisfy his inquiries;

and from this man he learnt that a son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, was still living, and that he was lame of one leg, the nurse having let him fall from her arms upon hearing of the terrible engagement wherein his father and grandfather were slain. Upon further inquiry, the king was informed that the son of his friend had been brought up by one Machir, of the city of Lodeba, where he still remained. The king immediately sent for the young man, who being soon brought into his presence, prostrated himself at his feet, and shewed him other marks of reverence. David encouraged him with the assurance that he might rely upon a continuance of the favour and protection of his sovereign. He soon after gave him possession of the estates and other effects left by his father and grandfather; receiving him as his particular guest, and appointing him to eat at his own table. Mephibosheth having made grateful acknowledgments to his benefactor, Ziba was called, whom David commissioned to superintend the grounds; and at stated periods, to deliver the profits to the son of Jonathan, who took up his residence with the king, and was on all occasions treated with the respect due to a child of the family. The king further ordered that Ziba, his fifteen sons and twenty others of his family, should be the attendants upon Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth's issue was a son called Micha.

Nahash the king of the Ammonites, the friend and ally of David, died about this time, and was succeeded by his son Hanun; to whom David dispatched an embassy to offer condolences in his affliction, and assurances of maintaining the league of amity which had subsisted between him and the deceased. The principal people among the Ammonites falsely insinuated to their king, that these messengers, under the pretext of being charged with a compliment of state, had been sent by David for the purpose of examining into the strength and defensive state of the country; and they advised him to act with circumspection, lest the opportunity should escape of frustrating the treacherous designs which they pretended to have been meditated by the king of Israel. Hanun, being prevailed upon by these unmerited calumnies, dismissed the ambassadors with one half of their beards and one half of their vests cut off. In this condition they returned; and having represented to David the ignominious treatment they had received, he became highly incensed against Hanun for his contempt of the laws of nations, honour, and hospitality, and determined to avenge the gross insult which had been offered to him, in the persons of his ambassadors, by an immediate declaration of war. The Ammonites being convinced that their perfidious conduct would not admit of excuse, prepared

Hanun's insulting usage of David's messengers.

The Ammonites prepare for war.

* David's generous disposition towards the children of Jonathan, evidenced a grateful and princely spirit: his benevolence herein also implied thankfulness to God, for being elevated to the regal

dignity in the room of Saul; who, though his inveterate enemy, is remembered with kindness, and whose posterity, agreeable to the oath David had taken, had many favours heaped upon them.

to defend themselves against David, who they learnt had formed the resolution of vindicating himself by force of arms. Hanun dispatched ambassadors to Syrus, king of Mesopotamia, with a present of a thousand talents, in order to engage him in an alliance; Syrus consented, and obtained the assistance of the king of Zoba, in support of the cause of the Ammonites. The joint forces of these kings amounted to twenty-two thousand foot. The assistance of the king of Maachab, and of king Ishob was likewise purchased, and they also mustered twenty-two thousand men equipped for war.

C H A P. VI.

JOAB obtains a Victory over HANUN and the confederate Powers. DAVID defeats the King of SYRIA, and commits a terrible Slaughter upon his Army. DAVID becomes enamoured of BATH-SHEBA, and, after having gratified his Passion, contrives the Death of her Husband. AMNON violates TAMAR, and her Brother ABSALOM meditates his Destruction.

The Syrians are defeated.

CONSCIOUS of the support of God in a just cause, the courage of David suffered no diminution on account of the powerful confederacy which was formed against him. He intrusted the conduct of the army to Joab, who proceeded on his march, and encamped before the principal city of the enemy, which was called Rabbah. The troops marched out of the town, and the auxiliaries were drawn up in order of battle in the open field, while the Ammonites were ranged under the walls of the town, facing the Hebrew army. Joab made a similar disposition of his army, and giving the command of one body to his brother Abinai, with orders to attack the Ammonites, he put himself at the head of the other, which was composed of chosen men, and prepared to engage Syrus. It being agreed, that in case of either being hard pressed by the enemy, the other should repair to his assistance; and Joab having enjoined his brother to an honourable discharge of the trust reposed in him, they proceeded to their respective destinations. Joab gave battle to Syrus, who for some time maintained a courageous defence, but a considerable number of his men being cut off, the rest declined the contest and made a retreat. This circumstance struck the Ammonites with such terror, that they retired into the town before Abinai approached to offer them battle. Joab now led his army in triumph back to Jerusalem.

* This is usually surrounded by two walls, the outermost of which partly projects over the street, partly makes the partition with the contiguous houses, and is frequently so low, that one may easily climb over it. The other, which may be named the parapet-wall, hangs immediately over the court, being always breast-high, and

Notwithstanding this signal defeat, the restless spirit of the Ammonites still remained unsubdued; and they applied to Chalama, king of the Syrians, who was stationed on the other side the Euphrates, for an auxiliary force, which he undertook to provide on condition of receiving a stipulated price. Chalama appointed Shobac, his lieutenant general, to lead an army of eighty thousand foot and ten thousand horse to the assistance of the Ammonites. In consequence of the formidable reinforcement which the enemy had received, David judged it to be no longer expedient to intrust the conduct of the war to his deputies; and therefore he assumed the command of his whole army, and having passed the Jordan, proceeded to an engagement, in which he killed forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse: Shobach, the general of Chalama, received a wound in the action which caused his death. The presumption of the Mesopotamians being effectually humbled by this event, they sent ambassadors with presents to David; and with acknowledgments of submission to his power, they were commissioned to intreat that he would decline a further prosecution of the war. David now returned to Jerusalem; and Joab was again dispatched against the Ammonites, whom he obliged to retire into Rabbah, to which place he a second time laid siege, and committed great havoc in that city and several other parts of the enemy's country.

Though David was a man of great piety and justice, he was not exempt from the frailties of human nature; for he was guilty of an heinous crime, whereby he incurred the displeasure of the Almighty. In the cool of the evening, as he was walking on the terrace of his palace, he perceived a woman of most exquisite beauty who was bathing. He instantly conceived a violent passion for her, and caused her to be brought to his bed. She became pregnant, and representing to the king that if her fault should be discovered, the laws of her country would condemn her to death, supplicated him to devise some means for keeping the affair profoundly secret. Uriah, Joab's armour bearer, and the husband of this woman, who was named Bathsheba, was ordered into the presence of the king, who questioned him concerning the state of the army, and the progress of the siege. He replied, that things were in the most favourable train for success. David invited him to supper, and after the repast, ordered him to repair to his habitation and repose that night with his wife. Uriah, notwithstanding, remained among the guards in the palace; and when this was known to the king, he asked him on what account he had neglected the opportunity of visiting his wife, after so long an absence? Uriah an-

The Ammonites and Syrians are again overcome.

Account of David's adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah.

answers to the battlements, Deut. xxii. 8. Instead of this parapet wall, the tops or terraces of some houses are guarded with balustrades, or latticed work, which seems to be the same with that net or lattice, 2 Kings i. 2. On these terraces several domestic offices were performed, as appears from Josh. ii. 6.

swered, that he judged it not consistent with the honour of a foldier to indulge himself in the embraces of his wife at a time when his general and fellow foldiers lay on the earth in the open country of an enemy. The king commanded him to remain another night, telling him he should return to the camp on the following day. He was again called to supper with David, and he plied him with liquors in expectation that in the gaiety of his heart he would go to Bathsheba; but he was disappointed, for Uriah spent this night also, as he had done the preceding one, among the guards. This proved so highly aggravating to the king, that he wrote to Joab, informing him, that being justly incensed against Uriah, he was determined to punish him according to his demerits*: this letter further expressed, that to prevent any reproach falling upon David, Joab should appoint Uriah to undertake some desperate enterprize, and that his companions should be instructed to desert him to the mercy of the enemy. David having written this letter, and sealed it with the royal seal, committed it to the care of Uriah, to be delivered to Joab, who having received it, obeyed the royal mandate by ordering Uriah to undertake a most dangerous expedition; but, to put a face of plausibility on the matter, commissioned several men of acknowledged bravery to second him; and told him, that if any difficulty arose as to his entrance into the town, he should be supported by the whole army. Joab likewise recommended it to him, to support the character he already held in the opinion both of the king and the army, by every possible exertion of his military courage. Uriah accepted the commission with great readiness; but Joab gave private orders to those who attended him, to desert him when they found that he was surrounded with the utmost difficulties. As the Hebrews pressed hard upon the wall, the Ammonites were apprehensive that they would enter the town by force; on which they threw open their gates, and rushed out in great numbers; which served as a hint to those who attended Uriah, that this was the precise moment to obey the orders of Joab, by deserting him. Thus, then, they left him at the mercy of his enemies, against whom he fought with astonishing resolution, and did wonders with his single arm against an opposing multitude; but after being wounded in several places, he fell breathless on the ground; and with him fell a small number of his friends, who had not been informed of the plot laid against him.

As soon as the contest was ended, Joab sent an express to David, acquainting him that, to put a speedy

end to the siege, he had made an assault on the town, but had been compelled to retreat to the camp, with the loss of several of his men. Joab gave private instructions to the person who carried this express, that if David appeared affected with his information, he might add, that Uriah was among the slain.

David having expressed his disapprobation of the conduct of Joab, the messenger mentioned, as a casual circumstance, the death of Uriah; on which the king observed, that it was but an effect of the common chance of war, and that foldiers must be alike prepared to meet every change of circumstances†.

The intelligence received of Uriah's death occasioned Bathsheba to shut herself up for some time, while she paid the tribute of mourning to his memory; but no sooner was the season of sorrow at an end, than David espoused her, and she soon afterwards made him the mother of a son. So contrary was this match to the will of heaven, that Nathan the prophet was informed, in a dream, of the displeasure of God on the occasion, and commissioned to reprimand David for his crime. Nathan, who possessed great knowledge of mankind, considering how little regard princes paid to the admonition of reason, particularly while they were under the influence of their passions, instead of directly informing David of what he had learnt in the vision, introduced his instructions by way of narrative, as will be seen in the following recital.

"Two men (said he) dwelt in the same city, one of whom was distinguished by his affluence, having plenty of oxen, sheep, and all other kinds of cattle. The other was a very poor man, possessed of only one single lamb, which he reared and fed with his children, and loved it as tenderly as if it had been his own child. It happened that the rich man had a visitor come to see him, whom he could not do less than entertain in an hospitable manner; but rather than furnish his table from his own abundant store, he caused the poor man to be robbed of his only lamb, to furnish a supper for the visitor."—"Wretch that he is (cried the king) to be guilty of so inhospitable an action; he ought to make fourfold restitution to the injured party, and forfeit his life as a farther atonement;"—"On which Nathan instantly said, "Thou art the man, and standest condemned from the words of thy own mouth."—After this declaration the prophet related the particulars of his vision, saying how highly God was offended with the conduct of David: reminded him of his ingratitude to

* This account differs very materially, in several parts of it, from that given in holy writ; and it should seem that Josephus had not consulted the sacred writings on this subject, but had only regarded traditional information. Notwithstanding the difference, this may be esteemed as one amongst many other proofs of the authenticity of the scriptures: for although other historians may differ in the relation of the same circumstance, it is a corroborative evidence that such circumstance really occurred, and that there was no collusion between them to deceive mankind.

† The meanest dissimulation, and most atrocious hypocrisy, stigmatise the conduct of David, as well as murder and adultery.—What a train of evils necessarily attended the commission of one heinous offence! well might the Almighty be displeased with the royal sinner, who thus abused his delegated power to answer the infamous purpose of lasciviousness: his conduct formed, in this instance, a hideous contrast to the amiable and pious youth when persecuted by Saul, and when he followed the ewes great with young! Lord what is man, but a monster of iniquity, when left to himself! that

that Providence which had advanced him to the throne, subjected the surrounding nations to his command, and repeatedly delivered him from the hands of Saul. "And now (said Nathan) shall you, who have a number of legal wives, compel in defiance of all laws divine and human, the wife of another man to cohabit with you, and then betray the husband to certain death from the hands of the enemy! What, after such conduct, can you expect, but that the vengeance of Heaven should overtake you?"—Nathan farther said, that David should live to know that one of his sons had committed a rape on his women, and should find that son brought to condign punishment. The prophet moreover added, that this child by Bathsheba should die in a short time. The terrors of these words affected David to such a degree, that he trembled with apprehension, and confessed his sins with tears expressive of his contrition. In consideration of the good tenor of his life, and that, except in this case of Uriah, he had acted as a righteous man, God took compassion upon him, and accepted his repentance, promising, by his prophet, the continued possession of his life and kingdom.

The prophecy of Nathan* having been thus delivered, he took his leave of the king; but he had not been long departed, when the child of Bathsheba, by David, was smote with a severe illness, which afflicted David to such a degree, that he retired to his chamber, and remained there seven days, refusing all kinds of food, laying on the ground wrapped in sackcloth, and praying incessantly for the life of that child to whose mother he was so much attached. The child died on the seventh day; but still the family avoided acquainting the king with it, as they conceived that he whose grief was so excessive, as to induce him to refuse the common necessities of life only on account of the child's illness, would not hear with any kind of patience the news of his death.

The looks of the domestics sufficiently apprised David that something unusual had happened, of which they were afraid to give him intelligence; and attributing the matter to its true cause, he acquainted one of the servants with his suspicions, who owned that the child was dead. Hereupon David arose from the ground, washed himself, put on clean garments, and having ordered his servants to provide supper against his return, went to the tabernacle to worship God. A conduct so extraordinary and unexpected filled the relations and domestics of David with astonishment: they thought it strange that he should so calmly resign to the death of the child, when his dangerous illness only had given rise to so extravagant and ungovernable a degree of grief. Curiosity prompting them to know the real cause of this alteration in David's conduct, they hinted their wishes to him, and he replied, that "While the

child was living, and there were yet hopes of his recovery, he was unwearied in prayer to God to spare his life; but when he was absolutely dead, it would have been equally foolish and presumptuous to weary heaven any longer with his prayers; or to grieve for an irrevocable event." These sentiments of David were generally approved by all who heard them. Some time after this Bathsheba had a son by David, to whom he gave the name of Solomon, in consequence of the advice of the prophet Nathan.

The Ammonites were by this time extremely distressed by Joab, who had prevented their receiving supplies of provisions, and cut off all their water except one small spring, which they were obliged to use very sparingly, lest that also should fail them; so that they were on the verge of perishing through hunger and thirst. At this juncture, Joab dispatched to David a minute account of the situation of affairs, requesting his personal attendance at the destruction of the city, as an event that would be worthy to be recorded among the other distinguished actions of the king's life. No sooner had David received Joab's dispatches, than, convinced of his zeal and loyalty, he assembled his army, and marched at the head thereof to the assault of Rabbah, which being taken by storm, the king allowed his troops all the plunder, which was of immense value, excepting a crown of gold, weighing a talent, on which was a sardonix stone, which was afterwards constantly worn by David. The inhabitants of Rabbah were put to death with circumstances of great torture; and all the other rebellious Ammonite cities shared the same fate.

Soon after the issue of this distinguished victory, its glory was tarnished by a most unfortunate circumstance. David had a maiden daughter, named Tamar, who was deemed, beyond all comparison, the greatest beauty of the age in which she lived; and she was born of the same mother as Absalom. With this daughter, Amnon, the eldest son of David, fell violently in love; but as she was strictly guarded, and was possessed of an innate modesty, he saw no prospect of success in addressing her, and pined away through excess of grief. This change in Amnon, which daily increased to an alarming degree, being observed by Jonathan, who was his friend and relation, and a person of uncommon sagacity and penetration, he asked him the cause of his indisposition, and particularly questioned him if love was not at the bottom of it; which Jonathan really imagined to be the case. To this Amnon replied, that he was enamoured of his own sister; on which, Jonathan gave him a hint how he might gratify his wishes. "Feign yourself sick, (said he) and when David pays you a visit, tell him that you wish for the company of your sister, whose kind attendance you think will tend greatly to the restoration

Amnon's rape
and incest with
his sister Tamar.

* The express time when Nathan appeared as a prophet in Israel, is nowhere specified, neither in the sacred writings, nor in those of any other historian. But from what is related of him he appears to have been endued with a pleasing method of address, and knew how to mitigate the severity of his reproofs with a suitable mixture

of meekness and wisdom, which endowments qualified him for the conversation of monarchs and courtiers. David esteemed him highly, as he conducted himself between the extremes of servile flattery, and inflexible austerity.

of your health*." This advice was followed by Amnon; who, on seeing David, requested his sister's company. This being granted, he begged her to make him some cakes; which she made, and baked in his presence, and presented them to him; but he refused to touch them, and directed the servants to leave the apartment, saying that he wished to compose himself. They were no sooner gone than he begged his sister to carry the cakes into a private room, which she complied with; and he following her, made use of every possible argument to induce her to gratify his unnatural passion. The harmless maiden expostulated with him, called out for assistance, and intreated him not to think of sacrificing the honour of his family for such an extravagant lust. "Let me be gone, (cried she) for God's sake, and learn to regulate your desires by the dictates of honour, religion, and law: or think how you may obtain your father's consent, nor seek to gratify your passion by violent means." All her intreaties, however, were in vain; his passion made him deaf to the voice of reason, and notwithstanding all her endeavours to the contrary, he forcibly violated her person.

Amnon's base
treatment of
her.

The passion of Amnon was no sooner gratified, than the violent love he appeared to have had for his sister was changed into as violent a degree of hatred, and in a most imperious tone he commanded her to quit his apartments†. Shocked at this treatment, she asked if, after having been thus injured, she was to be exposed to the public, and dismissed, by day-light, to tell the world how she had been insulted. "This treatment, (said she) even aggravates, if any thing can aggravate, the horror of the crime of which you have been guilty; for in the former instance at least, the prevalence of an ungovernable passion might be pleaded." All her remonstrances, and even her struggles were fruitless; for Amnon ordered his servants to turn her out of the house; and they complied. As she went through the streets with her vest torn, and ashes on her head, lamenting the ill usage she had received, she was met by her brother Absalom, who, surprised at the singularity of her appearance, demanded what had happened to her; on which she related the particulars of the shocking ill usage she had received. By way of consolation, Absalom said that she was not so blameable, as the crime was perpetrated by her own brother; and Tamar becoming thereon somewhat pacified, went with Absalom to his house, and resided with him a considerable time.

When David was acquainted with this affair, he was afflicted beyond expression; but as Amnon was his eldest and most beloved son, he declined to pu-

nish him as the crime deserved. In the mean time, Absalom waited for a proper opportunity to be revenged on Amnon‡; and after the expiration of two years from the rape of Tamar, he invited his father and brothers to attend at a sheep-shearing at *Beth-Hazor*, a city in the tribe of Benjamin. David urged the trouble and extraordinary expence, as a reason for his non-attendance; on which Absalom requested, that his brothers only might come; to which David consenting, Absalom issued orders to his servants to attack and kill Amnon when he was in liquor, on a signal to be given by their master; which they, watching the proper opportunity, executed accordingly.

CHAP. VII.

ABSALOM retreats to GESHUR. JOAB obtains Permission for his Return; and, after a while, to wait on DAVID, whose Leave he procures to go and pay a Visit at Hebron, where he gets himself proclaimed King. DAVID retires from JERUSALEM. ABSALOM, by the Advice of ACHITOPHEL, is guilty of an heinous Offence.

THE outrage committed on the life of Amnon affected the rest of the brothers to such a degree, that, conceiving the plot to be intended equally against them all, they mounted their horses, and hastened away to their father. In the interim, a messenger arrived, and informed David that Absalom had caused all his brothers to be slain. This afflictive news had such an influence on the mind of David, that, without waiting for a confirmation of it, or reflecting on its incredibility, he abandoned himself to the extremity of grief, tore his garments, and, prostrating himself on the ground, lamented equally the horrid crime of the murderer, and the unhappy fate of the deceased.

When this news arrived, Jonathan the son of Shimei, the brother of David, being with him, advised him to have patience, till he had considered the improbability of the circumstance, and received farther information: "For (said he) as there is not the least reason to believe all your sons should be slain, I cannot give credit to the story: with regard to Amnon, indeed, it is not improbable but Absalom may have taken this opportunity to wreak his vengeance on him, for the insult offered to his sister." During their conversation they heard the feet of horses, and the noise of people as just come off a journey; and, on inquiry, they found that the sons of David, who had escaped from the house of Absalom, were just then arrived.

ror to despair. A situation too painful for human nature to endure.

‡ Because Absalom neither threatened nor expostulated, nor even took the least notice of what had passed, Amnon lulled himself into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him on account of his base conduct towards Tamar: whereas he had greater reason to apprehend that Absalom was meditating some terrible revenge.

This

* This person is here honoured with the name of Jonathan, the approved friend of David; but, alas! a far different spirit was in him! In the scripture account, he is called Jonadab.

† When love is unlawful, it is vexatious and tormenting in the extreme. Its enormity must strike the soul with horror, and the impossibility of an innocent gratification must increase that hor-

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Absalom having Killed Amnon his Brother Sent a Woman,
in disguise to Sollicit his Pardon from David his Father.

This meeting between David and his children was very affecting, and mutual tears flowed in abundance. The father wept at once with joy at the sight of those sons whom he supposed to be no longer living; and through grief at the recollection of him whom he knew to be dead: while the sons lamented the murder of their brother, but were consoled at the thought of returning safe to their father: so that the whole scene was wonderfully pathetic. In the interim, Absalom departed to Geshur, where he remained about three years with his grandfather by the mother's side, who was a man of considerable rank and influence.

By the expiration of this time, the anger of David towards his son Absalom was in a great measure subsided, and he became disposed to recall him to his favour and friendship; and this disposition of the king being observed by Joab, the friend of Absalom, who was continually with David, he considered how to improve it to the advantage of his friend. To effect his purpose, he had recourse to an ancient and venerable woman, whom he caused to be clothed in deep mourning, and instructed her to lay her case before the king, which she represented, by way of petition, in the following manner, viz. That two of her sons, who resided in the country, having had an unfortunate quarrel, which grew to that height that they came to blows, one of them was unhappily killed in the contest: whereupon, some of the friends of the deceased demanded justice to be done on the murderer. Wherefore she solicited the king to spare the life of her son, who, notwithstanding his offence, was the only comfort of her old age. She added, that her son's enemies were so determined in their malice, that nothing could protect him, but the interference of the royal authority; and that she had no hope of relief, but in the mercy of her sovereign*. Having acted her part with great skill, the king was induced to comply with her request: upon which, having made many acknowledgments of his considerate goodness to a mother who solicited the life of an only child, she yet besought his majesty to grant her one further favour, as a proof that she should not fail to reap the benefit of the royal promise; and this was, that he would let the pardon of her child be preceded by that of his own son Absalom: for by extending his compassion to him, there could remain no doubt but the intended mercy would be ratified in the case of her own child. She added, that as his majesty had already the misfortune to have lost one son, it would be very inhuman for himself to be the destruction of another.

* The whole intention of this woman's speech was, to frame a case similar to that of David, in order to convince him how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But there was great art in not making the similitude too plain and visible, lest the king should perceive the design of her petition, before she had obtained a grant of pardon for her son, and came to make the application to the king.

† The severity David thought proper to inflict upon his son, by No. 7.

David now began to conjecture, that this application of the woman was in consequence of the advice of Joab; and interrogating her on the subject, he found it to be as he suspected; wherefore calling Joab to him, he acquainted him, that his device had succeeded, that his anger against Absalom had subsided; that he freely pardoned him; and that Joab might recall him whenever he thought proper. This was joyful news to Joab; who, having made the most grateful acknowledgments to his sovereign, repaired instantly to Geshur, and brought back his friend Absalom to Jerusalem. When the king was informed of the return of his son, he sent a message to him, importing, that he must abstain from appearing before him for the present, for that he could not yet be reconciled to the sight of him; whereupon, Absalom remained within the walls of his own house, that he might by no means come into the presence of the king. The trouble and anxiety he had for some time past encountered, together with the manner of his living, had been rather incompatible with his rank as the son of David; yet the singular manliness and grace of his person was not in the least diminished, so that he was deemed the wonder of his age. Once in eight months he used to cut his hair, and in that short space of time it would grow to the weight of two hundred shekels, which are equal to five pounds.

He lived in Jerusalem, in the private manner above-mentioned, about two years, and by this time had become father of four children, viz. three sons and a daughter; the latter of whom was remarkably distinguished by her beauty, and was afterwards the wife of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, by whom she had a son called Abia. As Absalom grew uneasy from his mode of living, he sent to his friend Joab, to obtain permission for him to wait on his father, in hopes that a perfect reconciliation might be the consequence of an interview. Having in vain expected an answer for some time, he dispatched some of his servants into a field belong to Joab, to burn his corn on the ground, as it was growing. This coming to the knowledge of Joab, he went to Absalom, complained of the injury, and demanded the reason of such proceeding; to which the latter replied, that he had no other way of obtaining sight of him; that he had written to request his intercession with his father, but that he had done nothing in the business: and added a wish, that he would endeavour to pacify the king; "for (said he) if he still continues inflexible, banishment itself would be preferable to my present condition†." This address affected Joab so much, that he made immediate application to David, and was so successful in his suit, that the king gave orders for his son to be admitted

not permitting him to appear in the royal presence, was intended not only to make him sorry for what he had done, but also to convince the people how detestable his crime was in his sight, and how averse he would be to pardon murderers, since he could not endure the sight of a son whose hand was defiled with a brother's blood. His affection to him did not hinder him from seeing that it would not be for his honour to admit him to be near his person.

to his presence. This favour being obtained, Absalom threw himself at the feet of his father, and humbly sued for pardon of all his past offences: on which David extended his right hand, raised him up, and gave him the most solemn assurance that all former crimes should be buried in everlasting oblivion.

Absalom aspires to the crown.

Within a short time, Absalom became so much ingratiated in the favour and affection of the king, that he was permitted to keep a splendid equipage, to retain fifty men as his body guard, and to have a great number of servants and dependents, besides chariots and horses in proportion. He was constantly one of the most officious in personal attendance on the king, yet at the same time ever ready to bespeak, by the most plausible behaviour, the affections of the people. When any person who had a cause in litigation came to sue for justice, he would treat him in the most familiar manner, demanding his name, country, business, &c. and ask if he could be personally serviceable. On the application of such as appeared discontented at the passing of a hard sentence, or when verdicts had gone against them, he used to observe, that "bad men were about the king; that his majesty was sometimes mistaken as well as other people; and hinted, that if himself had been in the place of others, things would not have happened as they had done:" he would then wish the persons who applied, great success, and, in the most artful way imaginable, endeavour to ripen their sentiments to the promotion of the scheme he had in view.

Absalom, by dissimulation, acquires popularity, and is proclaimed king.

By these insidious methods, he soon gained over a large party to his interest; and, in the fourth year from the reconciliation to his father, thinking his plan then ripe for the execution, he asked permission to repair to Hebron, there to fulfil a vow which he had made during his banishment. David readily granting his request, he invited a great number of people to attend him, and was followed by many others; among whom was Ahithophel, the Gilonite, the king's principal minister, who was attended by two hundred inhabitants of Jerusalem: but neither these nor Ahithophel knew of the intended design, namely, to proclaim Absalom king, which was soon afterwards done, by the common consent of the people.

David departs from Jerusalem.

Information of this atrocious act being brought to David, he stood astonished at the insolence and ingratitude of his son, who, after having obtained the royal pardon and being taken into favour, could so soon embark in so rebellious a plot: for it seems that the scheme was, not only to seize on the kingdom, which was the gift of God to David, but to attempt his life also. In this perplexing situation, the king deliberated with his friends, on the steps most proper to be taken; and it

was agreed that he should go over the river Jordan, to some place of greater security, committing to ten of his concubines the care of the royal palace. Having resolved, then, to leave the event of this affair to the Almighty, he set out on his journey, attended by immense numbers of people, who voluntarily embarked in the cause of their sovereign; particularly his six hundred friends, who had heretofore so faithfully attached themselves to him when he was persecuted by Saul. Abiathar and Zadock the high-priests, together with the Levites, would gladly have taken the ark with them, and attended David; but he advised them not to think of removing, and enforced his request by observing, that the presence of the holy ark would not be necessary for his protection, as he should be immediately under that of heaven. His last advice was, that they should devise some private method of informing him, from time to time, of such news as it might import him to be acquainted with: and these instructions were afterwards admirably obeyed by the good conduct of Jonathan the son of Abiathar, and Ahimaaz the son of Zadock. With regard to Ittai the Gittite, though advised to the contrary, he insisted on a personal attendance on his sovereign, whom he accordingly attended.

As David, surrounded by the weeping multitude, was walking bare-footed up mount Olivet, a person arrived express, with information that Ahithophel had deserted his duty, and taken part with the rebellious Absalom: which news so shocked the king, that he besought the Almighty to deprive him of his senses*. Ahithophel was a man of so great penetration and subtilty, that there was nothing David dreaded so much, as the pernicious effects of his counsels.

He hears of the defection of Ahithophel.

David had no sooner reached the summit of the mountain, than he cast his eyes on the city, and wept while he lamented the loss of his government: on this spot he met with the loyal and friendly Hushai, who, with his cloaths torn and strewing ashes on his head, was regretting the uncertainty of all sublimary enjoyments. David encouraged him to bear up under the misfortune with resolution; and earnestly advised him to return to Jerusalem, where he might be of essential service, by pretending to side with the friends of Absalom, which would give him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the counsels, and perplexing the schemes of Ahithophel. Hushai, convinced by these reasons, went back to Jerusalem, to which place Absalom likewise soon after repaired.

David continuing his journey, was met by Ziba, a servant to Mephibosheth, to whom the king had committed the management of an estate which he had given to the son of his friend Jonathan. Ziba, who was driving a couple of asses, complimented David and his attendants with their choice of any part of the burden of his beasts. Ziba

Falseness and treachery of Ziba.

* The sacred writer does not say so much as this; but represents David as praying that the counsel of Ahithophel (which was so sure and safe, that it was generally followed without ever doubting of

its success) might be "turned into foolishness," or frustrated and over-ruled.

being asked where his master was, replied, that he was at Jerusalem, entertaining hopes that, in honour of the memory of Saul, the people might be induced to take advantage of the present disturbances, to elect him their sovereign. David was so enraged at this instance of ingratitude, that he resumed the estate above-mentioned, which he committed to the care of Ziba, who deemed himself highly gratified by the trust.

Shimei curses and insults David. When David, in the course of his journey, arrived near Bahurim, Shimei, the son of Gera (a relation of Saul), advancing towards him, threw stones at and cursed him; and abused him the more violently, the more his friends took the part of their sovereign. Shimei attributed all the public calamities to David, whom, with most opprobrious language, he directed to quit the country; thanking God, that his own son had retaliated upon him the insults which David had heretofore offered to his father. All the company present were shocked at this behaviour, and he would certainly have fallen a sacrifice to the resentment of Abishai, but for the interposition of David, who advised him to restrain his passion, and not seek to increase the present calamities. Having given this advice, David proceeded slowly on one side of the mountain, while Shimei went on the other side, cursing him as he advanced*. At length David and his followers arrived on the bank of the river, where they halted to take refreshment after their tedious march, the troops being mustered on the occasion.

Hushai pretends to join Absalom. About this time, Absalom and Ahithophel arrived at Jerusalem, where prodigious crowds of people received them with every demonstration of joy; nor did Hushai fail to make one of the number, to cry "God save the king," and to wish that his reign might be long and prosperous. Absalom, struck by this circumstance, demanded how it happened that the zealous Hushai should desert his king, and attach himself to the interest of another? To which Hushai artfully replied, that the will of God, and the approbation of the people were not to be resisted. This speech lulled all suspicion that Absalom might have entertained of Hushai.

Ahithophel's abominable counsel followed. Ahithophel was now consulted what was proper to be done in the present posture of affairs; and his advice was, that Absalom should lay with all David's concubines; and he enforced his advice by saying, that when matters were thus advanced beyond a possibility of reconciliation, the people would infer that the state was more secure. "In the present state of things, (added he) they may think a reconciliation

may be effected, in which case their safety would be endangered by declaring in your favour." This advice was followed; and a tent being erected in the place for the occasion, Absalom, in the view of the people, lay with the king's concubines. Thus the prophecy of Nathan, respecting what would befall David, was fulfilled†.

CHAP. VIII.

AHITHOPHEL opposed, and over-ruled by HUSHAI. AHITHOPHEL hangs himself in his own House. AMASA, being created General by ABSALOM, engages DAVID in Battle, and is routed. ABSALOM found hanging on the Bough of a Tree, by the Hair of his Head. JOAB strikes ABSALOM, with his Javelin, through the Heart.

Ahithophel's further counsel to Absalom defeated by Hushai. **A**HITHOPHEL's late advice had no sooner been carried into execution, than consultations were held how to prosecute the war: when he said, that if he might be intrusted with the command of ten thousand select men, he would bring the head of David, or be content to forfeit his own: adding, that the loss of David's life would secure the government to Absalom, and safety to the public. This proposal appeared highly agreeable to Absalom; but before he came to a resolution, he thought it prudent to take the advice of Hushai; whose opinion being demanded, he gave it to the following purport: "It is unnecessary for me to remind you, Sir, of the acknowledged valour of your father, and of the numbers of brave men in his service, in conjunction with whom he hath always been victorious. You are equally well acquainted with his courage and his skill. Our advances will undoubtedly be announced to him; and it is probable, that his troops will wait to engage us, in some wood, valley, or behind a rock; or should we advance to attack them, they would probably retreat by degrees till we are surrounded, and the whole body fall upon us at once. I would wish you, Sir, to consider, that in an emergency, such as I speak of, whether the encouragement given to the enemy, joined to the consternation into which we should be thrown, would not create a confusion very unfavourable to your army. You will now, Sir, please to consider, whether my advice or that of Ahithophel is most proper to be pursued. But having proceeded thus far, let me inform you what I think, in our present situation, would be the most rational

* Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what had exasperated him against David, no where appears; but it seems as if he had conceived some rancorous hatred to him, when neither the presence of the king, nor the terror of his guards, could restrain him from throwing stones, and venting bitter speeches against him; and it appears as if the king was fallen into the utmost contempt, when a private man could think of venting his malice at him, in so gross a manner, with impunity. Such rage

was little less than madness; since he could not injure David, but might, for his insult, have suffered immediate death.

† In addition to this grievous affliction, it should seem that David's transgression, in the matter of Uriah, was, in a greater or less degree, the cause of his mourning all his days; and though God forgave the sin, he caused David to see and feel both that, and the punishment of it, in the miseries with which he was afterwards afflicted in his family.

mode of acting. Give orders that the whole body of the Hebrews assemble, at a fixed time and place, to wage war with David; and when they are come together, do you assume the command of them all, without delegating your authority to any other person. This being done, David must either retire to the walled towns, strong holds, or other secure places, or take the open field: in the latter case, your numbers will be sufficient to destroy him; and among them will be a multitude whose pride and ambition will stimulate them to appear foremost in the service of their prince and country. Thus the ruin of David will be certain: but, if he should act only the defensive part, and seek security by secreting himself; there are many ways of reducing him to submission, such as starving, mining, or battering*." Hushai had no sooner delivered his opinion, than it was determined to follow his advice, in preference to that of Ahithophel; and even Absalom voted in favour of this resolution; but it ought to be remembered, that the hand of Providence guided this event.

Hushai informs David of what passed.

This determination was no sooner made, than Hushai hastened to Abiathar and Zadok, the priests, with an account of the result of the conference; intreating them to send away instantly an express to David, conjuring him to pass over the river Jordan that night; for that his enemies might attack him in his present situation, if they should learn where he was, or if any alteration should happen in their sentiments. To forward any intelligence of this kind, the high-priests had procured lodgings for their sons without the city, and had a trusty maid-servant to carry the dispatches to them; and no sooner was the information received, than the young men hastened to obey their orders: but they had not proceeded a quarter of a mile on their journey, before they were discovered by some horsemen; and Absalom, being soon apprised of the circumstance, gave orders for apprehending them. The young men, having learnt the danger they were in, quitted the high-road, and went towards Bahurim, a little village not far from Jerusalem, where a woman undertook to hide them; which she effected, by putting them down into a well, over which she threw the skins of some beasts. They were but just got safe into this retreat, when some men came after them, and inquired if she had not seen such people. She confessed, that two men answering the description had drunk at her gate, and were gone forward; nor could there be any doubt of overtaking them in a short time. This did not satisfy the pursuers, who sought for them a long time in vain, and then returned to Jerusalem. When the woman was certain they were at a proper distance, she released the young men from the well, who immediately pursued their journey, and informed

* Since the laws of nature and arms have made no difference with respect to the way of conquest; and those of mercy and humanity seem to incline to that side where the least blood is likely to be shed; Hushai may be said to have acted herein the worthy patriot, as well as the faithful subject.

David of the proceedings of Absalom. Though their arrival was late, David managed so as to get his people across the river before morning.

Ahithophel was so much chagrined that Hushai's advice had been preferred to his, that he got upon his ass, and retired to his house at Gallop, and, assembling his family, acquainted them what counsel he had given to Absalom, who had rejected it; adding, that the rejection of this advice would soon prove ruinous to him, for that David would conquer his son, and recover the sovereign authority: "And now (said he) it is less disgraceful for me to meet death while I can boast my freedom, than to wait the re-establishment of the king, when I shall be sacrificed by the father for the services I have done the son." He had no sooner thus expressed himself, than he retired to a private room, and hanged himself†, from a consciousness of his own demerits; and he was buried by his relations.

Ahithophel on his advice being rejected, hangs himself.

David had now passed the river Jordan, and arrived at Mahanaim, one of the principal cities in that part of the country; when Siphar, a prince of Ammon, Barzillai and Machir, two of the chief inhabitants of Gilead, treated him with the utmost liberality and affection, as did also all the principal persons of that district; not only in his present distressed circumstances, but from the recollection of his former rank and dignity. Such was the kind affection of these people, that David and his retinue were amply supplied with meat, bread, wine, lodging, and every other article that could contribute either to their support or accommodation. During these transactions, Absalom having assembled a large army to oppose David, crossed the river Jordan, and encamped near Mahanaim, a town of Gilead. Of this army Amasa was appointed general, in the room of Joab: now Zeruiah the mother of Joab and Abigail the mother of Amasa, were both the sisters of David.

Barzillai, &c. meet David, with a supply of provisions.

On the review of the army, David found himself able to muster only four thousand men; yet with this small number he determined rather to act offensively, than to wait till he should be attacked by Absalom: he therefore separated his army into three divisions, and appointed proper officers to each, giving the first division to Joab, the second to Abishai, and the third to Ittai, the Gittite. The king would willingly have been present with the army; but in this he was opposed by his adherents, urging, that if they should be vanquished while he was in the field, their whole plan would be frustrated, and the contest at an end; whereas, on the contrary, if one of the divisions should be routed, the rest might retreat to him, and some mode might be adopted to recruit the army: and, exclusive of this consideration, the king's ab-

Disposition of David's small army for attacking that of Absalom.

† He was convinced, from the methods Absalom was going to pursue, that David would get the better of him; and, in that case, he well knew he should be put to death for his treason, and therefore chose to be his own executioner.

sence from the field might induce the enemy to think that he had another army which had not made its appearance. By these arguments David was influenced to remain at Mahanaim: but he bound his adherents, by every sacred tie, to discharge their duty manfully; requesting, that if Providence should decree the victory in their favour, they would spare the life of his son Absalom; for, in case of his death, his own life would become of no value. Having expressed himself to this purpose, he dismissed his friends, with all good wishes and prayers for their success*.

The two armies join, and engage.

Absalom no sooner remarked the disposition of Joab's division, which was on a plain, with a wood behind them, than he opposed his own troops to them in a similar situation. As soon as the two armies engaged, equal valour appeared to inspire either party; the one anxious to recover David's loss, the other no less so to support Absalom in his usurped authority: the adherents of David were determined to do and suffer every thing, to punish the guilty son for his rebellion against his father. For a considerable time Absalom's people fought most courageously, ashamed of being vanquished by the few forces of David; while, on the other hand, the royal party had in view the honour of putting so many superior thousands to the rout. At length, however, the veterans of David, with a bravery that disdained all opposition, broke the enemy's ranks, totally routed them, and pursued the flying divisions through woods, over mountains and precipices, or wherever they sought for safety. Great numbers were lost in the pursuit, many taken prisoners; and the number killed on the field of battle was estimated at twenty thousand.

Absalom, in his flight, is entangled by his hair among the boughs, and slain by Joab.

The person of Absalom was so distinguishable, both for his height and comeliness, that he was the universal mark at which they wished to aim: in order therefore to avoid being taken prisoner, he mounted his swiftest mule, and rode off at the full speed; but the wind blowing his long hair above his head, it caught hold of a bough of a tree, and the mule continuing her speed, left Absalom hanging in this situation. This being observed by one of David's troops, he informed Joab of the circumstance, who ordered him to go and stab Absalom, and his reward should be fifty shekels of silver. This the soldier refused, saying, that two thousand should not bribe him to such an act, especially as David had given orders that the young man's life should be spared. Joab now inquired where Absalom was hanging, and having at length found him, struck his javelin through his heart. Joab's armour-bearers being present at this scene, lifted the body from the tree, and buried it in a pit, over which they erected a kind of rude sepulchre, by piling a number of

stones upon it. This ceremony being ended, Joab ordered a retreat to be sounded, to stop the pursuit, and save the unnecessary effusion of blood. Some time before this, in a place denominated the king's valley, adjacent to Jerusalem, Absalom had caused a marble column to be erected, to which he gave the name of the "Hand of Absalom," and intended it as a lasting memorial of himself, in case (as he himself expressed it) he should die childless.

C H A P. IX.

JOAB's Remonstrances on occasion of the Death of ABSALOM. SHIMEI solicits and obtains Permission. The Tribe of JUDAH adhere to DAVID: and SHEBA's revolt. AMASA dispatched by DAVID after SHEBA. JOAB meets AMASA, and stabs him. SHEBA's Head brought to DAVID by JOAB. A Famine among the ISRAELITES, in consequence of SAUL's breach of Faith with the GIBEONITES. DAVID numbers the People, and a Pestilence ensues.

THE immediate dispersion of Absalom's troops was the consequence of his death: and now a kind of contest arose who should carry the news of the victory to David. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadock the high-priest, besought Joab that he might be the messenger, as the victory appeared to be the immediate consequence of an interfering providence; but Joab replied, that as he had hitherto carried the king only good news, he would be an improper messenger of the death of his son; he therefore ordered Cushai to be the bearer of this intelligence, as he had been witness to the event: but Ahimaaz again applied, urging, that David's concern for the loss of his son, would yield to his joy on the general import of the message. Hereupon Joab permitted him to go; and as he was acquainted with the nearest road, he arrived before Cushai.

Ahimaaz and Cushai dispatched to carry intelligence of the event to David.

While David was sitting at the gate of his palace, anxious to learn the event of the contest, a servant brought him intelligence that he could discern a person advancing hastily toward them, but that he was not near enough to ascertain his person. David began to console himself with the hope of good news, when the servant told him that he saw a second person running, which still increased his expectations. By this time the first messenger was come very near, and proved to be Ahimaaz, the son of the high priest Zadock, who travelled in a chariot. "This man (said David) certainly brings me acceptable intelligence;" and scarcely had he pronounced these words,

* The strength of paternal affection was fully exemplified in king David, and shone conspicuously amongst many of his splendid virtues. The king's anxious concern for the life of a rebellious un-

grateful son, who was seeking the destruction of his indulgent father, merely to gratify his own ambition, and the lamentations he made at his death, are scarcely to be paralleled in history.

when Ahimaaz prostrated himself before the king, who instantly demanded what news from the army. To this Ahimaaz replied, "Success and victory." The king then eagerly inquired the fate of Absalom, to which the messenger answered, that he had no sooner been a witness of the victory by the routing of the enemy, than he hurried away with the news; that his orders from Joab were given in haste, and related solely to the advantage gained over the enemy, without regard to Absalom, of whom, however, he knew the troops were in pursuit, from the noise and clamour that he had heard. He had scarcely done speaking, when Cushai arrived with intelligence of the victory, and throwing himself at David's feet, was interrogated with regard to the fate of Absalom:

David laments
the death of
Absalom.

to which he replied, "May all the enemies of my lord the king be no more successful than Absalom has been!" Intelligence thus fatal to the hopes of David, turned a day of joy into sorrow and lamentation. The king was inconsolable for the loss of his son; and the people were equally astonished and grieved, that their sovereign could thus afflict himself for the death of a rebel, by which his life and crown were secured. David, however, withdrew himself from public business, and, on the top of one of the highest towers of the city, lamented his fate with many tears: and, while he smote his breast, and tore his hair, exclaimed, "Oh Absalom, my son, my son! Ah! that I could have died with thee, my son Absalom!" By this time Joab and the army were entering the city in triumph; and were not a little shocked, that the grief to which the king had abandoned himself, spread an air of gloom over the joyous solemnity, and made them appear rather as the vanquished than the conquerors.

Joab repre-
hends David,
and instructs
him what
steps to take.

On this occasion David gave himself up so intirely to grief, that Joab thought it requisite to throw off all restraint, and speak his sentiments with freedom, which he did as follows: "Consider, Sir, (said he) the tendency of your conduct: consider how inglorious it is for you thus to waste your time in fruitless repinings: this behaviour carries with it the appearance of despising the good offices of those friends, who have risked their own lives to preserve your's; nay, it looks like a degree of contempt for yourself and your own family, and a partiality for those enemies which the just vengeance of heaven hath doomed to destruction, as an instance of mercy to you.

Arouse then, I beseech you; appear before your subjects, and acknowledge that, next to the immediate interference of Providence, you owe the victory you have obtained to their courage and fide-

lity: for if you continue in this desponding way, your army will desert you, your kingdom will be lost, and then you will find real and substantial cause for lamentation." Such was the effect of this honest address to David, that he began to recollect himself, and resolved to pay more attention to the interests of his people, and the dignity of his government; and therefore appeared at the gate of his palace, with unusual complacency in his look and behaviour. This alteration in his conduct had such an influence on the people, that they crowded in from all parts, to make submission to their sovereign.

During this situation of affairs, the late adherents of Absalom, who had fled on the day of battle, and were now got to their own habitations, dispatched expresses across the country, desiring their friends to recollect what a variety of obligations they lay under to David, for the numerous hazards and toils he had undergone in asserting their common rights and liberties; how ungenerous they had all behaved in rebelling against him; and recommending an immediate submission to him, when they should intreat his forgiveness, and solicit him once more to take them under his royal protection; and these arguments were enforced by the consideration, that the usurper they had set up in the place of David was no more.

The insur-
gents recant,
and are dis-
posed to sub-
mit to David,
and implor-
pardon.

In consequence hereof David received addresses in great number, which he regularly dispatched to Zadok and Abiathar, the high-priests, instructing them how to treat with the heads of the tribe of Judah, to confirm his restoration. Hereupon the high-priests represented to them how scandalous it would be for them to remain indifferent, while others were taking the lead in an act of common justice to so benevolent a prince, who was, moreover, of their own tribe. This mode of address inspired a spirit of emulation who should be most zealous in the service of the king. The high-priests were also instructed to inquire of Amasa how it happened that he, the king's nephew by his own sister, had failed to model the army to a disposition fit for the restoration of the true government: and it was hinted to Amasa, that David would give him the same post he held under Absalom, and likewise grant him his free pardon. In this mode the high-priests created with the heads of the tribe; and with Amasa, who, by the promise above-mentioned, was easily reconciled to the king's interest.

The first tribe that sent deputies to David, to invite him to re-assume the regal government, was that of Judah; and partly by the influence of this ex-

The tribe of
Judah also in-
vite the king
to re-assume
his authority.

* Nothing can certainly be more moving and pathetic, than the words uttered by David on this solemn occasion: but whether it was David's deliberate wish, that he had died in Absalom's stead; or only the effect of his excessive love and grief for him, is not so easy to determine. St. Augustine seems to be on the affirmative

side. Whether David's wish was deliberate or not, his grief was doubtless increased by reflecting that himself, by his own sin in the case of Uriah, had been the unhappy instrument and occasion of his son's death, what was most lamentable of all, in a state of sinful rebellion against a kind and indulgent parent.

ample,

ample, and partly through that of Amasa, all the tribes agreed to receive the king at Jerusalem. Among the very foremost to pay the tribute of submission was the said tribe of Judah, who advanced to meet him even to the banks of Jordan. There likewise went Ziba, a freed-man of Saul's, with fifteen children, and twenty servants; and a thousand Benjamites, preceded by Shimei the son of Gera. These all combined with the tribe of Judah, to throw a bridge across the river, that David and his troops might pass with greater convenience.

Shimei humbles himself, and obtains favour.

When the king had reached the river side, the tribe of Judah first paid their obedience: then Shimei, approaching to the bridge, humbled himself at the feet of David, implored his pardon for all that was passed, and hoped it would not be remembered to his disadvantage when David should be reinstated in his government: requesting farther, that his ready submission, and unfeigned repentance, might be accepted in extenuation of his former crimes. In answer to this, Abishai, the brother to Joab, exclaimed, "Think you thus easily to compensate for the insults that you have offered to the king whom God hath appointed to rule over you?" David, in reply, said, "Be at peace, no farther try to foment old divisions, by seeking out new cause of disquietude. Consider this as the first day on which I begin to reign, and observe what I most solemnly swear. Every one is now absolutely forgiven by me; and I hereby engage, that not any person, of what rank or condition soever, shall suffer on account of any insult offered to myself, or on any other account: and you, Shimei, may now rest at ease, for your life shall not be endangered." Hereupon Shimei arose from his suppliant posture, paid his humble respects, and retired.

Mephibosheth also waits on the king, and apologizes for his neglect.

Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, now approached the king, in a disguise which was the consequence of a vow by which he had bound himself when David was expelled, that he would neither cut off his hair, nor change his clothes, till his sovereign should be restored. Ziba had endeavoured to traduce Mephibosheth to David; for on the latter inquiring how he could desert him in the day of distress, he attributed the fault to Ziba, who had disobeyed his commands, and treated him with the utmost insolence, notwithstanding he had given express direc-

tions to have every thing prepared for his journey. This was heard by David, who neither made any comment on it, nor hinted the least discredit of what Ziba had heretofore said; but told Mephibosheth, that he would order Ziba to restore half the estate that had been intrusted to his care*: to which Mephibosheth answered, that Ziba was welcome to the whole, since he had the happiness of seeing his sovereign restored to his throne and kingdom.

Barzillai, the Gileadite, a man renowned for acts of honour and virtue, had been long the steady friend of David, whom he had assisted in deeds of heroism; nor, on this occasion, could Barzillai deny himself the pleasure of attending the king on his way to the river Jordan. David intreated him to accompany him to Jerusalem, assuring him, that he would treat him with the tenderness of a parent, and that every convenience should be supplied to render his old age comfortable to him. To this invitation Barzillai replied, that a retired and private life was now more eligible to him, than all the gaiety and splendor of a palace: for that he was eighty years of age, and had outlived all taste for the pleasures of a court; his chief care now being to give directions for his funeral, and prepare for another world. For these reasons he requested his majesty's permission to return and dwell at his own house, where he might live in the way most agreeable to himself: he said farther, that he could no longer receive pleasure from luxurious living; and with regard to dancing, singing, and the concert arising from the accordance of voice and instrument, he had no longer any pleasure in them, for that he was almost deprived of his hearing. In consideration of these reasons, David was induced to part with Barzillai, on condition that his son Chimham should go with him, and accept of such favours as his majesty could with propriety bestow on him. Barzillai committed his son to the king's care, with every acknowledgment of the honour done them, and retired to his own house, after offering up his warmest wishes and prayers for the long and prosperous reign of David.

Barzillai is kindly received by David.

On David's arrival at Gilgal, he found that his followers consisted of the whole tribe of Judah, and one half of the whole nation. At this time there came to David many of the chief men of the country (followed by vast multitudes of people), who reflected on the tribe of Judah, for their presumption in waiting up-

* David first gave the whole in property to Mephibosheth, and afterwards to Ziba: and yet, *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land*, must refer to some former determination of David with respect to the estate. But no such determination is to be found but in that original one, chap. ix. 10. in which the estate was divided between Mephibosheth and Ziba; the whole to Mephibosheth in property, and to Ziba sufficient to maintain himself and family, for taking care of it, out of the profits it produced: so that this was, in reality, confirming the original grant, and restoring him to the possession of the whole upon the same terms on which the possession was at first granted him. It was certainly a revocation of the grant to Ziba, who therefore could claim no part of the estate by that grant, nor

by any other; for there was no other but that by which he was allowed a proper maintenance out of it: so that if David was too hasty in giving Mephibosheth's estate to Ziba, he was, upon being undeceived, as hasty in restoring it to him, and thereby discovered his great regard to truth and equity, and the firmness of his affection and friendship to Jonathan and his family. And though he confirmed the original grant, thereby leaving to Ziba and his family a maintenance out of the estate, it was out of respect even to Saul, of whose house Ziba was, and as a recompence for that seasonable and noble supply that he brought him when he was forced to abandon the capital, by the unnatural rebellion of Absalom his son; 2 Sam. xvi. 2.

on the king without the concurrence of their brethren, as in reason they ought to have gone all in a body. To this the tribe of Judah replied, that they hoped their brethren would not be offended that they had made the first offer of their services, as they considered it as a duty to which they were bound by their affinity to the king, which had made them more zealous on the occasion than otherwise they should have been: they averred, that they had not a view to any private advantage in what they had done, and thought that, in reason, this testimony of their zeal ought not to give any offence to those who were later in their professions of loyalty and attachment.

Rebellion of
Sheba.

During this debate among the principal men, Sheba the son of Bichri, of the tribe of Benjamin (a man of a violent and litigious disposition), standing up in the midst of the assembly, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Wherefore do they talk to us of a part in David? What connexions can we have with the son of Jesse?" Hereupon he ordered a trumpet to be sounded, and proclamation to be made, that "the people might depart to their tents;" from which moment it was considered that a war was declared against David: the majority appearing to adhere to the party of Sheba; but the tribe of Judah still held their allegiance to David, whom they escorted to Jerusalem.

As soon as the king arrived at the city, his first care was to remove from his palace all his concubines, whom Absalom had heretofore publicly violated: but he gave orders for their being properly attended and accommodated, in lodgings prepared for them, though from this time he never held any correspondence with them. His next step was, to promote Amasa to the rank of general, in the room of Joab, and to him he gave orders to assemble all the troops he could of the tribe of Judah, and prepare to march, within three days, against Sheba, the son of Bichri. This commission Amasa endeavoured to execute with all possible expedition; but not being able to assemble them so soon as he wished, David grew impatient, and on the third day, spoke to Joab to the following purport: "There is no time to be lost in counteracting the designs of Sheba; do you, therefore, instantly assemble such troops as are in readiness, together with the six hundred veterans; and, taking your brother Abishai as your assistant, proceed directly in search of him, and the moment you get sight of him encounter him, before he has a possibility of arranging his forces; for, if there be any delay on our part, his numbers will increase like the gathering of a snow-ball; and, when he is sufficiently strong, he may secure himself in some

fortified town, and it may be a work of more time and labour to dislodge him, than it was to conquer Absalom."

No sooner had Joab received his orders, than he and his brother collected their troops, and marched in pursuit of Sheba. When Joab came to Gibeon, a village about five miles from Jerusalem, Amasa met him at the head of a numerous army. While Amasa was approaching to salute him, Joab, who wore a breastplate, and had his sword by his side, let fall the sword from the scabbard, but immediately took it up again; and advancing towards Amasa, took him by the beard, under pretence of saluting him, but instantly ran him through the body, so that he died on the spot*.

Amasa treacherously murdered by Joab.

Amasa was no sooner dead, than Joab and his brother Abishai proceeded on their march in search of Sheba, leaving a person in care of Amasa's body, with orders to proclaim that he was a bad man, and had only been punished according to his demerits: proclamation was also made, that the friends of David should follow Joab and his brother. During the time the body lay exposed, great numbers assembled to view it; on which the person in whose care it was, removed it to a neighbouring village, where he put it in a house, and covered it with a coat, and the soldiers now followed their leaders. Joab and his army had nearly traversed the whole country, before they knew that Sheba had taken refuge in a fortified town named Abel-Maacha. The gates of this place being shut against Joab and his troops, he was resolved to besiege it; and accordingly gave orders for throwing up a trench round it, and that the walls should be undermined, and the place attacked by means of batteries.

While the necessary steps were taking for the attack of the city, a public-spirited woman, zealous for the service of her country, ascended the battlements of the wall, whence she called aloud to Joab, desiring to speak to him apart from his troops. Joab complying with her request, she addressed him in the following manner: "Although Providence hath appointed kings and governors to rule over us, to induce us to live at peace one among another, and to defend us from the assaults of our foes, yet have you advanced against us, to destroy one of the most capital cities in all the land of Israel; and this without any provocation or insult on our parts." To this Joab replied, that she was mistaken in her judgment; for that he had no wish either to destroy the city, or to injure any one of its

A woman procures the death of Sheba, which restores the public tranquillity.

* This action was attended with the highest perfidy and infolence. Many reasons concurred to prevent David's calling Joab to an account now, particularly his power, authority, and interest with the army: but it is plain he never forgot, nor forgave him. That he highly resented it, we find in his last charge to Solomon, where he nobly recommends, and gives it in charge to his son, to do justice on that bloody assassin. He was not now in a capacity to do it. Joab was too powerful a subject to be brought to account.

After Absalom's death, he had the insolence to tell the king with an oath, that he would make every one of his subjects desert him; and after this assassination of Amasa, he resumed, contrary to his master's will, the command of all the forces; who had an affection for him as their own general, and because he had restored the quiet of the land by quelling the insurrection of Sheba. Joab's being continued captain-general of all the forces was not from David's inclination, but contrary to it, and by force.

inhabitants: all he wished and demanded was, that the rebel Sheba the son of Bichri should be delivered up as a victim to public justice, and his army should be immediately withdrawn from before the walls. The woman having heard this declaration of Joab, requested him to suspend his operations but for a short time, and the head of Sheba should be thrown over the wall to him. Joab consenting to this, she descended from the wall, and addressed the citizens in the following manner: "Can you, O fellow-citizens, be so abandoned, as for the sake of affording protection to one bad man, who is moreover a stranger among you, to consent to the loss of your wives and children, and to be driven from your habitations in so disgraceful a manner? What obligations have you to Sheba, to counterbalance those you owe to David? Or if this was not the case, is it possible to hold the city in despite of the besiegers?" This short address had the intended effect: it was agreed to purchase peace at the expence of Sheba, whose head was immediately cut off, and thrown over the wall; on which the troops returned to Jerusalem, where Joab was appointed general: the command of the guards, and the six hundred veterans, was given to Benaiah; Adoram was appointed treasurer; the recorders were Achilais and Sabathes; Sufa was made secretary; while the office of high-priest remained with Abiathar and Zadock.

Matters had not long been thus adjusted, when a famine raged so violently, that David intreated God to acquaint him with the cause and cure of the calamity. To this the prophet returned an answer, intimating, that Saul having treacherously shed the blood of the Gibeonites, it appealed to heaven for vengeance; for that this blood had been shed, not only in opposition to the rights of natural equity, but to Joshua's promise and oath, which the elders had ratified. The prophets therefore instructed the king to redress the injury sustained by the Gibeonites, in the murder of their citizens, in such manner as they should require, on which the Almighty would avert the present judgment. As soon as David heard this, he sent for the Gibeonites, and demanded what recompence they would wish: to which they answered, "Let seven of the sons or relations of Saul be given up to our disposal." Hereupon David gave orders that seven of them should be sought for; but with an exception in favour of Mephibosheth, on account of his father Jonathan. These being given to the Gibeonites, they were appeased, and inflicted such punishments on them as they thought proper: immediately after which, rain fell in great abundance, the earth recovered its former verdure, and produced the accustomed plenty.

Soon after this event, David marched his forces against the Philistines, whom he attacked and routed;

but being too eager in the pursuit, he was observed, when alone and fatigued, by Achmon, the son of Araph, a man of the gigantic race (armed with a sword, a coat of mail, and a lance which weighed three hundred shekels), who, turning quick on the king, beat him down, and would infallibly have killed him, but that at the instant came up Abishai, the brother of Joab, who standing across the king, attacked and flew Achmon. The great danger David had been in, and his providential deliverance, so much affected the army, that the officers insisted on his swearing never again personally to engage in war; for that the blessings derived to the nation by his government, were in the utmost danger of being lost, from that natural bravery which led him to expose himself in situations of the most imminent danger*.

Not long after this battle, the Philistines re-assembled their troops at Gaza; on which David sent an army to attack them. Sobach, the Hittite, obtained a great character on this occasion, by killing, with his own hands, several of the race of the giants, who were equally remarkable for strength and size. In a word, the victory was principally owing to his courage. The Philistines once more took the field, against whom the king sent fresh detachments; and in this attack, Nathan, a relation of David, performed miracles of valour: among the rest, killing one of the bravest of the Philistines in single combat; whereon the remainder fled, with the loss of great numbers of their troops.

The Philistines took possession of a town near where the Hebrews lay; and among them was a man descended from the race of the giants, whose height was six cubits, and who had on each foot six toes, and on each hand six fingers. This enormous giant, while fighting at the head of his soldiers, was attacked by Jonathan, the son of Shimei, and Gai, fighting hand to hand; which circumstance went far in the decision of the victory, and established Jonathan's character as a man of great courage. This might be called a decisive victory; for the Philistines wanting courage to engage the Israelites any more, the war was at an end.

The fatigues and hazards of war being now over, and the blessings of peace restored, David devoted almost all his time to the composition of psalms and hymns to the honour of God. These being in various measures, and adapted to different tunes, he gave orders that the Levites should sing them on the sabbath, and other solemn festivals. This singing was accompanied by musical instruments; among which were the psaltery, which had twelve strings, on which the fingers of the musician moved; an instrument of ten strings, which was sounded by touching it with a quill; and cymbals of a great size, made of brass.

David narrowly escapes being slain by a Philistine giant.

The Philistines worked, and several of their gigantic heroes slain.

* This desire of the people is beautifully expressed in 2 Sam. xxi. 17. "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." David, in 2 Sam. xxii. 66. "Thou No. 8.

hast given me the shield of thy salvation," celebrates the escape he experienced, when on the point of being slain by the giant above-mentioned.

David was now surrounded by many men of distinguished courage and honour, among whom were thirty-eight who had become super-eminent remarkable for their valour: these men seemed born for glorious achievements, and adapted to give laws to empires.

David orders the people to be numbered. The king had now come to a resolution to number the people of Israel, to see what forces could be raised on an emergency: but he did not recollect an ordinance of Moses, which decreed, that, on every such occasion, half a shekel for each man should be offered to God, by way of oblation. David dispatched orders to Joab to take the account, which he declined as an unnecessary business: but the king would not be refused, saying, that he would have it done immediately. Hereupon Joab took the advice of the Scribes, and the heads of the tribes, and a computation was immediately made through the whole country. Joab went, at the end of nine months and twenty days, to the king at Jerusalem, and informed him that the number of Israelites fit to engage in war, was nine hundred thousand, exclusive of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi, an account of whom had not as yet been taken. Four hundred thousand men, he said, might be mustered in the tribe of Judah only.

During the progress of the above business, David regretted the orders he had given; and was told, by the prophet, of the anger of God: on hearing which, he humbled himself in unfeigned repentance, and obtained his pardon in consequence of his prayers. Soon afterwards, the prophet Gad came to him, and said, that God gave him his choice of the three following things, viz. "A famine for seven years; a flight of three months before his enemies; or a pestilence of three days." To choose either of these, David thought very distressful: "If (said he) I fix on famine, I shall seem to regard my people's interest less than my own; for it is not likely that I can be deprived of bread: If my choice be to fly before the enemy, the appearance will be the same, as my personal safety may be provided for in castles and strong fortresses; but the third calamity is equally threatening to subjects, and to their rulers." While he was thus deliberating on the matter, the prophet urged a speedy answer; on which the king said, "he should expect greater mercy from the hands of God than man, and therefore chose rather to submit to the pestilence, if agreeable to the divine will." This answer being given to the prophet, he made a report of it; soon after which, the Israelites were attacked with disorders equally new and violent, which were attended with almost sudden death, and bid defiance to all the skill of the physicians. Some were afflicted with suffocations, some with swimmings in the head, others with dimness of sight; others again either with violent

gripes, languors, or faintings, and various diseases, so that they expired at an amazing rate; some even died in lamenting the death of others: in a word, the disease spread so fast, that seventy thousand persons fell a sacrifice to it, between day-break and dinner-time. The disorder was now making hasty strides towards Jerusalem, when David clothed himself in sackcloth, and deprecated the vengeance of heaven by prayers, and tears of unfeigned humiliation. While he was thus engaged, he looked upwards, and beheld an angel advancing to Jerusalem, with a drawn sword in his hand. Struck with this appearance, he exclaimed, "Let thy punishments, O Lord, fall on the shepherd; but in what hath the flock offended? On me, and on my family, be thy wrath poured forth*; but have mercy, I beseech thee, on my people!"

It pleased the Almighty to put an end The plague removed. to the raging of the pestilence, on the intercession of David, who was directed by the prophet Gad to repair instantly to the threshing-floor of Araunah, and there to offer sacrifice, on an altar to be erected on the occasion. David repaired thither, when Araunah, who was threshing his corn, observing the king and his sons advancing, went out to pay his obedience. Araunah was a Jebusite, and so warm an adherent to David, that he had preserved him at the time of taking the city, as before mentioned.

Araunah now inquired, if he could any way serve David; to which the king replied, "I come to purchase your threshing-floor, on which to build an altar, and sacrifice to God." "Not the threshing-floor only, (said Araunah) but my ploughs, my oxen, and my burnt offerings, are all at the service of my king, without expence; and I pray that your sacrifice might be acceptable to God." This behaviour charmed David, who said it would be wrong to offer a sacrifice which cost him nothing; wherefore he must purchase the floor, for which he gave fifty shekels of silver. This being done, David was restored to the favour of the Almighty, after sacrificing burnt offerings, and peace-offerings on the place. This was the very spot on which Abraham would have offered up his son Isaac, but for the intervention of the angel, and the appearance of the ram in his place; of which we have already written.

The prayers of David being heard, and David sacrificed. his sacrifice become acceptable, he determined to give the name of "The Altar of the People," or "The Israelites' Altar," to the whole place, and thereon to cause a temple to be erected: and this resolution was strengthened by one of God's prophets, who predicted to David that the temple should be built by his successor. Hereupon David gave orders for numbering the strangers in his dominions; who appeared to be about one hundred and eighty thousand, of whom one hundred thousand were employed to carry materials for building, and eighty

* With respect to this crime of numbering the people, it is the opinion of some, that God, for wise ends and purposes, known only to himself, permitted David to be influenced and persuaded by some evil counsellors; since, from Joab's words on this occasion, 2

Sam. xxiv. 3. it seems plain, that the matter had been previously debated in the council, and that though Joab opposed the act, yet David was stirred up to perform it, by the persuasion of some other person.

thousand to do the stone-work : besides which, thirty-five thousand were directed to act as overseers of the workmen. Vast numbers of cedar trees, the largest and best that could be got, were procured from Tyre and Sidon, and an immense quantity of iron and brass was brought together on the occasion. To his particular friends David used to say, that these things were only procured in readiness, against the time his son might want them, which would forward the work, and save much time and labour : but that his son was not yet of an age to engage in such an arduous task.

C H A P. X.

SOLOMON receives Directions from his Father concerning the building of a Temple. ADONIJAH, DAVID's fourth Son, usurps the Government. DAVID nominates SOLOMON his Successor.

David gives directions for building the temple.

MATTERS were thus situated, when David commanding the presence of his son Solomon, enjoined him strictly, on his advancement to the throne, instantly to set about the building of a temple for the adoration of the Divine Being. "This (said David) I would myself have done, but that my frequent wars having marked me as a man of blood, the particular command of God prevented my proceeding in it, and destined it for you." Now of Solomon it was foretold, that he should be a prince of peace ; that he should be taken under the peculiar protection of the Almighty ; that under his government the subjects should not only be free from foreign wars, but live without private quarrels and animosities. Then David, addressing his son, spoke to the following purport : "As it was predicted before your birth, that you should wear a crown, act worthy of that distinction : let piety, fortitude, and justice, govern your actions ; let the laws, traditions, and commandments of Moses be revered by you : neither violate them yourself, nor permit others to do so. With regard to the building God's temple, let no difficulties prevent your proceeding in it. I will take care, that at the time you ascend the throne, all the materials shall be ready for the beginning of it. Ten thousand talents of gold, one hundred thousand of silver, besides an incredible quantity of iron, timber, and stone, are already provided. You will find no want in supplies, and thousands of masons and carpenters shall wait your commands. Let the whole work be conducted with care and expedition ; for, on its being completed, you need not doubt but God will continue to you his protection and blessing."

Having thus spoken, the king gave it in charge to the princes, to aid Solomon in the advancement of this work ; and, in preference to every other con-

cern, to attend the duties of religion, since that would infallibly secure peace and prosperity to the community. David likewise ordered, that when the temple was completed, the ark, with all the holy vessels and utensils thereto belonging, should be placed therein ; which, agreeable to the commands of God delivered to their forefathers, ought to be done, since they had been enjoined to raise a temple immediately on their arriving in the Land of Promise. David laid these injunctions equally on his son, and on the princes who attended him.

The king had now just completed his seventieth year, but was so debilitated by a complication of disorders, that his blood was almost stagnated, so that he could not get any warmth from all the clothes that could be laid upon his bed. On this occasion, a consultation of physicians was held, who were unanimously of opinion, that nothing was so proper in his disorder, as the sleeping with a healthy young person, the genial heat of whose body being communicated to the king, might relieve nature, without doing it any violence. Hereupon a maiden, named Abishag, famed for her health and delicacy, was put to bed to David, to lie by him, and keep him warm ; which she might do with perfect innocence, as the king was past the age of temptation.

The next son that David had, after Absalom, was Adonijah, whose mother was named Haggith. This youth was not much unlike Absalom, either in height, comeliness, or ambition. Soon after the death of Absalom, Adonijah seemed to have an eye to the succession, and took great pains, by himself and friends, to make a popular interest. He furnished himself with horses, chariots, and guards, keeping a superb equipage ; nor did his father restrain him in this mode of proceeding, or even inquire the reason why he lived in such pomp. Joab the general, and Abiathar the high-priest, were the principal adherents to Adonijah ; while Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the captain of the guards, Zadock the high-priest, Shimei, and the officers in general, took the part of the king.

In the suburbs of Jerusalem, not far from the fountain in the royal gardens, Adonijah prepared a sumptuous entertainment, which he invited all his brothers to partake of, except Solomon. Joab, Abiathar, and the principal men of the tribe of Judah, were also present ; but neither Zadock, Nathan, Benaiah, nor a man of their party, had any invitation given them. This affair being reflected on by Nathan, he said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Observe how Adonijah is already assuming the state of royalty, while David is ignorant of his proceedings : it becomes you, therefore, equally for your own sake and your son's, to interest yourself in this business. Go then to David, and, when alone, remind him that he has sworn that Solomon shall be his successor ; adding, that Adonijah behaves as if he

* Galen observes, that the application of any young, wholesome animal to the stomach, is the most effectual method of procuring heat

and health. The advice of David's physicians, therefore, was salutary.

was already king. During this discourse, I will come into the room, and confirm what you say." This advice pleased Bathsheba, who sought the king, paid her respects, and obtaining permission to deliver her business, did it as Nathan had directed; recounting the story of the entertainment, who were invited, and who were admitted; adding, that the public were anxious to know whom he would appoint to succeed him; and that the life of herself and son rested on the event. At this moment Nathan's attendance was announced to David, and orders being given for his immediate admission, he said to the king, with an air of astonishment, "Have you this day transferred the sovereign rule to Adonijah, and appointed him to succeed you?" The prophet then told him of the feast, who were invited, and who left unasked: "And there are they (said he) feasting and carousing, and drinking healths to Adonijah, their new sovereign; but for me, and the high-priest Zadock, and your captain of the guards, Benaiah, we were utterly unacquainted with the affair. Now I would advise your majesty to signify to the public, whether these proceedings have the sanction of your approbation." When the prophet came in, Bathsheba had retired, and being now summoned to appear, the king said, "The oath I formerly made to you, Bathsheba, I now repeat, in the presence of Almighty God. Solomon, your son, shall succeed to the government, and this day shall the business be accomplished." Hereupon, Bathsheba wished the king long life, and departed.

David appoints Solomon for his successor.

The king instantly sending for Zadock and Benaiah, desired them to accompany Nathan, and, being conducted by the guards, place Solomon on the king's mule, and attending him to the fountain, called Gibon, without the city, anoint him with holy oil, and proclaim him king. David likewise farther ordered, that he should be carried through the city, escorted by troops, and attended by crowds, crying, "Long live king Solomon!" that his having been appointed to succeed to the throne, might become a matter of the most public notoriety. Finally, David commanded Solomon to rule over all his people with the utmost regard to the principles of equity and religion. A prayer to God, for a blessing on Solomon, being now pronounced by Benaiah, they all departed to execute the king's commands.

Solomon being placed on the king's mule, was attended to the fountain, anointed, and accompanied back again, amidst the shouts of the people, who prayed that his reign might be long and prosperous. He was now conducted to the palace, and seated on the throne of David; which being done, the whole city joined in festivity, and nothing was to be seen

* Though no precept in the law makes the altar a privileged place, the Jews, in conformity to the custom of other nations, seem to have considered it as such. But the question is, to what altar Adonijah fled; whether to the brazen one which Moses made, and which was now at Gibeon, or to that which his father had lately erected in the threshing-floor of Araunah? It is expressly said, that he "caught hold on the horns of the altar;" but it is hardly to be

or heard but feasting, dancing, and music, and every possible demonstration of joy. At this time Adonijah, with Joab and his other guests, who were at their feasting, were so alarmed at the sound of the trumpets, and the acclamations of the people, that they quitted their dinner; and while they were wondering what had happened, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the high-priest, came in, whom Adonijah rejoiced to see, on the presumption that he was the messenger of good news; but Jonathan had no sooner acquainted them with the orders issued by the king, and what honour had been done to Solomon, than the company left the entertainment, and privately retreated to their own houses. Adonijah alone, conscious that the nature of his crime scarcely left hope for mercy, fled to the horns of the altar for sanctuary*, and there solicited forgiveness. As soon as Solomon was told how Adonijah had disposed of himself, and that he expected some security that his pardon should be granted, he, with an equal degree of mercy and prudence, sent him a pardon for all past transgressions, attended with a hint to him, to be extremely cautious in his future conduct; for that in case of a similar behaviour hereafter, he must certainly abide the fatal consequence. Adonijah being brought from the place of his retreat to the palace, made his submission to the new king, who told him to return in peace to his own habitation, and hereafter to behave like a good subject, which he would find greatly to his advantage.

Adonijah submits to Solomon, and is pardoned.

CHAP. XI.

The dying Counsel, Prayer, Farewell, Death, and Funeral of DAVID. The Siege of JERUSALEM by ANTYOCHUS.

AFTER having given ample directions for building the temple, and commanding the great men of Israel to assist his son Solomon in a work which lay so near his heart, David, being heavily oppressed by the infirmities of age, judged himself on the point of dissolution; and having called Solomon into his presence, he addressed him to the following effect: "I am now preparing to depart to a world, whither, in due time, you must follow. To die, is to pay the common debt of nature; and that debt once paid, puts a final period to all our concerns with this life. While I have power, I must not omit to remind you of the doctrines which I have so frequently inculcated: in the government of the people, fail not to observe a strict regard to the administration of pub-

supposed, that the altar in the threshing-floor, erected in such haste with stones and turf, was made in this form. We may suppose, that as David had built a place for the reception of the ark of the covenant on Mount Zion, he had also built there an altar, for the oblation of the daily sacrifices, in the exact form of the original one which was then at Gibeon; and that it was to this altar that Adonijah fled for refuge.

The
DISTANCES OF PLACES IN
PALESTINE,

Reduced to Roman Miles,
The Names affixed to the Miles signify
the several Authors by whom the
distances were pointed out, as
Josephus Eusebius, Arrianus, Diodorus,
Siculus & Antoninus.

The Distances which stand without Names
being adjoined are copied from the ancient
Jerusalem Itinerary.
The whole carefully Compiled,
with Improvements By
Tho: Bowen.

PART OF

MEDITERR-

RANEAN

SEA

IDUMEA

English Miles 69 1/2 to a Degree.

Roman Miles 74 1/2 to a Degree.

5 10 20 30 40 50 60 69 1/2

5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 74 1/2

Longitude

East from

GAULONITIS

Capitolas

Tiberias Lake

BATANEA

Gadara, Metropolis of Peraea

PEREA



PART

Ancient Country of
the Moabites and
Midianites.

OF

ARABIA

THE LAKE OF SODOM

Red Sea

Elath

Jericho

157 Roman Miles

from

London

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35

34

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28

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lic justice; zealously adore that Eternal Being to whom you are indebted for the regal dignity, as well as for your existence; pay a rigid regard to his commands, as they are transmitted to us by Moses; for, if through fear, vanity, interest, or any other human infirmity, you shall violate his laws, you must no longer expect a continuance of the protection of divine Providence. But if you religiously conform yourself to the pleasure of the Lord, the government will be established to yourself and your successors in perpetuity. I must now mention the iniquity of Joab, in the assassinations of those brave warriors, and dutiful subjects, Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Ithra, whom he cruelly massacred, from motives of malevolence and envy. I had myself inflicted upon him the punishment due to his crimes, but was restrained by a consideration of his popularity; yet you may act towards him as your judgment shall direct. It is my request, that you will exert yourself in offices of friendship towards the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite; and this I mean you should do, as a requital of the obligations I received from Barzillai, during the period of my banishment; and these services I consider as a debt which my whole family are bound to acknowledge. With Shimei, the Benjamite, the son of Gera, you may find some proper occasion to account for those opprobrious and unmerited censures, during my persecution at Bahurim*. On our interview at the river Jordan, he obtained my pardon; but in case of future transgressions, you will determine as to the propriety of punishing these injuries."

Having concluded this discourse, David expired, in the seventieth year of his age, after a reign of seven years and six months over the tribe of Judah, at Hebron, and thirty-three years over the whole people of Israel at Jerusalem. David was a man

* This is certainly a blot in the last hour of this good man. He had sworn to Shimei and pardoned him; and he now in a manner desires Solomon to find an occasion of revenge. Alas, how

possessed of every qualification necessary to the exalted station which he filled. No man was more remarkable for bravery and fortitude; and he took the lead in all dangerous expeditions, either for the defence or protection of his people. The valour of his soldiers was more animated by his example than by the authority of his command. He was judicious in the appointment of his council; and possessed a singular degree of penetration, whereby he was enabled to improve present advantages, and obviate future difficulties. He was of a temperate, humane, and affable disposition; an impartial judge, and a righteous man. His life was irreproachable, excepting in the case of Bathsheba, and her husband Uriah. The wealth he left greatly exceeded the possessions of any former prince. His remains were interred at Jerusalem, with a magnificence of pomp exceeding the powers of description. Solomon, his son and successor, deposited an immense treasure in his sepulchre; concerning which it must be observed, that about thirteen hundred years after this period, in the time of Hyrcanus the high-priest, Jerusalem being besieged by Antiochus, the son of Demetrius, he made an offer to abandon the place, in consideration of being paid three thousand talents. Hyrcanus had no resource but in David's tomb, which he broke open, and thence took the sum demanded for the composition. Many years afterwards, king Herod discovered a cell, from which he took riches to an immense amount; but so deeply sunk in the earth, and so ingeniously concealed was the place where the remains of David were deposited, that both Hyrcanus and Herod were unable to effect a discovery. In the tenth chapter of the sixteenth book, the reader will find a particular account of Herod's rifling this tomb, where he found much valuable treasure.

frail, how imperfect the best of men are! What eminent virtues are discernible in David! how contrasted with detestable vices!

. B. O. O. K. . VIII.

TRANSACTIONS from the YEAR of the WORLD 2931, to 3048.

C H A P. I.

SOLOMON succeeds to the Throne, and causes ADONIJAH, JOAB, and SHIMEI to be put to Death. He transfers the Sacerdotal Dignity from the House of ITHAMAR to that of PHINEHAS.

SOLOMON, the son of David, succeeded to the government at an early period of life, being invested with the regal authority by the appointment of the Almighty, and the approved con-

sent of his father. Upon his advancement to the throne, he was congratulated by the people, who expressed the most sanguine wishes that he might enjoy a long life, and a reign of uninterrupted felicity.

Adonijah, who, during the life of David, had made an attempt to possess himself of the government, adopted an insinuating address, in order to obtain an interest with Bathsheba, the king's mother, through whose mediation he had conceived a design of promoting

noting his own interest. She assured him, that she would exert her utmost power to render him service. Bathsheba also told him, that she was disposed to promote his suit, and encouraged him to hope that the king would not reject the joint interest of his mother and brother, even on a subject of greater consequence than that in question.

Solomon not only refused the request of his mother, but caused Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei to be put to death; and banished Abiathar the high-priest*, for attaching himself to the cause of Adonijah and Joab. Thus, according to the prediction of God to Eli the grandfather of Abiathar, the pontifical dignity was transferred from the house of Ithamar to Zadock, of the family of Phinehas. Eli was the first of the house of Ithamar invested with the sacerdotal function: and from his time, the following persons of the family of Phinehas led private lives; Boccias, son of Joseph; Jonathan, of Boccias; Maræoth, of Jonathan; Arapha, of Maræoth; Architob, of Arapha; and Zadock, of Architob.

CH A P. II.

SOLOMON marries the Daughter of the King of EGYPT. The Gift of Wisdom bestowed upon him by the Almighty. Wonderful Structure of the Temple. He builds a superb Palace; and erects Fortifications of great Strength for the Defence of JERUSALEM. He vanquishes the CANAANITES. His immense Riches. He degenerates into Idolatry. Evil Consequences of his Misconduct.

Various trans-
actions of
Solomon.

THE regal authority of Solomon was at this time perfectly established; his people were reconciled to the government; and his enemies acknowledged the superiority of his power. During this state of uninterrupted tranquillity, Solomon contracted a marriage with the daughter of the king of Egypt, enlarged and considerably strengthened the walls of Jerusalem, and applied himself to the distribution of public justice. His early time of life was no obstruction to an unremitting observance of the duties of his exalted station, and a religious conformity to the instructions of his dying father. In short, his judgment and penetration were arrived to such a state of maturity at this early period, that they would have done honour to the gravity of age and extensive experience.

Solomon now determined to humble himself in prayer, and perform sacrifice to the Lord, in gratitude for the blessings he enjoyed; and having repaired to Hebron, he made an oblation, consisting of a thousand victims, upon the brazen altar erected by Moses. This instance of piety proved so agreeable to the Almighty, that on the following night he

visited Solomon in a dream, and assured him that he would grant whatever he should request. He determined that the object of his choice should be what the bountiful Donor would bestow with the greatest satisfaction; and, at the same time, an acquisition of singular advantage to himself; and he petitioned the Lord to the following effect: "Grant me, O God! a just comprehension of things and a perfect judgment, that in the government of the people I may invariably regulate my conduct by the rules of truth and justice!" This proved so agreeable to the Almighty, that, in addition to the blessing of greater wisdom than ever man possessed, he promised wealth and glory to Solomon; and, on condition of his conforming in all things to the divine will, and following the virtuous example of his father, the sovereignty should be continued in his family for many generations. Solomon awaked upon hearing these assurances, and having worshipped the Lord, and offered thanksgivings, he returned to Jerusalem, where he performed sacrifice, and gave a general feast to his people.

Two harlots appealed to the king on the following occasion: The complainant related, that she had dwelt in the same lodging with the other woman; that while she was asleep, the defendant took her infant from her arms, and in the place substituted the body of her own child which she had overlaid and smothered; that early in the morning she discovered the fraud, and earnestly pleaded to have her child returned, which she infallibly knew to be her own from certain marks, but that her opponent persisted in a refusal. She said she had no witness to support her cause, but supplicated the king for justice. Solomon asked the defendant what plea she had to offer in extenuation of the charge. She rested her defence on the assertion that the complaint was groundless, and that the living child was the issue of her body. The firmness with which each party supported her deposition induced the auditors to suspend their judgment on the issue of the cause, which at length was determined by the following happy expedient. Solomon commanded the living and the dead child to be produced, and that with his sword one of his guards should cut the bodies exactly in halves, one half of each to be given to each woman. Hereupon, the mother of the living child wept most bitterly, earnestly supplicating that this sentence might be reversed, and declaring, that rather than the infant's life should be sacrificed, she would relinquish all claim in favour of the other woman. The pretended mother appeared to be satisfied with the judgment, and even to enjoy a cruel pleasure in the distress of her adversary. On this evidence of maternal affection and natural tenderness, Solomon assigned the child to the real mother; and he severely reproved the iniquity of the other woman in having endeavoured, after the loss of her own child, to

* The chief priests were appointed by the kings, and were removed or put to death by them on account of any enormous crime,

and, in order to shew their inferiority, always appeared standing in the royal presence.

effect the destruction of that of her friend. The conduct of Solomon on this occasion was considered as so singular an instance of his sagacity and penetration, that from this time he was honoured as a king acting under the immediate direction of the supreme Being*.

Upon the accession of Solomon to the throne, Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent an embassy to congratulate him on the occasion, and to express the satisfaction he enjoyed upon the government being continued in the family of David, for whom he had entertained a great friendship. Solomon sent the following letter by these ambassadors.

"King SOLOMON to King HIRAM, greeting."

Solomon's
message to
Hiram, king
of Tyre.

"MY father David, be it known to thee, O king, long entertained the design of constructing a temple, and dedicating the same to the honour of God: but the wars of his time compelled him to decline this holy work, which he left to be completed by me, during a state of peace, according to the prediction of the Lord. Praised and blessed be his holy name for the present tranquillity of my reign. By the divine assistance, I shall avail myself of the opportunity that is afforded to prosecute this important work. I therefore request that you will permit some of your people to accompany my servants to mount Libanus, and there assist in cutting down materials for the intended structure; the Sidonians having more judgment in that business than we have. Such rewards as you may judge to be reasonable shall be given to the workmen."

Solomon's letter proved highly satisfactory to Hiram, who sent the following reply.

"King HIRAM to King SOLOMON."

Hiram's letter, in answer.

"NO circumstance could have afforded me greater pleasure, than that I experience in consequence of the government of your blessed father being transferred to a successor of such eminent virtue and wisdom. Praised be the name of the Almighty, for the gracious providence manifested in this happy event. Your request shall be cheerfully granted. Such numbers of the finest cedar and cypress-trees as you may have occasion for, I will order to be cut down; and they shall be transported to such ports as you may appoint, whence they may be conveyed to Jerusalem by your own people. In exchange for this, if you will supply

us with such a proportion of corn as may be convenient, it will be considered as a particular obligation; that being an article most wanted in this island."

Hiram's letter proved so agreeable to Solomon, that he ordered him an annual present, consisting of two thousand measures of wheat, two thousand vessels of oil, and two thousand vessels of wine, each vessel containing seventy-two quarts. The friendship thus commenced between the kings, daily increased, and was manifested by a constant interchange of offices of kindness.

Solomon commanded thirty thousand workmen to be selected, ten thousand of whom he ordered to cut wood upon mount Libanus, for the space of one month, at the expiration of which time they were to be relieved by a second ten thousand, who were to do duty for a like period, and then to be succeeded by the third ten thousand. Thus they were at liberty to remain at their respective habitations for two months, and, according to the rotation, every fourth month they were to return to labour. Adoniram was appointed superintendent or inspector-general of these workmen. There were besides, seventy thousand foreigners, whom David had intended for conveying stones and other materials, eighty thousand masons and stone-hewers, and thirty-two thousand overseers. They were ordered to search for the largest stones for the foundation, and to prepare them for use on the mountains where they were procured, and then to convey them to Jerusalem; and in this part of the business, Hiram's men were commanded to assist.

Solomon began this important undertaking in the fourth year of his reign, and in that month which is called Artemisius by the Macedonians, and Jar by the Hebrews; five hundred ninety-two years after the Israelites had come out of Egypt; one thousand and twenty years from the period when Abraham removed from Mesopotamia into the land of Canaan; fourteen hundred and forty years after the flood; and three thousand one hundred and two years from the creation of the world. It was two hundred years after building the city of Tyre, and in the eleventh year of the reign of king Hiram.

The foundation was sunk to an astonishing depth, and composed of stones of singular magnitude, and so hard a quality, as to resist the worm and the inclemency of the weather: and being closely mortised into the rock with great ingenuity, they formed a basis adequate to the support of the intended structure. The temple was sixty cubits high, and sixty cubits also in length, and the breadth

Solomon begins to build the temple.

Its dimensions.

* The wisdom of this king, in determining the case between the harlots, is scarcely to be paralleled. He discovered a great penetration into the hidden recesses of the heart, and the discovery made in consequence proved it to be genuine.

† If it should be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner? it may be answered, that the materials his father had provided lay rude and unfashioned, and at a considerable

distance: this time was therefore requisite to form them into exact symmetry and order; especially as the very stones, which made the foundation, were probably vast blocks of marble or porphyry, and all polished in the most exquisite manner. Abarbinel tells us, that Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared; and therefore four years cannot be reckoned an unreasonable time, to gather gold and silver sufficient to defray so vast an expence.

was twenty cubits; above this, was another stage, of equal dimensions, so that the height of the whole structure was one hundred and twenty cubits. The walls were composed entirely of white stone: and the front of the building was towards the east. The porch was twenty cubits in length, ten in breadth, and one hundred and twenty in height. Round the outward walls were erected thirty cells, or small houses, communicating with each other, and forming galleries, and at the same time answering the purposes of buttresses, by supporting the walls. These cells were each five cubits broad, and of the same length, and twenty cubits high. Over these were two other floors of the same proportion, and the uppermost of the cells were on a level with the lower story of the fabric. They were fastened together by large beams, so disposed as to make them appear of one piece, and as if they gave additional strength to the walls. Under the beams was a variety of carving, gilding, fret-work, and other curious ornaments. The walls and ceilings were lined with cedar, and the wainscots were embellished with a profusion of splendid ornaments of the purest gold. The fabric was composed of stones polished to the utmost degree of excellence, and put together with such ingenuity, that the smallest crevice was not to be perceived. The whole, in short, was so wonderfully executed, that it appeared to be the effect of divine providence, rather than of human art.

The second story had not, like the lower part, a large door towards the east, but several small doors were made to enter from the sides. The king caused winding stairs to be cut in the wall, which stairs led to the upper part. The temple was intirely lined with cedar, and the timbers were joined by iron cramps, whereby great strength and solidity were given to the building. Solomon caused the temple to be divided into two parts, the more inward of which was a space of twenty cubits square, called the holy of holies, and declared to be inaccessible, being particularly consecrated to the Almighty. The other space of forty cubits was called the holy temple, and destined to the use of the priests. In the wall dividing the temple a large cedar door was made, and it was richly gilt and carved, and before it hung a veil of the finest silk and linen, curiously embroidered with historical and other representations in purple, scarlet, and a variety of other colours, in the highest perfection.

The cherubims.

The king caused two golden cherubims to be made, and he placed them in the holy of holies, and dedicated them to the Lord. They were each five cubits in height, and their wings, which were five cubits long, being stretched out, touched the walls on the north and south sides; and the other wings, joining each other, formed a

covering for the holy ark. The superb and curious workmanship of these cherubims, is beyond the power of description. The doors were twenty cubits broad, and of a proportionable height, and overlaid with beaten gold; with which precious metal even the floor of the temple was entirely covered. Before the entrance of this place was hung a rich curtain. In short, nothing was omitted which could add splendor and magnificence to this astonishing structure.

Solomon being informed that a man in Tyre, named Chiram, was highly celebrated for his skill in the manufacture of metals, sent thither to engage him. This man was also an ingenious architect. The father of Chiram was an Israelite by extraction, and his mother was of the tribe of Naphtali. The most difficult and curious work was assigned to this artificer, who cast two hollow pillars, the brass of which was four fingers thick; they were eighteen cubits high, and twelve in circumference. Upon the top of each of these pillars was formed a chapter of brass, five cubits high. These were overspread with a kind of brass net-work; below them were lilies of the same device, and under these, two rows of pomegranates depended, an hundred in each row. The pillars were fixed in the entrance of the porch of the temple, and that on the right hand side was called Jachin, and the other Boaz.

Chiram made a vessel of molten brass, ^{The brazen sea.} bearing some resemblance to a globe severed in the middle, and from its extraordinary magnitude it was called the sea. It measured ten cubits from side to side, and the metal was four fingers thick. It was supported by a twisted pillar, measuring one cubit in circumference. At the base of this pillar were placed the figures of twelve bulls and oxen, so disposed, that three faced the east, three the west, three north, and three south. The vessel called the sea*, would contain three thousand baths; and each bath is estimated to be nearly equal to ten English pottles. He made ten brazen bases, of equal dimensions, with square sides: the length of them was five cubits each, the breadth four, and the height six. To each base were made four pillars or supporters, and the parts which were separately cast, were so nicely compacted and incorporated, that each base and its pillars appeared to be one entire piece of work. The figures of a bull, a lion, an eagle, and other representations, were wrought upon the bases; the pillars, and the plates of the borders were adorned with corresponding images. The whole was mounted on a carriage of four wheels, each a cubit and a half over; the wheels, spokes, nave, and every other part being cast, and put together with surprising ingenuity. Embossed work was introduced, in representation of hands, shoulders, the paws of lions, talons of eagles, and branches of palm-

* In Hebrew, the word *batim* is used to signify any great collection of waters; and in this place the word *batim* [sea] signifies a large vessel containing a great quantity of water. In 1 Kings vii. 26. we read, that this sea contained *two* thousand baths: now a bath

was the same with the ephah, and contained eight gallons; so that, according to this computation, the sea here mentioned held sixteen thousand gallons.

trees, for the purpose of making good the angles; and rests were formed for receiving the lavers. To each of these bases was made a laver of the same metal, being four cubits high, and of an equal measure in diameter. The lavers, each of which would contain forty baths, being placed on the bases, were deposited in the temple; five being disposed on the north, and five on the south side, facing the east. The brazen sea was also deposited in the building; and it was assigned to the use of the priests, who were to wash their hands and feet therein, previous to their approaching the altar. The lavers were made use of for cleansing the entrails and other parts of the victims destined for the holocausts.

The altar of
brass.

He constructed a brazen altar, measuring twenty cubits long, twenty broad, and ten in depth, on which the burnt-offerings were made, and provided water-pots, flesh-hooks, and boilers, of the same metal; and, in short, all the utensils appertaining to the religious ceremony. Solomon caused an immense number of tables to be made of various forms and sizes, and of inestimable value; and one, which was larger than the rest, was entirely composed of pure gold, and on this was placed the shew-bread; on the other tables were placed twenty thousand vessels and cups of gold, and forty thousand of silver.

The candle-
sticks.

In conformity to the injunction given by Moses, Solomon provided twelve thousand candlesticks, one of them, according to the direction of the law, held lights, which were kept constantly burning. This candlestick was placed on the south side, opposite the table for the shew-bread, which was on the north, and in the middle was the golden altar. The ark of the covenant was kept in the holy of holies, which was divided from the fore-part of the temple.

Cups, &c.

Solomon also caused eighty thousand wine cups, ten thousand goblets, and other vessels of various forms, to be made in gold, and twenty thousand in silver. He also provided twenty thousand of the golden measures, called the Mosaic Hin and Afaran, and forty thousand of the same in silver; eighty thousand golden dishes and plates for steeping flour in upon the altar, and double that number in silver; twenty thousand golden censers for incense, and fifty thousand other censers for conveying fire from the great to the smaller altar.

Robes and
musical in-
struments.

This great king further provided one thousand sacerdotal robes, with ephods, suits of precious stones and other appendages; but there was no crown except that on which Moses had inscribed the name of the Almighty: ten thousand silken vests, and a like number of purple girdles for the priests; two hundred thousand trumpets, agreeable to the directions of Moses, and the same number of silver stoles, for the use of the Levites, whose office was to chant hymns sacred to the praise of God; and four hundred thousand harps, psalteries, and other musical instruments for accom-

panying the voice, which were formed of a composition of gold and silver: in short, nothing was omitted which wealth and industry could add to this glorious work, to manifest the zeal of the founder towards the Almighty, and inspire others with correspondent affections. That part of the temple wherein the priests only were to be admitted, was guarded by a fence three feet high: the space which was for the reception of such of the public as came with the purity and qualification required by the law, was a quadrangular court, with spacious galleries, and four superb gates opening to the east, west, north, and south; and these gates were plated with gold.

For the purpose of erecting this temple, the most astonishing hollows were filled up; for the earth was raised four hundred cubits, in order to form it on a level with the surface of the rock on which the building was raised. The edifice was environed with a double cloister, supported by two ranges of pillars, each of which was hewn, in an entire piece, from the rock. These cloisters were wainscotted with cedar, the doors were composed of silver, and the roof was fret-work. This stupendous undertaking was completed in seven years; and, considering the magnificence and ingenuity so astonishingly displayed, it may justly be said to have been the work of ages comprised within that period.

The temple being brought to a state of perfection, Solomon dispatched letters to the elders of Israel, and the principals of the different tribes, requesting them to summon the people to Jerusalem, in order to view the temple, and to assist in removing the Ark of Alliance thither. In the seventh month, which the Hebrews call Thuri, and the Macedonians Hyperbergæus, the populace assembled; and this was the time for celebrating the feast of the tabernacles, which was the most solemn festival observed by the Israelites. The holy ark, the tabernacle of Moses* and the sacred vessels belonging to the altar, were conveyed into the temple by the priests, preceded by the king, the people, and the Levites, who sprinkled the way with the blood of the victims for sacrifice, and perfumed the air with incense, the fragency of which extended to a great distance; and it was of so grateful and reviving a quality, that though the populace had danced and sung all the way, they reached the temple without any sensation of fatigue; and they concluded that the Almighty had descended to consecrate the temple, which was dedicated to his worship.

A general
summons of
the people to
Jerusalem.

Having reached the holy of holies, the place destined for the reception of the ark, the people drew back, and left the priests to convey it into the oracle, where they fixed it under the two cherubims, which had been made with the points of their wings extending each to the other; so that the ark, which stood just beneath, appeared to be covered and protected thereby. In

The ark, &c.
conveyed to
Jerusalem.

* Called also "The Tabernacle of the Congregation," which, for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple the centre of
No. 8.

devotion, was now taken down, and deposited in the treasury, where it continued till the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.

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the ark were deposited the two stone tables, which had the ten commandments engraven on them, as they had been delivered by God on mount Sinai. In the sanctuary were also placed the candlesticks, table, and golden altar, disposed in the same manner as they heretofore had been in the tabernacle, when daily sacrifices were offered up. Directly opposite to the door was placed the brazen altar, that the grandeur of the worship on the other side might be the better seen. In the temple were likewise deposited, all together, the remainder of the holy utensils and vessels.

The most respectful care having been taken to place the ark in a proper manner, and the priests being retired, a cloud descended, which so obscured the view, that they scarcely saw each other: but its effects were so benign, that they appeared as not proceeding from a common cause, but an intimation of the divine pleasure, and of the descent of God to dwell in the temple.

Prayer of Solomon. As the people were deliberating on this event, Solomon arose, and with equal dignity and devotion, prayed as follows: "O God, who dwellest in eternity, thou who hast created this world, the heavens, earth, air, and the sea, from nothing; who fillest all nature with thine unbounded and incomprehensible greatness; look with compassion on us who have built a temple to the glory of thy name. May our prayers be heard, O God, and our sacrifices accepted: though thou art omnipresent, be particularly with thy servants. Nothing is hid from thee: from thine heavens, then, attend to our petitions. Have mercy upon us, O God, who hearest those that constantly worship thee, and reverently love and serve thee."

His address to the people. This prayer being ended, Solomon addressed the people on the providence and power of the Almighty, informing them how, in visions and dreams, strange things had been made known to David his father, respecting things past and to come, regarding himself, the name given him, his succeeding to the government, the raising the temple, his family being established, and the welfare of the people at large: "And now, (said he) as many of the prophecies are fulfilled, be you thankful to the Lord, not only for present enjoyments, but for future promises; and consider the blessings bestowed, as a prelude to greater yet to come."

* God is represented in the sacred writings both as the tutelary deity and the supreme magistrate of the Jews; in consequence of which he governed them by an equal, or rather an extraordinary providence. This extraordinary providence is represented as administered, 1. Over the state in general: 2. Over private men in particular. And such a representation we should expect to find from the nature of the republic; because as an extraordinary providence over the state necessarily follows God's being their tutelary deity, an extraordinary providence to particulars follows as necessarily from his being their supreme magistrate. As to this providence over the state, it would be absurd to quote particular texts, when the whole Bible is one continued history of it. In this dedication of the first temple Solomon addresses a prayer to God, that the

Thus saying, Solomon lifted up his hand, and looking towards the temple, exclaimed, "What, O God! are the most splendid works of man, compared with the least of thy bounties! How shalt thou, who wantest not our services, be requited by those who have nothing to bestow! All we can offer is the tribute of our thanks and gratitude, a distinction by which men are honoured above thy other creatures; which thanks I now render, for myself, my family, and my people, for thy blessings heaped upon us. Accept, then, the words of our mouths, as the only present method of expressing our duty, for thy mercy to my late father, who was raised by thee from the sheepfold to the throne, and for thy bounty to myself, in the ratification of thy most gracious promises and predictions. Continue to us, as to a chosen race, thy blessing; may the government remain uninterrupted in our family, for a succession of ages, agreeable to thy promise to my father David. Grant this, O God; and may my people possess those virtues that may make them acceptable to thee. Condescend, O God, to make this temple the place of thy peculiar residence. I am sensible that the heavens and earth are too confined for thy majesty; much less can a building of wood and stone, the work of mortal hands, be worthy of it: yet I cannot refrain from imploring thy protection of it. Preserve it, O God, from the attacks of our enemies, and let thy possession of it be its peculiar defence*: and if, in future time, the sins of this people shall call aloud for thy judgments, let their humble supplications, and unfeigned repentance, in this thy house, be accepted as an atonement for their crimes. And I implore this mercy, O God, not only for the Hebrews, but for all people who shall worship thee in this place. Thus shall the world know that we are thy chosen people, and that this is thine habitation; and it will be seen that the Hebrews are devoutly anxious for a general distribution of thy mercies."

Solomon having said this, bowed to the ground, and having worshipped God, arose and offered a variety of sacrifices, of the acceptance of which proof was given, by a flash of fire which descended to the altar, and consumed the sacrifices. The multitudes who saw this, considered it as a token that God acknowledged the temple, and approved the worship;

Solomon's humble invocation and prayer to God.

Testimony of God's approbation of Solomon's prayer, worship, and sacrifices.

covenant between him and the people might remain firm and inviolate, and the old œconomy be still continued. Solomon in this petition, which with respect to the given covenant we might properly call a petition of rights, speaks the language of one who extended the temporal sanction of the law to particulars and individuals: for he desires God, according to the terms of the covenant, "To render unto every man according to all his ways." But when is it that he prays for the exertion of this extraordinary providence to particulars? At the very time when it is administering to the state in general: "If there be in the land famine," &c. The necessary consequence is, that as sure as Solomon believed an extraordinary providence exercised to the state in general, so surely did he believe it exercised to individuals in particular.

which so transported them, that they joined in one general adoration of the Deity. Solomon now returned thanks for so perfect a testimony of God's favour, in which he intreated the people to join him. He then recommended constant prayer to God, that they might still experience his grace, by living righteous and holy lives, according to the laws of Moses; which would certainly render them the most happy of all people. He reminded them, that their happiness could be only secured by what had acquired it, the practice of justice and religion. He farther said, it was not so easy to keep what they had obtained, as to procure what they wanted; and urged them not to forfeit, by misconduct, what their virtue had acquired.

Offerings.

Solomon having finished his exhortations, dismissed the people, after an offering of twelve thousand calves, and 120 thousand lambs; on which all the Israelites, with their wives and children, were entertained, being the first blood shed in the temple. Exclusive hereof, the feast of tabernacles was celebrated, at Solomon's expence, before the temple; which was very splendid and magnificent, and continued for a fortnight.

The hurry of public business being ended, every one thought of returning home, after acknowledging the benevolence, good conduct, and wisdom of the king, and offering prayers for his continued life, and the happiness of his people. They returned rejoicing, singing, and praising God: and the tediousness of their journey was alleviated by the joy of their hearts, and the mutual good humour of the company.

God appears to Solomon in a vision.

Soon after this, God appeared again to Solomon in his sleep, when he heard a voice intimating, that his prayers and sacrifices were accepted; and that God would preserve him, and dwell in his temple, while himself, his subjects, and their posterity, continued faithful in worship, as his father David had done. On this condition it was promised, that he should reach the utmost sublunary happiness; that the possession of the throne should remain in his family; and that the sceptre should for ever be swayed by a prince of the tribe of Judah: on the contrary, that if they should depart from their present worship, and seek strange gods, they should be cut off from the face of the earth, and be no more a distinct people; but being harrassed by war, and other calamities, should wander as exiles and vagabonds through the world. Solomon learnt from the voice of God, that, if his people apostatised, the new building should be destroyed, and burnt by barbarians, and Jerusalem laid in ashes by an unrelenting foe; so that amazement should arise from the extremity of the distress, that a people lately so favoured of heaven, and so distinguished by their riches and splendor, should at once sink to such utter contempt: to which themselves would answer, that the forsaking their God, and abandoning the religion of their forefathers, and their country, had brought that judgment upon them.

The temple being completed, Solomon began to build a royal palace, which was thirteen years in completing. He was not so anxious respecting the latter, as the former, which (as we have heretofore said) was finished in seven years, owing to the particular aid and blessing of God. The court of Solomon was greatly inferior to the temple, as the latter was designed for the immediate worship of God, the other for the residence of an earthly monarch: but it was adapted to its design, and a credit to the prince and people who built it.

The royal palace.

Solomon now repaired the walls of Jerusalem, to which he added towers and other securities. He likewise built, in the land of the Philistines, the cities of Asar, Magedon, and Gazara. This last city, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had heretofore taken, rased it to the ground, and destroyed all the inhabitants; but afterwards gave it to his daughter, on her marriage with Solomon, who caused it to be rebuilt as a city of strength. He also built Betachora, Baleth, and other places of pleasing retirement, distinguished for good water, and pure air. Having taken possession of the entrance of the desert towards Syria, he there erected the fortified city of Thamadora, by which name the Syrians still call it; but the Greeks call it Palmyra. The city having several springs and fountains, was intended for a watering place to those who passed through the desert. It was six days journey from Babylon, two from Upper Syria, and one from the Euphrates.

Repair of the walls of Jerusalem.

Between mount Libanus and the city of Amathe, there yet dwelt a number of Canaanites, who refused submission to the king of Israel; but at length, Solomon compelled them to pay an annual tribute of a fixed number of slaves, who were to till the land, and to do other laborious exercise; for the Hebrews engaged in no servile offices, it being thought dishonourable for those who had subdued so many nations, to do the work of captives. The disposition of the Israelites was turned to arms, military exercises, the use of horses, chariots, &c. The Canaanites were kept to constant work, and six hundred persons were appointed to superintend them, and to see they did their duty.

The Canaanites made tributary.

At Ezion-Geber, a bay of Egypt on the Red Sea, the king constructed a number of ships. This port is now named Berenice, and is near the city of Elan, formerly deemed to be in the Hebrew jurisdiction. King Hiram greatly assisted king Solomon in preparing his navy, sending him mariners and pilots, who conducted Solomon's officers to Ophir, called the Land of Gold, where they collected four hundred talents of gold, which they carried to Solomon.

The king's navy.

So great a character had Solomon now obtained for his virtue and knowledge, that Nicaulis, queen of Egypt and Ethiopia, who was also distinguished for her wisdom, was desirous of visiting him, doubtful if the reports concerning him had not exceeded the fact. When she had deliberated

The queen of Ethiopia visits Solomon.

deliberated some time on the matter, she came to a resolution, and despised the inconvenience and danger of a long voyage, that her judgment might be convinced of the truth of what she had heard. Thus resolved, she proceeded towards Jerusalem with a most sumptuous equipage, having in her train many camels laden with precious stones, gold, and perfumes. When she arrived, Solomon received her with all the distinction due to her high rank; and so easily resolved the difficult questions she put to him, that she was lost in wonder to find the reality so much exceed the report. The splendor of the royal palace, the order and regularity of the edifice, and the king's sagacious management of the building of it, were all matter of astonishment to her. The grove of Lebanon, which was deemed the master-piece of the building, charmed her highly; nor was she less pleased with the œconomy of the household, the regularity of the entertainments, and the singular grace which accompanied all that Solomon did. The sight of the daily sacrifices, and the devotion with which the priests and Levites performed their worship, afforded her great pleasure. This matter was constantly in her thoughts; and when she had pondered on the subject a long time, she addressed the king to the following purport:

"Illustrious sovereign! There is so much of doubt and uncertainty in common report, that when this report verges on the extreme of good or evil, we are constrained to with-hold our assent to it; but in respect to your intellectual faculties and distinguished glory, common fame, so far from having exceeded the fact, hath fallen far short of it; and I am this day a witness of that real dignity, which I thought had been heretofore exceeded in description. The Hebrews are blessed, the friends and subjects of Solomon are blessed, who are continual witnesses of his wisdom; and all praise be rendered to God, for ordaining so worthy a prince to rule over this nation*."

This speech being delivered, the queen presented to Solomon twenty talents of gold, besides precious stones, spices and perfumes, to a great amount. Tradition likewise reports, that she gave him a root of balsam, the first of the kind that had ever been brought into Judea, where it has so greatly thrived since that time. Solomon was not deficient in making proper returns to the queen of such presents as he thought might please her, and he even prevented her wishes in every thing that he conceived would yield her satisfaction. The queen returned to her own country, soon after this mutual exchange of presents.

At this period, Solomon's ships arrived from Ophir (named the Land of Gold), bringing rich stones, and great quantities of pine-wood; which last was used, partly to support

the palace and temple, and partly in the construction of psalteries, harps, and cymbals, on which the Levites sung and played to the glory of God. For size and beauty, Solomon had never seen such wood before; but it should be remembered, that this is not what is usually called pine, being more glossy and white, and having some resemblance in the grain to that of a fig-tree.

Solomon received by this fleet, six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, exclusive of presents from the kings and governors of Arabia; and the merchants had their usual adventures. The king ordered two hundred targets to be cast of this gold, which weighed each six hundred shekels, and were hung up in the principal hall in the grove of Lebanon. Even the cups that Solomon drank out of were made of beaten gold, adorned with stones of value; and of this rich metal, his common utensils were made. In the above traffic, no money passed; Solomon sending his own ships from the sea of Tarsus, and receiving in exchange negroes, gold, silver, ivory, apes, &c. This voyage, the going and returning, usually took up three years.

The fame of Solomon's wisdom and grandeur was now so extended, that the sovereigns of many kingdoms wished to see him; and lost no opportunity of testifying their regard by the presents they sent him, which consisted of gold, silver, purple robes, perfumes, and spices, with chariots, horses, and mules, the last of uncommon strength and beauty. The king had now a thousand chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which were rode by young men admirably skilled to manage them. These youths were all dressed in purple, and when the sun shone on their hair, which was intermixed with threads of gold, it had a most beautiful effect. Solomon used to ride, dressed in white, in a chariot, attended by these men, having arms and quivers, to a pleasant house he had near the city, in which he much delighted, for the beauty of its gardens, walks, and fountains.

Solomon was of so quick a penetration, that it may be said he scarcely suffered the most minute improvement, either for use or ornament, to escape him. He caused all the public roads leading to the palace at Jerusalem, to be regularly paved with a black stone; and to this he was induced by the double consideration of displaying his own magnificence, and contributing to the convenience of the public. He kept but few chariots at Jerusalem, but dispersed great numbers at different towns, which were called the Chariot-towns; and at these places they were kept free of expence. The profusion of silver which was at Jerusalem is not to be described; and cedars, which had before been known only in Judea, were

Solomon's magnificence, and presents from foreign potentates.

Gold brought by sea from Ophir.

* That the government of the Jews was only a vice-royalty, may be inferred from this circumstance: The throne and kingdom of Judea is all along expressly declared to be "God's throne" and "God's kingdom." Thus the queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon to be instructed in his wisdom, and doubtless had been inform-

ed by him of the true nature of his kingdom, compliments him in these words: "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee "on his throne," to be king "for the Lord thy God;" as it is read, 2 Chron. ix. 8.

now to be met with as frequently as mulberry trees. He commissioned certain Egyptian merchants to purchase a number of chariots, with two horses to each, at the rate of sixty silver drachmas for every carriage and pair of horses: and these he sent as presents to the king of Syria, and other sovereigns beyond the Euphrates.

His disobedience to the divine commands.

It is indisputable that Solomon was greatly superior to any monarch who had graced a throne, in piety, wisdom, justice, power, and other eminent qualities: but it is equally certain, that by acting contrary to the law of Moses, and the religious and legal institutions of his ancestors, he blasted the hopes which his exemplary conduct in the early part of life had inspired. His ungovernable attachment to women was such, that, not contented with those of his own country, he took the Tyrians, Sidonians, Ammonites, and others, in direct violation of the law of Moses. The prohibition of the Hebrews intermarrying with foreign women, was made on the wise consideration that women professing an idolatrous religion might seduce men from the true God. Solomon contracted marriage with no less than seven hundred women, who were descended of the most exalted families, and one of them was daughter to the king of Egypt; and he had three hundred concubines. So infatuated was he by these women, that, to prove his tenderness and affection, he yielded to their impious examples.

He lapses into idolatry.

As his age increased, the powers of his mind were impaired in proportion to those of his body; and as he became indifferent in his duty to Almighty God, he was induced with the less difficulty to adopt the abominable mode of worship, which was exercised and recommended by his women*.

His conduct, in regard to the other sex, was not his first breach of duty, for he transgressed the law by causing the figures of the twelve bulls to be placed round the pedestal of the brazen sea, and afterwards causing the lions to be fixed on the steps of the throne. In his own family he had an instance of the most eminent piety, honour, and virtue, in the person of his father, whose distinguished qualities were recommended as an example, by a divine visitation during his sleep, to which he was instructed to adhere, on the penalty of incurring the divine vengeance. He disregarded these instructions, and the consequence was an ignominious death.

Prophecy of the revolt of the ten tribes.

After this, the Almighty, by the agency of a prophet, communicated to Solomon that he should meet a retribution for his iniquities: but that, in consideration of the promise given to his father, by the Almighty, he should not be deprived of the government, which should be

transmitted to his son, who should, however, be punished for the crimes of his father: the prophet farther said, that ten of the tribes should revolt from his successor, but that from a regard to his grandfather, and the temple at Jerusalem, the other two should preserve their allegiance. The king became exceedingly distressed, in the idea of being removed from the eminence of temporal grandeur and felicity, to the extremity of misery.

Not long after this message had been pronounced by the prophet, the Almighty was pleased to create a powerful and vindictive enemy to Solomon, in the person of Adad, who was a native of Idumæa, and a descendant of the royal line. When the Israelites conquered Idumæa, Joab, whom David had appointed to the command of the army, caused all the males capable of bearing arms, who could be found within the space of six months, to be put to death. Adad, who was at this time very young, escaped to the dominions of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who gave him a gracious reception, and, besides houses and lands, appointed him a revenue: and he conceived so high an esteem for him, that, in process of time, he gave him in marriage to his sister Taphines, who bore to him a son, whom Pharaoh caused to be brought up with his own children. Upon intelligence being brought into Egypt that David and Joab were deceased, Adad requested the permission of the king to return to his native country; where he intended to foment an insurrection, in revenge for the cruel massacres perpetrated in the early part of his life. Pharaoh repeatedly urged him to relate the motive of his desire to relinquish the protection of his best friend, but was not able to obtain a satisfactory reply.

Adad becomes an enemy to Solomon.

The iniquities of Solomon now calling aloud for vengeance, the Almighty inclined Pharaoh to yield to the solicitation of Adad; who repaired to Idumæa with a resolution to raise a rebellion against Solomon: but, observing the garrisons to be exceedingly strong, and the whole country in an excellent state of defence, he judged that he could not effect his purpose by surprise; and adjourned to Syria, where he united with a man named Rezon, the leader of a desperate banditti, who was a fugitive from his master, Adadzer, king of Zobah. In conjunction with this man, he subdued that part of Syria, and having caused himself to be proclaimed king, he committed great slaughter upon the Israelites, and obtained immense booty, during the reign of Solomon.

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was left at an early age to the direction of his mother: and as he advanced towards manhood, being observed by Solomon as a

Abijah predicts Jeroboam's reign over the ten tribes.

* Had we not the authority of the sacred historian, as well as others, it would hardly be credible that Solomon, who built the temple, and consecrated it by the finest prayer that ever came from the mouth of a mere man; who had such frequent visions of the Almighty, and was favoured with such incontestable evidence of the nature of the divine Being; we say, after such favours and quali-

fications bestowed on this man, it almost exceeds belief that he should fall into idolatry through any snare or temptation. Surely, all his recollection must have failed him, and his memory must have totally deserted him, before he could be guilty of such monstrous ingratitude and wickedness! Hence we may see, how frail, how impotent, the brightest and wisest of men are, when left to themselves!

youth of a generous disposition, he appointed him superintendent of the improvements making to the walls of Jerusalem; and as a reward for the punctual discharge of his duty in this office, the king invested him with the military command of the tribe of Joseph. As he was departing on some occasion from the city, he was met by the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, who having called him to a retired spot, took hold of his garment, and rent it in twelve parts: he ordered him to take ten of the pieces, according to the will of the Lord, who, as a punishment for having attached himself to prohibited women and idol gods, had determined to take the government from Solomon; adding, that in consideration of the promise to David, two of the tribes would continue their allegiance to the son of Solomon. The prophet exhorted Jeroboam to the rigid observance of the laws, and the pious example of David, and carefully to avoid those iniquities which had produced the reprobation of Solomon, as the certain means of escaping a similar fate.

This prediction of the prophet much elated the spirits of Jeroboam, who being naturally of a turbulent and ambitious temper, immediately declared his intentions, and endeavoured to spirit up the army to an insurrection; but Solomon being early apprised of these practices, gave orders for apprehending him; whereupon Jeroboam judged it prudent to decamp, and he took refuge in the dominions of Shishak, king of Egypt.

It is indisputable that Solomon was the richest, and, if we except the crimes he was led into, in the decline of life, by his violent passion for women, the wisest sovereign upon earth. Having reigned eighty years, he expired at the age of ninety-four, and was interred at Jerusalem*.

CHAP. III.

SOLOMON is succeeded in the Government by his Son REHOBOAM. Ten Tribes espouse the Cause of JEROBOAM, by whom they are seduced to the Worship of Idols. REHOBOAM also becomes an Apostate from the ALMIGHTY.

Rehoboam succeeds Solomon as king.

REHOBOAM, the son of Solomon, by Naama, an Ammonitish woman, succeeded to the throne. Upon the decease of the king, some of the principal people strongly urged the return of Jeroboam, who speedily repaired to Sichem, to which place Rehoboam had also adjourned for the purpose of declaring himself the successor to the throne, under the sanction of the una-

nimous suffrages of the people. Jeroboam joined divers of the princes and leading people in an application to Rehoboam, whom they advised to adopt a mild government; observing that, in some instances, Solomon had been rather oppressive; and that instead of rendering himself an object of terror to his subjects, his safety and happiness required him to regulate his conduct in such a manner as to obtain an acquiescence to the measures of his government, from an unfeigned affection to his person, rather than a dread of his power. Rehoboam delayed making a reply for three days: and this circumstance was the foundation of a jealousy among the people, who considered that an immediate compliance with so reasonable a request, would not have been refused by a prince disposed to promote the happiness of his subjects. They reflected, however, that the suspension did not imply an absolute denial, and waited the event with favourable expectations.

Rehoboam summoned the counsellors and friends of his late father, and requested their advice as to the reply he should make. They recommended him to behave with a gracious humility on this occasion; observing, that such conduct would have a more favourable influence than a rigid observance of the formalities of state. But so insatuated was this young prince by the charms of his new station, that, rejecting the wholesome counsel he had received, he applied for the sentiments of some persons of his own age and disposition. They advised him to answer, "That they should feel more weight from his little finger, than they had done from the loins of his father; that if they had been oppressed before, the oppression should be increased; and that if whips were the instruments of chastisement made use of by his predecessor, he would himself inflict a more painful discipline by chastising them with scorpions†. In the utmost anxiety of hope and fear, the people assembled on the third day: when the king delivered the answer, precisely in the words which the young men had recommended. Thus, by the providence of the Lord, was the prediction of the prophet Ahijah fulfilled. The people unanimously cried out, "We renounce all allegiance to the house of David. If it is his desire, let the king possess the temple which was constructed by his father, but we are no longer the subjects of Rehoboam."

He commits a fatal error by preferring the counsel of young men.

Revolt of the ten tribes.

This was the prelude of a general sedition, which became so violent, that upon an officer of the king's treasury being sent forth to appease the multitude, by attributing the cause of the revolt to the rash advice of some inconsiderate young men, without permitting him to urge any exculpatory arguments, they stoned him to death. The king apprehending that

* Our author's account differs widely from that given in scripture of the reign and age of Solomon: the sacred historian informs us, that he reigned forty years; which, added to nineteen, the time when he succeeded to the throne, makes his age to be no more than fifty-nine. a Kings xii. 42.

† They advise him to acknowledge that his father had greatly

oppressed them, and at the same time to declare that he would act in a far more tyrannical and oppressive manner. But it was still worse, to acknowledge that his father had treated the Israelites like beasts of burden, but he would use them in a far more cruel manner; and instead of common whips, use those full of thorns or pieces of iron, which would tear their very flesh in pieces.

Engraved for D. BRADSHAW'S New Edition of JOSEPHUS.



Joseph going out of the town Shiloh, meets the prophet Huius who parted his mantle into twelve peices, and gave him ten of them as a sign of his future power over ten tribes of Israel.

his life was in danger, mounted his chariot, and made all possible expedition to Jerusalem. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin continued in allegiance to him, but the others revolted to Jeroboam, and declared that they would never again acknowledge the sovereignty of a descendent of David. Rehoboam mustered one hundred and eighty thousand men, and with this force he proposed to prosecute a war against the ten tribes who had deserted his cause, till he should compel them to obedience. During the preparations for this intended enterprize, a prophet of God exhorted him not to engage in a civil war, urging, that the defection of the tribes was an event, which for just ends had been produced by the providence of the Almighty.

Jeroboam established idolatry at Dan and Bethel.

Jeroboam constructed a palace at Samchem, where he established his residence, and he afterwards built another at Penuel. On the approach of the feast of the tabernacles, he reflected, that if his people should repair to Jerusalem to celebrate that festival, the ceremonies of religion might so far operate on their minds, as to induce them to acknowledge allegiance to their late sovereign, whereby both his life and government would be in imminent danger. On these considerations he determined to erect two temples, one at Bethel, and the other at Dan, which is situated near the head of the Lesser Jordan. Having consecrated the golden image of a calf in each of these buildings, he assembled the ten tribes under his command, seduced them into their idolatrous worship, and, by this act of disobedience to the commands and laws of God, Jeroboam was the primary cause of the civil wars, bondage and other calamities, which they experienced, and also of the destruction of his own family.

Acts of Rehoboam.

The cities of Bethlehem, Etan, Tekoa, Bethzar, Shocah, Adullam, Ipa, Maretha, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Ajalon, and Hebron, were built in the tribe of Judah by Rehoboam, besides many other towns of equal consideration within the tribe of Benjamin. He appointed governors and established garrisons in these places, which he amply supplied with corn, wine, oil, and every other necessary for defence and maintenance. The intolerable oppression of Jeroboam occasioned great numbers of the priests, Levites, and the laity to repair to Jerusalem, for the advantage of paying adoration to the true God, instead of the golden calves which their king had compelled them to worship: and in the course of three years, the power of Rehoboam was augmented in a very considerable degree. The first wife of Rehoboam was his kinswoman, and by her he had three children. He married another relation named Maachab, who was daughter to Thamar, the daughter of Absalom; she bore to him Abijah. He had eighteen wives, and thirty concubines; and these women bore to him twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. He intended that Abijah should succeed him in the government; and to his care he entrusted his treasure, and ap-

pointed him to superintend his several places of strength. It generally happens, that prosperity produces a corruption of manners; and this was the case with Rehoboam; for as his power increased, he gave additional latitude to the practice of vice. As it is usual for the multitude to be influenced by the conduct of their superiors, the licentious example of Rehoboam seduced his subjects into a profanation of the commandments of God.

C H A P. IV.

JERUSALEM is besieged and taken by SHISHAK King of EGYPT. The Temple plundered. The Death of REHOBAM, after whom his Son ABIJAH ascends the Throne. Terrible denunciation of the Prophet AHIJAH against JEROBOAM, and his House.

SHISHAK, king of Egypt, was chosen by the Almighty as an instrument of vengeance upon Rehoboam; and not Sesostris, as Herodotus asserts. When Rehoboam was in the fifth year of his reign, Shishak marched against him with a numerous army, chiefly composed of Ethiopians and Africans, and supposed to contain twelve hundred chariots, six thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, with which he attacked and subdued the Israelites; and having established garrisons in several fortified towns, which had surrendered to him, he laid siege to Jerusalem, where Rehoboam and his people were blocked up.

Shishak invades Judea, takes Jerusalem, and spoils the temple.

In this exigency Rehoboam earnestly supplicated the Almighty to grant him victory over his enemies, but his prayers were rejected: and to increase his terror, the prophet Sameas informed him, that the Lord had determined to withdraw his protection from such as were degenerated into a state of apostasy. The prophet's words had such an effect on the king and the people, that they acknowledged their sins, and that their punishment was justly inflicted. Thus reduced to the most desponding situation, the king was assured by the prophet that their penitence would be so far regarded by God, that he would not suffer them to be totally ruined, but that the Egyptians should hold them in bondage, in order that they might be convinced whether serving God or man was attended with the greater advantage. Terrified by this declaration, Rehoboam surrendered the city upon certain conditions: but, disregarding the articles of the stipulation, Shishak plundered the temple, and made prize of all the plate and other treasure which was dedicated to God, as well as that which belonged to the king: he likewise seized the golden shields and bucklers of Solomon: the golden quivers which had been taken from the king of Sophera by David,