

A
CRITICAL HISTORY

OF THE

L I F E

OF

D A V I D:

IN WHICH THE

Principal EVENTS are ranged in Order of Time;

THE CHIEF

Objections of Mr. BAYLE, and Others, against the
Character of this PRINCE, and the SCRIPTURE
Account of him, and the Occurrences of his Reign,
are examined and refuted;

AND THE

PSALMS which refer to Him, Explained.

BY THE LATE

Rev. SAMUEL CHANDLER,

D.D. F.R. and A.S.S.

Πρὶν ἂν ἀμφοῖν μύθον ἀκροῆς, ἢ ἂν διὰ σοφίας.

Aristoph.

————— *Nihil est, Antipho,*

Quin male narrando possit depravarier. TERR. Phorm. iv. 4. 17.

*Ambitionem scriptoris facile ad-verseris. Obtrectatio et livor prouis
auribus accipiuntur. — Sed incorruptam fidem professis, nec
amore quisquam, et sine odio dicendus est.* TACIT. Hist. l. i. Init.

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THE
CONTENTS.

VOL. II. BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

DAVID *anointed King over all Israel.* p. 1—4

CHAP. II.

The Conquest of Jerusalem.—Psalm xxx. ci. and lxxxvii. explained. p. 5—26.

CHAP. III.

David's Wars with the Philistines. p. 27—37

CHAP. IV.

The Translation of the Ark of God to Jerusalem.—Ps. lxviii. explained. p. 38—113

CHAP. V.

David's dancing before the Ark.—Psalm cv. cxii. and ii. explained. p. 114—154

CHAP. VI.

War with the Philistines. p. 154—55

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

*War with the Moabites and Edomites.—Psalms
xviii. explained.* p. 156—212

C H A P. VIII.

David's kindness to Mephibosheth. p. 212—14

C H A P. IX.

His war with the Ammonites and Syrians. p. 214—
38

C H A P. X.

*The affair of Bathsheba and Uriah.—Psalms 1. ex-
plained.* p. 238—73

C H A P. XI.

Amnon's rape on Tamar. p. 273—9

C H A P. XII.

Abshalom kills Amnon. p. 280—2

C H A P. XIII.

David reconciled to Abshalom. p. 282—92

C H A P. XIV.

Abshalom's Rebellion.—Psf. iii. and lv. explained.
p. 292—350

B O O K IV. C H A P. I.

DAVID's restoration and return to Jerusalem.—
p. 351—2

C H A P.

The CONTENTS.

v.

C H A P. II.

David's *reception of Shimei.* p. 350—4

C H A P. III.

His gratitude to Barzillai. p. 354—5

C H A P. IV.

The insurrection of Sheba. p. 355—60

C H A P. V.

The insurrection under Sheba suppressed, and the murder of Amasa by Joab. p. 361—70

C H A P. VI.

David *reconciled to Mephibosheth.* p. 370—8

C H A P. VII.

The affair of the Gibeonites. p. 378—409

C H A P. VIII.

Wars with the Philistines. p. 409—10

C H A P. IX.

David's *numbering the People.* p. 410—23

C H A P. X.

Of David and the Shunamite. p. 423—25

C H A P.

C H A P XI.

Adonijah's rebellion, Solomon appointed king, the charge given him in relation to religion --- to Joab. Psalm lxxii. explained. 425—60

C H A P. XII.

David's charge in Relation to Shimei, vindicated. p. 460—82
Recapitulation. p. 482—87
Conclusion. p. 487---88

A
CRITICAL HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE OF *DAVID*,
The MAN after GOD's own HEART.
In FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

David anointed king over all Israel.

THE behaviour of *David* upon the death of *Abner*, in the lamentation he made for him, accompanying his corpse to the funeral in so honourable a manner, and the exemplary punishment which he executed on the two assassins of *Ishbosheth*, plainly convinced all the people of *Israel*, that it was not by *David's* order, that either of them was slain; gave them

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

an high opinion of his moderation and integrity, and greatly disposed them to join unanimously in advancing him to the kingdom over them. *Abner* indeed was cut off before he had finished the revolution in *David's* favour, as he intended; but, as *Ishbosheth* also was dead, and there was no other of *Saul's* house to succeed to the throne, but *Mephibosheth*, *Jonathan's* son; who had been lame of his feet from five years old, and had, on that account, been set aside by *Abner*, as unfit to be intrusted with the affairs of the kingdom; the whole nation at last unanimously resolved to fix on *David* to be king of *Israel*. And accordingly all the tribes of *Israel* came to him at *Hebron*; and having been long prepossessed in his favour, and regarded him, during the reign of *Saul*, as one appointed by God to govern and lead them, said to him: || *We are thy bone and thy flesh*, of the same blood and origin with thyself; and even
 “ formerly, when *Saul* was king over us, thou
 “ wast our general, who leddest us out to bat-
 “ tle, and broughtest us back victorious. We
 “ farther remember the assurance that God him-
 “ self gave thee: *Thou shalt feed and govern my*
 “ *people Israel, and thou shalt be captain over Is-*
 “ *rael*. With these sentiments all the elders of *Israel* came to *David* at *Hebron*, presented to him the conditions on which they advanced him to the throne, which being mutually and solemnly agreed to, they anointed him king, according to the word of the Lord, * by *Samuel*, many years before; thus settling the government upon a solid foundation, and effectually providing for the national security and peace.

Besides the elders of *Israel*, there were present at *David's* inauguration, above three hundred and

|| 2 Sam. v. 1, &c.

* 1 Chron. xi. 3.

forty thousand men, § deputed by the several tribes to assist at this solemnity ; and it is observable, that among these, there were three thousand of the children of *Benjamin* and kindred of *Saul*, who mixed with the rest of the tribes in the election of *David*, tho' they had hitherto, a very great part of them, been *Saul's* principal friends, and firmly attached to him, and the interest of his family. But being now convinced, by the manner of his death, and the destruction of his four sons, that God had set aside the succession in his house, they cordially united, with the rest of their brethren, in *David's* advancement and coronation. Of all these men of war it is remarked, that † *they came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel* ; determined unanimously to support his interest, and protect him against all opposition whatsoever. And as to all the rest of Israel, *they were of one heart* to advance him to the kingdom. After the solemnity of the inauguration was over, *David* and the people held a festival of three days continuance ; the people, to shew how well pleased they were with the choice, bearing the expence of it, and generously preparing bread, meat, meal, cakes of figs, bunches of raisins, wine, oil, oxen, and sheep, in the greatest abundance : For, as the sacred historian observes : || *There was joy in Israel.*

It plainly appears from this transaction, that *David* had long been in high esteem with all the tribes of *Israel*, as a brave man, a good soldier, a fortunate commander, of great integrity, one in whom they thought they could confide, and under whose government they might expect full protection in their religion and liberties. What

§ 1 Chron. xii. 24, &c. † Ibid. ver. 38. || Ibid. ver. 40.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

contributed farther to their high esteem of him, and their unanimity in electing him to the throne, was the designation and appointment of him by God himself to be their king, by the ministry of *Samuel* the prophet, and the assurance they had from God, as *Abner* expresses it, that * *by David's hand he would save his people out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.* After the death of *Saul*, § and the defeat of the *Hebrew* army, the *Israelites* forsook their cities, fled in great numbers over *Jordan*, and the *Philistines* came and seized on the deserted towns, and dwelt in them themselves. *David* was the man, for whom God intended the honour of delivering his people from their oppression, and from the power of all the neighbouring nations, that had in their turn frequently invaded and enslaved them; and there could not be a more effectual argument made use of to reconcile all the tribes to his interest, than this assurance; that by exalting him to the throne, they should prove victorious under his command, recover all their lost cities, and dwell in them secure, and free from hostile oppression for the future. They all united in him with these views; so that he now had the best right, that it was possible for him to have, to the crown of *Israel*: The appointment of God, and the free election of the whole body of the nation, who were of one heart in this choice, and formed the highest expectations from his integrity, courage and prudence. Nor did he disappoint them in their largest hopes.

* 2 Sam. iii. 18.

§ 1 Sam. xxxi. 7.

C H A P. II.

The conquest of Jerusalem.

SOON after *David's* establishment in the king- David
dom of *Israel*, he undertook the siege of ^{over Ju-}
Jerusalem. This city was the ancient possession ^{dah 8, all}
of the *Jebusites*; one of the nations whom God ^{Israel 1.}
had ordered the *Hebrews* utterly to exterminate,
and seize their cities as a possession for themselves.
In the division of the land to the twelve tribes, it
was assigned to the tribe of *Benjamin*, and taken and
burnt by the children of *Judah* soon after *Joshua's*
death; not indeed the whole city, but the lower
one, whilst the *Jebusites* kept possession of the
fortress of *Sion*; the children of *Judah* and *Ben-*
jamin dwelling together with the *Jebusites* in the
lower part, after it had been rebuilt. The *He-*
brews dwelt in it in the reign of *Saul*, for *David*
took the head of the *Philistine*, *Goliath*, and brought
it to *Jerusalem*. But the whole city was now in
the hands of the *Jebusites*; for when *David* with
his men went up to demand the restitution of it,
the *Jebusites* said: *Thou shalt not come in hither*,
from an imagination he would not be able to re-
duce it. *Josephus* also affirms *, that they were in
possession both of the city and fortress. How
they came into the possession, is not said. Pro-
bably they seized it after the loss of the battle at
Gilboa, or were put into the possession of it by
the *Philistines*, after their victory over *Saul*.

From this short account it appears, that this
city was the ancient inheritance of the *Hebrews*,
given by God's order to the tribe of *Benjamin*,
who had for ages past been in possession of it,
and unjustly driven out of it by the *Jebusites*.

* A. J. l. 7. c. 3. *sec.* 1.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

They had therefore a right to recover it; and *David* could not be wrong in his resolution and attempt to reduce it. He accordingly made the attempt, and bravely succeeded. Not content with having obtained the government, he resolved to deserve it; and was indeed *of too enterprising a genius* to suffer so strong a fortress, in the midst of his dominions, to remain in possession of his enemies, whom he had a right to expel, as being under the proscription of the God of *Israel*; and he would have been an impolitick negligent prince, had he not drove them out, and added the city to his dominions. His claim to it was just, and the taking it necessary to the safety and peace of his government and people. What fixed him more in the resolution to reduce it, was the insult offered him by the *Jebusites* in the town and fortress, upon the supposition that it was, as they thought, impregnable. For when he approached to besiege it, they scoffingly told him: *Thou shalt have no admission here; for assuredly the blind and the lame shall repel thee*; meaning by what they said, that *David should never enter the town*, inasmuch as it was so strongly fortified, as that the blind and the lame were sufficient for the defence of it, against all his forces. Upon this, *David* said: *Whosoever smites the Jebusites, let him smite also with the shield both the lame and the blind, who are hated by, or, who * hate, David's soul; because they, both the blind and the lame, said: He shall not come into the fort.* Thus I think the whole passage should be § rendered.

* Who are hated of *David's* soul. שְׂנְאֵי דָוִד. The 70th render these words τες μισετας ψυχην Δαβιδ; *those who hate David's soul*, i. e. *David* himself; and if we read שְׂנְאֵי without the points, it will bear this signification.

§ The reader will find this whole passage very critically handled by the learned Dr. Kennicot, in his first vol. of the
state

state of the printed Heb. text, p. 23, &c. tho' I have not the happiness intirely to agree with him, in the exposition of the place. When *David* came to invest the city, the garrison insulted him from the walls of the fortress, and told him that the place was so strong, as that the very blind and lame within the place, were sufficient to defend it against all his troops; and planted some of them probably on the ramparts, who defied him to take the place, and said, he should never be master of it. Thus *Josephus*: *Ιεβυσαιων — αποκλεισταιτων αυτω τας πυλας, η της πεπηρωμαις τας οφθας η τας βατεις, η παν το λεωδαιμενον εξαντων επι χλευη τε βασιλειω επι τε τειχες, η λεγοντων κωλευειν αυτον εισελθειν της αιαπηρας, ταυτα επραττον καταρξοντες τη των τειχων οχυροτητι.* A. J. l. 7. c. 3. §. 1. Now when *David* attacked the fort, he gave orders, that *whosoever should smite the Jebusites that were in garrison, וְיִי let him smite also בְּצִנּוֹר *εν παταξιφιδι, with the sword, as the 70th renders it, both the lame and blind.* Let them see whether they can defend the city or not. Some warlike weapon seems plainly to be intended by the construction; and the very word in the *Arabick* dialect signifies *Clypeus, ansa clypei*; and both the *Arabick* and *Syriack* versions render the word in this very place by another that signifies a *shield*. And this gives also a good sense: *Let him also strike with the shield the lame, and the blind.* The *Clypeus* was an offensive as well as defensive weapon. Thus *Manlius*, in defending the Capitol, *τον δε τω θυρεω παταξας εις το προσωπον ωσιν οπισω κατα της πετρας.* One he struck on the face with his shield, and tumbled him headlong down the rock. *Plut. in vit. Camill. p. 142. F.* So also *Scæva*, when the *Britains* opposed his landing, *descripto gladio audacissimum quemque, modo umbonis impulsu — depellens — spectaculo fuisti.* *Val. Max. l. 3. c. 2. §. 23. Vid. etiam Claudian. vi. Honor. v. 629.* We may observe also, that the word is rendered by the *Chaldee* *כַּרְכַּא* a strong hold, and by *D. Kiuchi* *בְּקוֹם חֲזוֹן* the fortress, or; strong place; and in this sense of the word, the version will be: *Let him also strike in, or at the fortress, the blind and the lame.* If we understand by *בְּצִנּוֹר* a canal or aqueduct, or water-pipe or channel, as some do, we may then render the words: *Whoever smites the Jebusites, let him also strike בְּצִנּוֹר into the channel, or brook, the blind and the lame, whom David hates, for the insult they offered him, when they said: David shall not come into the hold, as tho' they had been sufficient to defend it against him; or, who hate David, and bid defiance to him.* Thus the text in *Samuel* will be perfectly compleat. Dr. *Kennicot's* conjecture, who renders the word by *subterraneous passage*, is certainly a very ingenious one. But I want authority for it. Besides, his version leaves the passage wholly imperfect, which I should not chuse to allow without an absolute necessity.*

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

This insult *David* soon repaid; for, in order to encourage the brave men in his army, to exert their endeavours to take the fortrefs, he publicly declared, that || whosoever should first mount the walls, and drive the *Jebusites* from them, should be captain-general over all his forces. *Joab*, being a man of great bravery and resolution, mounted first, attacked the enemy, drove them out of the castle, or put them to the sword, and accordingly was made general in chief. After the reduction of it, he chose it for the place of his residence, and called it after his own name: * *The city of David*. Here he built himself a royal palace, being assisted in it by *Hiram*, king of *Tyre*; who being informed of his advancement to the throne of *Israel*, and finding him to be a prince of great taste and magnificence, furnished him with materials for erecting his palace, and supplied him with skilful workmen, such as carpenters and masons, to carry on and perfect his design; the *Tyrians* in general being better skilled in architecture than the *Hebrews*, who were almost altogether employed in the culture of their lands, and tending their cattle. When the building was compleated, he penned the following † ode at the dedication of it.

I. I

† PSALM XXX.

|| 1 Chron. xi. 6.

* 2 Sam. v. 11.

In tit. *At the dedication of it.* חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת. The original word חֲנֻךְ signifies *initiari*, *εἰσαγαγεῖν*, *rei novæ primam usurpationem*. So *Cocceius*; to initiate, or the first use that is made of any thing. It was common, when any person had finished an house and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends were invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus, when the second temple was finished, the priest and *Levites*, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices. *Ezr.* vi. 16. We read in the New Testament, *John* x. 22. of the feast of the dedication appointed by *Judas*

1. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast David
over Ju-
dah 8, al
Israel 1.
lifted me up,
And hast not caused my foes to rejoice over me.
2. O Jehovah, my God, I cried unto thee,
And thou didst heal me.

3. O

Judas Maccabæus, in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of *Jerusalem*, after it had been defiled and almost laid in ruins by *Antiochus Epiphanes*; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by *Titus*, by solemn sacrifices, musick, songs, and hymns, to the praises of God, and feasts, and every thing that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively. *Joseph. Ant. l. 12. §. 7.* *Judas* ordained, that the days of the dedication should be kept in their season, from year to year, with mirth and gladness. *1 Mac. iv. 59.* And that this was customary, even amongst private persons, to keep a kind of religious festival, upon their first entrance into a new house, appears from the order of God, *Deut. xx. 5.* that no person, who had built a new house, should be forced into the army, *if he had not dedicated the house, i. e.* taken possession of it, according to the usual ceremonies practised on such occasions; a custom this, that hath more or less prevailed amongst all nations. Thus the *Romans* dedicated their temples and their theatres. *Suet. Octav. c. 43. §. 13.* Their statues. *Id. Ibid. c. 31. §. 9.* and their palaces and houses. Thus *Nero* dedicated his palace. *Id. Ner. c. 30. §. 10.* When the two *Tetrici* dedicated the sumptuous palace they had built, they invited the emperor *Aurelian* to the feast. *Trebell. Poll. 30 Tyran. c. 24.* See also *Plin. Epist. l. 10. Ep. 117. et l. 5. Ep. 12.*

Ver. 1. *Thou hast lifted me up.* דָּלִיתָנִי. The verb is used, in its original meaning, to denote, the reciprocating motion of the buckets of a well, one descending as the other rises, and vice versa; and is here applied, with admirable propriety, to point out the various reciprocations and changes of *David's* fortunes, as described in this psalm, as to prosperity and adversity; and particularly, that gracious reverse of his afflicted condition, which he now celebrates, God having raised him up to great honour and prosperity; for having built his palace, he perceived, that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom, for his people Israel's sake. *2 Sam. v. 12.* See *Mr. Schult. on Prov. xx. 5. p. 223.*

2. *Thou hast healed me.* תִּרְפָּאתִי. The verb is used, either for the healing of bodily disorders, *Pf. ciii. 3.* or to denote the

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

3. O Lord, thou hast raised up my soul from the grave;
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

4. Sing praises to the Lord, O ye Saints of his,
And when you praise him, commemorate his holiness.

5. There is but a moment in his anger:
Life and happiness in his favour.

Weeping

the happy alteration of any person's affairs, either in private or publick life, by the removal of any kind of distress, personal or national. Pf. cvii. 20. Isai xix. 22. So in the place before us: *Thou hast healed me*, means: Thou hast brought me out of my distresses, hast restored my health, and rendered me safe and prosperous. Under *Saul* he was frequently in the most imminent danger of his life, out of which God wonderfully brought him; which he strongly expresses by saying: *Thou hast brought up my soul from Hades. Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.* I thought myself lost, and that nothing could prevent my destruction, and can scarce help looking on the deliverance thou hast vouchsafed me, otherwise than as a kind of restoration from the dead. *Thou hast revived me*, or recovered me to life, *from amongst those who go down to the pit*; according to the literal rendering of the latter clause.

4. *Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* The holiness of God here mentioned, is his truth and faithfulness to his promises, which argues the rectitude and sanctity of his nature. Of this *David* had the highest and most comfortable experience, God having at last brought him to the throne, and settled him in the possession of it, notwithstanding he was often reduced to the greatest hazard of his life; and his advancement to the kingdom seemed, according to all human probability, almost impossible. It is therefore no wonder, that he should call upon the truly religious, to make their acknowledgments to God, when they remembered his holiness; or to commemorate that holiness, when they praised him.

5. *There is but a moment in his anger.* The accomplishment of God's promises must, as to the season of it, be left to the disposals of his all-wise providence, and there may be a considerable time, and many afflictions, between the giving the promise

Weeping may come to lodge with us in the evening,

But singing shall dwell with us in the morning.

6. For, in my prosperity, I said : " I shall never
" be moved,

" By thy favour, O Lord, thou hast made my
" mountain to stand strong."

7. Thou didst hide thy face :
I was troubled.

8. To

promise and the performance of it. However, good men shall not finally be disappointed, and tho' some events may seem to be arguments of his displeasure towards them, yet, as the Psalmist found by his own experience, the duration of his anger is but short, comparatively *but for a moment*, but the effects of his favour substantial and durable.

Ibid. *In his favour is life.* חַיִּים בְּרַצוֹנוֹ. *Vitæ in beneplacito ejus.* Lives are in his favour, *i. e.* long life, and durable happiness of life are the blessed effects of it.

Ibid. *Weeping may come to lodge with us in the evening ; its stay with us will be short, like a guest that lodges with us only for a night ; but in the morning singing for joy shall return and abide with us.* These are poetical illustrations of the shortness of God's anger, and the durable effects of his favour. This the psalmist farther illustrates in his own example.

6. 7. *I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. By thy favour, O Lord, thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.* I have joined these two verses together, as David's language in his prosperity, which renders the immediate change in his circumstances the more remarkable and striking.

In my prosperity. בְּשִׁלְוִי. The word denotes *peace and tranquillity, arising from an affluent prosperous condition.* Schult. Orig. lib. 2. p. 62, 63. When God had settled him quietly on the throne, he thought all his troubles were over, and that he should enjoy uninterrupted happiness ; and that God had made his mountain so strong, as that it should never be moved ; *i. e.* placed him as secure from all danger, as tho' he had taken refuge upon an inaccessible mountain ; or, made his prosperity firm, and subject to no more alteration, than a mountain is liable to be removed out of its place ; or, raised him to an eminent degree of honour and prosperity ; a mountain, by its height, being a very natural representation of a very superior condition, remarkable for power, affluence, and dignity. He had taken the fortress of Mount Sion, which
was

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

8. To thee, O Lord, I made my cry,
And to the Lord I directed my complaint:

9. "What gain can there be by my blood?
"When I go down into the pit, can my dust
"praise thee?
"Can it declare thy faithfulness?

10. Hear

was properly *his mountain*, as he had fixed on it for his dwelling. It was strong by nature, and rendered almost impregnable by the fortifications he had added to it: This he regarded as the effect of God's favour to him, and promised himself that his peace and happiness for the future should be as undisturbed and unshaken as *Mount Sion* itself.

8. *Thou didst bide thy face. I was troubled.* To hide one's face, is to refuse to see, or be seen by another, and argues displeasure, and a denial of assistance and favour. And the Psalmist means, that when God withdrew his protection, displeased with his presumption, and the security he fondly promised himself, he was immediately disturbed by fresh troubles, and his dream of uninterrupted tranquility vanished away. He refers I believe to the two invasions of the *Philistines*, soon after they found that he had been anointed king over *Israel*. 2 Sam. v. 17, &c. In this unexpected distress he cried unto the Lord, and in his supplication said:

9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?* Thus our version. I have altered the connection and pointing. *What profit is there in my blood? When I go down to the grave, shall my dust praise thee?* There is a propriety in asking: *Shall the dust praise thee*, when the body goes down and moulders in the grave; which doth not so immediately appear in the other connection of the words. The Psalmist expostulates with God; that the suffering him to fall by the sword of the enemy, would be of no benefit to his people, nor to the cause of religion, as he would hereby be prevented from publickly celebrating the praises of God, and making those regulations in the solemnity of his worship, which he purposed to do, if God would spare his life, and give him the victory. Mr. *Le Clerc* hath here, I think, a very injudicious observation on these words. *People at this time*, says he, *did not think of the immortality of the soul, or at least but very obscurely.* And yet he says, in his notes on 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. that it is manifest, from the history of the *witch of Endor*, that the Hebrews commonly believed, that after the death of the body, the soul survived; and that this was *Saul's* opinion. See him on v. 11. These things do not seem quite consistent. When he farther adds,
in

10. "Hear me, O Lord, and have mercy on David
me :

"Be thou, O Lord, my helper."

over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

11. Thou hast turned my mourning into
dancing :

Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me
with joy.

12. That every one may sing glory unto thee,
and not be silent.

O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto thee
for ever.

This

in confirmation of what he had asserted, that they thought nothing of the soul's immortality, *that the immortal spirits of men, when delivered from the chains of the body, praise God in a better manner, than when fettered with them*, is, I apprehend, nothing to the purpose. For, whatever be the manner in which immortal spirits, separate from their bodies, praise God, a point not yet thoroughly settled, the Psalmist says not one word about it, neither denying nor affirming it. He speaks only of the publick solemn celebration of the praises of God, in the assemblies of his people in this world, and their embodied state, and the impossibility of their doing this when they die.

12. *To the end my glory may sing praise unto thee.* The *Philistines* had invaded *David* soon after his establishment on the throne, and before he had taken possession of his new-built palace; so that he was engaged in fresh difficulties, and could not enjoy the tranquility he promised himself. In this unexpected exigency he applied himself to God; and the effect was, his being soon delivered out of all his fears, by the utter defeat of these restless enemies; which he describes by the pleasing expressions of God's *turning his mourning into dancing, and putting off his sackcloth, and girding him with gladness*. He had now an opportunity of dedicating his house, and taking possession of it with all those tokens of joy and gladness, which were usual on such occasions; and with those solemn praises to God, which he owed him as his great deliverer, and the kind author of his prosperity.

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee. The pronoun *my* is not in the original, and I should chuse to render the words: *That every one may sing glory to thee, and not be silent*; they that celebrate with me the dedication of my house,
and

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

This excellent composure is well suited to the occasion on which it is penned; for nothing could be more proper than the recollection of the past conduct of providence, in the various changes of condition that had attended *David*, in the numerous and dangerous distresses that had befallen him, and the deliverances God had seasonably wrought out for him; till at length he was brought to the height of prosperity, when he saw *Jerusalem* well fortified, and her numerous buildings rising up under his hand, and his own palace magnificently finished, for the residence of himself and family. The psalm is penned with great strength and elegance of diction, and the sentiments of piety in it are truly noble and instructive. The manner in which he describes the interpositions of God's favour, and the gratitude of his own heart, is warm, sententious, and affecting; the periods being short, generally without the connective particles, and answering to the events, that crowded fast one after another, and the various affections that inspired him. *I cried, thou heardest me, a moment in his anger, lives in his favour, weeping lodges in the evening, singing dwells in the morning, the strength of his mountain, the sudden seeking of it, the hiding of God's face, his being troubled, the turn of his mourning into singing, the putting off his sackcloth, and girding him with gladness;* are passages, which the reader of taste will observe with pleasure, acknowledge in them the majesty, force, and figurative manner of the language, in which the ode is written, and the genuine spirit of poetry, enlivened and enriched with sentiments of pure

and all my people, who see and share in my prosperity. *Cocceius* renders the word כָּבֵד by *maxima multitudo*. Let the multitude of my people, in whom I rejoice, celebrate thee. See Psalm xxix. 1.

and

and exalted devotion. Nor should the excellent David design of it be forgotten, which is to put men in ^{over Ju-} mind of the folly and vanity of that presumption, ^{dah 8, all} which causes them to forget themselves, and fond- ^{Israel 1.} ly depend on the continuance of their external prosperity; and to shew them, that when their expectations of this kind are highest, they may then be nearest to a severe disappointment, by a sudden reverse of their circumstances; in order more effectually to convince them, that, as all their prosperity is originally from God, the continuance of it depends solely on his favour. And, on the other hand, we are instructed that all the afflictions of life are under a divine direction, that we should never despair, should apply ourselves to God, when exercised with them, by fervent supplication, and hope, in his mercy; who can, and will deliver us out of them, if, upon the whole, it is necessary to promote our best and highest happiness.

David now finding himself well established on his throne, and settled in his new-built palace, next resolved to regulate his family and court. He wisely considered, that the example of the prince would have great influence on the morals of the people, and that he could not, with any dignity and consistency, punish the crimes of others, if he was guilty of the same in his own private conduct, or if he allowed them with impunity in his attendants and courtiers. And therefore, determined that he would severely punish all great and incorrigible offenders, he purposed to be himself a pattern of religion and virtue to his people, and to retain, as far as he could, none for his domesticks and officers, but such as were men of principle, honour, and virtue. The scheme he formed, and the regulations he fixed on in this respect, he hath transmitted down
to

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

to us in the following * ode ; which will do honour to his memory, as a good man, and an excellent king, throughout all generations.

1. I will sing of mercy and judgment.
To thee, O Lord, will I direct my song.

2. I will behave myself prudently in a perfect way.

O when wilt thou come unto me ?

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

* PSALM ci.

Ver. 1. *I will sing of mercy and of judgment.* This psalm hath a double reference, and describes the manner in which *David* intended to act as king of *Israel*, towards all his subjects, under their different denominations, as they were good or bad ones. Towards the faithful of the land, he would shew חסד *constant benignity* and favour. Towards the wicked, and such as obstinately violated the laws, he would exercise משפט *judgment*, as he would judge and punish them according to their deeds. As this was his fixed purpose, he consecrates this song to God. *To thee, O Lord*, says he, *I will sing*, appealing hereby to him for the sincerity of his intention, to make mercy and judgment the great rules of his administration ; and agreeably it is observed of him, that *he executed justice and judgment unto all his people.* 2 Sam. viii. 15.

2. *I will behave myself wisely* אשכילה *in a perfect way.* So our version. The verb undoubtedly signifies to *act prudently and prosperously*, and in Hiphil, *to make ones self or another person act well and wisely.* And as there is great need of prudence and wisdom in the publick distribution of justice, our version expresses, I think the real sense : *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way* ; and is much preferable to that of Mr. Le Clerk and others : *I will seek the way of an upright man* ; as the psalm doth not contain instructive precepts to others, but the wise and salutary resolutions he had made in reference to himself. Bishop *Patrick* thinks, that the expression refers to his own private behaviour, and contains his fixed purpose of studying, with all diligence, integrity of life, and purity of manners. But though I would not wholly exclude this, I rather apprehend it relates to his publick conduct in the administration of government. *He would sing of mercy and of judgment*, as he was resolved to act with wisdom and circumspection, and the most impartial perfect equity and justice toward all his subjects without exception. This interpretation seems to be countenanced by the following words.

Ibid. *O when wilt thou come unto me ?* There are some who think it propable from this expression, that this psalm was
penned

3. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. David I hate the work of obstinate revolvers. It shall not cleave to me. over Judah 8, all Israel 1.

4. A 

penned during the contest between *Ishbosheth* and *David*, before he was established king over all *Israel*. I rather apprehend it was composed soon after that great event, but whilst he was not yet firmly settled on the throne, and had not power enough to exert himself in the punishment of great offenders; as he himself complains: *I am this day weak, though anointed king, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me,* 2 Sam. iii. 39. that I cannot act as I would, and punish them according to their demerits. What, therefore, the Psalmist earnestly wished and desired was, that God would so favour him, as to strengthen his hands, that he might be able to exercise justice impartially, and act agreeably to those wise and good maxims, he had laid down for the future government of his people. An absent friend is little capable of assisting us. To do us real service in many cases, he must come to and favour us with his presence; and therefore the expression, *O when wilt thou come to me?* is figurative, and must be explained of God's protecting and assisting him, as tho' he came to, and was personally present with him.

Ibid. *I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.* Literally, *in the integrity of my heart*; i. e. manage all my affairs, as impartial reason and judgment shall direct me, and, by my example, encourage piety and virtue, amongst all my domesticks, dependants, and courtiers.

3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.* Pleasure or displeasure, approbation or abhorrence, may be known by the look, or the cast of the eye. What we are pleased and delighted with attracts and fixes the eye. What we dislike or hate, we turn away from the sight of; and when the Psalmist resolves, that *he would not fix his eyes upon any evil thing*, he means; he would never give it the least countenance or encouragement, but treat it with displeasure, as what he hated, and was determined to punish. For he adds:

Ibid. *I hate the work of them that turn aside.* עֲשֵׂה סָמִים שְׁנֵאתִי. Mr. Schultens hath shewn in his commentary on *Prov.* vii. 25. that עֲשֵׂה hath a much stronger and more significant meaning, than that of mere *turning aside*; and that it is used of an unruly horse, that champs upon the bit through his fiery impatience; and when applied to a bad man, denotes one impatient of all restraint, of unbridled passions, and that is headstrong and ungovernable in the gratification

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

4. A perverse heart shall depart from me.
I will not protect him that is evil.

5. He who privily slandereth his neighbour,
him will I cut off.

Him that hath haughty eyes, and an arrogant
heart, I will not endure.

6. Mine

tification of them, trampling on all the obligations of religion and virtue. Such as these are the deserved objects of the hatred of all good men, whose criminal deviations and presumptuous crimes they detest; none of which *shall cleave to them*; they will not harbour the love of or inclination to them, nor habitually commit them, nor encourage the practice of them. Persons of this character are too frequently about the courts of princes; but it is their honour and interest, as far as ever they can, to discountenance them.

4. *A forward heart shall depart from me.* לבב עקש. The original sense of עקש is *torfit, contorfit*, to twist together, and denotes, when applied to men, persons of a perverse, subtle disposition, that can twist and twine themselves into all manner of shapes, and who have no truth and honour to be depended on.

Ibid. *I will not know a wicked person*; i. e. I will never regard him, nor ever own, or treat him as my favourite and friend, any more than if I had never known him. See Ps. i. 6, Exod. xxxiii. 12.

5. *Who so privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.* Those who are advanced to places of eminent dignity, trust, and profit, are the objects of hatred and envy, frequently traduced and slandered, and the worst kind of suspicions are insinuated concerning them, into the minds of those princes who employ them, in order to supplant and ruin them. It is the part of a good and prudent prince utterly to discountenance such false and treacherous informers, and none but the worst have favoured and protected them. Tacitus tells us, that under Tiberius, *delatores, genus hominum publico exitio repertum, et poenis quidem nunquam satis coercitum, per præmia eliciebantur.* Annal. l. 4. c. 30. 31. Titus on the contrary scourged them, sold many of them for slaves, and banished others. Sueton. Tit. c. 8. Vid. etiam Plin. paneg. in Trajan. c. 34. 3.

Ibid. *Him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, I will not suffer.* The original words, literally rendered, run: *High in eyes, and broad in heart.* Haughtiness and pride discover

6. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. David over Ju- dah 8, ali Israel 1.
 He who walketh in a perfect way shall serve me.
 7. He who practices deceit shall not dwell with-
 in my house.

He who speaks lies shall not be established in my sight.

8. In

cover themselves in the elevation or tossing of the nose. גבה אף Pf. x. 4. which we very improperly render *the pride of his countenance*, and by the גבה עינים disdainful turning up the eye; scorning, as it were, to look down upon the object, as unworthy its regard; which is also expressed by רום עינים Prov. xxi. 4. *altitudo oculorum*, the height of the eyes; the character of him, who, because of his superior riches and power, scorns to take notice of one whom he thinks beneath him. To this answers the רחב לבב *the wide in heart*; one whose heart swells and dilates itself with pride, upon account of the largeness of his fortune, or the eminence of his station. It should be remarked however, that as the heart may be dilated with other things besides pride, so the phrase is used in a good sense; to denote the enlargement of the heart or mind with pleasure. Isai. lx. 5. or with wisdom and comprehensive understanding. 1 Kin. iv. 29. and with other things of a like nature. The expression is in itself liable to be taken in a good or bad meaning; and phrases of this sort are common in all languages. In the place before us 'tis certainly taken in the bad sense.

6. *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that he may dwell with me.* In the third verse he resolved, that *he would set no wicked thing before his eyes*, i. e. he would never countenance it, nor ever regard it with pleasure and approbation. Here he informs us, what he would particularly set his eyes on, and who the persons were that he would encourage with his smile, and look on with an affectionate regard, viz. the *faithful of the land*; men of religion, probity, and virtue. These *should sit, or dwell with him*; he would use them as his familiars and friends; employ them in the domestick services of his palace, and advance them to publick offices and stations in his kingdom. This is a circumstance that *Pliny* mentions in honour of the emperor Trajan. *Tu amicos ex optimis legis. — Hos procebis et ostentas, quasi specimen et exemplar, quæ tibi secta vitæ, quod hominum genus placeat.* Paneg. in Traj. c. 45.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

8. In the mornings I will cut off all the wicked
of the land,
Till I have destroyed all the workers of iniquity
from the city of the Lord.

This psalm affords an admirable lesson for princes, to direct themselves in the administration of their affairs in private and publick life. They should be the patrons of religion and virtue, and encourage them by their own example and practice. Those of their household, their servants, ministers, and particularly their favourites and friends, should be of unblamable characters, and, if possible, eminent for every thing that is excellent and praise worthy. Subtle and fraudulent men, backbiters and slanderers, and private informers against others, they should detest, and shew the utmost marks of displeasure to them. They should maintain the honour of the laws, and impartially punish all transgressors against them; and instead of indulging to ease, and being engrossed and dissipated by pleasure and amusement, they should consecrate a just portion of their time to the publick service, and promoting the real happiness of their people. Thus they will be indeed truly *patriot kings*, honoured of God, and

8. *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land.* Literally, *In the mornings* I will destroy, &c. He resolves to devote all his mornings to the administration of justice, and the punishment of incorrigible offenders. This is a season most proper in itself for the management of all business, and which was generally appropriated to the administration of publick affairs, by princes and great men; as we learn from 2 Sam. xv. 2. and Jerem. xxi. 12. When the Psalmist adds: *That I may cut off all evil doers from the city of the Lord*; it is I think an evident proof that he was now king over all *Israel*; and in possession of *Jerusalem*, stiled by him; *The city of the Lord*; because it was now the place of his peculiar residence, as he had lodged the ark in the midst of the tabernacle he had prepared for its reception.

esteemed

esteemed and beloved of men. I have placed this *David* psalm here, tho' it was penned after the ark was over *Judah* 8, all brought into *Jerusalem*, as the regulation of *David's* household naturally followed after the finishing his palace. *Israel* 1.

But *David's* thoughts were not confined merely or principally to himself, and the increasing his own personal splendor and majesty, but he had formed much more extensive views, and was engaged in a much more publick work, that of enlarging and beautifying *Jerusalem*, the care of which he committed to *Joab*. For he built round about from *Millo* § and inward, erected houses in the vacant part of it, formed regular streets, and adorned them with palaces for his princes and nobles, well fortified it for its security and defence, and built a tower * for an armoury, *whereon hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men*; so that as he intended, it became henceforward the capital of the whole kingdom, and the royal residence of all the kings his successors. But what was its peculiar honour was, that it was *the city of the || great king, † the city of God*; for in *Salem* was his *tabernacle*, and his dwelling place in *Sion*, ‡ where he sat between the Cherubim, when the ark was translated into it, and afterwards when placed in the magnificent temple,

§ The revd. and learned Dr. *Pocock*, late bishop of *Oxford*, says; that *Millo* was on the east side of *Mount Sion*, and separated it from *Mount Moriah*, on which the temple stood; and that it was called by *Josephus* *Φαργὸς τυρποίων*, *the valley of cheesemongers*. Vol. II. p. 7. which is agreeable to the account of its situation by *Josephus*; who says, that it separates the hill of the upper city *Mount Sion* from the lower hill, or *Mount Acra*, and stretches down as far as the fountain of *Siloam*. *de Bel. Jud.* l. 5. c. 4. §. 1. See also *Lightfoot*, vol. 1. p. 1056.

* *Sol. Song.* iv. 4, || *Pf.* xlviii. 1. 2. † *Ibid.* lxxv. 2.
‡ *Ibid.* xcix. 1.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

which *Solomon* erected to the honour of the supreme God. On this account *Sion* † is called *the holy mountain*, and * *Jerusalem the holy city*; because consecrated to the worship of the true God; the only city in the world which could boast of this dignity, and because God dwelt in it, by his peculiar presence, and favoured it by his special protection and care. As *David* had experienced the divine favour, in preserving him from the jealousy and rage of *Saul*, in his having been maintained on the throne of *Judah*, during a more than seven years war with *Ishbosheth* and *Abner*, his coming at last into the peaceable possession of the whole kingdom of *Israel*, and his glorious conquest of this, as it was thought, impregnable fortress of *Sion*; he was encouraged to undertake these royal works, as they were conducive both to the embellishment and security of his capital. For now *David* perceived that the Lord had established him king over *Israel*, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people *Israel's* sake; i. e. to render them an happy and victorious people. When he had finished these publick undertakings, which undoubtedly were several years in carrying on, he penned, I apprehend, the following || psalm.

|| PSALM lxxxvii.

1. It is his foundation in the mountains of holiness!

2. The

† Ps. lxxxvii. 1.

* Isai. xlii. 2.

Ver. 1. *His foundation.* יסודתו. *It is his foundation.* The suffix וָצוּ is masculine, and cannot refer to עִיר, or *Sion*, which are both feminine; and therefore must refer to God. *Sion* is of God's founding. Thus Isai. xiv. 32. The Lord יסד צִיּוֹן *hab founded Sion*, and chose it for his habitation, where he desired

2. The Lord loveth the gates of *Sion*
More than all the dwellings of *Jacob*.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

3. Glorious things, it shall be said, are in thee,
O thou city of God.

4. Shall I celebrate *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, to them
that know me?

Behold, O *Philistia*, *Tyre*, and *Cush* :
Such a man was born there.

5. Even

desired to dwell for ever, Pf. cxxxii. 13. And as *Jerusalem* was built on several hills, *Mount Sion*, and *Mount Moriah*, and other lesser ones, they are called *holy mountains*, or hills, the whole city being consecrated to God; and the city itself, *the holy city*, for God dwelt more especially therein, as it was the fixed abode of the ark of his presence. And if we imagine the Psalmist to be surveying the new built city from some eminence, or from the terrace on the roof of his palace, just as he had finished it, how natural was it for him to cry out, with pleasure and gratitude to God, who had enabled him to compleat this great design: *It is his foundation, in the mountains of holiness*.

3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*. Thus our version. But may not the words נִכְבְּרוֹת מְדַבֵּר בְּךָ be rendered? *There are glorious things, it shall be said, in thee*. All nations shall speak of them with surprise and wonder. If this be allowed, as I think it may, we shall avoid the more unusual construction of a plural feminine with a masculine participle in the singular. Or else, according to the usual way of accounting for this construction, נִכְבְּרוֹת *glorious things*, is put for *every thing that is glorious*, and so connected with a participle in the singular number. Bishop Hare, F. Houbigant, and others, think that instead of מְדַבֵּר we should read מְדַבְּרוֹת to secure the syntax. But this construction may be found in other places. So Pf. lvii. 1. עַד יַעֲבֹר הַזֶּה *till these calamities be overpast*; and elsewhere.

4. *I will make mention of Rahab*. So our version renders the words אוֹכִיר רָהַב. I take them interrogatively. *Shall I mention Rahab and Babylon to my acquaintance? Shall I mention? Behold, O Palæstine, Tyre, and Arabia: Such a man was born there!* Is this his honour, shall I mention this as his privilege, that he was born in one or other of those celebrated cities and countries? No. *But of Sion it shall be said: This and the other person was born in her*. To be a citizen of

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

5. Even of *Sion* it shall be said :
This and the other man was born in her.
And the most high shall establish her.

6. Jehovah shall record it, when he registers
the nations :
This man was born there.

7. And

any other place is an honour nothing comparable to that of being a citizen of *Sion*. Thus *Buchanan* seems to have understood the words in his elegant version.

*Tecumne Babylon se audeat componere ?
Tecumne Memphis insolens ?
Præclara quamvis et Palæstina et Tyros
Faslet virorum robora :
Nihil ad Sionem fortibus factam viris,
Favore tutam numinis.*

R. S. *Jarchi* also expounds the words much in the same manner. The *Philistines*, &c. extol *Egypt* and *Babylon*, nations famous for antiquity, learning, and arts, when they say : *Such a man was born there.* But that praise which formerly belonged to them, shall now return to *Sion*, of which it shall be, with much more justice, said to his honour : *This and the other person was born there.* The privileges of being citizens of *Sion* were unspeakably greater, than what the inhabitants of any other city in the world were intitled to ; as the city had God for its founder, as the ark of his presence dwelt in it, as the solemnities of his worship were with great magnificence performed there, as it was governed by his laws, and as it was under his immediate and constant protection. In these things no other city could compare or vie with it.

5. *The highest himself will establish her.* This is what *David* promised himself, that as he had built the city under the direction of God, and had fixed for the ark a proper habitation in it, so he would now establish it, by guarding it from its enemies, and providing for its future prosperity. And I think it appears from hence, that this and the foregoing verse, are the Psalmist's own words, and not the words of God concerning *Jerusalem*, as *Grotius*, *Le Clerc*, and others, make them.

6. *The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people : This man was born there.* The Lord will count יספר record it in a book, when he writes up the people בכתוב עמים registers the several nations of the earth ; that *this man was born in Sion*. The Psalmist here describes the peculiar regards of God to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and figuratively represents him, as keeping a register of all the nations of the earth, and marking

7. And they shall sing as those who dance :
 “ *All my springs are in thee.*”

David
 over Ju-
 dah 8, all
 Israel 1.

The inscription to this psalm doth not ascribe it to *David*, nor is the occasion on which it was penned particularly mentioned. It is certain that it was written in praise of *Jerusalem*, and of the particular privileges of which it could boast, above all other the most famous cities in the world; and by the manner of its beginning, I should think it was wrote, when the author of it had compleated his design in the repairing, enlarging, beautifying, and fortifying *Jerusalem*.

marking, as it were, in that register, every one that was a citizen of *Jerusalem*, as thereby intitled to his distinguishing favour and protection.

7. *As well the singers, as the players on instruments, shall be there.* So our version. Bishop Hare says, that *there is neither sense nor metre* in this verse, as it stands in the *Hebrew*; and Mr. *Le Clerc*, that tho' he knows the meaning of each word, that he is intirely ignorant of the meaning of the passage, or, that he knows just so much of it, as those that know nothing at all. The literal version of the words is: *Cantantes erunt, sicut choream ducentes: Omnes fontes mei in te.* *They shall sing like those who lead up the dance: All my springs are in thee.* וְשָׂרִים the *Chaldee* paraphrase rightly renders בְּחִלְלִים *dicent cantica.* *They shall sing songs.* בְּחִלְלִים signifies, as those who dance, or lead up the dance, i. e. very joyfully: singing and dancing frequently accompanying one another. And the burthen of the song they should sing in praise of *Sion*, should be this: *All my springs, or fountains, are in thee.* All my kindred shall sing and rejoice in thy safety, as *Jarvis* explains it. And I would observe, that the original word מְיָרִים which we render *Springs*, is used in a figurative sense, to denote *any one's posterity*. Thus Prov. v. 16. *Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad;* i. e. thy posterity be exceeding numerous. And thus in the place before us: The inhabitants of *Jerusalem* should triumph and sing: *All my springs, or fountains, all my friends, my family, my children, are in thee, are thy citizens, enjoy the glorious privileges thou art favoured with, are all inserted in God's register, and intitled to his protection and favour.* Thus there is an harmony and connection between all the parts of this ode, which I think is very intelligible, and poetical.

And

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

And therefore I ascribe it to *David*, and think it was sent by him to the sons of *Korah*, to be sung by them on the solemn festival, that was appointed to celebrate the foundation and building of the city. This conjecture is in some measure countenanced by the *Chaldee* paraphrast, who makes this psalm to begin at the second verse : *The Lord loves the gates of Sion* ; and the first verse, *his foundation is in the holy mountain*, to be part of the inscription or title, which according to him must have been : *A song of the foundations in the mountains of holiness*. F. Houbigant thinks the psalm was first sung upon laying the foundations of the temple in *Mount Sion*. But it is the city, and not the temple, that is spoken of, as being founded in these mountains.

Bishop *Hare*, very unjustly I think, censures this psalm, as *having neither head nor tail*, and imagines, for this reason, that it is only the fragment of a psalm, and the most obscure of any of them. I think it has both head and tail, and excellent ones too. The beginning is striking, and what a sudden exclamation of wonder and joy should be ; abrupt and short. The ending, what every citizen of *Jerusalem*, who knew and valued the priviledges he was intitled to, would joyfully sing : *All my springs are in thee*. These circumstances, together with his glorying over it, for the preference God gave it to all the other cities of *Judah*, his representing it as a greater honour to be born in, and an inhabitant of it, than to be a citizen of any of the most celebrated cities in the world, his assurance that God would protect and establish it, God's keeping a register of all the nations, and marking therein the citizens of *Sion* as his favourite people, and the joy and triumph of the inhabitants upon a review of their peculiar priviledges ; are beauties that will not be overlooked by a careful reader.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

His wars with the Philistines.

AS *David's* prosperity increased, it is no wonder that he excited the jealousy of the neighbouring nations, the ancient enemies of *Israel*, and put them upon concerting measures for oppressing him, before he had thoroughly established himself in his new acquired kingdom. He had now all the tribes of *Israel* at his devotion, he had dispossessed the *Jebusites* of the strong fortrefs of *Sion*, and had new built and fortified *Jerusalem*; and it was natural for the *Philistines* to imagine, that as he had begun his reign with this important conquest, he would not rest, till he had recovered all the towns and cities, which fell into their hands after the battle of *Gilboa*; and accordingly they formed the resolution of attacking him with all their forces.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

David, * who could not but foresee and expect a visit from these troublesome neighbours, was however in a condition to receive them. When he was solemnly chosen and crowned king over all *Israel* at *Hebron*, he was attended with large detachments of soldiers from all the tribes, ready armed to the war, mighty men of valour, of high reputation for military abilities, throughout the houses of their fathers, men well disciplined, and with all manner of instruments for the battle. These were under the command of wise and experienced generals, several of whom had distinguished themselves by their bravery, and signa-
lized their courage and strength, by personal engagements with large bodies of the *Philistines*,

* 1 Chron xi. 10, &c.

whom

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

whom they defeated and destroyed ; or by single combat with gigantick men, whom they laid dead at their feet ; or by encountring and killing lions that had attacked them. With an army of brave men thus officered, and well provided with all necessaries, the new king had little to fear from his enemies, even in a natural way ; especially as his forces were all in his interest, well affectioned to his person, and, to a man, determined to support him on the throne, against all his enemies.

He first tried their valour in the attack and conquest of *Jerusalem*, and, some time after, in two engagements with the united forces of the *Philistines*, whom he intirely broke, and drove out from all the cities and towns they had seized on in the *Hebrew* territories, after the defeat and death of *Saul*. For when the *Philistines* heard that they had anointed *David* king over *Israel*, all the *Philistines* || *came up to seek David, viz.* in an hostile manner, or with a design to attack him with all their forces ; and as, for any thing that appears, without any injury done them, or provocation given them ; only that they might crush him, if they could, in the infancy of his power, and prevent his becoming a more formidable enemy by the increase and establishment of it.

During the intestine divisions between the houses of *Saul* and *David*, the *Philistines* gave the *Hebrews*, very happily for them, no disturbance ; contenting themselves with the towns and cities they had seized on, in consequence of their victory on *Gilboa*, and imagining they had little to fear from the *Hebrews*, during their domestick broils, and whilst they were weakening themselves by their contest for the crown. But when all centered in

David, of whose military abilities they were fully convinced, they looked on him as a dangerous neighbour, and attacked him with the united strength of the whole nation; spreading their tents in the vale of *Rephaim*, situate on the north of *Jerusalem*, at no great distance from the city itself. * *Josephus* adds, that all *Syria* and *Phœnicia* assisted them in this expedition, and that the combined army was three times more numerous than that of *David*.

David
over Ju-
dah 8, all
Israel 1.

When he was informed of this invasion he went to the cave of † *Adullam*, and tho' he had himself a large and well disciplined army under his command, and was called into the field by the unjust invasion of the *Philistines*; yet, sensible that his success depended on God, and that, tho' king of *Israel*, he was but God's vicegerent, and ought to receive his orders immediately from him; he would not venture to engage his enemies without the leave and direction of his superior commander; and therefore he inquired of God by the high priest: *Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into my hands?* God ordered him peremptorily to go up, and engage them, and assured him of the victory. § *Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thy hand.* They had now advanced to *Baal-perazim*, where *David*, fully assured of conquest, warmly attacked them, carried all before him, and obtained a compleat victory over them, and ascribing it to God, said: *The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as ‡ the breach of waters, i. e. as irresistibly broken through,*

* *Jos.* A. I. l. 7. c. 4. §. 1. † 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 13.

§ 1 *Chron* xiv. 11.

‡ כפרץ מים. *Ut ruptura aquarum; sicut aqua perumpit; as water breaks through, פּרַץ properly denotes the eruption of water, pouring itself into rivers, or any other place, where it can*

David
over Ju-
dah 9, all
Israël 2.



through, and defeated them, as a flood of water, forcing its banks, carries away, by its impetuous fury, every thing that opposes it. From hence the place where the battle was fought was called *Baal-perazim*, or *the place of Eruption*; or, as in

can force itself; and the similitude here made use of is, that God broke in upon *David's* enemies, like the breaking in of a flood of water, that sweeps away every thing before it. *F. Houbigant's* version of the place is low and flat. *Dominus inimicos meos coram me dissipavit, ut aquæ dissipantur.* The Lord hath dissipated my enemies before me, as waters are dissipated. What is the meaning, or where is the force of *the dissipation of waters*? Nor do I apprehend, that the allusion, which a learned writer of our own thinks is intended, will suit the place. *Histor. ac. of the life of David, vol. i. p. 369.* He renders the words: *God hath broken, or divided mine enemies, as waters are broken, i. e. as a storm breaks or divides a flood*; adding, *that an army coming up in one vast body, broken in upon by a brave enemy, as by a tempest, put to flight, and in their flight scattered into a great many broken parties, is finely compared to a vast flood, or body of waters, broken and dispersed into many streams.* A storm's breaking or dividing a flood, and dispersing it into many streams, is a very unusual *phænomion*; and there is but little resemblance between the rout of an enemy, which is all disorder and confusion, and the dispersion of a flood into many streams. There is nothing more common in the sacred writings than comparing the forces of a victorious army, spreading themselves through an enemy's land, and seizing and plundering all around them, to the inundation of a mighty flood, that by an irresistible fury breaks down, and carries away every thing before it, and overwhelms a country with desolation and ruin.

——— *Ruit arduus æther,
Et pluvia ingenti sata læta, boumque labores
Diluit. Implentur fossæ, et cava flumina crescent*

Virg. Geor. I.

Thus it is said of God himself: *His breath as an overflowing stream shall reach to the midst of the neck.* *Isai. xxx. 28.* And that *he hath a mighty and a strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth*; or lay every thing it meets with level to the ground. *Isai. xxviii. 2.* See also the description of the invasion of the *Egyptian king.* *Isai. viii. 7, 8.*

our

our margin : *The plain of Breaches.* The flight of the *Philistines* was so hasty, as that they left their images and gods behind them, which were immediately burnt by *David* and his men.

The next year the *Philistines* made a second ir-
 ruption into the dominions of *David*, and pitched
 their tents in the same valley of *Rephaim*. He
 immediately inquired of God by the high priest,
 how he was to act, and was immediately ordered,
 not to go up, and attack them as before, but to
 march his men at some considerable distance behind
 them, and fall on them at that part of their camp,
 that was situated over against some remarkable
 mulberry trees in the valley ; and that as soon as
 he heard a rustling in the mulberry-trees, he should
 then exert his whole force against them, and as-
 sure himself that, under the conduct of God, he
 should obtain the victory. *For then shall the Lord*
go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.
 He obeyed his orders, and conquered and smote
 the *Philistines* from *Geba* to *Gazer*, till he had ut-
 terly destroyed them, or made them precipitately
 evacuate his dominions ; both these towns be-
 longing, *Geba*, or *Gibeon* to the tribe of *Benjamin*,
 and *Gazer* to that of *Ephraim*. These two bar-
 tles were so very remarkable, and gained under
 the immediate conduct of the God of *Israel*, as
 that they are both taken notice of by the pro-
 phet * *Isaiah* ; who when he would express the
 great indignation of God against the *Jews*, and
 the dreadful effects of it, says : *The Lord shall*
rise up as in Mount Perazin, he shall be wroth as
in the valley of Gibeon ; i. e. give them up to the
vengeance of their enemies, and utterly destroy
them, as he did the Philistines by David at Pe-
razin and Gibeon. In both these instances the

David
 over Je-
 dah 9, and
 Israel 2.

* *Isai.* xxviii. 21.

David
over Ju-
dah 9, all
Israel 2.

Philistines * were the aggressors, and *David* had a right to oppose them, and repel force by force; and how severe soever *David's* vengeance on them was, they brought it on themselves, and owed it to their own injustice and presumption.

I cannot also here help observing, in honour of the *Hebrew* oracle; that its answers were such; as became the character of the true God, who hath all events at his disposal; and cannot be mistaken as to those, which he expressly foretells. Let any one compare it with the heathen oracles, and he will be forced to acknowledge; that they were shuffling, & ambiguous, and vague; and the answers they gave of so uncertain a nature, so equivocal and deceitful, as that they

* It is *David's* hard fate, that none of his actions must pass without censure; no, not those, which, in any other prince, would be deemed heroick and meritorious. The author of the book of *Samuel* observes, that *when Saul took the kingdom, he fought against his enemies on every side, against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zoba, and the Philistines, and vexed them wheresoever he turned himself; and that he smote the Amalekites, so as to leave none of them alive, but Agag their king.* And tho' these were the very enemies, with whom *David* contended, yet no censure is passed on *Saul's* conduct, upon account of any of the wars in which he was engaged; even tho', as it hath been said concerning *David*, *all this smiting and slaying is so obscurely mentioned, that we know nothing of the offences committed against this mighty chief, to excite such blood-thirsty indignation.* Whereas, tho' we know *David's* wars were generally provoked by the unjust invasions of his enemies, and necessary for the vindication of his own honour, and the safety of his subjects, they are all represented as *the effects of a very criminal ambition, and an insatiable thirst after plunder and blood.*

§ *Tuis enim oraculis, sancte Apollo, Chrysippus totum volumen implevit, partim falsis, ut ego opinor, partim casu veris, ut fit in omni oratione sæpissime, partim flexiloquis, et obscuris, ut interpretes egeat interprete, et fors ipsa ad sortes deferenda est; partim ambiguïs, et quæ ad dialecticum referenda sunt.* Cicer. *de divin.* l. 2. c. 56. So *Prometheus* complains: *Ἦκον δὲ ἀναγγελλόντες αἰολοστόμους χερσὺς, ἀσημὰς, δυσκρίτους εἰρημίας.* Æschyl. *Prom Fined.* v. 662. 663.

might

might be interpreted in two direct contrary senses, David might be equally true of two contrary events, ^{over Judah 9, all Israel 2.} and evidently demonstrated, that they who gave them out knew no more of those events on which they were consulted, than they who inquired about them; who were often deceived in the application of them to their own destruction. Thus *Cræsus* * was foretold by *Apollo*, that if he made war with the *Persians*, he should overturn a great empire; which *Cræsus* interpreting in his own favour made war upon *Cyrus*, and thereby put an end to his own empire; after which, he severely reproached *Apollo* for deceiving him. And thus § *Pyrrhus*, king of *Epirus*, who is said, upon the credit of an ambiguous oracle of the same *Apollo*, to have engaged in war with the *Romans*, was intirely defeated by them, and forced at last to retire with great disgrace and loss into his own dominions. Whereas, the answers of the *Hebrew* oracle had one plain obvious certain meaning, that needed no interpretation, that no one could possibly mistake the meaning of, and that was never found, in one single instance, to deceive or disappoint those, who depended on, and directed themselves by the order of it. *Do this*, or, *Do not this*, was the peremptory form, in which they, who consulted it, were answered; which, in the judgment of *Cicero*, || was the manner, in which the oracles of God ought to be delivered.

* *Quum illa fors edita est opulentissimo regi Asiæ,*

Cræsus Helin penetrans magnam pervertet opum vim, hostium vim sese perversurum putavit; pervertit autem suam. Utrum igitur eorum accidisset, verum oraculum fuisset. Cicero. de divin. l. 2. §. 56. Ην στρατευηται επι Περσαις μεγαλην αρχην αυτου διαλυσαι. Herodot. l. 1. c. 90. 91.

§ *Aio te Acacida Romanos vincere posse.*

|| *Jam vero quid opus est circumitione et amfraetu, ut sit utendum interpretibus somniorum, potius quam directo? Deus, siquidem nobis consulebat, hoc facito, hoc ne feceris, diceret; idque visum vigilantibus potius quam dormienti daret. Id. ibid. §. 61.*

David
over Ju-
dah 9, all
Israel 2.

During these wars with the *Philistines*, there were some remarkable particulars, that are worthy to be taken notice of. It hath been observed, that, in the first of them, *David* being informed that the *Philistines* had invaded his dominions, went down with his forces to the cave of * *Adullam*; and, it being harvest time, and probably extremely hot, he longed for a draught of water out of the well by the gate of *Bethlehem*, and said: *Oh, that any one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate*; signifying his impatience that his enemies should be in possession of the town, and his ardent wish to recover it out of their hands. However, three of his brave men, hearing, or being informed of what *David* had said, intrepidly attacked, and broke through that part of the *Philistine* army, that encamped near the well of *Bethlehem*, drew water from it, and brought it to *David*. Surprised at their courage, but reflecting on their danger, he refused to drink it, but poured it out as a thanksgiving offering to God, for the preservation of their lives, saying: † *God forbid it me, that I should do this thing; i. e. drink the water that hath been fetched me. Is it not the blood? Or, as in a parallel place: Shall I drink the blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it.* He looked on it as a kind of impiety to drink that water, which was obtained at the hazard of the lives of those who fetched it. A noble proof this, of his humanity, moderation, and forbearance!


A somewhat like instance we have of the generosity and temperance of *Alexander*, § who,

* 1 Chron. i. 19.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 14.—17.

§ *Nec solus bibere sustineo, nec tam exiguum omnibus dividere possum. Vos currite, et liberis vestris, quod propter illos attulistis, date.* Curt. l. 7. c. 5. §. 10. 11. 12.

when

when he and his army were almost perishing for David thirst, and two of his soldiers had got a cruise of over Ju-
 water for their children, and happening to meet dah 9, all
 with that prince, offered it him to drink; re- Israel 2.
 turned the vessel, full as it was, to the soldiers, 
 and said: *I can't bear to drink it alone. It is too little to divide amongst all. Give it to the children for whom you brought it.* At another time also, when, upon a like emergence and distress, some of his soldiers brought him, in an helmet, a small quantity of water, which they had accidentally found; he refused to drink it, and, like David, *poured it out on the ground*, in the presence of his whole army. *

There is another instance or two of the brave and gallant behaviour of some of ‡ *David's* worthy officers. When he inquired of the Lord, whether he should go § up against the *Philistines*, and was ordered to go, three of them, according to the custom of those times, appeared at the head of the *Hebrew* army, after they had marched up to the *Philistines* and defied || them, by insulting and

* Polyæn. Stratag. l. 4. c. 3. §. 25. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.

§ I think the circumstances of this action will warrant my placing it just before *David's* first battle with the *Philistines*; for it is expressly said, that *they defied the Philistines* that were gathered together to battle, and the children of *Israel*, יִשְׂרָאֵל, not, as in our translation, *were gone away*, but *gone up*, viz. to engage the *Philistines*. Now this is the peculiar circumstance, that distinguished the first battle from the second. For *David*, previous to it, inquired of the Lord הֲאֵלֶּיךָ הָאֵלֹהִים shall I go up to the *Philistines*? And God answered him: הָאֵלֹהִים Go up, for I will deliver them into thy hand. And when they were actually gone up, this defiance was given to the *Philistines*.

|| בַּחֲרָפָם. *When they defied the Philistines.* F. Heubigant is for banishing this word out of the text, and reading, as he says it is in *Chronicles*, *Ephes*, or *Pas-dammim*, which is the name of a place; and Mr. Le Clerc thinks that we may
 D keep

David
over Ju-
dah 9, all
Israel 2.

and challenging any three of them to a single combat. But the *Philistines* declined the challenge, and after the general engagement began, *Eleazar*, one of them, fought with so much bravery, that he destroyed many of the enemy with his sword, so that his hand was not only weary, but even the handle of the sword was fixed to it, by the blood, I suppose, and swelling of the wound, that was made in it, by his long grasping the weapon, and the furious strokes he dealt about with it. This greatly contributed to that important victory, which the Lord wrought out for his people that day; as they not only defeated the whole *Philistine* army, but plun-

keep both readings: *When they defied the Philistines in Ephes-Dammim.* But whoever will carefully compare the two accounts, as they stand in *Samuel* and *Chronicles*, will find that there must be a very considerable omission in the book of *Chronicles*, in which the exploits of *Eleazar*, the son of *Dodo*, and those of *Shammah*, the *Hararite*, are confounded together in the present *Hebrew* copies. For, in *Chronicles*, the great actions of *Eleazar*, mentioned in *Kings*, are intirely omitted; and the exploits attributed to *Shammah*, in *Kings*, are mentioned as performed by *Eleazar* in *Chronicles*; and therefore the history related in *Chronicles* should be corrected by that in the book of *Kings*. I therefore retain the reading in the *Kings*, בחרפם. *when they defied the Philistines.* The original word חרף signifies to reproach, or taunt, or revile any person. And this was the custom of the ancient heroes and warriors, in their challenges, to use the most reproachful language to each other. The word is used of *Goliath*, when he defied the armies of *Israel*; and when *David* came against him, he cursed him by his Gods, and told him, he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air, and beasts of the field. So *Æneas* reproaches *Turnus*, when he was going to engage him in single combat, with his cowardice and flight.

*Quæ nunc deinde mora est? Aut quid jam, Turne, retrahas?
Non cursu, sævis certandum est cominus armis,
Verte crines tete in facies, et contrabe quicquid
Sivæ animis, sivæ arte vales. Opta ardua pennis
Astra sequi, clausumque cavate condere terra.*

Virg. *Æn.* 12.

with other instances that may be produced, both out of *Virgil* and *Homer*.

dered

dered their camp, and returned loaden with the spoils of their conquered enemies.

Shammah also, another of *David's* officers, deserves to be placed in the register of valiant men.

When some of the *Philistines*, probably in one of these two battles, were gathered in a body, at a certain *village, near which, in a piece of ground, there were lentiles in one part, and barley in another, and some of the *Hebrew* army fled when they were attacked by them; *Shammah* bravely defended the field against the whole body of the enemy, slew great numbers of them, and obtained a signal victory over them; like § *Cocles*, the noble *Roman*, who alone opposed the invasion of the *Tuscan*s, and kept back *Porfena* with all his army, when they were ready to enter into *Rome*, upon the wooden bridge over the *Tiber*; and by this means preserved the city from falling into the hands of the invader.

David
over Ju-
dah 9, all
Israel 2.

* At a certain village. לַחֲיִיָּה. We render this word, *into a troop*, or, as it is in the margin, *for foraging*. F. Heugiant alters it into the name of a place, called *Lechi*. The interlineary version translates it, nearly as I have done, *in villa*. The word in the *Arabic* dialect, signifies *Vicus*, *Pagus*, where a family, or a large part of a tribe dwelt together; properly *a village*, from חָיָה or חָיָה *collegit, congregavit*, from persons collected together to dwell in it; or because villages are composed of several houses, near one another. See *Gol. in voc.*

§ Liv. l. ii. c. 10. Flor. 1. 10. 4.

C H A P. IV.

The translation of the ark to Jerusalem.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

AFTER this double victory over the *Philistines*, David being now at rest, in peace at home, and free from all foreign wars, applied himself to make some necessary regulations in religion, and a proper provision for the more stated performance of the solemnities of divine worship. The ark, which was the emblem of the divine presence, where God dwelt between the cherubim, was now at *Kirjath-jearim*, in the house of *Abinadab* on the hill; where it was placed, when *the *Philistines* had sent it back, after they had taken it in the battle, in which *Hophni* and *Phineas*, the sons of *Eli*, perished, and great part of the *Hebrew* army were cut off. The time of its continuance here was about forty-six years, except when, on some particular occasions, it was removed, † as once in *Saul's* time, when he fought his first battle against the *Philistines*.

As *David* had now fixed his own residence at *Jerusalem*, and intended it for the capital of his whole kingdom, he was resolved to do every thing in his power, that could contribute to the splendor, dignity, and safety of it. His first care was to secure it the presence and protection of the God of *Israel*; and accordingly, he provided a proper habitation ‡ and residence for his ark, and pitched for it a tent, where it might continually remain throughout all future ages.

The ark was a small chest, made of shittim wood, two cubits and a half, or a yard and a half and one inch long, a cubit and a half, or

* 1 Sam. vii. 1. † Ibid. xiv. 18. ‡ 1 Chron. xv. 1.

two feet nine inches broad, and overlaid within and without with pure gold. On the top of the ark was placed a seat, or cover, called כפרת; ^{David over Ju- dah 10, all Israel 3.} *the mercy seat*, as we render the word, or, *the propitiatory cover*, * because the blood of the propitiatory sacrifice was sprinkled on, and before it. In this ark were placed the two † tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were engraven, called *the testimony*; because God testified and declared, these ten commandments were essential and unalterable laws of his kingdom. On this account the ark is called, *The ark of the testimony*. In the order to make it, God says: ¶ *Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.* Here, God tells Moses: *I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims, of all things, which I will give thee in commandment, unto the children of Israel; and ‡ I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.* Hence the ark was considered as the house, the sanctuary, and temple of God, where he resided; and God is described as † *dwelling between*, or rather *above the cherubim*; not because the Hebrews were so stupid as to imagine any personal residence of God in the ark, or that he could be confined to any particular place, whom they well knew § *the heaven, even the heaven of heavens could not contain*; much less any house that could be erected for him by human hands; but because the cloud and glory, which appeared there, were the visible emblems of his gracious presence with them, and of his peculiar inspection and care over them; or, as Joshua tells them, || *whereby they should know,*

* Lev. xv. 14. † Ex. xxxi. 18. ¶ Ibid. xiv. 22.
 ‡ Levit. xvi. 2. † 2 Sam. iv. 2. § 1 King. viii. 27.
 || Josh. iii. 10. 11.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

that the living God was amongst them, even the Lord of the whole earth; viz. to protect and prosper them.

That the Majesty of this ark, or *portable temple* of God, might be preserved inviolable, God ordered a tabernacle to be prepared for its reception, and a veil to be placed before the ark, to separate *the holy place*, where the ark was fixed, from the other part of the tabernacle, where *Aaron* and his sons were to minister continually before God. Besides this, there was a spacious court prepared † *round about the tabernacle and the altar*, where the congregation were allowed to enter, and present their offerings at the door of the tabernacle, before the Lord. At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation the daily burnt offering was to be offered, where God promised to * *meet with the children of Israel, to sanctify it by his glory, and to dwell amongst the children of Israel, and be their God*, i. e. their almighty guardian and protector. Here also were to be brought all their various kinds of sacrifices, in reference to which the charge was so strict, as that God commanded, that § *whoever did not bring his sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle, there to offer it to the Lord, should be cut off from his people*; the most effectual provision this, that could possibly be made against idolatry, as it struck at the root of all idol worship; and which, had they observed the command, must have prevented the introduction of any other God, in opposition to *Jehovah*, the true God, who dwelt in the ark, and on whose altar their sacrifices must have been offered by his priests, who resided in the tabernacle.

Hither also, as to the temple of God, the religious *Hebrews* loved to resort, not only to pre-

† Exod. xl, 33. * Ibid. xxix. 42. 43. § Levit. xvii. 4.

sent their sacrifices, but to join in the celebration of the divine praises, and the singing those sacred songs, that were composed in honour of the true God, to offer up their supplications to him, and to make and pay their vows before him; and their appearance at the tabernacle for these purposes, where † *the ark of the presence* resided, was stiled, *appearing before God, coming before his presence, frequenting his courts, abiding in his house, and the like*; because they saw there *his power and glory*, or the glorious manifestation of his power and majesty, which were frequently given, as the immediate token of God's accepting their sacrifices, thanksgivings, and prayers.

David
over Ja-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

From these observations it appears, that this ark of God was of the highest importance in the *Hebrew* republick, as it was a standing memorial for *Jehovah*, the one true God, the God of *Israel*, the center of all the publick solemnities of religion, the place where the whole nation was to pay their homage and adoration to him, where he appeared propitious and favourable to his people, where they were to inquire of him, and wait for his direction; and that the presence of it was essentially necessary, where ever the publick solemnities of worship were to be performed; and that *Jerusalem* could never have been fixed on for these sacred services, nor the visible emblems of the divine Majesty and presence, in the cloud and glory, have ever been expected in it, unless this ark had been translated to, and settled there, as the place of its future and fixed residence.

These were some of the considerations that induced *David* to remove it into the new city that he had built; but there were others also, that the

† *Exod. xxv. 8.*

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

very law of *Moses* suggested to him. God had by him commanded the *Hebrews*, that † *unto the place which the Lord their God had chose out of all the tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation should they seek, and thither they should come, and thither should they bring their burnt offerings, their sacrifices, their tythes and beave offerings, their vows, their free-will offerings, and the firstlings of their herds and flocks, and that there they should eat before the Lord their God, and rejoice in all that they put their hand to, they and their household, wherein the Lord their God had blessed them*: He farther promised them, that after they had passed over *Jordan*, and dwelt in the land, which he had given them to inherit; then § *there should be a place, which the Lord their God would choose, to dwell there, and that there they should bring their burnt offerings——and all their choice vows, and that there they should rejoice before the Lord their God, they, and their sons, and their daughters, and their men servants, and their maid servants, and the Levites that was with them in their gates——and do all that he-commanded them*; * and that here, and no where else, they should eat the passover, and appear three times in it every year, before the Lord their God; at the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles; || and that here they were to apply for determining their principal causes and controversies: In a word, that this very place; which the Lord should choose, should be the capital of the whole kingdom, the principal seat of all their publick solemnities, and the perpetual residence of the supreme courts of justice and equity.

During all the preceding periods of the *Hebrew* republick, no such place had been chosen and

† Deut. xii. 5.

§ Ibid. xii. 11. &c.

* Ibid. xvi. 16,

|| Ibid. xvii. 8. 9.

appointed

appointed by God; the ark itself had no settled and fixed habitation, but removed from place to place, as convenience or necessity required; and the several judges and supreme officers, that presided over and judged the people, had their particular cities, where they resided, and administered justice to those who applied to them. In this unsettled state of the republick, many and great inconveniencies must have necessarily arisen, and the most significant and important solemnities of the national religion were absolutely incapable of being performed, according to the prescription of the law of God by *Moses*.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

The honour of making the necessary settlement in these things, and perfecting the civil polity, and the ceremonial of the *Hebrew* worship, was reserved for *David*; who when he had retaken *Jerusalem* from the *Jebusites*, had considered the strength and conveniency of its situation, had enlarged it with new buildings, adorned it with palaces, erected a magnificent one for himself, had well fortified it with walls and bulwarks, and chosen it for his own residence; was in hope that *this was the place God had now chosen to dwell in*, and immediately formed the great design of translating the ark of God into it, and providing a suitable habitation for its future rest; that this emblem of God's immediate presence might be perpetually near him, where he himself might constantly worship in the courts of his tabernacle, where all the solemn sacrifices might be statedly offered, and the affairs in general of the whole kingdom, relating to religion and justice, for the future, be transacted with regularity, order, and dignity.

In pursuance of this great design, he first § gathered together all the chosen men of *Israel*,

§ 2 Sam. xvi. 1,

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

|| thirty thousand men, consisting of the captains of thousands, and hundreds, and all the princes; and said to them, thus assembled at Jerusalem: *If it seem good unto you, and it be approved of by the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves together unto us, and let us bring up to us the ark of God; at which we but seldom inquired in the days of Saul.* To this proposal the congregation unanimously agreed. David accordingly sent messengers to *Israel*, throughout all his dominions, from *Sichor*, or the *Egyptian Nile*, the most southern boundary of his kingdom, to the entrance of *Hemath*, northward, near the rise of *Jordan*. When the assembly were met, David led them to *Bealah*, which is † *Kirjath Jearim*, and which belonged to the tribe of *Judah*; and from thence they conveyed the ark of God, where his name was invoked, even the name *Jehovah Zebaoth*, or *Lord of hosts*, who sits upon the cherubim, that were over †

|| 1 Chron. xiii. 1, &c.

† Josh. xv. 9.

† Over the ark. עליו. Upon it, or, over it. So the 70th Vulg. and Chaldee paraphrase. This word offends father Houbigant, who would alter it into ויעלו, they went up. Mr. Le Clerc hath certainly given the right rendering of the word עליו, which is the same with the versions I have mentioned, *arcæ impositis*, sitting between the cherubim, placed over the ark. But the good father finds fault with this version, because, as he asserts, there is no place, in which the cherubim are said to be placed on the ark. But he is greatly mistaken; for in God's directions to *Moses* relating to the ark, he orders him: *Thou shalt put the mercy seat על הארון מלמעלה* above, upon the ark, as we render it, and there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims, אשר על ארון which are upon, or, over the ark. *Exod. xxv. 21. 22.* This abundantly vindicates the genuineness of the word עליו in the text before us.

the

the ark. They had prepared a new || carriage, David drawn by oxen, for the conveyance of it, which over *Ju-*
Uzzab and *Abio* the sons of *Abinadab* drove to § *A-* *dah* 10, all
binadab's house; and then placing the ark upon it, *Israel* 3.
 they attended on it; *Abio* marching before the
 ark, and *Uzzab* on one side of it. When the pro-
 cession began, *David*, with all the house of *Israel*,
 gave the highest demonstrations of satisfaction and

|| The word *cart*, which our version makes use of, is apt to convey a low contemptible idea, from the form and use of a cart amongst ourselves. But the original word עגלה is by no means necessarily to be understood in such a sense. What the form and structure of it was we know nothing of; though it plainly appears, by *Uzzab's* touching the ark that was placed on it, to have been an open carriage, and the word denotes any travelling carriage, and such as persons of rank made use of. When *Pharaoh* commanded *Joseph* to bring his father and brethren, with their wives and children into *Egypt*, he ordered him to send עגלות carriages for their conveyance. Gen. xlv. 19. where we render the word, *waggons*, as also in other places; and we may be sure they were such carriages, as became the dignity of *Pharaoh* and his prime minister to send, and as were made for the conveniency of the persons who were to travel in them. The word therefore, in the place before us, should have been rendered, *carriage*; and unquestionably, such was the magnificence of *David's* temper, it was such a one as suited with the solemnity of the procession, and the sacredness of the ark, that was conveyed on it. This carriage was drawn by oxen, because horses, being unclean beasts, could not be used on such an occasion, and had the ark been drawn by them, it would have had the appearance of a procession in honour of the sun, to whom horses were sacred.

§ There is thought to be an unnecessary repetition in the third and fourth verses, and therefore *Capellus* and *F. Houbigant* are for clearing the text from what they count superfluous in it. But I think the two verses may be so rendered, as not to need any critical annotation. And they put the ark of God into a new carriage, which carriage they took from the house of *Abinadab* on the hill, and *Uzzab* and *Abio*, *Abinadab's* sons, drove the new carriage, viz. to take up the ark. And they brought this carriage out of the house of *Abinadab*, on the hill, with the ark of God placed in it, and then *Abio* went before the ark.

pleasure,

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

pleasure, playing before the Lord on all manner of instruments, made of firwood, even on harps; and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

But the joy of *David* and his people on this solemn occasion was soon interrupted. For when the procession was advanced as far as *Nachon's* threshing floor, the oxen stumbled, and thereby shook the ark; on which *Uzzab*, fearing probably it might be thrown off the carriage, very rashly laid hold of the ark of God with his hand, in order to support it; not considering, that as he was but a *Levite*, he was forbidden to touch it under penalty of death, and that, as it was the dwelling of God, and immediately under his protection, he could and would have preserved it from falling, without *Uzzab's* officious care to prevent it. For this violation of the law, *Uzzab* was immediately struck by the hand of God, and fell down dead by the ark.

*Scilicet in superis etiam fortuna luenda est,
Nec veniam læso numine casus habet.*

God smote him, as the text says, *for his error*, or as we have it in the margin, *for his rashness*; and as this is the first instance that we have of the violation of this prohibition of the *Levites*, from touching any thing sacred, under the penalty of death, the punishment of it shews that the prohibition was really divine, and that as the penalty of death was incurred, it was justly inflicted, as an example to others, and to preserve a due reverence for the divine institutions. *

Besides God had particularly appointed the manner in which the ark should be removed from place to place †; not upon a carriage drawn by

* Num. iv. 15.

† Exod. xxv. 14.

oxen,

oxen, but by ordering that the sons of *Kobab* should carry it on their shoulders, by the staves, that were put into the rings, on the sides of the ark; and their neglecting to do it on this solemn occasion, and consulting their ease more than their duty, by placing it on a carriage drawn with oxen, was an offence of no small aggravation, as it was an innovation contrary to the express order of the law.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

This *David* himself afterwards acknowledges, and assigns it as the reason of the punishment inflicted upon *Uzzab*, and as he himself and the whole house of *Israel* were present at this solemnity, and it was impossible that the nature and cause of *Uzzab*'s death could have been concealed; the insinuation that hath been made, that it was inflicted by the dagger of a priest, hath no one single circumstance to render it probable and worthy of belief. The history expressly says, that *God smote him for his rashness*, in laying hold of what he ought not to have touched; or *for his error* † in thinking God was not able to protect and

† על השל. *For that error or rashness. Super temeritate*, as the Vulgate hath it. So also the *Chaldee* paraphrast. על דאשתלי. *Eo quod deliquit*. Because he transgressed. The word may either be derived from של which denotes *perfect security* and ease of mind, which often renders men thoughtless, remiss, and careless. So we render the verb. 2 Chron. xxix. 11. על תשלן. *Be not now negligent*; according to which השל in the place before us should be rendered, *for, his incogitancy*, or want of consideration and care. Or it may be derived from שלל *raptim eduxit, abripuit prædam*, and so will denote, *precipitancy and rashness*. See Mr. Schulten's orig. Heb. vol. ii. p. 66. F. Houbigant thinks that the text hath been mutilated, and that the ancient reading was, על השלה ידו *because he put forth his hand*, viz. to touch the ark; as it is, 1 Chron. xiii. 10. He adds, that the *Syriac* and *Arabick* versions

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.


and * secure it; and *David* affirms, that *the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*, and in commemoration of it called the name of the place, *Perez-uzzah*, i. e. *the breach of Uzzah*; a plain evidence, that he knew his death to be extraordinary, and inflicted by the immediate hand of God; this is farther evident from the terror *David* was in upon account of this extraordinary accident, and his desisting for this reason from the resolution he had formed of introducing the ark into *Jerusalem* §. *David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said: How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? I am at a loss what method to take to bring the ark, with safety to myself and people, into Jerusalem.* Every circumstance in this transaction shews that *Uzzah's*

versions give this reading. But it is evident, that the *Chaldee* paraphrase and the *Vulgate* justify the present reading, the 70th wholly omitting the one and the other. When he says, that *Uzzah did not through error lay hold of the ark*, yet if he did it through precipitancy or rashness, it will still vindicate the reading of our present copies, as the word will well bear this meaning, as hath been shewn. Indeed no word could be more proper on this occasion; for as in the foregoing verse, *Uzzah* is expressly said to put forth his hand to the ark of God; it is with great propriety added in the following verse, that *God smote him*, על דשגל, for that error or rashness, which is much more emphatical, than if it had been דשגל for his error, as the learned father thinks it should have been.

* It is a very just remark of Mr. *Le Clerc* on this affair. It was not, says he, lawful for a *Levite* to touch the ark. *Uzzah* therefore behaved himself irreverently towards it, broke the law, and besides doth not seem to have entertained suitable sentiments of the immediate presence of God with it, when he imagined it might fall by the stumbling of the oxen, or the joulting of the carriage. Therefore God immediately punished him, that henceforward the people might know, that God was peculiarly present with the ark, and that the *Levites* might shew a reverential respect to sacred things; and I add, to those institutions which God had ordained, and which on this great occasion had been very criminally neglected and transgressed.

§ 2 Sam. vi. 9.

death

death was a divine punishment, and had he died by any other hand, it must have been known to many that were present, as he died in open day light, and in the view of thousands, who attended in this solemn procession. David over Judah 10, all Israel 3. 

Should it be said, that *if the Lord would have saved the ark, because he could, it may be also urged, that he would have brought it to any place, where he intended it to be, because he could have done it, and that therefore David was impertinently officious in removing it himself*; the answer is; that as God had forbidden the ark to be touched, on any occasion, by the *Levites*, under penalty of death, it was an assurance, that in all its movements he would take it under his especial protection, and that as he was able to secure it against every hazard, without human assistance, so he certainly would do it. But God never promised to remove it himself from place to place, but expressly gave that service in charge to the *Levites*; and therefore it doth not follow, that because he himself could, therefore he would remove it, because he expressly ordered it to be done by others.

But Uzzah's *intention was certainly good, and therefore the alledged crime certainly pardonable; the seeming exigency precluding all reflection*. But this seeming exigency was no real one, and his acting without reflection, an aggravation of his fault; especially as he committed this offence, in consequence of a former. *Uzzah* knew, or might have known, that the ark was never to be moved in any carriage, but on the shoulders of the *Levites*; and had it been thus removed, the accident would not have happened to the ark, and his rashness in touching, and the punishment he suffered for it, would have been both prevented. His good intention therefore here could be of no avail. It was no excuse for his ignorance, if he was really

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 5.

ignorant, because he might, and ought to have known better; nor for his presumption, and such it must have been, if he could not plead ignorance for his error, because this was in its nature an high aggravation of his fault. And light as this offence may seem, yet when it is considered in all its consequences, and what an encouragement it might have given for the introduction of other innovations, contrary to the institutions of the law of *Moses*, had this offence been passed by with impunity; it was no wonder that God should manifest his displeasure against it, by punishing with death, what he had forbidden under the penalty of it; thereby to prevent all future attempts to make any changes in that constitution, which he had established.

But *supposing that the ark had been overturned for want of this careful prevention, might not Uzzah, with greater plausibility, have been smote for his omission, than he was for his commission?* That is, might not God have more plausibly punished *Uzzah* for omitting what he had strictly forbidden him to do under pain of death, and what therefore it could never be his duty to do; than, for committing what it was unlawful by God's own command for him to commit, and which he had made the commission of a capital crime? What some criticks may think of this, I know not; I cannot for my life conceive, how *Uzzah* could have been more plausibly, or reasonably punished for omitting what it was his duty to omit, than for committing what he was obliged never to commit. The very contrary seems to me to be true, because he who doth not commit an illegal action can never deserve punishment on that account; whereas he, who actually doth such an illegal action, becomes thereby guilty, and liable to the punishment denounced against it.

On

On this unhappy accident * *David's* rejoicing David was immediately checked, and as our version over Ju- renders the word, *he was displeased*, because the dah 10, all. Lord had made a breach upon *Uzzah*. But sure- Israel 3. ly it ill became *David* to be displeased with God for thus vindicating his own honour, in the punishment of an offence, to which he had long before fixed the penalty of death. The original † word here used by no means forces us to this sense, and should have been rendered, *was exceedingly grieved* and terrified; for so it follows in the next verse: *David was afraid of God that day*. Indeed so great was his surprise and dread, that he immediately desisted from the undertaking, on the effecting which he had so much set his heart, through fear lest the presence of the ark might, some how or other, prove fatal to the inhabitants of the city; saying: *How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?* I am afraid to do it, not knowing what may be the consequence of it. He therefore ordered it to be carried to the house of *Obed-Edom* the *Gittite*, who was himself a *Levite*, and therefore fit to be intrusted with this sacred depositum. Here it continued three months, and the historian observes, that *the Lord blessed the house of*

* Chron. xiii. 11, 12.

† ויחר. This word is made use of to denote any fervor or vehemency, whether of anger or grief, or any other affection. It primarily signifies *to burn* or *inflame*, and hence is transferred to denote *the warmth of anger*, Exod. xxxii. 11. or, *the violence of grief*. Prov. xxiv. 19. Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7, 8. *Fret not thyself*, as we render the word; *distress not*, *grieve not thyself*, *because of evil men*. So 1 Sam. xv. 11. ויחר לישמואל. It grieved *Samuel*, as in our version. So the 70th, ἠδυνήθη Δαυὶδ, *contristatus est David*, as the Vulg. and also the oriental versions; and farther, even the order and intenseness of study and diligence. Nehem. iii. 20. where we render the words החרה החזק *he earnestly repaired*.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

Obed-Edom, *and all that he had*: He was favoured with an unusual and remarkable prosperity.

When this signal favour of providence was reported to *David*, he naturally concluded, that he could have nothing to fear from the presence of the ark of God, either for himself or his capital; and therefore having considered to what the punishment of *Uzzah* might be owing, he soon recollected, that the manner of its conveyance had been irregular, and contrary to God's appointment by the law of Moses; *for that none ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister to him*. Desirous therefore of securing in a more especial manner the divine blessing to his capital, and resolved a second time to attempt bringing the ark to *Jerusalem*, he gathered again all *Israel* together to assist him in the solemnity. He particularly assembled the children of § *Aaron* and the *Levites*; and sending for *Zadock*, and *Abiathar* the high priest, and six of the principal *Levites*, he thus addressed them: ‡ “ As the ark of
“ the Lord is now going to be removed, do you,
“ who are the chief of the fathers of the *Levites*,
“ sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, by
“ abstaining from all those pollutions, which the
“ law of God hath forbidden you, that you may
“ be capable of attending on the ark, and car-
“ rying it unto the place that I have prepared for
“ it. For because this was omitted, when we
“ first attempted the removal of it, and the me-
“ thod we took to carry it was contrary to the
“ order, which God had appointed for this pur-
“ pose, he, to shew his displeasure, for this vio-
“ lation of his law, made a breach upon us,
“ by striking *Uzzah* with immediate death.” †

§ 1. Chron. xv. 1.

‡ Vers. 12, 13.

† Vers. 14.

In obedience to the royal mandate, the priests ^{David} and *Levites* sanctified themselves, according to ^{over Ju-} the ritual prescribed them, that they might be ^{dah 10, all} ready to attend in their proper places. They ^{Israel 3.} were all clothed in robes of fine linen. Seventeen or eighteen of them were appointed as the porters, to carry the ark by staves on their shoulders, others of them to sing with instruments of musick, psalteries, harps and cymbals, the vocal and instrumental musick accompanying each other, during the procession, and two on each side of the ark were stationed in the office of door-keepers to it. The priests * were seven of them ordered to precede the ark sounding their trumpets; the elders of *Israel*, the captains over thousands, and the whole body of the people, playing on all manner of instruments, such as harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets and cymbals, following the ark, all of them expressing, by frequent and loud acclamations, the fulness of their joy on this happy occasion.

David himself, laying aside his royal habit, put on the same robe which the *Levites* wore, and had nothing to distinguish himself from them as to his dress, but a linen ephod, which he threw over and girt round his robe †. As he was a lover of musick, and understood the harp, he carried that instrument in his hand, and in token of his high satisfaction played on it, and danced in the view of all his people *before the Lord*, i. e. in sight of the ark, which was the emblem of his presence, according to the custom of the times, and nation, in their grand solemnities.

During the march, *David*, in order to render it more solemnly religious, sacrificed, at proper intervals, oxen and fatlings; and though the ark,

* 1 Chron. xv. 27. † 2 Sam. vi. 14. 1 Chron. xv. 27.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

with its proper furniture, must have been of a considerable weight, and the service of the *Levites*, in carrying it such a length of way on their shoulders, as from *Obed-Edom's* house to *Mount Zion*, could not but be very difficult; yet the history observes, that * *God helped the Levites*, by enabling them to bring it to its appointed place, and preserving them from every unhappy accident, till they had safely deposited it; in grateful acknowledgement of which they presented an offering unto God of seven bullocks and seven rams. As the procession was accompanied with vocal as well as instrumental musick, *David* had prepared a proper psalm or ode to be sung by the chanters, the several parts of which were suited to the several divisions of the march, and the whole of it adapted to so sacred and joyful a solemnity; as will appear by a careful perusal and examination of it. When the *Levites* first took up the ark on their shoulders, the singers began:

PSALM LXVIII.

1. Let God arise. Let his enemies be scattered.
Let them also that hate him flee from before him.

* 1 Chron. xv. 26.

Ver. 1. *Let God arise, &c.* These are the words which *Moses* made use of, when ever the ark was taken up, for the several marches of the *Hebrews* thro' the wilderness. Num. x. 35. As God was in a peculiar manner present in it, and as his presence was their great security from the dangers of the wilderness, and the power of their enemies; when the ark was lift up, *Moses* prays that God would rise up along with it, and that *his enemies may be scattered; and those that hated him might flee before him.* God's enemies were those of his people, and those who hated him, those nations who hated them, and envied and opposed that prosperity, which God was determined to procure them. *David*, with great propriety, applies these words to the translation of the ark to *Jerusalem*, since God was still equally present with it, and his aid necessary to the protection of *Jerusalem*, and to the success which *David* hoped for over the enemies of his religion and people.

2. As

2. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: David
As wax melteth before the fire, over Ju-
So let the wicked perish from the presence of God. dah 10, all
Israel 3.

3. But let the righteous rejoyce:
Let them exult before God; and exceedingly rejoyce.

4. Sing unto God. Celebrate his name in songs.
Prepare the way for him, who rideth thro' the de-
serts.

His name is JAH, and exult ye before him.

5. A


2. *As smoke is driven away, so drive them away.* נדף
signifies *quaterere, pulsare*, and from thence, *discutere, vehementius expellere, ac dispellere*. So that the sense is, as smoke is violently scattered and driven away by the wind, so do thou shake and intirely disperse them, with a force they cannot resist. See *Schult* in Prov. xxi. 6.

4. סלל. *Extol him.* So we render the words. The root is סלל which properly signifies, *viam exaggeravit*, to throw up an highway. So it is rendered; Isai. lxii. 10. *Cast up an highway.* And so undoubtedly it should be rendered here. *Cast up, make an highway for him that rideth through the desert.* So the 70th. Οδοποιήσατε. *Iter facite*, as the vulg. Latin. It is a poetical exclamation to prepare every thing for the march of God, and remove every obstruction that might delay or prevent it. So Isai. xl. 2. *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make strait in the desert an highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made strait, and the rough places plain;* to denote what the event should be, and that God would so order all things, as that there should be no more hindrance to the execution of his purposes, than in passing through an highway made smooth and level, and in every part of it fitted for convenience, ease, and safety.

Ibid. בערבות. *Upon the heavens.* So our version. The ancient versions in general render the word, *super occasus*, or *occasum*. The desert or solitude is the proper and general meaning of it, and there is no authority to render it by *the heavens*, but that of the *Rabbins*, which indeed is little or none; and of the *Chaldee* paraphrase, which gives it ליתב על כרסיה וקרניה בערבות. *Qui sedet super thronum gloriæ ejus in nono cælo.* Who sits upon the throne of his glory in the ninth heaven. The Psalmist here alludes, as I apprehend, to the passage of the *Israelites* thro' the deserts, in their way to the promised land, and describes it in many of the

David principal circumstances of it in the following verses ; and God
 over Ju- is said to *ride*, or, *be carried through the deserts*, as the ark of
 dah 10, all his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the
 Israel 3. *Israelites* in all their various stages, during their continuance
 and pilgrimage in them.

Ibid. ביה שמו. All the ancient versions give it: *His name is Jah, or Jehovah ; i. e. Lord ; and therefore Capellus and F. Houbigant read יהי for the Lord is his name ; especially as they think that the prefix Beth is quite redundant, and added to Jah in a very unusual manner. The learned Mr. Schultens also thinks the betb redundant, but according to a very common construction of the Arabic dialect. Deus est in potente, ego sum in credente, for, Deus est potens, ego sum credens. The learned Mr. Michaelis rejects this solution, because, as he says, according to this way of accounting for the expression, it should have been יה בשמו Jah est in nomine ejus ; and he therefore makes ביה a verb, and gives it a signification from that root in the Syriac dialect, which denotes solari, recreate, to comfort and refresh. I will not urge the arbitrary change of the points, which this learned writer is forced to make, to establish his sense ; though this should not be done without necessity. But I think the reading in the place before us may be fairly defended by the Arabick construction before mentioned. We have a parallel one, Isai. xxvi. 4. ביה יהוה צור עולמים In Jah Jehovah est petra atern, for, Jah Jehovah est petra eterna. To avoid the force of this instance, he tells us, that this place also needs a medical cure, and that ביה should be considered as a verb in this instance, as well as in the former, and in the same sense of solari, and that then the sense will flow easy : Jehovah, the everlasting rock comforts us. I own it flows, but I think very languid, and unaffecting, and by no means comes up to the dignity and force of the other rendering : Jah, Jehovah, is an eternal rock. Nor doth the being comforted by Jehovah, as an eternal rock, carry in it that propriety of figure, which is usual in the diction of this sublime writer ; the comfort of a rock being a quaint unusual representation. I beg leave here to mention another place, which bears a great resemblance to that before us. Exod. vi. 2, 3. I am Jehovah, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, באל שרי, literally, in el schaddai, in God Almighty ; properly, the almighty God ; him, who is necessarily, immutably, and in every sense, the Almighty God. I am not therefore for altering the present reading of the place in question, without some better reasons than I have yet seen for doing it, as the construction is justified by other places ; especially as all the ancient versions concur in rendering*

5. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of David
the widow, over Ju-
Is God in the habitation of his holiness. dah 10, all
Israel 3.
6. He maketh the solitary to dwell in families, 
He

rendering the place by, *dominus est nomen ejus*, and so justify the reading of our present copies in the place before us; as they do also in the other place, which the learned writer would correct, Isai. xxvi. 4. I may add, that if we make בִּיחַ a verb, the sense is defective, as the pronoun is wholly wanting; for in the *Hebrew* text it is not *his name comforteth* us, but *his name comforteth*.

As to the derivation and proper sense of this name of God, JAH, learned interpreters differ greatly. Some derive it from הִיחַ, *suit, extitit*, abbreviated from the future יִהְיֶה. Others take it to be a contraction of the name יְהוָה, *Jehovah*. But this is not in the least probable, because, as *Cocceius* in his *Lex.* observes, these two titles, JAH JEHOVAH are sometimes joined together. So in this very psalm, ver. 18. and elsewhere. That judicious critic derives it from יָצַח, *accuit*; and explains the name by, *τὸ ἀξιοπρεπὲς, omni decentia polentem*. He who is supream in all excellency or beauty. But there are several exceptions to this derivation, from the analogy of the language, which I shall not trouble the reader with. The learned Mr. *Schultens* derives it from יָרַח which is used in the *Arabick* dialect to denote a *religious fear and reverence*, from the original signification of *tremuit, to tremble*; according to which this name of God, JAH, will denote, *the awful deity, worthy of all reverence and fear*. And in this I acquiesce, as the most probable, and most suitable to the analogy. And thus, *his name is in the awful God, is exactly the same with, God is in the powerful, i. e. his name is the awful God, and God is powerful*.

5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.* The meaning is, that God, who is present with us in his sanctuary, or in the ark of his presence, will provide for and defend, as a father, those who have been rendered fatherless by the sword, and, as a judge, avenge the widows cause upon those who have unrighteously cut off their husbands; referring to the unjust wars that were made upon his people, and the cruelties exercised towards them by their implacable enemies, in their passage through the deserts.

6. *God setteth the solitary in families.* Literally, *God causes them to sit down into a family*. The יָחִידִים are such as *soli relinquuntur, et ope destituti*, are left alone, and destitute of help; and

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

He brings forth those who are bound with great
abundance,

But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. 7. O

and seem to mean here, such whose fathers and families were destroyed either in *Egypt*, or in passing thro' the wilderness, by their enemies. Even these God will cause to sit down, **ביתה** each of them into a family, or bless them with a numerous posterity, and with the safe and comfortable enjoyment of all the social blessings attending it. The word **מושב** here means more than the mere *setting them into families*; even rendering them secure, easy and happy in their dwellings and families; sitting being a posture of rest and security.

Ibid. *He bringeth out those who are bound in chains.* **בבושרות**.

The word is used only in this place, and the signification of *chains*, as we render it, is very uncertain, and is given to it from the similitude of its letters to **קשר** ligare, *to tie or bind*.

The *Syriac* renders the word by **בבשירותא** *cum prosperitate*, with prosperity; the others versions, *cum fortitudine*, *sive potentia*, by strength and power. *Cocceius* in his *Lexicon* renders it by *in commoditatibus*, into commodious, easy, plentiful circumstances. Mr. *Le Clerc* by *compedibus*, shackles, or rather *stocks*, because the word **כשורא** in *Chaldee* and *Syriac* signifies *asser*, or *trabs*, a plank or beam of which stocks are made. Mr. *Michaelis* agrees with *Cocceius* and the *Syriack* version; and renders it *in abundantiam*, deriving it from the *Arabick* **كشور** with a *thse* instead of the Hebrew *schin*, *abundavit*; and I would add, particularly *abundavit opibus, pecoribusve*. See *Gol.* in voce. He abounded in wealth and cattle. And in this I rest, and would render the words: *He brings forth them that were bound, with great wealth, or with numerous cattle.* Undoubtedly this relates to the state of many of the *Jerus*, who were bound or fettered in *Egypt*, but whom God brought out from thence with numerous flocks, and great riches; for that they spoiled the *Egyptians*. Mr. *Schultens* gives a still different turn to the word, explaining it by *nexus societatum, et veluti conglobationes familiarum sese numerose propagantium*; social connections, or gatherings into numerous families. God brings forth those, who were bound, into the more grateful bonds and connections of societies and family relations. See him on *Prov.* xxxi. 19. This is a very ingenious interpretation, but it seems to be rather forced. Let the reader judge for himself.

But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. **סוררים שכנו צחיחה**.

The verb **סרר** is originally and properly used of an untamed

This part of the psalm I suppose to have been sung, just as the *Levites* took up the ark on their shoulders, and it was a proper exordium to this great solemnity. It begins with a solemn acknow- David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

tamed refractory mischievous heifer, wantonly running and frisking about, or stung with a gad-bee, and vexed by it almost to madness. To such a one the prophet compares *Israel*, Hos. iv. 16. *Israel slideth back, as a backsliding heifer*, as we very badly render the words; the epithet of *backsliding* being very improperly applied to an heifer. The 70' render the words much more emphatically. Ως δαμαλὶς περιεστῆσα περιεστῆσεν Ἰσραὴλ. *As a stung heifer madly leaps about, so hath Israel grown mad, refractory, and obstinate.* Jonathan in his paraphrase gives the words another turn. *As an ox fatted kicks back, so also Israel rebels.* In a similar sense the Syriack version. *As an heifer rebels against the yoke, so have the Israelites rebelled.* It appears that the original word hath a very strong and significant meaning, and as used here, denotes those enemies of the *Israelites*, who were obstinately and madly bent on doing them mischief, and stimulated by their hatred and malice utterly to destroy them. The verb in the *Arabick* dialect signifies, *male fecit alicui, malignum præbuit se, adversatus fuit*, as may be seen in *Goliath* under the root שׁרר, the Hebrew *sin* being changed into the *Arabick* *sjin*, according to the usual permutation of those elements in the two dialects.

The verb צהח properly signifies *nituit*, to shine; hence when applied to the earth it signifies *shining*, sandy, barren ground, that produces nothing, any more than צהח סלע, a naked shining rock. Ezek. xxvi. 4. And God threatens *Tyre*, ver. 14. נִתְּתִיךָ לְצַחֲחִים סֶלֶעַ, I will make thee as a shining or barren rock, i. e. as appears by the context, strip thee of thy riches, pride, power, inhabitants, palaces; so that thou shalt be as bare as a rock, that hath nothing on it, and is of no other use than for the spreading and drying of nets. So in the place before us, the refractory enemies of God's people should dwell in a צַחֲחִים shining, dry, barren place, i. e. should be destitute of fortune, riches, family; in a word, of all the great advantages of life, and reduced to the utmost distress and poverty. The *Chaldee* paraphrase applies this verse to the state of the *Jews* in *Egypt*. *He brought out Israel, who were bound in Egypt. But Pharaoh and his army, who refused to let them go, inhabit a dry place*; referring, I suppose, to their being stripped of their riches by the *Israelites*, or the throwing up their dead bodies on the dry and sandy shore.

ledgment

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

ledgement of God, a devout prayer for the dispersion of his enemies, an exhortation to his people to glory in and rejoice before him, and celebrate his praises, who guided their forefathers into the desert, when he redeemed them from the *Egyptian* bondage, avenged them of their enemies, freed them from their fetters, enlarged them into families, enriched them with the spoils of *Egypt*, and condemned their oppressors to poverty, disgrace, and misery.

When the ark was lift up, and placed by its staves on the shoulders of the *Levites*, just as the procession began, the following part of the hymn was sung.

P A R T II.

7. O God, when thou didst go forth before thy people,

When thou didst march thro' the wilderness,

8. The earth trembled,
Even the heavens melted from before God,
Sinai itself from before God, the God of *Israel*.

9. Thou,

7. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness. This refers to God's going before them by day, in a pillar of a cloud to lead them by day, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light. *Exod. xiii. 21.* of which *Moses* puts them in mind, when he tells them, that God went in the way before them to search them out a place to pitch their tents in, in fire by night to shew them what way they should go, and in a cloud by day, *Deut. i. 33.*

8. The earth shook. When the people arrived at *Sinai*, and God descended on the mountain, the earth trembled at his presence.

Ibid. The heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord; dissolved into showers, as the consequence of the mighty thunders and lightnings, that bespoke the presence of the Almighty, and from the thick cloud that covered the mount. *Exod. xix. 16.*

Ibid. Even this *Sinai*, at the presence of God, the God of *Israel*. Supply, either *שׁוּק* trembled, or *נָטַף* dropped, and as it were flowed

9. Thou, O God, didst pour down a plentiful rain,
David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

flowed down and dissolved. So *Deborah*, Jud. v. 4. 5. in her song of triumph, says: O Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst from the field of Edom, the earth trembled, even the heavens dropped, even the clouds dropped down water; the mountains *גִּלְיָם* flowed down at the presence of the Lord; this Sinai, viz. *גִּלְיָם* flowed down at the presence of the God of Israel. Jud. v. 4. 5. I think therefore that *P. Houbigant's* placing the sentences in a different order, and reading: *The earth trembled, even Mount Sinai, before the Lord; even the heavens dropped, &c.* is quite needless; since, by the same figure, *Mount Sinai* may be said to drop or disil water by the water running down from all parts of it, and through the various crevices and hollows in it, as to flow down with water by means of the storm of rain, that accompanied the thunder and lightning.

9. *Thou didst send, O God, a plentiful rain.* תִּנְיָה. The verb signifies, *eminuit, emicuit.* See *Gol.* in voc. and is here used to denote the nature of the descent of the shower spoken of. It was visible over their heads, by a kind of waving, glittering appearance. It is frequently used of the lifting up and waving the hand. 2 Kin. v. 1. where what we render, *strike his hand over the place*, should have been rendered, as it is in the margin, *move it up and down*, or, in one word, *wave it over the place.* Hence it is figuratively applied to God. *With his mighty wind he shall shake his hand over the river, and smite it.* Isai. xi. 15. and in other places. It is also applied to those offerings, which were to be held up, and waved, or shaken to and fro, that they might become observable and conspicuous to all. Exod. xxix. 24. Thus God caused a plentiful shower to fall on the *Israelites* in a waving vibrating manner, that rendered it conspicuous and remarkable to all.

What this shower was is not by all agreed. It is called גֶּשֶׁם נְדִבּוֹת. *A plentiful shower*, as we render it. I think we do not read of any showers of rain that fell, during the continuance of the *Israelites* in the wilderness, except that before mentioned on *Sinai*. Sometimes they were supplied with wells, and at other times God gave them miraculously water from rocks. The dropping of the heavens in the foregoing verse cannot be intended, because this plentiful rain is spoken of as a distinct thing from it, and the description of it as גֶּשֶׁם נְדִבּוֹת *a shower as it were voluntarily falling*, distinguishes

David
over Ju-
dah &c, all
Israël 3.


Thou didst confirm thy inheritance, even when
weary.

10. Thy

distinguishes it from a thunder shower, occasioned by the violent bursting of the clouds. I think therefore this shower relates to *the manna and the quails*, which were rained down on them from heaven. Thus God told them: *I will rain bread from heaven for you.* Exod. xvi. 4. And the Psalmist puts them in mind: *He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the corn of heaven.* Ps. lxxviii. 23. 24. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls as the sand of the sea.* ver. 27. which came and pitched round their camp, so that there was plenty for the whole congregation. This may truly be called a kind of *spontaneous shower*, as both the manna and the quails offered themselves into their hands, without any pains or labour in the people to procure them.

Ibid. *Thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.* Moses, in his song, tells the Hebrews: *The Lord's portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* Deut. xxxii. 9. And so they are frequently called by the sacred writers. Mr. *Le Clerc* is here inconsistent with himself. In his paraphrase he explains *נחלתך* by *populum tuum*; but in his notes by *terram Chananæam Israelitis, quasi Dei colonis, datam*; the land of *Canaan* which God gave to the *Israelites* as his tenants. But I do not remember any place where the land of *Canaan* is certainly called God's inheritance. The people were God's inheritance, and the land of *Canaan* was theirs. Besides, the Psalmist is speaking of events, that happened in the passage through the desert, and therefore God's confirming his inheritance must relate to that period, and not to what afterwards happened in *Canaan*. The learned *Michaelis* is, I think, much farther from the mark, who renders the original word by *peculium tuum*, and in his note says: *Montem intelligit et desertum Sinaiticum, quæ terra sancta, Exod. iii. 5. a Deo dicitur, atque hic in sanctuariis Dei locum habet.* He means the mountain and desert of *Sinai*, which is called the holy land by God, Exod. iii. 5. and which may be regarded as one of his sanctuaries. I think the learned writer infers too much from the place he cites; which is: *The place where thou standest is holy ground*; viz. because of the near appearance of God; not the whole mountain and desert of *Sinai*; which, had they been holy, would have obliged the *Israelites* to walk without shoes all the time of their continuance in it. Nor is there any passage to prove, that God regarded either as
his

10. Thy food, they dwelt in the midst of it, David
Thou didst prepare, O God, by thy goodness for ^{over Ju-}
the poor. ^{dah 10, all}
^{Israel 3.}

11. The 

his sanctuary. I think the people themselves are here spoken of as God's inheritance, and that the following words confirm this; for, it is added: *Thou didst confirm thy inheritance.* כִּוְנַנְתָּה. I do not find that this word is ever used to signify *complanare*, to make smooth and level, and therefore can't be meant of the smoothing or levelling the earth, by large showers of rain in the place before us. It is generally used in the sense of confirming, establishing, and others of a like nature, and is well rendered by *confirmabas, refecisti, constabilivisti*, thou didst confirm, establish, or, recruit and refresh thine inheritance, for they greatly needed it, as they are described to be in circumstances of great distress.

Ibid. נַחֲלֶתְךָ וְנִלְאָה. *Thine inheritance when it was weary.* I do not find that נִלְאָה is ever applied to the earth or ground, to denote the parching up the fruits of it with excessive drought. It is applied to men, and generally denotes, either to be weary, or to bear with impatience and displeasure; a meaning, that exactly suits with the circumstances of the *Israelites*, when God rained down their bread and meat upon them. For the whole congregation murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron* in the wilderness, and said to them: *Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.* *Exod. xvi. 3.* They were tired, and almost worn out with hunger, and bare their wants with great grief and impatience.

10. חֵיתְךָ יֹשְׁבוּ בָהּ. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein.* There is no small difficulty in these words. Interpreters differ as to the meaning of חֵיתְךָ, which we render, *thy congregation*, and Mr. Le Clerc, *coetus tuus*, and others by a word of like kind. But if we take the word in this sense, to what must we refer בָּהּ, which is feminine, and hath nothing to answer to, but נַחֲלֶתְךָ in the verse before; the rendering of which will then be: *Thy congregation dwelt in thy inheritance*; a version no one will contend for. Others render חֵיתְךָ by *pecudes tuæ, sive greges*, as father Houbigant; which he understands of the *Israelites* themselves; for his note is: *Deum habet ut pastorem; populum Israel, ut illas, quas Deus pascit, pecudes.* But this will be liable to the same objection

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

objection, as the former interpretation of the word was. Others therefore understand the words of *the cattle* of the *Israelites* properly; which dwelt in or amongst the inheritance and people of God, he providing even food for their sustenance in the desert. The learned *Michaelis* hath a peculiar thought here, rendring the word by, *animalia tua*, i. e. *animalia tibi sacra*; adding, *quæ in loco sancto sunt, ipsa sacra et sub tutela numinis esse putantur, animalia*. Animals sacred to thee, i. e. God; for animals that are in a sacred place, are themselves sacred, and supposed to be under the protection of the deity. But it doth not appear, that the desert of *Sinai* was more sacred than any other desert they past through; or that the animals and wild beasts of any deserts were accounted sacred to God, and under his immediate protection. If either of these interpretations be the right one, I should adhere to that, which refers the word to the flocks and herds of the *Israelites*, for which God in his bounty provided, as well as for the people themselves.

But I beg leave to propose another interpretation of the whole clause, quite different from any of the others, or that I have any where seen, which is quite agreeable to the sense of the original words, the usual construction of the language, and the history itself. In the former verse the Psalmist tells us, that God had confirmed, refreshed, and revived his inheritance, by the plentiful, and as it were voluntary showers of bread and flesh, that he rained down upon them. In these words, I apprehend, he speaks of the manner, as well as abundance of the food he gave them. חֵיִת, *Thy food*, the food which thou gavest them יֹשְׁבוֹ בָּהּ. *They dwelt in the midst of it*. Thus the history informs us. As to the manna, 'tis said: *In the morning the dew lay round about the host, and when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, and they said, it is manna*. *Exod. xvi. 13—15*. And as to the quails, the historian observes, that *they were let fall by the camp, about a day's journey, on one side, and a day's journey on the other, round about the camp*. *Num. xi. 31*. This was literally dwelling in the midst of the food God provided for them. In this sense of food and provision חֵיִת is used, *Isai. lvii. 10*. *Ezek. vii. 13*. As to the syntax, I render חֵיִת *quod ad victum tuum attinet*, as to thy food; the nominative case being here used absolutely, as it is in many other places of the sacred writings. See *Glass. p. 286*. Many others may be added. But this I submit to the judgment of abler criticks.

11. The

11. The Lord gave the word: David
 Large was the number of the women, that published the glad tidings: viz. over Judah 10, all Israel 3.
12. "Kings of armies fled away. They fled away: {
 "And she that staid at home divided the prey.
13. Tho'

11. *The Lord gave the word.* Having celebrated the power and goodness of God, that fed them in the wilderness, he now proceeds to speak of the great deliverances he wrought out for them from their enemies, who opposed their passage, and intended their destruction. They were attacked first by the Amalekites, , *who met them by the way, and smote the hindmost of them, all of them that were feeble*, when they were faint and weary with the fatigue of their journey. Deut. xxv. 18. by *Arad, a Canaanitish king*. Numb. xxi. 1. by *Sibon, king of the Amorites*, ver. 23. *Og, king of Bashan*, ver. 33. by the *Midianites and Moabites*. Num. xxv. xviii. With respect to all these enemies, the Lord *gave the word*. The *Israelites* engaged them by his order; see Numb. xxv. 17.—xxi. 34. and under his conduct and blessing obtained the victory over them.

Ibid. *Great was the number of those that published it.* The original word *המבשרות* is feminine, and points out the women, who with musick and songs and dancings, celebrated the victories of the *Israelites* over their enemies, according to the custom of those times. Exod. xv. 20. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. So also in this march, between the vocal and instrumental musick, were the damsels playing on timbrels, ver. 25. and the paragraph should be translated: *Great was the number of the women who published, i. e. in their songs spread abroad, the glad tidings: viz.*

12. *Kings of armies did flee apace.* In the original, it is; *fled away; fled away*; the reduplication of the words denoting their hasty flight, and utter dissipation. The kings, that commanded the armies that opposed them, fled with their routed forces, and were pursued and destroyed by the *Israelites*.

Ibid. *And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.* After the conquest of the *Midianites*, God ordered the prey that was taken from them to be divided into two parts, between them who went out on that expedition, and the rest of the congregation who continued in their tents. Num. xxxi. 27. And therefore this was part of the damsel's song, that the women who had the charge of the household affairs, were enriched by an equal division of the enemies spoil, which their

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

13. "Tho' ye have lien among the pots,
"Ye shall *now lie down* within the wings of a
dove covered with silver,
"And her feathers with yellow gold."

14. When

husbands and fathers had their share in. And I apprehend, that it is the victory over the *Midianites* that is here particularly referred to. For *the Lord gave the word*. Avenge the children of *Israel* of the *Midianites*, Num. xxxi. 2. *Kings of armies fled away*; five of the *Midianitish* kings being routed and slain, ver. 8: *She that tarried at home divided the spoil*, according to the distribution before mentioned; vast quantities of gold and silver being taken, to which there is a plain allusion in the next verse. Mr. *Le Clerc* seems quite at a loss for the interpretation of these two verses, and imagines they refer to some future victories of *David*; whereas the scene is certainly laid in the wilderness, and the passages refer to the transactions therein, when God arose, marched before his people, and made all their enemies flee before them.

13. *Tho' ye have lien amongst the pots.* אִם תִּשְׁכְּבוּ בֵּין שִׁפְתִּים. The word שִׁפְתִּים occasions great difficulties to interpreters, and is by them very variously rendered. The word is used but once more in the scriptures. Ezek. xl. 43. where, whatever be the meaning of the word, it is impossible it can signify, what Mr. *Michaelis* thinks it doth, a trunk or gutter for receiving the water, that falls from the tops of the houses; because these are always placed on the outsides of the houses; whereas the שִׁפְתִּים are there expressly said to be בְּבֵית in the house round about. When I consider the context, and amongst what sort of things these שִׁפְתִּים were placed, viz. the sacrificial instruments, I think they must denote some of those instruments or vessels, that were made use of in the sacrifices; either as the *Targum* gives it, the עֲנָקְלִיךְ *uncini*, hooks fastened on the inside of the house, for hanging up the flesh of the sacrifices, as our version hath it in Ezekiel; and within are hooks fastened round about; or, as I gather from the *Arabick* dialect, the iron spits for roasting the flesh; as שִׁפְוֹר from שִׁפֹּר, the *Tbau* and *Daleth* frequently changing for each other, signifies *veru ferreum, in quo assantur carnes*, as in *Goliath*; or as others explain it, the *ollæ* or pots for boiling, as our version in the place before us renders it; *tho' ye have lien amongst the pots*. This description agrees with what the *Israelites* said of themselves, when they murmured for want of food: *We sat by the flesh pots*. Exod. xvi. 13. as it was part of

of their servile druggery to attend them; and with what the Psalmist represents God himself as saying of them: *I removed his shoulder from the burthen. His hands were delivered from the pots.* Pf. lxxxi. 6. and with what Moses tells them: *The Lord hath taken you, and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt.* Deut. iv. 26. And as the original word שפתיים is in the *dual* number, I apprehend these pots were placed in rows, fixed in stone or bricks, thro' which they were to pass; which seems to be intimated, Pf. lxxxi. 6. which I think should be thus rendered: *I removed his shoulder from the burthen, his hands from the pots thro' which they passed.* This will account very well for the derivation of the word, from שפת, *posuit, ordine collocavit*; the שפתיים being kettles, or pots, or furnaces, for various uses, placed in double rows, and so regularly disposed for convenience and use. *Quum jaceretis inter strues, sive lapides, quibus ollæ imponuntur*, as Cocceius explains the words. I do not think it necessary here to make any remarks on another word, near alike to this, and from the same root, משפתיים, twice used, Gen. xlix. 14. and Jud. v. 16. because it is of a different form, and may therefore have a very different signification; and shall only say, that to me it is extremely doubtful, whether in either of the two places it signifies *Canalis*, a trunk, or trough for the conveyance of water; and that this sense, I apprehend, is by no means suitable to the passage under consideration.

Upon the whole, I apprehend that the Psalmist intends to point out, by this description, the wretched, sordid, and miserable condition of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, when they were condemned to the vilest drudgeries, and had the dress and appearance of slaves; and thus it will stand in a just opposition to the great and pleasing alteration that was made in their circumstances, by their stripping the *Egyptians*, and the spoils they took from their enemies who attacked them, and who were conquered by them in the wilderness. For thus it follows:

Ibid. Ye are as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold, as we render the passage. In the words themselves there is no difficulty; in the construction and sense of them there seems to be not a little; insomuch that F. Houbigant says: *Habes, lector, in eo versu, tanquam Acro-ceraunia saxa, et interpretum naufragiis infames scopulos*; and in order to avoid shipwreck himself from these fatal rocks, he doth not interpret the words, but without any authority, and in virtue of an imagination that he hath formed in his own head, alters them, and gives us a quite new text, without attempting to explain the old one. Of שפתיים he makes two words, שפתיים הייתם, *colles, eritis*; and so also of כנפי

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

David he makes the first letter *capb* to signify *sicut, ac*; and the re-
 over Ju- maining part of it, *ינב*, to denote *librations*, wavings, or
 dahio, all hoverings; and renders the whole: *Quando intra colles sub-*
 Israel 3. *sislebatis, sic apparebatis, ut librans sese per aerem columba, ar-*
 gento intecta, &c. When ye abode within the hills, ye ap-
 peared as a dove waving herself, or hovering in the air, co-
 vered with silver, and her wings yellow with gold. And the
 image intended to be conveyed he thinks is this: That when
 the *Israelites* ascended the hills, and pitched their tents in
 them, after they had beat their enemies in the plains, then
 their army, when their troops moved in this advanced situa-
 tion, and waved and displayed their colours or banners,
 yielded a resemblance to the neighbouring fields of a dove,
 ballancing or hovering herself thro' the air, vibrating and
 darting forth all around her the yellowness of gold in her
 wings, and the snowy whiteness of her body. But I think
 there are some difficulties in it, and that he himself is not
 quite free from the danger of shipwreck upon these *infames*
scopuli. For, in the first place, I do not find any such word
 as *ינב* or in construction *ינב*, any where, or in any sense,
 and particularly not in that of *librations*, which is one very
 considerable objection against this amendment. In the next
 place, the whole alteration is without the authority of any
 of the ancient versions. Again, there is no mention of
 hills in the preceeding context, or of the *Israelites* ascend-
 ing the hills, and encamping on them, and their moving
 between them. Nor do we, as I apprehend, know enough
 of what the colours and standards of the *Israelites* were
 made, or whether they were adorned with gold and silver,
 to warrant such a comparison as this; nor is the motion
 of a dove, flying in the air, which is swift and hasty, a
 proper representation of the slow and regular motion of an
 army in march; nor is the libration of its wings a proper
 resemblance of the wavings of its colours. Nor hath this de-
 scription of the march of the *Israelitish* army, any kind of
 connection with what goes before, or comes after. If we keep
 the present reading, I think the sense is good, and the con-
 struction usual. The *שפתים*, as hath been shewn, may well
 signify those pots or furnaces, at which the *Israelites* in *Egypt*
 wrought as slaves, and amongst which they were forced to
 lie down for want of proper habitations, and in the most
 wretched and vile attire. But how great was their alteration
 by the conquest of their enemies, and especially the *Mi-*
dianites; from whom they took the spoil of their cattle, their
 flocks, and all their goods; and particularly an immense
 quantity of jewels of gold, chains, bracelets, rings, ear-
 rings, tablets, raiments, furnitures made of skins, and works
 of goats hair, as we find mentioned, Num. xxxi. for the
 Midia.

14. When the Almighty scattered kings there- David
 in, over Ju-
 Thou didst make them joyful in Salmon. dah 10, all
 PART Israel 3.

Midianites used to carry their treasures with them, when they went to war with their enemies. See Judg. viii. 21. 26. To this conquest of the *Midianites* *Habbakuk* refers, when he says: *The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.* c. 3. v. 7. Being thus enriched by the spoils of your enemies, תשכבון as I would supply *απο νουε, ye shall now lie down*, dwell at ease, and with elegance in your tents, בין כנפי יונה within the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. כנה signifies, *cinxit, custodivit, sepivit domum, paravit tegumentum*; and the substantive, any thing that covers or encompasses another, whether garment or tent, or whatever the particular form or use of it may be. And these כנפי יונה dove-like coverings, denote either their rich garments, or costly tents, which they took from these *Midianites*; which, either because of their various colours, or their being ornamented with silver and gold, resembled the colours of a dove, the feathers of whose wings and body glistered interchangeably, as with silver and gold. See *Bochart Hier.* p. 2. lib. 1. c. 2. Or, if we supply, as our version doth, היתם, and *caph*, as denoting a similitude, there are many like instances to justify these supplements. For there is nothing more common than the omission of the verb substantive; and as to the want of the *caph* of similitude, the very version of *F. Houbigant* is an instance of it. *Ut --- columba, argento intesta, pennis auro flavescens.* As a dove covered with silver, and her wings yellowing with gold; i. e. like a dove covered, as with silver, and her wings yellow, as with gold; with colours resembling those of silver and gold. For the dove hath neither gold nor silver about her.

14. When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon. *F. Houbigant* imagines there is a dislocation of the words, *When the Almighty scattered kings in it*; and thinks they should be placed at the beginning of the 12th verse. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, the kings of armies fled apace, &c.* But here also the ancient versions are all against him. The latter part of the verse, *it was white as snow in Salmon*, he makes to be a farther description of the dove, and renders it: *Ipsa nivea ut Salmon.* Her self snow white as Salmon. But as the whiteness of the dove, in distinction from the appearance of her yellow feathers, was just before represented, by the whiteness of silver, it is not probable it

David should be a second time represented by the whiteness of snow over Judah.

The kings here referred to, may be *Sihon*, king of the *Amorites*, and *Og*, the king of *Basban*; or rather, the five kings of *Midian*, mentioned, Num. xxxi. 8. These kings God scattered. פָּרַשׁ שָׂרִי. The verb properly signifies, *stravit, instravit*; and from thence, *humi stravit, conculcavit, vicit*; to trample on the ground, as the consequence of being intirely overcome. See Gol. in voce. בָּהּ may refer to אֶרֶץ the country of *Midian*, where these kings were taken and destroyed. This conquest of the *Midianites* was so intire, as that the Psalmist, praying for deliverance from the nations, who had confederated to cut off the Hebrews from being a nation, and that the name of Israel should no more be remembered, says: Do unto them as unto the *Midianites*. Ps. lxxxiii. 9. The consequence of this signal victory was תִּשְׁלֵג בְּצִלְמוֹן. It was white as snow in *Salmon*. *Salmon* here cannot be that *Mount Salmon* mentioned, Judg. ix. 48. for this was in the tribe of *Ephraim*; but that *Salmon*, of which the Psalmist here speaks, was in, or near the land of *Midian*, where the *Midianitish* kings were destroyed, and was probably one of the high places of *Baal*, from whence *Balaam* viewed the people of *Israel*. Num. xxii. 41. or one of the adjacent hills, rendered famous by this conquest of the *Midianites*. Or, to mention another conjecture. We read that king *Arad*, the *Canaanite*, who dwelt in the south, when he was informed that *Israel* came by the way of spies, attacked them with all his forces, and took some of them prisoners. But, in a second engagement, God delivered up the *Canaanites* into their hands, and they intirely destroyed them, with their cities. Before this action they were at *Mount Her*, where *Aaron* died, and this action probably happened in their march to their next station, which was *Salmon*, or *Salmonah*. Compare Num. xxi. 1. 2. 3. with chap. xxxiii. ver. 40. 41. In *Salmon*, therefore, God discomfited kings, *Arad*, with his confederates. And as *Salmon*, or *Salmonah*, is fœminine, בָּהּ which is also fœminine, will refer to it, and the construction and sense of the whole will be easy. See *Glass Philol. Sac.* p. 337. This victory was very remarkable, as it was in consequence of a vow made to God, utterly to destroy them according to his command, if he would vouchsafe them the victory, as it was after some loss they had sustained at the first encounter, as it was intire, and the first remarkable advantage they had obtained over the *Canaanites*, and so a kind of earnest of their future conquests.

תִּשְׁלֵג it snowed, or was white as snow, as in our version. But I do not see, even supposing it snowed during the battle in

in this place, that this was a circumstance of so much consequence, as to deserve to be mentioned on so solemn an occasion, as that on which this ode was composed. Bishop Patrick paraphrases it: *By scattering all their kings, the Almighty appeared most illustrious as Salmon.* But this comparison doth not appear to me natural, and with a sufficient dignity to be allowed. The verb שלח in Arabic, written with a *thse* instead of a *schin*, signifies *ninxit cælum*, and also, *tranquillo, etiam læto animo fuit homo*; et in quarta cong. *nivosus fuit dies, item, lætitia affecit*; as in Golius; *quasi refrigerium attulit, prout refrigeratus animus tranquillum et lætæ signat.* Vid. Schult. Clav. Dialect. p. 304. According to this sense, we may render the words: *There was great joy in Salmon.* Or rather, תשלח may be considered as the second person, and addressed to God. *Thou didst refresh and render them joyful in Salmon,* both on account of the great victory obtained, and the spoils they took from their conquered enemies. And in this sense; as what appears most probable to me, I acquiesce.

How proper were these reflections upon the past interpositions of God's providence in favour of his people, upon this great event, the translation of the ark to *Jerusalem*? This was the place where God was now to be peculiarly present; his dwelling place, where the great earnest of his especial protection and blessing was to dwell; the same ark, that went before them in their marches through the wilderness, and out of which God, as it were, went forth, subdued their enemies before them, and settled them peaceably in that good land, which he had promised to their fathers. As it was now to be fixed at *Jerusalem*, the capital of the kingdom, that city was henceforwards to become the city of the living God, its prosperity to be secured by his presence, and in that the welfare and safety of the whole nation.

When the ark came in view of *Mount Sion*, the place of its fixed residence for the future, and probably when they began to ascend it, I apprehend, they sang the following part of this sacred composition.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

PART III.

15. Is the hill of *Bashan*,
Is the craggy hill, the hill of *Bashan*, the hill of
God?

16. Why look ye with envy, ye craggy hills?
THIS is the mountain God hath desired to dwell
in.

Yea, the Lord will dwell there for ever.

17. The

15. *The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, an high bill, as the hill of Bashan*, according to our version. If these words be read with an interrogation, they will appear suitable to the occasion, and worthy of the genuine spirit of poetry. *The bill of God*, that hill which God hath chosen to inhabit; *is it the bill of Bashan, the bill with its craggy eminences, the bill of Bashan?* Bashan may boast of its proud eminences, its high summits; but is this the hill where God will fix his residence? The **הרים גבניים** are unquestionably *montes concreti*, not congealed with ice and snow, an image not suitable to the present occasion; but rough and gibbous, with sharp and protuberant bunches or eminences, so as to be very disagreeable and horrid to the view. See *Schult. clav. dialect. p. 196, 197*. He seems to speak of *Bashan* with contempt and disdain, as a scabrous, craggy, ill-sighted hill, and unworthy the honour of being the residence of the ark of God. And this agrees well with what immediately follows.

16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills?* According to our version. The verb we render *leap* **תרצרון** is properly used of a lion, or other wild beast, lying in wait, and with rolling eager eyes looking for his prey. And from thence it signifies, *obliquis oculis et insidiosis observare, quod ipsum est invidiæ*, as Mr. *Michaelis* observes; or as Mr. *Schultens* before him, *limis oculis intueri, Animad. Philol. p. 161*. To look upon another with sly, treacherous, and envious eyes; the oblique and wry cast of them being the genuine indication of envy. So that the Psalmist poetically introduces *Bashan* and the other hills, as looking with envy on *Mount Sion*, that she, above all the other mountains, should be favoured with the residence of the eternal God, and become the fixed seat of his ark, in which he dwelt between the cherubim. He tacitly bids them cease their envy, and by pointing to *Mount Sion*, tells them:

Ibid.

17. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, David
Even thousands of thousands, over Ju-
The Lord is amongst them, O Sinai, in the dah 10, all
sanctuary. Israel 3.

Ibid. *This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.* דָּוָר.
See, there is the hill, which God hath chosen above all
others to inhabit. Yea, the Lord will dwell there for ever.
His ark shall never be removed from it to any other dwelling
whatsoever.

17. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand.* When Moses
blessed the people, he tells them: *The Lord came from Sinai,*
and rose up from Mount Scir to them. He shone forth from Pa-
ran, and he came with ten thousand saints. Deut. xxxiii. 2.
Mr. Le Clerc thinks, that by *the saints* Moses meant the *Is-*
raelites, who are called the saints of God; but I apprehend, that
this place of the Psalmist, who evidently alludes to the ap-
pearance on *Sinai*, proves that by the saints in that place
are meant the angels of God; because the chariots, which
he mentions, cannot be the chariots of the *Hebrews*, since
they had none, and therefore must mean those invisible and
heavenly chariots, which are in scripture ascribed unto God.
Thus *Isaiab* represents God: *He will come with fire, and with*
his chariots like a whirlwind. Isai. lxvi. 15. Thus *Elisha's*
servant saw that *the hill was full of horses, and chariots of fire,*
about his master. 2 Kin. vi. 17. These chariots are here said
to be *twenty thousand*; a certain number put for an uncer-
tain; only denoting a very large multitude.

Ibid. *Even thousands of angels.* אֱלֹפִי שָׁנָן, according to
our version. So the *Chaldee* paraphrase, אֱלֹפִין רַאֲנָנִיא.
Thousands of angels. Deut. xxxiii. 2. The 70th render שָׁנָן
by ὡδονοῦντες, *latantium*, as the *Vulg.* but whether they meant
angels or men, is uncertain. They seem, as *Coccius* ob-
serves, to have read שָׁנָן, from שָׁנָן, *tranquillus, felix fuit.*
F. Houbigant, as usual, mends the text, and reads שָׁנָאִים
from שָׁנָא *concordem esse*, and travels a long way to find out
this meaning, in which it is never used in the sacred writ-
ings, even to *Æthiopia*; this sense, as he tells us, having
been conveyed from the *Hebrew* to the *Æthiopic* language.
But if we read *schinin* in the plural, instead of *schinan* in the
singular number, as our translators seem to have done, that
plural termination, tho' more usual in the *Chaldee* dialect,
ought not to have been objected against by *F. Houbigant*, as
barbarous, in *David's* compositions, because, as he affirms,
there was no agreement between the Hebrews, and the Chaldee
nation

David over Ju- dah 10, all Israel 3. *nation and tongue.* For the *Chaldee* dialect was far more ancient than *David*, and this very plural termination י for יִּי, is frequently used in the book of *Job*, in *Prov.* xxxi. 3. and many other places of scripture; and there was undoubtedly a greater agreement between the two dialects in *David's* time, than in after ages, when the variations between them grew more considerable by length of time; and as in all dialects, so unquestionably in these, there might be some words, in which the terminations might generally differ, and yet both occasionally pronounce them each way. See *Schult. Institut.* p. 474. Nor can I see why the good father should forbid us to go to the *Chaldee* dialect for a termination, when he goes to the *Æthiopick* for the meaning of a word. If he will allow me the former, I will readily allow him the latter, whenever there is occasion. But I think we may safely keep the reading of our present copies, and the rendering of the two words will be, *millia iterationis*, or *millia iteratu*, thousands doubled, or repeated, i. e. *thousands of thousands*. The angels of God are undoubtedly referred to, and I would render the whole verse: *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, thousands of thousands, the Lord is amongst them, O Sinai, in the sanctuary.* The sense of the whole verse I take to be this. *Sinai* may boast of the honour of the appearance of God, and the attendance of ten thousand of his saints, when he gave the law from thence. But now there are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands of the angels and chariots of God attending the ark of his presence. The same God, who was formerly encompassed with his angels on thee, O *Sinai*, is now amongst them here, and his future residence will be with them in his sanctuary on *Mount Sion*.

There is somewhat peculiarly pleasing and poetical in this part of this sacred hymn. *Bashan* was an high hill, and situated in the territories of the *Hebrews*; and if the loftiness of its summits could give it any claim to the preference, *Sion* must have lost the honour of being the residence of the ark of God's presence. But the interrogation, if my rendering be allowed, expresses a contempt for *Bashan*, and comes with peculiar propriety, if, as I suppose, this part of the hymn was sung, just when the procession came in view of *Sion*. The representation of the hills as leaping with a kind of eagerness to be chosen for
 God's

God's residence, or rather as envying *Mount Sion* David for the choice God had made of it, is in the over Ju- true spirit of poetry, which can make mountains dahro, all speak and move, rejoice and grieve, when ne- Israel 3. cessary to enliven the scene, and adorn the sub- ject. The introducing the angels of God, as de- scending on the hill, and his chariots as attend- ing and guarding the ark into its habitation, in much larger numbers than they were on *Mount Sinai*, is finely and sublimely imagined, to create in the people a firm belief, that *Jerusalem* should be under the special care of God, and that the army of heaven should be stationed there for the protection and safety of the ark and city. Nothing could have been more elegantly thought of, or better adapted to the occasion.

When the ark had ascended *Mount Sion*, and was deposited in the place assigned for it, the singers proceeded.

P A R T IV.

18. Thou hast ascended on high,
Thou hast led captivity captive.
Thou hast received gifts among men, even from
the rebellious,
That the Lord might have an habitation.

19. Blessed

18. *Thou hast ascended on high.* Thou hast now marched up to the heights of *Mount Sion*, and taken possession of this sacred hill; God being figuratively said to do what the ark had done; as he peculiarly resided, and gave frequently visible appearances of his majesty and glory in it. *Thou hast led captivity captive.* Thou hast led captive our enemies, by enabling us to subdue them, and reduce them into subjection to us; referring either to the many signal victories God had given them in former times, or the victories *David* himself had obtained, by his assistance, over the *Philistines*, and which he mentions here as an earnest of his future successes.

Thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious. מורדים are malignant adversaries, such as through hatred and envy opposed *David's* government, and disturbed, by their in-
vasions

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

19. Blessed be the Lord. He bears our bur-
thens every day.

He is the God of our salvation.

20. God

invasions the quiet of his reign. *For these, or as the words should be rendered, amongst these God received gifts.* Thou hast received gifts from men, even from amongst the refractory, envious opposers of thy kingdoms. These gifts were the spoils of his conquered enemies, particularly the *Philistines*, which God is said *to receive, or to have taken from them*, as they were taken under his conduct by *David*, and given to enrich his victorious people, and part of which *David* himself consecrated לִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, *that the Lord God might inhabit, or have an habitation or dwelling.* Thus of *Babylon* the prophet says : לֹא תִשְׁכֵּן, *non confidebit, non habebit habitaculum*, as *Cocceius* renders it, *it shall not sit, it shall have no habitation, or place where it shall rest, or abide for ever.* *Isai. xiii. 19.* The immense charge of this procession, and the whole apparatus for the reception of the ark, was undoubtedly supported, at least in part, by the riches he obtained as the fruit of his victories; and I think it probable that *David* had now, in some measure, formed the scheme of erecting a temple to the honour of God, לִשְׁכַּן אֱלֹהִים *ad habitandum deum*, that God might have an habitation, and that he determined to make the voluntary offering of his friends, and the spoils of his conquered enemies, subservient to this great design. It may be farther observed, that these words are capable of a different rendering: *Thou hast received gifts, that the Lord God might dwell amongst men, even amongst the rebellious*, i. e. subdued thine enemies, and rendered them tributary to thy throne, that they might enjoy the benefit of thy protection, and live happily under thy government; God being said to receive the gifts which were offered to *David*, and to reign over them, as they were subjected to *David's* crown, who was God's king, whom he had established in *Sion*. But I rather choose the former sense, as it seems most agreeable to the apostle's application of the words to our blessed Saviour, *Eph. iv. 8.* to whom they are in an higher sense applicable, than they could be to *David*; who personally ascended up to the highest heavens, led captivity captive by triumphing over all his conquered enemies, and having received gifts from his heavenly father, gave them unto men, as was most conducive to the establishment of his kingdom over all the nations of the earth.

19. *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits; even the God of our salvation.* The words, *with his benefits*, are put in *Italicks* in our bible, to denote that they are a supplement

20. God is to us the God of salvations,
Even to the God Jehovah belong the outgoings
of death.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

21. But

plement of the translators, and not in the original. But that supplement seems to be unnecessary. The 70th renders the word יָעֲמֵס κατενοδωσει, *prosperum iter faciet*, as the vulg. The Targum explains it, *who loads us every day, adding precepts upon precepts*. But it may be observed, that the verb יָעֲמֵס signifies both *to take on ones self, or carry a burthen, and to place a burthen on another*; and from hence it is used figuratively to bear and carry another with tenderness and affection. In this sense it is applied to God himself, to express the constant care he had taken of his people, and how he had supported them, and taken as it were upon himself the burthen of their affairs. *Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, מְנִי בֶטֶן הָעַמִּים portati ab utero mihi*, who have been born by me from the belly; to which is added הַנִּשְׁאִים מִנִּי רֶחֶם, *lati a vulva mihi*, who have been carried from the womb. Isai. xlvi. 3. i. e. as *Moses* explains it: *The Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bare his son, in all the way that ye went, untill ye came unto this place*. Deut. i. 31. So in the place before us: יָעֲמֵס לָנוּ הָאֵל, *suscipit bajulandum nostra causa*, as *Cocceius* renders the words; takes on himself to carry the burthen for our sakes; or as *F. Houbigant*, *onera nostra suscipiens*, takes on himself our burthens; or as I would render the words, *bears or carries us*, i. e. protects us by his power, and provides for our safety and happiness by his constant care. Amongst other senses of the word in *Arabick*, it signifies, *valetudine corpus restituit Deus*, God restores the body to health, and may be well applied to the care God took of the publick health and prosperity. I would render the whole verse thus: *Blessed be the Lord. He carries or supports us every day. He is the God of our salvation. Or, the God of our salvation carries us every day.*

20. *Unto the Lord belong the issues from death*, according to our version. But the original words are certainly capable of another rendering. *The goings forth of Jehovah, the Lord, are unto death*. Or, *the goings forth of death belong to the Lord Jehovah*. Τὸ ἐξέρχαι αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς θανάτου, as the 70th, *Domini exitus mortis*, as the Vulg. Or, as the *Syriack*: *He is the Lord of death, and of escape from it*. Our translation of the words לָמוֹת תּוֹצְאוֹת *the issues from death*, is not, I think, agreeable to the usual signification of the prefix *lamed*, which seldom denotes

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

21. But God will wound the head of his
enemies,
Even the hairy crown of him that walketh in his
trespasses.

22. For

denotes *from*, and most of the places mentioned by *Noldius*, where he gives us this sense, may be much better rendered in another. In the first part of this verse, the Psalmist declares: *God is to us the God of salvations*; all our deliverances come from God. And in the next verse says: *God will wound the head of his enemies*; and the *לָמוֹת תּוֹצֵאוֹת* may include both: *The outgoings to death, or of death, belong to God*. It is he directs them, suffers them not to approach his people, but ordains them to reach his restless and implacable adversaries. The one he redeems from, the other he condemns to death. Death seems to be here represented poetically, as a person going forth, and marching in various ways, and by different methods, to spread destruction amongst mankind; but as under the restraints of God, and in all his marches directed by his pleasure.

21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies.* יִמְחֶץ. *Shall wound.* The original propriety of this word is explained by Mr. Schultens, *De Defect.* p. 69. 70. and in his comment. on Job v. 18. who makes it to consist in *hauriendo aquam, commota, aut huc illuc jactata urna*, in drawing water, by moving the pitcher from one side to the other. Hence, in the figurative use, it denotes, inflicting the most grievous wounds, and quite exhausting the blood by the motion of the plunged sword, or any other deadly weapon in the body. So in the place before us, יִמְחֶץ רֹאשׁ *hauriet caput gladio*. God shall exhaust, draw forth the blood of the head of his enemies, or utterly destroy them by the sword.

Ibid. *The hairy scalp of such a one, who goeth on still in his trespasses.* The verb יִמְחֶץ, *he shall exhaust the blood, or mortally wound the hairy head of him that walks in his guilty practices, being to be repeated.* And so all the ancient versions. The *Targum* only interprets the words קִדְקַד שֵׁער *verticem comatum*, the hairy scalp, by יִנְשֵׁר שֵׁער *evellat capillos*; and F. Houbigant says, that he here imitates the *Chaldee*, by translating the words as the *Chaldee* paraphrase doth. But this is somewhat extraordinary in a writer, who, at the 18th verse declares, that there was no commerce or correspondence between the *Hebrews*, and the *Chaldee* nation and language. קִדְקַד never signifies *evellere* in the *Hebrew*

an-

22. For the Lord hath said:” I will bring them
again from *Bashan*,
“ I will bring them again from the depth of the
sea,

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

23. That

language. Besides, who can ever imagine, that the Psalmist would so sink in his ideas and expressions, as this interpretation makes him to do ; and after he had described God as exhausting the blood of his enemies with his sword, make him descend to the plucking out the hairs of their head ? The usual interpretation vindicates itself by its propriety, and suitableness to the foregoing words. God shall strike deep, or exhaust the blood of the head of his enemies, even the hairy scalp of him that goes on in his guilty practices ; where the emphasis consists in the description of God’s enemies, who were such as persevered in their criminal actions. ’Tis not also at all unlikely, that by the *vertex comatus* may be meant, as *Cocceius* explains it : *Hominem abundantem copiis et affectis, qui ab eo ut capite dependens*. Or the *vertex capillatus* may mean *the crafty pate* ; for the verb, from whence שער or *hairy comes*, signifies *sciuit, percepit, intellexit, a pilo et subtilitate ejus, quasi dicas, subtilissime, et ad tenuitatem usque pili intellexit* ; as *Schultens* explains it in his notes, *Harir. Confess.* 2. p. 50. Or, finally, it may signify *the impious head*, שוער signifying *vana loquens et contra Deum*. Vid. *Gol. in voce*. Some interpreters think that *Saul* is here covertly intended. But if any particular person be meant, I should rather think it to be *Balaam*, who was truly *vertex capillatus*, a crafty and subtle man, who, in opposition to God, persevered in his endeavours to curse his people, and at last ensnared them by the *Midianitish* women into idolatry and destruction, and was himself cut off, for continuing in his trespasses.

22. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, &c. Abner, in his conference with the elders of Israel, to bring them over to David’s interest, tells them: The Lord hath spoken of David, saying: By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.* 2 Sam. iv. 18. David knew himself to be raised up by God for this purpose, who had promised him success over all his adversaries. He seems to have been now apprehensive of some new disturbances from the *Philistines* ; and therefore to this promise he refers in the first words of the verse : *The Lord said* ; and such full assurance he had, that God would perform the promise that he had made him, as that whatever princes and forces should op-
pose

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

23. "That thou mayst shake thy foot in the
blood of their enemies,
"And the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

pose him, he was firmly persuaded, God would as powerfully appear for him, as he did in the victory over Og, king of *Basban*, and when he delivered his people from the *Egyptian* army, by giving them a safe passage through the *Red Sea*.

23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of t'ine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.* Our translation hath very judiciously made the verb *תמחץ* to refer to both clauses of the verse, and no word could be more proper than this; the motion of the foot, and the lapping of a dog's tongue, in the blood of slaughtered enemies, both agreeing to the sense of the original word, which, as shewn at the 21st verse, properly means, *haurire aquam commota, aut huc illuc jactata urna*, to draw water, by the moving the pitcher here and there. So that there is no manner of need of Mr. *Le Clerc's* supplement of *lambat*, or *bibat* in the second clause, that sense being included in the original word, which is there naturally supplied; nor of the many alterations in the text, which *F. Houbigant* would impose upon us. The meaning of the verse is, that if the enemies of God's people should continue to invade and harass them by war, they should be entirely cut off by the sword, and their slaughter so great, as that the victorious army should be forced to trample on their dead and bloody bodies, and the dogs should satiate themselves by lapping up their blood. The words are the description of a compleat victory, and of what always happens after a bloody engagement.

Here also every part of this period suits the circumstance and the occasion. *David* had now accomplished the great design his heart was set upon, and addresses himself to his God, as having taken possession of, and fixed his residence on *Mount Sion*; in consequence of which, *David* assures himself of the perpetual safety and prosperity of his people; thus triumphing over his enemies, who attempted to disturb his reign, and dispossess him of *Jerusalem*; but whose armies

mies God enabled him to vanquish, great numbers of whom he had reduced into captivity, from whom he had obtained great riches, as the fruit of his victories, received gifts as tributary to his crown, consecrated great part of the spoils he had taken from them to God, and particularly to enable him to provide for the expences of this magnificent procession, and to prepare a proper habitation for the God of *Israel*. His breaking out immediately, upon the review of these favours, into the solemn adoration of God, for thus continually upholding and protecting his people, as the God of salvation, as the sovereign director of the outgoings of death, and declaring his full assurance, that his vengeance should be exerted, on all his incorrigible enemies, and that from his holy habitation on *Mount Sion* he would render his people equally victorious over them, as he did formerly over *Pharaoh*, and the king of *Basban*; must strike every attentive mind with a religious pleasing surprise, is an argument of the warmth of *David's* piety, and indeed naturally arose from the consideration, that he was now under God's peculiar protection, and of the liberty he had of frequenting his courts, and asking his direction in every future time of need.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

When the ark was thus safely deposited, the sacrifices were offered, the solemnity well nigh concluded, and the whole assembly about to return back, the singers struck up, and joined in the following part of this noble anthem.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.


24. They have seen thy marches, O God,
The marches of my God, my king, into the
sanctuary.

25. The singers went before :
The players on stringed instruments behind :
In the midst of them virgins playing with tim-
brels and singing :

24. *They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my king in the sanctuary.* בְּקֹדֶשׁ. *Into the sanctuary.* In this sense the prefix is used in innumerable places. These words contain a sort of triumph, that this great work of translating the ark, was now so happily accomplished : Thy people have seen *thy goings*, הֵלִיכֹתֶיךָ *thy marches, O God* ; the procession stopping several times, and being performed in several sorts of periods, in proper succession one after another, for the ease of the carriers of the ark, and for performing some sacred rights, that were appointed on this occasion. 2 Sam. vi. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 26. *Even the marches of my God, and my king, into the sanctuary* ; i. e. the tabernacle which David had prepared for the reception of the ark of God, whom David publicly acknowledges as his sovereign and king. Or, if we understand by the sanctuary, the ark itself, the meaning will be much the same : *We have seen thy marches, O God, even the marches of my God, my king, in thy sanctuary, or ark,* without fatal accident ; as we experienced in the former attempt to remove it, till its happy arrival at the place of its rest ; God being represented as marching in the ark, because of the tokens of his presence that attended it. The doubling of the words, *thy marches, O God, the marches of my God, my king*, adding a peculiar emphasis, and expressing the joyful wonder both of the king and his people.

25. *The singers went before.* This verse and the following give some description of the procession. *The singers went before*, for David had ordered the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren for singers, *by lifting up the voice with joy.* 1 Chron. xv. 16. After these came the נְגִינִים *the players on instruments*, lutes and harps, which are played on by the fingers, and between both these עֲלָמוֹת *Virgins*, playing on timbrels, and with their voices celebrating the praises of God.

We find it was customary among the *Gentiles* themselves, in their solemn processions, and before and after, and during their libations and sacrifices, to sing hymns in praise of their respective deities ; and when they celebrated the supposed ad-
vent

vent of their Gods, at particular times, and to particular David
favourite places, it was with the greatest demonstrations of over Ju-
joy, with dancing, musick, and songs, in honour of them. dah 10, all
And in these things consisted one great part of their reli- Israel 3.
gious worship. Thus Callimachus *Hymn. in Apol. v. 12. 13.* 

Μητι σιωπηλην κιθαριν, μηδ' αψορον ιχθυος
Τε φαιεσ τεσ παιδας εχειν επισημησαιτος.

On this account they employed persons to compose these
sorts of hymns, and that the singing of them might be per-
formed with greater harmony and dignity, they chose, for
this religious service, particular persons trained up to, and
well skilled in vocal musick, who might be able to perform
their parts with the greatest propriety, and as became the
majesty and characters of those deities, whom they considered
as more immediately present on these occasions. For this
employment they brought up children of both sexes to chant
forth the praises of their Gods, in honour of whom they
marched in procession at their great festivals, and who highly
contributed, by their appearance and harmony, to the pub-
lick joy. Thus *Horace* in his *Carm. Secul.*

*Date quæ precamur
Tempore sacro :
Quo sibyllini monuere versus
Virgines lectas puerosque castos,
Diis quibus septem placuere colles
Dicere carmen.*

So *Catullus Carm. Sec.*

*Dianæ sumus in fide
Puellæ et pueri integri.
Dianam pueri integri
Puellæ que canamus.*

Thus also in the annual procession of the *Egyptians*, in ho-
nour of *Isis*. *Symphoniæ debinc suaves, fistulæque modulis dul-*
cissimis, personabant. Eas amœnus lectissimæ juventutis, veste
nivea, et cataclista prænitens, sequebatur chorus, carmen venustum
iterantes, quod Camænarum favore salers pœta modulatus edixerat,
quod argumentum referebat. *Apul. Metamph. l. 11. p. 370.* The
same custom prevailed among the *Greeks*.

So *Callimachus Hymn. in Apoll. ver. 8.*

Οι δε ιεροι μολπην τε και ες χορον εντυιθεσ

And in *Cerer.*

Ειπετε παρθενικαι η ερεφδεγξασθε τεκεσαι,
Δημητρε, μεγα χριζε.

ver. 119. 120.

And

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

And *Apollonius Rhodius*, cited by Mr. *Spanheim*. l. 1. v. 1223.

Νυμφῶν ἴσαντο χοροί. μέλε' γὰρ σφίσι πασαις
Ἀρτεμιν ἐννυχίῃσιν αἰεὶ μελπεσθε αἰοδαίς.

This practice was undoubtedly, as the very learned Mr. *Spanheim* observes, derived from the more ancient forms of worship practiced amongst the *Hebrews*, who in all their sacred solemnities sang hymns in honour of *Jehovah*. Thus *Moses* and the children of *Israel*, after they had escaped *Pharaoh's* army, and passed safely thro' the *Red Sea*. *Exod.* xv. 1. So *Deborah* and *Barak*, upon their deliverance from *Jabin*. *Judg.* v. 1. *David* is stiled *the sweet psalmist of Israel*. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1. because of the many admirable hymns he composed for publick service, *to give thanks to the Lord*, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 7. and which will remain as a monument of his piety, and the sublimity of his sacred muse to the end of time. *Jehoshaphat* also appointed singers unto the Lord, *that they should praise the beauty of holiness*, and say: *Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever*. 2 *Chron.* xx. 21. And when *Hezekiah* commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar, as soon as the sacrifice began, the song of the Lord began also. And in this solemn procession of the ark to *Jerusalem*, the singers went before, the players on instruments behind, and a chosen band of virgins in the midst of them, playing with their timbrels, and accompanying them with the sweeter melody of their voices. And it was from this persuasion, that these songs of praise were pleasing to their deities, that the *Gentiles* constantly used them in their worship of them.

Τον χορόν, ὡ πολλῶν, οτι οἱ κατὰ θυμόν αἰδεῖ,
Τιμῆσει.

Callim. Hymn. in Apol. v. 29. 30.

And for this reason their best poets distinguished themselves, and employed all their art and skill, in compositions for this purpose; as appears from those ascribed to *Homer*, *Orpheus*, and others, mentioned by Mr. *Spanheim*, *præfat. Lectori in Callim. hymn. observat.* and those made by *Callimachus*, *Horace*, *Catullus*, and others. And undoubtedly, proper hymns made, and sung by the worshippers of the true God, with a right disposition of mind, are as acceptable in their nature as any other part of worship, engage the attention, and greatly enliven and add to the fervour and pleasure of the common devotion.

What the *Hebrew* ladies sang on this occasion, in concert with the band of musick that attended, was:

26. Bless

26. “ Bless ye the Lord in the congregations,
“ The Lord, from the fountain of *Israel*.”

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

27. There was little *Benjamin*, their ruler.
The princes of *Judah*, with their counsel;
The princes of *Zebulon*, the princes of *Naphthali*.

26. *Bless ye the Lord in the congregations*; i. e. let all the assemblies of his people, and all who join them, celebrate the wonderful works and praises of God. *Even the Lord*, repeat ברכו, *bless ye the Lord מִמְקוֹר from the fountain of Israel*, Deut. xxxiii. 11. 28. i. e. all you who are of the posterity of *Israel*. It became them in an especial manner to bless God for the signal favours he had bestowed upon them. *F. Houbigant*, contrary to the authority of all the ancient versions, alters the text, and instead of מִמְקוֹר says, *non dubium quin במקוה in congregatione*; nam id, in congregatione, ex ad-verso est illius in conventibus, quod habet membrum prius. We must read, he says, not מִמְקוֹר *from the fountain*, but במקוה *in the congregation*, because this word answers to the other in the former part of the verse. But this is a reason that makes quite against the amendment, as it creates a dead tautology in the text. *Bless the God in the assemblies, the Lord in the congregation of Jacob*, which is a distinction without any difference. מִקוֹר signifies *fons, origo*, the fountain and original of any thing. *Jacob* was the *fons and origo* of *Israel*, and is often considered as such in the sacred writings, and the words may be rendered: *Bless ye the Lord, you that are from the fountain Jacob*; or, as in our version, *from the fountain of Jacob*. In a somewhat similar sense we read of the מִקוֹר and מַעַן *the fountain and spring of Ephraim*, that was to be intirely dried up, denoting the excision of all his posterity. Hof. xiii. 15. so that he should have none to descend from him, as their original and source.

27. *There was little Benjamin with their ruler*. There is no need of that supplemental preposition, *with*; for as *Benjamin* is stiled *little*, because he was the least of the tribes, so he is called רֹדֵם *their commander or ruler*, because *Saul*, the first king, was of that tribe. And I apprehend that *David* particularly mentions the tribe of *Benjamin*, not only to do honour to them, but to shew their affection to him, and attachment to his interest by attending him, as he now made his publick entry as king of *Israel* into *Jerusalem*, established himself in his throne in that capital, and thereby cut off all hopes of the kingdom's ever returning to the former tribe

David and family. The 70th render the word *עַל מַסְתָּאֵהוּ*, as tho' from over Ju- *סַסְתָּאֵהוּ* *inporari, sensibus privari*; to express probably the dah 10, all height of their joy at this grand solemnity. It is no wonder Israel 3. he should mention *the princes of Judah, and their counsel*, as we render the word *רַגְמָתָם*, because he was of that tribe, and elected by them to be their king. *F. Houbigant* suspects the word, because it is but once used, and for some other reasons not worth mentioning; and alters it into *לְעַמְתָּם* *prope eos*, which carries little or no meaning; and is not true, if the order of the several tribes in this procession was, as probably it was, the same as was originally fixed by the order of God to *Moses*, Numb. ii. 3. 18. 22. by which *Judah* was to march on the east side, and that of *Benjamin* on the west; so that *Judah* and *Benjamin* were not near one another, but distant as the east from the west. Where there is a difficulty it is better candidly to confess, that we do not understand it, than immediately to cry out of the corruption of the text, and alter the reading of it without authority, and according to our own fancy. All the ancient versions acknowledge the present reading, and render the word by others which denote *ηγεμονες*, as the 70th, *duces, gubernatores*, and the like. The *Chaldee* paraphrase preserves the root itself *רַגְמוּ* *lapidarunt*, and the derivative *רָגַם* or the feminine *רַגְמָה*, as in the place before us, signifies *lapidatio & nex lapidando illata*. See *Gol. and Schult. Com. in Prov. xxvi. 8*. What the Psalmist means precisely by it is hard to determine. Stoning was a punishment for a capital crime, and the power of inflicting it was in the principal citizens of any place, where such crime was committed, as may be seen, 1 King. xxi. 8. 11. Act. vi. 12. and vii. 57, 58. and *רַגְמָתָם* may signify, the counsel of *Judah*, with whom was vested the power of lapidation, or condemning capital offenders to this punishment. And in this I fix, till some abler critick shall give a better explication of the word. Our learned bishop *Patrick* understands by the word, the support and prop of the kingdom, which well agrees to the tribe and princes of *Judah*, and to the meaning of the verb, which signifies *propugnavit, et mala avertit*, as in *Goliath*, from the original notion of casting stones; and the form *רַגְמָה* denotes one of those great stones, that are often placed on sepulchres to increase their height, and make them arise in a convex form. See *Schult. ubi. sup. p. 359*. and so may naturally enough represent persons conspicuous for eminence and station, who are considered as the support and ornament of the nation to which they belong.

The princes of Zebulon, and the princes of Naphthali. These tribes are added, as the most remote, to shew the unanimity of

of the whole nation, and of all the tribes, far and near, in David attending this solemnity, to testify their willing acknowledgment of *David* for their king, and their consent, that henceforward *Jerusalem*, the city of *David*, should be declared and esteemed as the capital of the whole nation, and as that place where all the great solemnities of religion should be performed, and their annual festivals continually celebrated.

28. Thy God hath commanded thy strength.
Strengthen, O God, what thou hast done for us.

29. Because of thy temple at *Jerusalem*,
Kings shall offer gifts to thee.

30. Rebuke the beast of the reed,
The assembly of bulls, with the calves of the
people,
Trampling on their idols, plated with silver.
Scatter thou the people that delight in war.

28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* The word צוה frequently denotes such a resolution, purpose, appointment, or order of God, as carries the effect, and secures the event; and the meaning of the passage before us is, that the great power of the *Israelites*, and the height of glory and strength to which the kingdom of *David* had arisen, was the work of God. The ancient versions seem to have read, צוה אלדי עז, *Give commandment, O God, to thy strength.* But as the present reading carries in it a very good sense, and contains a pious acknowledgment, that God was the author of their prosperity, we need not, with *F. Houbigant*, make any alteration; especially as it naturally makes way for the petition immediately following it: *Strengthen, O God, what thou hast done for us.* Let the foundation of our present happiness be firm and durable.

30. *Rebuke the company of spear men.* So our translators, tho' they have placed in the margin, *the beast of the reed.* The beast of the reed is the crocodile, or river horse, which both lay amongst the reeds that grew on the banks of the *Nile*; and as it is a very proper description of the *Egyptian* tyrant, the meaning will be, that God would repress his power, and preserve his people from being overrun and destroyed by him. See *Bochart. Hieroz.* l. 3. p. 985. The Psalmist adds:

וְעַתָּה אֲבִירִים *viz.* גִּעְרִי. *Rebuke the multitude of bulls, as we render it; i. e.* as bishop *Patrick* explains it, their great number of captains, as furious as bulls; the original word

David signifying *fortis, robustus, validus*, being applicable to men, over Ju- bulls, horses, and all strong and furious animals.
dah 10, all *בעגלי עמים*. *With the calves of the people*, i. e. according
Israel 3. to the learned bishop, soldiers as insolent as young heifers.

מתרפס ברצי כסף. i. e. as we render the words, *till every one submit himself with pieces of silver*, or become tributary to his power. The verb *רפס* signifies *verberavit, vel percussit, vel quassit pede*. So it is used. Ezek. xxxii. 2.---xxxiv. 18. 19. of trampling in, disturbing and fouling of the waters with the feet. But I do not well see how we can, from this sense of the word, without great impropriety and force, interpret the passage before us in the sense of our version, of *submitting himself*, viz. *to be trampled on*, for this is the force of the word, *with pieces of silver*; for this is scarce ever practised by tyrants, to trample on those who offer them tribute. Cocceius, in his lexicon, applies this description to the crocodile himself, as the emblem of the king of Egypt, and renders the words by, *qui sibi sternit laminis argenti*, or, *qui sibi iusternit laminas argenti, seque iis incrustat*; who covers himself over with plates of silver; and from hence, as Mr. Schultens says, in his comment on Proverbs, vi. 3. *extundi possit*, may be hammered out, *Exculcans sibi frustra argenti, et tyrannicis concussionibus extorquens*; extorting, by tyrannical violences, pieces of silver. But this is a conjecture which that learned critick himself pays but little regard to; tho' I apprehend it is more natural than what is given by our translators. Bishop Patrick is partly of Mr. Schultens's opinion, and explains the words by, *who prances in arms plated with silver*, and, unprovoked by us, makes war upon us, merely to satisfy his own ambition, or desire of wealth. But it will be difficult to shew, how the words *ברצי כסף* can be proved to signify, *arms plated with silver*.

F. Houbigant goes on here in his own way, by altering some, and giving new senses to other words. He makes *עגלי* which is the plur. masc. to signify *currus*, chariots of war, which it never doth in scripture; that sense being confined to *עגלה* femin; and as to *רצי*, which he renders *wheels* from *רוץ currere*, there is no such word under that root, in that, or any other signification; nor is it very usual for warlike chariots to have silver wheels. He changes *מתרפס* into *מתרפים* without any authority; and, after all these contrivances, thus renders the verse: *Compesce — — coitionem fortium, simul et currus populorum rotis argenteis sese precipitantes*. Restrain the meeting of the mighty, together with the chariots of the people, which precipitate themselves with silver wheels. Where these chariots, precipitating themselves with silver wheels, are

to be found, the learned father hath not thought proper to inform us.

If we consult some of the ancient versions, they will, I believe, lead us nearer the truth. The *Chaldee* paraphrase explains עגלי עמים by עגליא טעות עמיא who confide in the calf idols of the nations. The *Syriack* version makes the עגלי to be calves, i. e. idols in the form of calves, covered with silver. The 70th, and *Vulgate* after them, took the beth in ברצי to be radical from ברץ, which tho' not in the *Hebrew* bible, yet is still preserved in the *Arabic* dialect; for they render the word *προβάτας*, *probatas*; tho' the root in *Arabick* hath no such meaning.

I would observe, for the farther explication of this part of the verse, that the persons meant are figuratively described by the objects of their idolatrous worship. The *Egyptian* king is the beast of the reed, or the crocodile, who was sacred in some parts of *Egypt*. The עדת אברים congregation of bulls are his princes and nobles, who worshipped the bull; בעגלי עמים together with the calves, that were held sacred by the people, or the people who worshipped them; and the description of this people who worshipped those calves is, מתרפס ברצי ככה they severally trampled on the ground, viz. by walking in procession, or dancing to the sound of their silver *sistrums*, that made a tinkling noise in honour of these vituline deities. I shall express the sense in the words of the learned and ingenious Mr. *Merrick*, in his late paraphrase of the psalms.

The beast, that from his ready bed,
On Nile's proud banks, uplifts the head,
Rebuke indignant; nor the throng
Forget, from whose misguided tongue
The heifer and the grazing steer
The offer'd vow unconscious hear;
While to the silver's tinkling sound,
Their feet in solemn dance rebound.

This interpretation seems very natural, and answers well to the proper and native meaning of the words, and to the custom of the *Egyptians* in their publick solemnities. Thus *Apuleius* describes the procession in honour of Isis: *Tunc influunt turbæ sacris divinis initiatæ, viri, fæminæque omnis dignitatis et omnis ætatis ——— magnæ religionis terrena sidera, aureis et argenteis, immo vero aureis etiam sistris, argutum tinnitum constrepentes*. *Metam.* l. 11. p. 371. Edit. Delph. To this custom also *Claudian* alludes, in. 4 *Cons. Honor.* v. 569.---575.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

---- Penetralibus exit

*Effigies, brevis illa quidem ---- Nilotica sistris
Ripa sonat, Phariosque modos Ægyptia ducit
Tibia. Submissis admugit cornibus Apis.*

But may not מִתְרַפֵּס be referred to God, as Mr. *Le Clerc* refers it? *Rebuke the beast of the field מִתְרַפֵּס trampling on the pieces of silver*; so calling with contempt their images or idols, *breves effigies*, as *Claudian* calls them, plated over with beaten pieces of silver; referring to what God is said to have done to the Gods of *Egypt*; *amongst all the Gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.* *Exod. xii. 12.* and which *Moses* tells us, he actually did. *Num. xxxiii. 4.* So that the meaning of the words is; that God would break the power of the *Egyptians*, and preserve his people from being harrassed by their forces, and corrupted by their idolatrous practices. By this interpretation the construction will be natural and easy.

31. Let princes with their attendants come out of *Egypt*.

Unto God let *Ethiopia* hasten her hands.

31. *Princes shall come out of Egypt.* Or, rather in the precatory form: *Let princes come out of Egypt.* הַשָּׂמִימִים *Princes.* The 70th and Vulg. πρεσβυται. *Legati.* The word is only to be found in this place, and the root הִשָּׂם is wanting in *Hebrew*, but is preserved in the *Arabic* dialect, in which it signifies, *multi famulitii fuit, multos habuit famulos et affectas.* He was attended with a large number of servants and followers. *Gol. in voce.* From hence comes הַשָּׂמִימִין *cum nun servili*, denoting a princely person, accompanied by a numerous attendance.

Ethiopia shall soon, or, *Let Ethiopia soon stretch out her hands to God.* By *Ethiopia* many understand the country properly so called, and I see no reason to depart from this sense. The country is put for the inhabitants of it. תָּרִין יָדָיו *currere faciat, cito adducat*, as F. Houbigant, *manus suas ad Deum*; make her hands soon run unto God; *i. e.* as we render the words, *soon stretch out her hands to God*, in acknowledgment and adoration of him. The original word תָּרִין, signifying properly *to run*, is from thence applied to denote *exercuit, edocuit*, to exercise and accustom one's self to any thing; to teach and instruct. See *Gol.* and the words before us may be rendered: *Let Ethiopia exercise her hands, or ac-*
custom

custom herself to lift them up to God; or, teach and direct her hands towards God; and the meaning is; that God would so over-protect and defend Jerusalem, where the ark of the presence dāhio, all was now placed, as that the inhabitants of Egypt and Ethiopia-Israel 3. pia, and all the enemies of his people, so far from regarding it with an hostile disposition, should reverence it as the habitation of God, send solemn embassies to it with sacrifices in honour of him, with uplifted hands devoutly worship before his sanctuary, and so become the real patrons and protectors of it.

32. Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth,

O sing praises to Jehovah:

33. To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens which were of old,

See, when he uttereth his voice, it is a mighty voice.

33. *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; or, thro' the heavens of heavens, the highest and ancient heavens. So הָרִי קֶדֶם the ancient mountains, as we render the words. Deut. xiii. 15. בְּיָמֵי קֶדֶם the days of old. Ps. xlv. 2. אֱלֹהֵי קֶדֶם, the God of antiquity, the ancient, the eternal God. Deut. xxxiii. 27. So here the שָׁמַיִם קֶדֶם are the ancient heavens, that existed from the beginning of the creation; and God is said to ride on them, or thro' them, either to denote his omnipresence, or to signify, that he is the proprietor and Lord of them, and overrules all appearances in them to subserve the purposes of his own providence, and for the protection and safety of his people; as Moses expresses it: There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun who rideth on the heavens in thy help. Deut. xxxiii. 26. i. e. comes in the storms, the thunder and lightnings, the artillery of heaven, to thine assistance. For thus it follows:*

Ibid. Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Literally, he will give with his voice a mighty voice. Thunder is described in scripture as the voice of God. See Ps. xxix. where the dreadful effects of this mighty voice of God are described; and it is peculiarly awful and terrible, in the eastern and warmer parts of the earth.

34. Ascribe

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

34. Ascribe ye strength unto God :

His excellency is over *Israel*.

His power is in the clouds.

35. O God, the God of *Israel*, thou art terrible
out of thy holy places.

It is he that giveth strength and power unto his
people.

Blessed be God.

34. *His excellency is over Israel.* גִּבּוֹרָתוֹ. *Celsitudo ejus*, his Highness or Majesty. He is the universal sovereign, but his kingdom is exalted over *Israel* in a particular manner, he hath taken them for his peculiar inheritance, and by them alone he is acknowledged as universal creator, and the supreme Lord of heaven and earth.

Ibid. *His power is in the clouds.* He who is exalted in an especial manner over *Israel*, is that mighty God, who dwells in heaven, and manifests his power in the clouds thereof, when he sends forth his voice in the dreadful thunder.

35. *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the God of Israel.* Or, as I would join the words : *O God, the God of Israel, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.* Heaven was his sanctuary of old. His earthly sanctuary was on *Sion* in *Jerusalem*; who was worthy to be feared as inhabiting both; and he is represented as going out of them to take vengeance on the enemies of his people, and as dreadful on account of the judgments, which from thence, as the places of his dwelling, he executes on them.

Ibid. *He it is that giveth strength and power unto his people.* Tho' the marks of his displeasure are dreadful to his enemies, yet he gives fortitude and courage unto his people, inspires them with resolution and vigour, and renders them victorious over all that oppose them. *Blessed be God.*

How glorious is the conclusion of this most admirable hymn ! *David* exults in the successful translation of the ark into its fixed habitation, and that he had now his King and his God more immediately present with him, who marched in solemn procession with his ark, to take his future residence in *Mount Sion*. He describes that procession with pleasure, as accompanied with instru-
mental

mental and vocal musick, and at which the princes of all the tribes of *Israel* assisted, and which was graced with a choir of virgins, exciting the whole assembly to celebrate the praises of the God of *Israel*. He peculiarly mentions the tribe of *Benjamin* as present, an happy circumstance he could scarce have expected, as the kingdom was departed from them, and the crown transferred upon himself and family; the tribe of *Judah*, as the most powerful, and those of *Naphthali* and *Zebulon*, the farthest distant of all the rest; to shew the perfect unanimity of the whole nation in submitting to him, and acquiescing in *Jerusalem* as the capital of the kingdom. He devoutly acknowledges God as the author of his own and his people's prosperity, and prays that He would establish and continue it; that the kings of the earth might reverence God's sanctuary in *Jerusalem*, and there present their offerings before him; that God would restrain the *Egyptian* king, and keep him from all hostile invasions of the city and people of God, and not permit the worshippers of crocodiles and bulls and calves, to harass his dominions, or corrupt his subjects; and that he would dissipate in general all who delight in the oppression and cruelties of war. He prays even for the conversion of *Egypt* to the knowledge and worship of the true God, that *Ethiopia* might stretch forth her hand in solemn adoration of him, and that all the kingdoms of the earth might celebrate the praises of *Jehovah*, who rules in the Heavens, rides through them in the stormy clouds, and terrifies the nations with the voice of his thunders. He concludes with exhorting this grand assembly to acknowledge the almighty power of God, who was peculiarly the God and king of *Israel*, who was present in his heavenly

and

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.



and earthly sanctuary, dreadful in the judgments he executed on his enemies, but the author and establisher of the power and prosperity of his people. On all these accounts he was worthy to be blessed for evermore. How highly did this tend to promote the firm adherence of the whole assembly to the worship of their God, and to establish their faith and hope in the protection of his power!

I hope my reader will not be displeased, if I give him a short and easy paraphrase of this excellent composition.

*When the ARK was taken up on the shoulders of the
LEVITES.*

Ver. 1. Arise, O God, of *Israel*, and in thy just displeasure execute thy vengeance upon the enemies of thy people, and let all who hate them be put to flight, and never prevail against them.

2. Drive them before thee, and scatter them, as smoke is dispersed by the violence of the wind, and let all their power and strength die away and dissolve, as wax melts away before the fire.

3. But let thy righteous people be glad, exult in the presence and under the protection of thee their God, and in the triumph of their joy cry out:

“Sing psalms of thanksgivings to God. Ce-
“lebrate his name and glory with songs of praise.
“Prepare ye his way, and let all opposition
“cease before him, who rode through the de-
“serts, and guided his people with the cloud
“by day, and the flame of fire by night. His
“name is JAH, the tremendous being. And O
“exult with joy before him.

5. “He is the orphan’s father, who will pro-
“tect and provide for him. He is the judge
“and

“ and avenger of the widow, will vindicate her David
 “ cause, and redress her injuries, even that over Ju-
 “ God, who is present with us in his holy sanc- dah 10, al
 “ tuary. Israel 3.

6. “ He it is who increases the solitary and
 “ desolate into numerous families, restores to
 “ liberty, and blesses with an abundance those
 “ who are bound in chains, but makes those
 “ who are his refractory implacable enemies, dwell
 “ as in a dry and desert land, by destroying their
 “ families and fortunes, and utterly blasting their
 “ prosperity.”

When the PROCESSION began.

7. How favourably didst thou appear, O God,
 for thy people in ancient times! How power-
 ful was that protection, which thou didst gra-
 ciously afford them! when thou didst march be-
 fore them at their coming out of *Egypt*, and
 guidest them through the wilderness!

8. The earth shook, the very heavens dis-
 solved at thy presence, even *Sinai* itself seemed to
 melt, the smoke of it ascending as the smoke of
 a furnace, when thou the God of *Israel* didst in
 thine awful majesty descend upon it.

9. Thou, O God, didst rain down, in the most
 liberal manner, during their passage through the
 desert, bread and flesh as from heaven, and didst
 thereby refresh, satisfy, and confirm thine inhe-
 ritage, fatigued with their marches, and in the
 utmost distress for want of food:

10. Such was the abundance provided for them,
 that they dwelt in the midst of the manna and
 quails, in heaps surrounding them on every side.
 Thy poor and distressed people were thus libe-
 rally supplied by thy wonderful and never-fail-
 ing goodness.

11. And

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

11. And not only were they thus miraculously fed by thy benevolent hand, but made to triumph over all their enemies, who molested and opposed them. For thou gavest forth the order to attack. Thou didst assure them of success, leddest them forth against their adversaries, and their victories were celebrated by large numbers of matrons and virgins, who shouted aloud, and sang these joyful tidings.

12. “The kings of armies fled away. They
“fled away utterly discomfited, and they who
“abode with their families in their tents, received
“their shares in the spoils of their conquered
“enemies.

13. “Tho’ when you were slaves to the *Egyptians*, and employed in the servile drudgery of
“attending their pots and bricks, you appeared
“in the most sordid and reproachful habits, and
“took up your dwellings in the most wretched
“and miserable huts; yet now you are enriched
“with the gold and silver of your conquered enemies, possessed of their tents, and arrayed with
“garments shining and beautiful, you resemble
“the dove’s feathers, in which the gold and
“silver colours mixed with each other, give a
“very pleasing and lovely appearance.”

14. When the Lord thus scattered and overcame kings for the sake of his inheritance, how were thy people refreshed! How great was the joy thou gavest them in *Salmon*, where they obtained, beheld, and celebrated the victory!

When the procession came in view of MOUNT SION.

15. Is *Basban*, that high hill, *Basban* with its rough and craggy eminences, is this the hill of God, which he hath chosen for his residence, and where his sanctuary shall abide hereafter for ever?

16. Why

16. Why look ye, O ye craggy hills, with an David envious impatience? See, there is the hill, which over Judah God hath chosen and desired to dwell in. *As- dah 10, all Israel 3.* Surely the Lord will inherit it for ever.

17. The angels and chariots of God, who attend this solemnity, and encompass the ark of his presence, are not only, as at the giving of his law, ten thousand, but twice ten thousands, and thousands of thousands. God is in the midst of them, as formerly on thee, O *Sinai*, and will constantly reside in his sanctuary on *Mount Sion*, and as the guardian of it, by his almighty power continue to defend it.

When the ARK ascended SION, and was deposited in DAVID'S tabernacle.

18. Thus hast thou now, O God, ascended the heights of *Sion's* hill, and taken possession of it, as thy future favourite dwelling, after having subdued our adversaries, and delivered our captive brethren from the power of their enslavers. Thou hast received gifts from men, even from our inveterate enemies, by enriching us with their spoil, subjecting them as tributaries to my crown, and enabling me by them to provide an habitation for our God, and in this joyful manner to attend thine entrance into it.

19. O blessed be Jehovah. From day to day he supports his people, and like a father bears them up, and protects them from all destructive evils.

20. He is that God, to whom we owe all our past salvations, and from whom alone we can expect all we may hereafter need: For under his direction are all the outgoings of death, so that he is able to preserve his people from the approaches of it, when their inveterate enemies meditate and resolve their destruction.

David.
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

21. But vain and impotent shall be their power and malice. God will avenge himself on their devoted heads, and their strength and craft shall not be able to protect them from his indignation, if they continue wickedly to disturb me in the possession of that kingdom, to which he hath advanced me.

22, 23. For this end he raised me to the throne, and assured me that I should deliver his people from the *Philistines*, and from the hand of all their enemies. Let them therefore begin their hostilities when they please; God will appear for me, as he did in former times for our forefathers, and my victories over them shall be as signal and compleat; as that over *Pharaoh* and his army, who were destroyed in the sea, through which he safely led his people; or as over *Og* the king of *Basban*, the slaughter of whose army was so great, as that our victorious troops were forced to trample over their slaughtered and bloody bodies, and even our very dogs licked up their blood, and feasted on the carnage.

P A R T V.

Whilst the SACRIFICES were offering, which concluded the whole solemnity, they closed the anthem with the following verses.

24. Thy people have now, O God, seen thy marches; the triumphant marches of my God and king, present in his holy sanctuary, into the tabernacle prepared for it, amidst the loudest acclamations of the whole assembly.

25. The procession was led by a chosen band of singers, the players on instruments came behind them, and in the midst of them a virgin train, who accompanied their timbrels with the harmony of their voices, and sung:

25. "O celebrate the praises of God in this united congregation of our tribes. Celebrate
" the

“ the praises of Jehovah, all you who are de- David
 “ scended from *Israel*, your great and fruitful over Ju-
 “ progenitor.” dah 10, all
 Israel 3.

27. Even *Benjamin* himself was present, who, tho’ the smallest of our tribes, had so far the pre-
 heminance over the rest, as to give the first king
 and ruler to the people; even he was present,
 and rejoiced to see the honour done to *Jerusalem*,
 and the crown established on my head. Here
 the princes of *Judah* attended, with the supreme
 council of that powerful tribe; with the princes
 of *Zebulon*, and those of *Naphtali*; who from
 their distant borders joined the procession, all
 unanimously consenting that *Jerusalem* should be-
 come the seat of worship, and capital of my
 kingdom.

28. It is thy God, O *Israel*, who hath thus
 advanced thee, as a nation, to thy present state
 of dignity and power. Strengthen, O God, the
 foundation of our happiness, and by thy favour
 render it perpetual.

29. As the ark of thy presence is now fixed in
Jerusalem, protect it by thy power, and let the
 kings of the earth bring their gifts, present their
 offerings, and pay their adoration at thy altar.

30. O rebuke and break the power of the *Egyp-
 tian* crocodile, his princes and nobles, who pay
 homage to their bulls, and all his people, who
 stupidly worship their calves, and dance in ho-
 nour of them to the tinkling sounds of instru-
 ments and bells. Trample under feet their silver
 plated idols, and utterly disperse the people who
 delight in war.

31. Let the princes of *Egypt* come and worship
 at thy sanctuary, and the far distant *Ethiopia* ac-
 custom herself to lift up her hands in adoration
 of thy Majesty.

32. O may all the kingdoms of the earth
 celebrate, in sacred songs, the majesty of our
 H 2 God.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

God. Let all sing the praises of our *Je-
bovah*.

33. He is the omnipresent God, the proprietor and Lord of the heavens of heavens, which he spread out of old. He makes the clouds his chariot when he rides through the heavens, and storms and tempests, thunders and lightnings, the instruments of his vengeance against his enemies. When he sends forth his voice in the mighty thunder, how awful and astonishing that voice !

34. Ascribe to him that almighty strength which belongs to him. Tho' his empire is universal, his kingdom is peculiarly exalted over *Israel*, by whom alone he is acknowledged as the true God, and who manifests the greatness of his power in the clouds of heaven.

35. O God, the God of *Israel*, how terrible is thy Majesty, when thou comest forth from thy heavenly and earthly sanctuaries, for the destruction of thine enemies, and the defence of thy people. It is he who inspires them with strength and courage, and renders them a mighty and powerful nation. Eternal blessing and praise be ascribed unto our God.

I think the division I have made of this psalm, into its several parts, is natural and easy, which the subject matter of it points out, and which renders the whole of it a regular, well connected, and elegant composure. Without this, or some such method, it appears to me broken, and its parts independent on each other ; the expressions will be many of them unintelligible, and the occasion and propriety of them scarcely discernable. The very learned *Michaelis* acknowledges the difficulties attending this psalm, and I suspect my own strength, when I attempt to do what he thought
above

above his much greater abilities. I have however ^{David} done my best, and submit the whole to the candor ^{over Ju-} of my readers. ^{dah 10, all}

I shall now conclude by making a few observations on the whole anthem. And I would first take notice of the great and glorious subject of this hymn. It is the God of the *Hebrews*, and designed to celebrate his praises, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the operations of his providence. And with what dignity is he described! How high and worthy the character given him; in every respect suitable to his infinite Majesty, and the moral rectitude and purity of his nature! How grand are the descriptions of him as the omnipresent God, inhabiting his sanctuaries both in heaven and earth! as the original self-existent being, which his name *Jehovah* signifies; the tremendous being, worthy of all adoration and reverence, included in the name of *Jah*! as the almighty God, encompassed with thousands and ten thousands of his angels, and innumerable chariots, that stand ready prepared in the armoury of heaven! that rides through the heavens in his Majesty, whose voice is in the thunder, who makes the clouds and vapours of heaven subservient to his pleasure, and at whose presence the earth, the heavens dissolve, and the highest hills seem to melt away like wax! Descriptions the most sublime in their nature, and that tend to strike the mind with an holy reverence and awe. And as to his moral character, and providential government of the world, he is represented as the righteous God, the hater and punisher of incorrigible wickedness, the father of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, that blesses men with numerous families, that breaks the prisoner's chains, and restores him to his liberty; the God and guardian of his people, the great

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

disposer of victory; and giver of national prosperity; the supreme author of every kind of salvation, and as having death under his absolute command, and directing the outgoings of it by his sovereign will. This was the God of the ancient *Hebrews*. This is the God whom *David* worshipped, and whom all wise and good men must acknowledge and adore. Nor is there one circumstance or expression in this noble composition, derogatory to the majesty and honour of the supreme being, or that can convey a single sentiment to lessen our esteem and veneration for him.

Let any one compare, with this psalm of *David*, the ancient hymns of the most celebrated poets on their deities, how infinitely short will they fall of the grandeur and sublimity which appears in every part of it. Strip the hymn of *Calimachus* on *Jove* of the poetry and language, and the sentiments of it will appear generally puerile and absurd, and it could not be read without the utmost contempt. *Jove* with him, that *αἰὲν ἀναξ, αἰὲν μέγας, δικασπόλος ἐραγιδῆσι*, that *perpetual king, ever great, and lawgiver, to the celestial deities*, as he calls him, was born, he can't tell where, whether in *Mount Ida*, or *Arcadia*, washed on his birth in a river of water, to cleanse him from the defilements he brought into the world with him, had his navel string fall from him, sucked the dugs of a goat, and eat sweet honey, and so at last he grew up to be the supreme God. No despicable ballad can contain more execrable stuff than this, and some other like circumstances that he relates of him; circumstances that render utterly incredible what he says of him, as never dying, giving laws to the Gods, obtaining heaven by his power and strength, governing kings and princes, and the inspector of their actions,

the

the giver of riches and prosperity, wisdom and virtue, strength and power. That a mortal born ^{David over Ju- dah 10, all Israel 3.} baby should grow up to become the one supream and immortal God, or an infant nursed in *Crete* should rise to be the king of heaven, or one who gloried in his adulteries*, should be constituted lawgiver to the celestial deities, or he whose character was stained with the vilest impurities, should be the giver of virtue; are absurdities, that one would think it was impossible for any one to digest †. How free are the hymns of *David* from all such absurd, dishonourable, and impious descriptions of God! Every sentiment he conveys of him is excellent and grand, worthy a being of infinite perfection, and the supreme Lord and governor of the universe. It would be easy to enlarge on this subject.

We may farther take notice of the propriety of these historical incidents, that the Psalmist takes notice of in this sacred composition, and how the whole of it is calculated to promote the true spirit of piety and rational devotion. The ark, that was now translating to its fixed seat in *Jerusalem*, was the same ark that accompanied the *Hebrews* in the wilderness, where God was in a peculiar manner present, where *Moses* consulted God, where he received answers from him, and whence he received his directions; and who gave them manifest

* See *Callim. Hymn. in Dian. v. 28.---35.*

† On this very account *Arnobius* justly ridicules and reproaches the Gentiles: *Ergone ille rector poli, pater Deorum et hominum, supercilio et nutu totum motans et tremefaciens cælum, ex viro concretus et femina est?---Quid dicitis, O viri? Ergone iterum dicam, tonans, fulgurans, et fulminans, et nubila terribilia conducens, suxit fluentia mammarum, vagitum edidit, repfit, atque ut fletum exponeret ineptissime tractum, crepitaculis obticuit auditis, et ad somnos inductus est in mollissimis cunis jacens, et vocibus delinitus infractis? O Deorum assertio religiosa! O amplitudinis metuendæ venerabilem monstrans atque insinuans dignitatem!* *Adver. Gent. l. 4. p. 141. Edit. Lug. Bat. 1651.*

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

tokens of his special protection and favour, in the miraculous works he performed for them. Hence *David* puts them in mind of God's going before them in the wilderness, of the terror of his Majesty on *Mount Sinai*, of the manna and quails he rained down on them as from heaven, of the victories he gave them over their enemies, and his enriching them with the spoils of their conquered forces and countries; to excite in them a religious hope and trust, that God would protect *Jerusalem*, which was to be the future residence of the ark of his presence, and bless the whole nation with prosperity, if they continued firm in their allegiance to and worship of him. On this account the hymn is calculated to celebrate his praises for these ancient wonders of his power and goodness wrought in their favour; as well as for that present state of national grandeur and prosperity to which he had advanced them under *David's* government; and, on the other hand, to excite their fear of his displeasure, if they went on in their trespasses, and proved a corrupt and wicked people. Well might this grand assembly be glad and rejoice before their God, sing praises to his name, ascribe all power and dominion to him, whose excellency, whose majesty and government, was peculiarly over *Israel* on earth, and who rules in heaven, and manifests his power in the clouds thereof. I would just add, that the several ascriptions of glory to God; and the frequent exhortations to bless him, with which the psalm abounds, give an agreeable relief to the mind, are added with great propriety, and render the whole composition more pleasing and solemn.

It was customary, as hath been observed, amongst the *Gentiles*, to celebrate the supposed advent of their Gods, at particular times, and to particular

particular places, with the greatest demonstra-
 tions of joy; but *David* had much nobler rea-
 sons for introducing the ark into the tabernacle
 he had prepared for it at *Jerusalem*, with all the
 pomp and splendor, and publick festivity and
 joy, that could possibly be shewn on the occasion.
 The whole procession was in honour of, and a
 national instance of homage paid to the true God.
 By the ark's being fixed at *Jerusalem*, that God,
 who honoured the ark with the tokens of his
 presence, made *Jerusalem* his perpetual habita-
 tion, became the immediate guardian and pro-
 tector of the new built city, and thereby pecu-
 liarly concerned for its prosperity and peace.
 This is represented as the language of God him-
 self. *The Lord hath chosen Sion†. He hath de-*
sired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever.
Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abun-
dantly bless her provisions. Her saints shall shout
aloud for joy.

David
 over Ju-
 dah 10, all
 Israel 3.

And I cannot help here observing, what I think
 almost as remarkable a circumstance as any in
 the *Jewish* history, that there is not one single
 instance to be produced in it, of God's ever de-
 serting the city, or giving it up to be ravaged
 or plundered by the enemies of the *Hebrews*,
 from the time of this solemn entrance of the ark
 into it, till the total destruction of it by *Nebu-*
chadnezzar, when, by their impieties, the whole
 nation was ripened for utter destruction, under
 any of their princes, who steadily adhered to the
 constitution and worship fixed by the *Mosaick* law.
 It was indeed taken by *Shishak** in the reign of
Rehoboam; but it was because the people provoked
the Lord to jealousy above all that their fathers had
done, built them high places and images and groves

† Psalm cxxii. 13, &c.

* 1 Kings, xiv. 22, &c.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

on every high hill, and under every green tree, and practised with impunity the most unnatural crimes. * But even when this king and his princes humbled themselves, God granted them deliverance, and declared, that *his wrath should not be poured upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak*. It was also afterwards taken by *Joash* † king of *Israel*, under *Amaziah* king of *Judah*; who, tho' he signally prospered in the beginning of his reign, when he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; yet no sooner did he fall into the idolatries of the *Edomites*, but God forsook him, delivered him into the hand of *Joash*, who took *Amaziah* prisoner, seized *Jerusalem*, broke down great part of the walls of it, and plundered it of its treasures. So also under *Jehoram*, a most cruel and idolatrous prince, it seems to have been taken and pillaged by the *Philistines* and *Arabians*. || Again, when *Joash* left the house and God of his fathers, and served idols, God delivered *Judah* and *Jerusalem* into the hands of the *Syrians*, who destroyed all the princes of the people, and sent the spoil of them to *Damascus*.

But under the reigns of all its pious princes, God shewed that this city, which he had chosen out of all the tribes of *Israel* to put his name there, was under his immediate protection, by defending it against the numerous forces that combined against it, utterly to destroy it; from whom they were frequently delivered, by plainly miraculous interpositions of God in its favour. Thus under *Asa*, § when *Zerah* the *Ethiopian* came against it with the most formidable and numerous army, and *Asa* called on *Jehovah* his God to help him, piously acknowledging, that *it was nothing with God to help, whether with*

* 2 Chron. xii. 78. † Ibid. xxiv. 23. † Ibid. xxi. 16, &c. § Ibid. xiv. 9, &c.

many, or with them that had no power; God smote David the *Ethiopians* before *Asa* and *Judah*, and enriched over Ju-
 them with the spoils of their vanquished ene- dah 10, all
 mies. Under the reign of *Jehosaphat*, * his re- Israel 3.
 ligious son, God by his prophet encouraged the
 king and his people by this gracious assurance,
 when a numerous army of the neighbouring na-
 tions had invaded them: *Go down against them.—*
Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set your-
selves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord
with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. And accord-
 ingly, *the Lord sent ambushments against the children*
of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, all
 helping to destroy each other; so that when *Ju-*
dah beheld, their enemies were all dead bodies, §
 so that none escaped. Yea, in the reign of *Ahaz*,
 one of the worst princes that ever reigned over
Judah, tho' he was continually harrassed by the
 kings of *Syria* and *Israel*, by the *Edomites*, *Phi-*
listines, and the *Assyrian* king, for his crimes;
 yet when *Rezin*, king of *Syria*, and *Pekah*, king
 of *Israel*, had united their armies against *Jeru-*
salem, and determined to take it by force, to ex-
 tirpate the house of *David*, and set up a new
 king over *Judah*, of another house and family;
 God, to prevent the ruin of *David's* house, and
 defeating the promise he had made him, assured
Ahaz: *It shall not stand, neither shall it come to*
pass; and accordingly the projects of those two
 princes were utterly frustrated. And to men-
 tion no more, when *Hezekiah* † succeeded his
 wicked father, and restored the worship of God,
 according to the appointment of the law of *Mo-*
ses, he was miraculously delivered from the *Assy-*
rian army under *Senacharib*, who besieged *Jeru-*
salem, insulted the God of *Israel*, as not able to
 deliver the city out of his hands, and determined

* 2 Chron. xx. 22, &c. § Isai. vii. 1, &c. † 2 Kin. xix.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

to carry away the inhabitants of it into captivity. But God was pleased to assure Hezekiah, *concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. I will defend this city, to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake*; and the event was, that in that very night, the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the *Assyrians*, * 185000

* Of this destruction of *Senacharib's* army *Herodotus* plainly makes mention, *lib. 2. c. 141.* who tells us, that when *Senacharib* invaded *Sethon*, king of *Egypt*, and priest of *Vulcan*, *Sethon* had a vision from that God, bidding him not be afraid of *Senacharib's* forces, but go and meet them. *Sethon* accordingly went, and the next night after his arrival, a large number of country or field mice, eat all their shield straps, quivers, and bow strings, so that on their rising the next morning, finding themselves without arms, they were forced to raise the siege and march off. Every one sees that this account of *Sethon's* conduct is taken from *Hezekiah's* behaviour, upon the blasphemous message of *Senacharib*; for *Hezekiah* immediately went into the temple, and prayed God to deliver him; who bid him not be afraid of the *Assyrian* king, and assured him he should not enter into *Jerusalem*; for that he himself would certainly protect it. And accordingly God cut off *Senacharib's* whole army in the night, so that he was forced to return with disappointment and disgrace to *Niniveh*, the capital of his kingdom. This destruction of the *Assyrian* army was of the highest service to the *Egyptians*, whose country he had invaded, and where he had committed the greatest ravages for three years successively, and which undoubtedly he would have attacked again, after the conquest of *Jerusalem*. This great deliverance the *Egyptians* preserved the memory of, by the hieroglyphical representation of the gnawing of the strings of their bows, &c. by mice; not that they imagined the mice really gnawed their strings, but to express the sudden and total destruction of their army by this emblem. For, as *Herapollo* tells us, *αφανισμοὶ δηλῆντες μὴν ζωγράφει, ἐπεὶ δὴ παντασθίων μάλιστα καὶ ἀχρήστοι.* *Hieroglyph. l. 1. c. 50.* The *Egyptians*, when they signify an entire destruction, paint a mouse; because it corrodes every thing, and thereby defiles and renders it useless. It is the *αφανισμός*, the intire destruction of the *Assyrian* army, that the hieroglyphic denotes, and which agrees to the account given in scripture of that expedition under *Senacharib*.

men,

men, so that, early in the morning, they were all dead corpses. How justly may we here apply the words of the Psalmist: *|| God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For lo the kings were assembled. They passed by together. They saw it. They marvelled. They were troubled and hasted away. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. God will establish it for ever.* This whole procedure was agreeable to what God signified to Solomon, after the dedication of his temple, when he appeared to him, and told him: * *I have heard thy prayers and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me. I have hallowed this house which thou hast built to put my name there for ever, and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments; then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever. But if you shall at all turn from following me, you or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other Gods and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them, and this house which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and Israel shall be a proverb, and a bye word among all people.*

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

These promises and threatnings were fulfilled in the most exact and literal manner, and no one instance can be produced, out of all the annals of antiquity, of any city, that had such quick and perpetual successions of prosperity and adversity as this had, not only under different, but the very same princes, according as they adhered to,

|| Ps. xlviii. 3, &c.

* 1 Kin. ix. 3, &c.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

or departed from, that law which God had given them; nothing but misery and distress of all kinds attending their defection to idolatry; whilst victory, honour, and prosperity, were the sure and immediate rewards of their steady adherence, or recovery by repentance, to the worship of the God of their forefathers. Instances of the latter we have in † *Rehoboam* and *Manassèh*, and others. If the providence of God be at all acknowledged, I think a particular providence over this city and people cannot be reasonably denied.

It may not also be amiss to recollect, the triumphant manner in which the ark was carried to the place of its future rest; and it is impossible to conceive of a more glorious procession, than what this part of *David's* history presents to our view. It hath every circumstance to heighten the majesty and splendor of it. It was animated by religion, and conducted by a spirit of warm piety and devotion. The dwelling place of the most high, in which he often appeared in the cloud and glory, was the object of publick view, the center of all their hopes, and the grand security of their future prosperity. A powerful king, all his nobility and officers, the priests and *Levites*, with thousands and ten thousands of his people, all united to do homage to the God of *Israel*, and attend his ark to the place he had chosen for its residence. The numerous instruments of musick, that enlivened the solemnity, the harmony of voices joining in concert with those instruments, the sacredness of the song composed and sung on the occasion, the frequent sacrifices that were offered at proper intervals, and the loud acclamations of the people, expressing their satisfaction and triumph, are all

† 2 Chron. xii. 7.---xxxiii. 11---13.

circumstances that contributed to the joy, the David magnificence, and triumph of the day. Or to give the description of *Josephus* * of the solemnity of removing the ark afterwards into *Solomon's* temple. The king himself, all the people, and the *Levites*, went before with sacrifices, sprinkling the way with libations, and the blood of numerous victims; and burning such large quantities of incense, as that the whole circumambient air was filled with a sweet perfume, that extended its fragrancy to those who were the farthest distant, and manifested to them *the advent* of God, and his going to reside, humanly thinking, in the new built place, that had been consecrated for his habitation. And they never ceased singing songs and dancing, till they arrived at his temple.

And indeed it is no wonder, that *David* himself, and all his people should be transported with joy at this great event, as they could not but consider themselves as arrived at that happy period, when the kingdom was to be established, and all the affairs of religion and government were to be placed on a solid and durable foundation. These things heighten the glory of *David's* reign, shew him to be *a man after God's own heart*, every way fitted for the purpose for which he was exalted, a prince of the largest capacities and noblest views; and the extensiveness and national utility of the scheme he formed, in which the honour of his God, and the welfare and advantage of his people, were equally consulted, demonstrate the piety

* Προηγόν δε μετά θυσιών αὐτός τε ὁ βασιλεὺς, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἀπασ, καὶ οἱ Λευῖται σπονδαῖς τε καὶ ἱερῶν αἱματί τὴν ὁδὸν κατακλινόντες, καὶ θυμῶντες ἀπειρον τι θυμιαμάτων πληθος, ὡς ἀπαντα τὸν περιῆξ αέρας πεπληρωμένον ---- γνωρίζειν ἐπιδημίαν θεοῦ, καὶ κατοικισμόν, κατ' αἰθρῶπινην δόξαν, εἰς νεοδομητόν αὐτῷ καὶ καθιερωμένον χωρίον. καὶ γὰρ εὐδ' αἰνούντες, ἤδε χορεύοντες, εἰς τὸ πρὸς τὸν ναὸν ἡλθόν, ἐκαμὸν. Antiq-Jud. l. 8. c. 4. §. 1.

and

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

and goodness of his heart, and clothe him with a glory, in which no prince could ever rival or equal him. *I have found David † my servant, says God; I will also make him my first born, and higher than the kings of the earth.*

When the ark was thus brought to the appointed place, the proper officers had set it in the midst of the tent that *David* had pitched for it, and he had offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord; i. e. on the altar that was erected before the tabernacle; then, he turning himself round to the whole congregation, solemnly blessed his people in the name of the Lord of hosts, in the same, or a like form, which *Solomon* afterwards used, when he had finished his prayer at the dedication of his temple, and who probably took it from the form his father made use of on this occasion.

“ Blessed be the Lord, who hath given rest to
“ his people *Israel*, according to all that he pro-
“ mised. There hath not failed one word of all
“ his good promise, which he promised by the
“ hand of *Moses* his servant. The Lord our God
“ be with us, as he was with our fathers. Let
“ him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may
“ incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his
“ ways, and to keep his commandments and his
“ statutes, and his judgments, which he com-
“ manded our fathers. And let these my words,
“ wherewith I have made supplication before the
“ Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day
“ and night, that he may maintain the cause of
“ his servant, and the cause of his people *Israel*,
“ at all times, as the matter shall require, that
“ all the people of the earth may know, that *Je-*
“ *hovah* is God, and that there is none else. Let

† Pf. lxxxix. 20. 27.

“ your

“ your hearts therefore be perfect with *Jehovah* David
 “ our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep over Ju-
 “ his commandments, as at this day.” How dah 10, all
 glorious an instance of piety this ! How solemn Israel 3.
 and affecting the benediction ! What concern
 did it express for the interests of religion, and the
 perpetual welfare of the nation ! Who can help
 confessing here, *the man after God's own heart*,
 a truly patriot king, and the real father of his
 people ! I can scarce conceive of any spectacle
 more pleasing and grand, than that of a powerful
 king, thus supplicating the benediction of the
 Almighty upon all ranks and orders of men be-
 fore him, and exhorting them to a strict adhe-
 rence to those forms of religion, which God him-
 self had established amongst them, as the only
 means by which they could secure his protection,
 and their own continued prosperity. § After this
 sacred transaction, that he might not dismiss the
 people empty to their respective habitations, he,
 with a truly royal munificence, ordered to be
 dealt out to all the people, even the whole mul-
 titude of *Israel*, as well to the women as the
 men, to every one a loaf of bread, a good piece
 of flesh, and a flaggon of wine, so that all
 the people joyfully departed every one to his
 house.

§ 2 Sam. vi. 19.

C H A P. V.

David's dancing before the ark.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

WHEN this publick transaction was thus happily concluded, the pious prince retired to his palace, to bless his own family and household, and share with them the publick joy. But an unexpected accident interrupted the pleasure he promised himself, and could not but greatly affect him, as it arose from one, from whom he had no reason to expect the contemptuous treatment that she gave him. As the ark of the Lord was just entered into the city of *David*, or *Mount Sion*, *Mickal* †, *Saul's* daughter, looked through a window of the palace to behold the procession, saw *David* dancing ‡ with great spirit and earnestness, and viewed him with contempt; or, as the text says, *she despised him in her heart*; and when, after the solemnity, *David* was returned to his habitation, she came out to meet him, and, with indignation and a sneer, said to him: *Ob how glorious was the king of Israel to day, who openly shewed himself to day to the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain persons openly shews himself.* David's answer to her was severe, but just. Have I descended beneath

† 2 Sam. vi. 16, &c.

‡ פון ומכרכר The verb פון is properly used of the doe, when she nimbly skips away thro' surprise and fear, and is from thence figuratively used of a person, who moves with alacrity and sprightliness. See *Gol.* The other verb מכרכר comes from כרך which primarily denotes, *celeriter incessit, convolvens quasi et glomerans pedes*; which is the true description of dancing. See also *Gol.* So that the two words mean, that *David* danced before the ark with great spirit, vigour and activity.

the

the dignity of my character, as king of *Israel*, David by divesting myself of my royal robes, appearing over Ju- publickly amongst my people, and, like them, dāh 10, all dancing and playing before the ark? *It was be- Israel 3.* fore the Lord, who chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord. Therefore will I play * on my harp before the Lord; and if this be to make myself cheap and contemptible, I will be more so than this; and how high soever be my condition as king, I will always be humble in the judgment I form of myself; and as for those maid servants of whom thou speakest, I shall be honoured amongst them; the very meanest of the people will respect me the more for my popularity, when they see me condescend to share in their sacred mirth, and express it in the same manner, by which they testify their own joy in the publick solemnities. In this he acted as a wise and || politick, as well as a re-

* I will play. וְשָׁחַקְתִּי This doth not refer to *David's* dancing, or any lightness and indecency that he was guilty of in that exercise, but to his playing like the rest of the people on his musical instrument. Thus it is expressly said, that *David*, and the whole house of *Israel*, מְשַׁחֲקִים played before the Lord on all manner of instruments, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cymbals, and with trumpets. 1 Chron. xiii. 8. 2 Sam. vi. 5.

|| Thus *Scipio*, when he was in *Sicily* recruiting his army, and making provision for transporting it to the siege of *Carthage*, quitted his warlike habit, frequented the schools, and put on the dress of a philosopher; because *favorem eum sociorum uberiorum se adepturum existimavit, si victum eorum et solennes exercitationes comprobasset*. He thought he should secure a larger share in the affection and esteem of the allies, if he approved their way of living and usual exercises. *Valer. Max. l. 3. c. 1.* *Tacitus, Annal. l. 1. c. 54.* also takes notice of *Augustus*, that *civile rebatur misceri voluptatibus vulgi*. He thought it was politick, and the part of a citizen, to mix with, and share in the diversions of the common people. And he therefore frequented the publick sports. 'Tis a yet more pleasing sight to the people, to see their princes partake with them in the publick solemnities of their worship.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

religious prince; for in ancient times dancing itself was in use, as a religious ceremony, and in testimony of gratitude and joy, in publick solemnities. Thus *Miriam* §, the prophetess, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances, to celebrate their deliverance from *Pharaoh*, his destruction in the *Red Sea*, and their own safe passage thro' the waters of it. So also || *Jephtha's* daughter met her father with timbrels and dances, to congratulate his victory over the *Ammonites*, and God's having taken vengeance for him of those enemies. Thus at the yearly feast of the Lord at *Shiloh*, the virgins of the place came out to dance in dances †. It was used also frequently amongst the *Gentiles* ‡, by the greatest personages, in honour

§ Exod. xv. 20. || Judg. xii. 34.

‡ *Hesiod* represents the Muses as dancing round the altar of *Jupiter*.

Ορχεύεται καὶ ὦμον ἐπιστρέφει Κρητιώτης. *Theog.* v. 4.

Thus *Thesens* led the ring in the dance to the sound of the harp, somewhat like *David*.

--- σοὶ περὶ ὦμον εὐχρημένῳ κιθάρῳ
Κυκλίον ἀρχήσαντο. Χορὸν δ' ἤγησάτο Θησεύς. *Callim. Hymn.*
in Del. v. 301. 302. 312. *Vid. in. Apoll.* v. 12. 1316.

For as *David*, in the instance before us, they played, and sang, and danced in honour of their Gods.

----- *Cereris torta redimitus tempora quercu*
Det motus incompósitos, et carmina dicat.

Virg. Georg. 1. v. 350.

Plato assures us, that the Gods and the children of the Gods, were honoured with dancing. *De leg.* l. 7. p. 815. and he was for consecrating songs and dances to them, and appointing feasts, at proper seasons of the year, to them, and the Demons, and for ordering by authority what songs were proper

nour of the Gods, and recommended by the greatest philosophers, as a thing highly decent and becoming in itself; for instances of which I refer my reader to the note.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

But tho' *David* acted from a truly religious zeal, yet he hath been very severely censured for his habit and behaviour on this joyful occasion; being dressed, as it hath been represented, in a linen ephod, and *dancing before the Lord, in such a frantick indecent manner, that he exposed his* nakedness to the bye standers.* Mr. B. in the first part of his remark, expresses himself in a more cautious and temperate manner, and doth not pass his judgment, whether *David* discovered his nakedness or not; but says, that *if he did discover it,*

proper to be sung, and what dances to be danced, at the sacrifices which were offered them. *Id. Ibid.* Lucian also informs us, that dancing was in use amongst the Gods and Heroes, and amongst *Greeks* and *Romans*, in their religious solemnities; that no sacrifice was offered in *Delos*, and none of the ancient mysteries celebrated without it; and that the *Indians* adored the sun, when they rose in the morning, not as the *Greeks* did, by kissing their hand, but by turning to the east and dancing, and thus appeased the Deity morning and evening. *De Saltat.* §. 15. 16. 17. Many other instances might be produced of like nature. See Mr. *Le Clerc* on the place.

* Mr. *Le Clerc* also had this imagination. His remark is: *Cum veteres femoralia nulla ferrent, ---- facile fieri potuit, ut qui majore contentione saltabant, sublata motu corporis brevior tunica, pudenda retererent; quod factum videtur tunc temporis, Davide præ gaudio non attendente.* If *David* had been cloathed only with a short coat, or ephod, there might have been some ground for the observation; but as he was dressed also with a long flowing robe, the remark is groundless and injudicious. Mr. *Bayle's* insinuation, that *David* had nothing but a small girdle on his body, is invidious, and contrary to the most certain fact, and was undoubtedly mentioned by him, to intimate the great probability, that the cases of *David* and *St. Francis* bare a very great resemblance to each other.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

his action might be deemed ill, morally speaking; but if he did no more than make himself contemptible by his postures, and by not keeping up the majesty of his character, it was but an imprudence at most, and not a crime. He adds, that it ought to be considered, on what occasion it was that he danced. It was when the ark was carried to Jerusalem, and consequently the excess of his joy and of his leaping, testified his attachment and sensibility for sacred things. I shall just remark here, that if David did really discover his nakedness on this occasion, yet if it was merely accidental, and without any design, it could not be deemed ill, *morally speaking*, by any good judge of morality. I apprehend also that Mr. Bayle doth not know enough of David's manner of dancing, and the postures he made use of, to be sure that he rendered himself deservedly ridiculous by the use of them; because persons may dance in a very brisk and lively manner, without any postures that shall deserve contempt, and because there is no word in the original, that is made use of to express David's behaviour in this procession, that either implies, or will justify such a supposition.

The case, which Mr. B. mentions from *Ferrand* of St. *Francis* of *Assisi*, is so perfectly different from that of *David*, as that it should not have been related by him, in the article of *David*, at least without some mark of disapprobation. St. *Francis* voluntarily stripped himself stark naked, in the presence of many persons, met together to be witnesses to his absolute renunciation of his paternal inheritance. This was the downright madness of enthusiasm. *David*, on the contrary, divested himself only of his royal dress, and put on such an habit, as effectually preserved him from every thing of indecency and absurdity in his

his appearance. For he was cloathed with a double * garment; a robe of fine linen, and with a linen ephod. These two garments are expressly distinguished in the account of the vestments of the high priests, *Thou shalt take garments and put upon Aaron, and as we well render it †, the ephod, and the robe of the ephod. And again ‡: These are the garments, which they shall make, the breast plate, and the ephod, and the robe. The fabric of them was different §; the ephod being made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet; but || the robe formed all of blue. The shape of them was also different; the ephod reaching only to the knees, but the robe flowing down so as to cover the feet; called therefore by the 70th *ῥοδιῶν*, and the Vulgate version, *stola*. The robe also had no division in it throughout, but was made whole and ||| round, with an opening in the middle*

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

* Thus it is expressly said, that David was *cloathed with a robe of fine linen. He had also on him an ephod of linen.* 1 Chron. xv. 27. Mr. Le Clerc is mistaken in his version of this place, and in his note upon it. His version is: *David quidem amictus erat pallio byssino.* - David *inquam et ipse ephodum lineum gerebat.* And his note here is: *Repetitur more Hebraico, quod initio versus dictum erat.* But it is no repetition, as the two garments were intirely distinct. Nor indeed doth it appear from any passage, that the ephod was ever wore singly by any person; for as it reached at farthest no lower than the knees, such a habit would have been accounted extremely indecent in the eastern countries, where they wore long flowing garments. See 2 Sam. x. 4. And therefore the high priest, and the priests had the long robe, as well as the ephod, which was an upper short coat, thrown over the other garments.

† Exod. xxix. 5. ‡ Ibid. xxviii. 4. § Ibid. xxviii. 6. || Ibid. xxxviii. 22.

||| *כִּתְּיָה* *Vestimentum rotundum, et clausum utroque latere. Habebat duo foramina in lateribus, per quæ sacerdos brachia exserebat.* Braun. de Vestitu. l. 2. c. 5. §. 416. The account which Josephus, who could not be ignorant of the form of it,

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

middle of it, on the top, so that it was impossible that any part of the body could be seen through it; or that *David*, in dancing, could expose to view, what decency required him to conceal; especially as the ephod was, on this occasion, thrown over it, and * certainly tied with a girdle, as the priest's ephod always was: With these linen garments *David* cloathed himself on this solemnity, both out of reverence † for God, and for conveniency; because they were cooler, and less cumbersome than his royal habit, and would not occasion that large ‡ perspiration, which the exercise of dancing would otherwise have produced. And however improper such a long flowing robe, girt round with a girdle, may be thought for a man dancing with all his might, yet it is certain that *David* did dance in such a one, and there is no reason to think it could be any ways inconvenient to him. For, tho' the robe was close, *i. e.* had no opening from the breast to the feet, and was girt round with the ephod, yet it was large and wide, and flowing at the lower end; and hanging down in various folds, gave room sufficient for the full exercise of the feet in dancing. And of this every one will have full conviction, who frequents any of our polite assemblies, in which he will see

as it was a priestly vestment, gives of it, is: Πόδηρος δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ ἑστὸς --- ἢ ἐκ δύοιν περιτμημάτων, ὥστε ῥαπτοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων εἶναι, καὶ τῶν παραπλευρῶν, φάρος δ' ἐν ἐπιμήκει υφασμειον. It is a garment that reaches down to the feet; not consisting of two divisions, or pieces, so as to be sewed on the shoulders and sides; but it is one, a whole, intire, very long vestment, woven throughout. *Antiq. l. 3. c. 7. §. 4.*

* 2 Sam. vi. 14.

† The remark of *Grotius* is here judicious. *Deposita, tanquam coram Deo, regia majestate et ornatu.* He laid aside, as in the presence of God, his royal majesty and dress.

‡ Ezek. xliv. 18.

many

many fair ones dance, like the king of *Israel*, with David all their might, without any great inconvenience from the flowing habits; which so greatly adorn them. over Judah 10, all Israel 3.

It may be farther observed, that this robe was worn by kings, their children, priests, *Levites*, and prophets, when they appeared on very solemn occasions, which also covered over their other garments. Thus * *Samuel* is represented as covered with a robe or mantle, as we render it. All the † *Levites*, that bare the ark, and the singers, and *Chenaniab*, the master of the carriage, or of those who carried the ark, appeared in it on this very occasion. King's ‡ daughters were clothed with the same habit. The princes || of the sea wore them. And even God § himself is represented, *clad with zeal, as with a robe*. As *David* therefore dressed himself on this occasion, with a long flowing linen robe, instead of the robe of state, proper to him as king of *Israel*, which was made of different, and much richer materials; he was scornfully insulted by *Saul's* daughter, not for exposing his nakedness to the spectators, which he no more did, nor could do; than all the rest of the attendants, who wore the same habit; but for uncovering himself in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, *i. e.* appearing openly before the meanest of the people, in a dress, wholly unworthy, as she thought, the character and majesty of the king of *Israel*.

Nor was this all; for it appears, by part of *David's* answer to *Michal*, that she was particularly offended with his playing publicly on the harp; and, probably, she mimicked and ridiculed him, by the attitude in which she put herself on this occasion.

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 14. † 1 Chron. xv. 27. ‡ 2 Sam. xiii. 10.
 || Ezek. xxvi. 16. § Isai. lix. 17.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

For, in answer to her reproach, *David* says to her : *It was before the Lord* that I uncovered myself—— *therefore I will play before the Lord*, i. e. look on it with what contempt you please, yet as I openly played on my harp in the presence, and in honour of God, I glory in it, and will continue to do it, when any fair opportunity presents itself. His particularly mentioning *playing before the Lord*, plainly shews, that there was somewhat, in the nature and manner of her reproach, that gave occasion to it.

Besides, it should be remarked, that the eastern princes, out of affectation, and to strike the people with greater reverence, seldom appeared in publick, and when ever they did, not without great pomp and solemnity ; as is the custom amongst them to this day. *Michal* therefore unquestionably thought, that *David* made himself too cheap, by thus discovering himself to publick view, without any royal pomp, or marks of distinction, and familiarly mixing himself with the attendants on this solemnity, as tho' he had been one of them, and not the king of *Israel*. And the meaning of *Michal's* words in this view will be : How glorious was the king of *Israel* to day, who uncovered, i. e. stript himself of his * majesty, and all

* In this sense נָלַךְ is used, to denote the being stript of dignity, liberty, fortune, and every thing great and valuable, Thus, *Isai.* xxii. 8. *And he uncovered the covering of Judah.* וַיִּלֵּךְ אֶת מִסַּךְ יְהוּדָה The word מִסַּךְ is properly a veil, and denotes the veil of dignity and honour, that *Judah* had hitherto worn, without violation, disgrace, or infamy ; as it continued to enjoy its own laws, liberties, and priviledges. *This veil*, God says by the prophet, *I will reveal, uncover, and take it away ;* whereby *Judah* shall be stript of all its honours, exposed to the insults of his enemies, and carried into a wretched and shameful captivity. The form of expression is taken from matrons, who wore veils by way of dignity ;

all the ensigns of his royal dignity, and openly exposed himself to the most publick view of the meanest of the people, as a vain thoughtless person, who, without a proper habit, or regard to character, exposes himself to publick ridicule and scorn !

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

Mr. *Bayle* seems to be pretty much of *Michal's* opinion, when he says : *It would be thought very strange, in any part of Europe, if, on a day of procession of the holy sacrament, the kings should dance in the streets with nothing but a small girdle on their bodies.* It may be so, but the observation is nothing to the purpose, because *David* did not dance in the streets in this manner, as he insinuates. Besides, Mr. *B.* could not but know, that customs vary, and that the same customs may be thought very venerable and ridiculous, in different nations, and at different times. However solemn and sacred the procession of the sacrament might have seemed here, two or three centuries ago, and may at this day appear in popish countries, it would now seem a most contemptible and absurd farce in this nation. We should look with indignation and scorn, to see a crowned head holding the stirrup or bridle of a triple-mitred monk's horse, or humbly bending to kiss his toe ; or emperors and princes carrying wax candles in their hands, in company of a set of shorn bald-pated priests, or devoutly praying before a dead log of wood, or going in pilgrimage to consecrated statues, and kiss thresholds, and venerate the relicts of dead bodies ; and yet, despicable as these practices are in themselves, they have been used, and some of them continue in other na-

dignity ; and as a mark of their unviolated honour ; who, when abused, and carried captives, were deprived of their veils, and exposed to publick insult, contempt, and infamy.

tions

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

tions to be used to this day; and have been, and are now, so far from being thought strange or ridiculous, as that they were, and are still esteemed very high and laudable instances of piety and devotion.

If we examine the words themselves, by which *Michal* * reproached *David*, they can never be fairly so interpreted, as to mean that indecency, which some writers would be glad to find in them; and as to *David's* answer, it is utterly inconsistent with such a meaning. *David* said to *Michal*: *It was before the Lord.* What was before the

* Our version thus renders the passage. *How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!* But it should be observed, that the word *shamelessly* is not in the original, and is very wrongly inserted by our translators; who have themselves put a much better word, viz, *openly*, in the margin. And the whole passage may be thus literally translated. *How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who publicly shewed, or openly exposed himself to day in the presence of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the common, or ordinary, or meanest of men openly shews or exposes himself!* The original word גלה which we render *uncovering*, doth not, in its original primary sense, signify uncovering a man's nakedness, and is never used in that sense, without some other word to determine it to the meaning. Thus we read ערות גלה he hath uncovered his nakedness. Levit. xx. 11. So the prophet גללו שוליו tibi tuæ revelatæ sunt, thy skirts are uncovered. Jer. xiii. 22. And as in the parallel place, 1 Chron. xv. 29. this circumstance of *David's* exposing himself is not taken notice of; but only that when *Michal* saw *David* dancing and playing, on some musical instrument, αὐτὴ δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς παίζοντος καὶ χορεύοντος, as *Josephus* says, *Ant. Jud. l. 2. c. 4. §. 2. she despised him*; the meaning can only be, that by dancing before the ark, and playing on his harp, like the rest of the attendants, he exposed himself to the very meanest of the beholders, as tho' he was one of the harpers, and not king of *Israel*. The haughty woman, in the pride of her heart, calls the *Levites*, singers, and players on instruments, רקים low worthless people, of no rank, condition, or dignity, and likens *David* to them, because he appeared in much the same habit, and played and danced just as they did,

Lord?

Lord? What, his discovering his nakedness? David The very consideration of his being before the Lord would have prevented it, as he knew that such an indecency, in the solemnities of divine worship, was highly offensive to God, and prohibited under penalty of death. Again, he says: *¶ Therefore will I play before the Lord, i. e. play upon my harp; which must refer to her reproaching him, as appearing like a common harper; for it would be no answer to her, had she reproached him for that scandalous appearance, which some would make him guilty of. Farther he adds: And I will be † more vile than thus, and will be base § in my own sight. I will not scruple to submit to lower services than this, in honour of God; and notwithstanding my regal dignity, will not think myself above any humi-*

|| *Exod. xxviii. 42. 43.*

† *ונקלתי עוד. And I will be more vile, as we render the words. But the Hebrew verb doth not necessarily signify what the word vile means in English; but to be diminished, or to appear little to one's self, or in the eyes of comparison with others. See Gol. in voce. Thus Job saith to God הן קלתי behold I am vile, most contemptible and despicable in comparison of thee. Job xxxix. 37. So the men of Israel said to those of Judah: Why did ye despise us? 2 Sam. xix. 43. think so mean of us, as not to ask our advice? So Isai. xxiii. 9. The Lord of hosts hath purposed it להקל to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. So in the place before us, in reply to Michal's reproach: How glorious was the king of Israel to day, i. e. how inglorious and contemptible, he answers; I will be more inglorious and contemptible, i. e. think so low of myself, as to submit to greater condescensions and meaner services than these, when necessary to testify my veneration and submission to God.*

§ *And I will be עפל base in my own sight, as in our version. It should have been rendered, humble, as it generally is in our bible. David's advancement to be king did not make him grow proud and assuming towards God. He was resolved to cherish a perpetual humility, amidst all the pomp and and splendor of royalty. Lord, says he, my heart is not baughty, nor mine eyes lofty. Ps. cxxxi. 1,*

liations

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

liations, how great soever they may be, that may testify my gratitude and submission to him; expressions these which evidently shew, that what she called David's *uncovering himself*, was what he had designedly done, and not an accidental involuntary thing, without design, and contrary to his intention. And had he designedly exposed his nakedness, or even without design, how could he have made himself more vile, or rendered himself more worthy of censure and reproach?

Upon the whole, that *David* danced so, as to discover what he ought to have concealed, is an invidious surmise, that no man of learning or candor will affirm, and which has nothing in the grammatical sense of the expressions made use of to support it, and is in its nature impossible, from the make and form of the garments he was cloathed with.

I shall only add, that when the scripture says: § *Therefore Michal, Saul's daughter, had no child to the day of her death*; it doth not seem to be remarked, as tho' it was a punishment on her for this contempt of *David*, unless he voluntarily left her bed, for so heinous and undeserved an insult; but as a reproach on herself for her barrenness, she having never had any children by *David*; barrenness being accounted as reproachful and dishonourable a circumstance, as could befall a married woman. So that she had little reason to reproach her husband, when she was liable to a much greater reproach herself.

After *David* had thus deposited the ark at *Jerusalem*, he appointed the * *Levites* to their respective offices, distributed them into distinct

§ It should be observed, that what in our version is rendered, *Therefore Michal*, would be much better rendered, *And Michal*, which is the usual sense of the prefix *vau*.

* 1 Chron. xvi. 4, &c.

classes,

classes, carefully provided for the celebration of David
 publick worship before the ark, with a truly royal over Ju-
 magnificence, and with a pomp and splendor, dah 10, all
 suitable to the nature of that dispensation he was Israel 3.
 under, and the genius and circumstances of the
 people over whom he reigned; and delivered
 the following excellent hymn || to *Asaph*, the prin-
 cipal chanter, to be sung as a psalm of thank-
 giving and praise to God.†

Ver. 8. O pay your acknowledgments to *Je-
 hovah*.

Call upon his name.

Make known his deeds among the people.

9. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him.

Meditate on all his wondrous works.

10. Glory ye in his holy name.

Let the heart of them that seek the Lord rejoice.

11. Seriously consider the Lord, and his al-
 mighty power.

Seek his face continually.

12. Remember his marvellous works which
 he hath done;

His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth:

13. O ye seed of *Israel* his setvant;

O ye sons of *Jacob*, his chosen ones.

14. He, *Jehovah*, is our God.

His judgments are in all the earth.

15. Be ye always mindful of his covenant:

Of the word, which he hath commanded to a
 thousand generations:

† 1 Chron. viii. &c.

|| The fifteen first verses of this noble hymn are the first
 fifteen verses of the 105th psalm, with some few variations
 only, of little consequence, and what follows, to the end, is
 different in both. There needs but few words to ex-
 plain it,

16. Which

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

16. Which he made with *Abraham*,
And of his oath unto *Isaac*.

17. For he confirmed it to *Jacob* for a law,
And to *Israel* for an everlasting covenant. Saying :

18. “ To thee will I give the land of *Canaan*,
“ The lot of your inheritance :”

19. When ye were but few in number,
Inconsiderable, and strangers in it.

20. They went from nation to nation,
And from one kingdom to another people :

21. He suffered no man to spoil them,
But he rebuked kings for their sakes :

22. Saying : “ Touch not mine anointed ones,
“ And do my prophets no harm.”

Ver. 18. *The lot of their inheritance.* חֵבֶל הֵרֶשֶׁתָּם *the cord of their inheritance* literally, an expression taken from the antient method of measuring lands by the cord or line ; whence the measuring cord is metonymically put for the part measured, and divided by the cord. Thus *the lines* חֵבֶל הַבַּיִת *the cords are fallen unto me in pleasant places*, i. e. as the Psalmist explains it ; *I have a goodly heritage.* Ps. xvi. 6.

19. *When ye were but few.* כְּתִי מִסְפָּר Literally *homines numeri*, men of number ; so few as easily to be numbered ; in opposition to what their posterity afterwards were, as the sand of the sea, without number. So *Horace*, A. P. v. 206.

---- *Populus numerabilis, utpote parvus.*

Ibid. *Inconsiderable.* כְּמֵעַט The word signifies, either small as to number, or as to regard and esteem. Thus *Isai.* xvi. 14, *The remainder shall be* כְּמֵעַט *i. e. contemptible and few.* I take this idea to be included in the word here ; their being insignificant, and of little consideration, as the fewness of their number is mentioned just before.

19. 20. *And strangers in it.* *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, were all strangers in the land of *Canaan*, and went about from one nation and kingdom to another, without being injured by those among whom they sojourned.

21. 22. *He reproved kings.* *Pharaoh*, king of *Egypt*, Gen. xii. 17. and *Abimelech*, king of *Gezar*. Gen. xx. 3. *Let the sea roar, &c.*

23. Sing

23. Sing unto *Jehovah* all the earth.
 Joyfully shew forth his salvation from day to day.
24. Declare amongst the nations his glory,
 His marvellous works amongst all the people.
25. For *Jehovah* is great, and greatly to be
 praised,
 And to be feared above all Gods.
26. For all the Gods of the nations are idols,
 But *Jehovah* made the heavens.
27. Glory and honour are in his presence,
 Strength and gladness are in his dwelling.
28. Give unto the Lord, ye families of the
 people,
 Give unto *Jehovah* honour and strength.
29. Give unto *Jehovah* the glory of his name.
 Bring the offering, and come before him.
 Bow down before *Jehovah* in the beauty of holiness.
30. Tremble before him all the inhabitants of
 the earth.
 Surely by him the world is established, and shall
 not be moved.
 And let them say: “*Jehovah* reigns amongst the
 “ nations.”
31. Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad,
 32. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
 Let the field exult, and all that is therein.
33. Then let the trees of the wood shout aloud
 before *Jehovah*,
 Because he comes to judge the earth.
34. O make your acknowledgments to *Jehovah*,
 for he is good,
 For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

David
 over Ju-
 dah 10, all
 Israel 3.

32. The introducing seas and rivers, mountains and fields, trees and woods, as rejoicing, is in the true spirit of poetry.

*Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant
 Intonsi montes: Ipsæ jam carmina rupes,
 Ipsa sonant arbusta.* Virg. Eclog. 5. v. 63, &c.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

35. And say ye : “ Save us, O God of our
salvation,
“ And gather us, and deliver us from the na-
tions,
“ That we may make our acknowledgements to
thy holy name,
“ That we may glory in thy praise.”
36. Blessed be *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, from
everlasting to everlasting :
And let all the people say, *Amen*,
And offer praises to *Jehovah*.

Every one who reads this psalm with care, must acknowledge, that the spirit of true piety and good sense breathes through the whole of it, and that it is well calculated for the purpose it was intended for, the celebrating the praises of the true God. No well disposed mind can read it without feeling some warmth of devotion, and offering up his tribute of adoration and thanksgiving. The descriptions of God are just and noble. The representation of Glory and Honour, Strength and Gladness, as ministers attending his presence, is truly sublime. It is one of the best thoughts in *Callimachus*' hymn on *Jove*, his placing Power and Strength, as persons, or ministers, near his throne, to execute his pleasure.

Ση τε βίη το τε Κερτος, • και πειλας εισαο διφρε. ver. 67.

The ministers attending *David*'s God are still more worthy the divine character. Majesty and

35. *Gather us.* קבצנו. i. e. Either bring back those, who have been taken captives by their enemies, that they may be joined to thy people : Or, what I rather think : Let no divisions separate us. Keep us one collected body, all united in the same religion, in mutual affection, and under the government of the same king.

{ Honour,

Honour, Strength and Gladness, standing before his presence, strike us with an holy awe, and inspire us with a pleasing reverence and esteem. And finally, nothing can be conceived more grand and elevated, than the introducing heaven and earth, the sea, with all its fulness, the fields, with all that dwell in them, and the trees of the wood, as uniting into one grand chorus, and expressing their joy in songs at the presence of God, and congratulating his coming to judge the world in righteousness.

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

David having thus regulated all things, relative to the solemnities of the publick worship, before the ark or temple of God, and *Jerusalem* being now capable, by the numerous buildings erected in it, of receiving his people from all parts of his dominions, when they ascended to the yearly festivals; soon had the pleasure to find them in general disposed to appear before God in *Sion*, and to attend on those sacred annual solemnities, which were expressly commanded to be celebrated at that place, which the Lord should choose out of all the tribes of *Israel* to put his name there. And being informed that many were arrived, and others resorting to it for these religious purposes, to express his satisfaction on so joyful an occasion, and the pleasing prospect he had of the city's prosperity, and the future happiness of his people, I apprehend he composed the following most excellent ode.*

P S A L M CXXII.

Ver. 1. I was glad when they said to me:
“Let us go up to the house of *Jehovah*.”

2. Our

* This psalm is intitled שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת. *A song of ascensions*, and the nature of it seems to point out the reason of the title, and shews, that it was one of those hymns that

David
over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.

2. Our feet were standing in thy gates, O *Jerusalem*.
3. *Jerusalem* is built.
It is as a city which is closely compacted together.
4. There the tribes ascend, the tribes of the Lord,
There is the testimony of *Israel*,
That they may make their acknowledgments to the name of *Jehovah*.
5. There are seated the thrones for judgment,
The thrones of the house of *David*.
6. O pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*.
They shall prosper that love thee.
7. Peace be within thy walls ;
Prosperity within thy palaces.

were to be sung by the people, when they ascended, or came up from their respective cities and dwellings, to the yearly festivals at *Jerusalem*; as the very learned Dr. Lowth hath observed in his excellent performance of *the sacred poetry of the Hebrews*. And the ode is a very elegant and lively one.

3. *Jerusalem is as a city שחברה, that is compact together*, as we render it. The verb *חבר* denotes the connection, or joining of things aptly and closely to each other. Thus 'tis used of the coupling the curtains of the tabernacle together. *Exod. xxxvi. 18.* Hence it is used to denote the connection and society of friendship, affection, and purpose. *Gen. xiv. 3. Hos. iv. 17.* In the place before us both senses seem to be united. *Jerusalem* is compact as to its buildings, and the inhabitants of it firmly united, by mutual harmony and friendship. See other interpretations, *Irhov. conject. in Psalm. Tit. §. 24.*

4. *עדות לישראל.* To the testimony of *Israel*, as we render the words, supplying the preposition *to*, which is not in the original. I repeat the word *שם* from the beginning of the verse. *There the tribes ascend. There is the testimony of Israel*, i. e. the ark, so called, *Exod. xvi. 34.* because the tables of stone were placed in it; hence called *the ark of the testimony*. *Exod. xxv. 22.*

8. For

8. For my brethren and companions sake, I David
will now say:

“Peace be within thee.”

9. Because of the house of *Jehovah*, our God, over Ju-
dah 10, all
Israel 3.
I will seek thy good.

This psalm is in the title ascribed to *David*, and it is worthy the pen of so elegant a writer. From the beginning of it, it plainly appears, that when he had placed the ark in its proper habitation, and so far finished his buildings, as that the city was capable of receiving the people, who should come up to celebrate their first festival there, he had been informed, that they expressed a general desire of ascending to it, and visiting the house of the Lord; a privilege they were seldom capable of obtaining before. *I was glad when they said to me: Let us go up to the house of the Lord.* ver. 1. When they were actually come up to the city, and had just entered the gate, they are represented as crying out with triumph, in the height of their surprise and joy, when from the gate they beheld the buildings which presented themselves to their view: *Jerusalem* is built! 'Tis a city well compact within itself, stately, beautiful, and regular! The description, as it were, places us under the very gate, and the houses and palaces rise almost conspicuous to our view. What added to their joy, when they beheld the city, was the presence of the ark in it, the courts of judicature, and the several other circumstances mentioned in the psalm. How natural and affecting also is the sudden change, from

8. *שלווה*. *Prosperity*. Mr. *Schultens* hath shewn that this word signifies pure, unmixed prosperity, undisturbed, and free from the interruption of any calamities. *Schult.* Orig. vol. ii. p. 63.

David
over Ju-
dah I I, all
Israel 4.



admiration into devotion, breathing out into ardent prayers for the peace and prosperity of a city, which so many considerations united to endear to them, and render them solicitous for its safety. The Psalmist closeth the ode with a solemn assurance to his people, whom he stiles *his brethren and friends*, that for their sakes, and the high reverence he bare to the house of God, he would himself both pray for the prosperity, and in the whole of his government, endeavour to secure the tranquility and welfare of the city. And indeed this psalm hath ever been admired by the best judges, both for the composition and the matter of it.

But this great man had more enlarged views † than the settling of the ark in a tabernacle at *Jerusalem*, and formed a much more noble and magnificent design, that of erecting a house or temple, as a more firm and durable repository for it. And as he was one day sitting in his palace, and pleasing himself with the costliness of its materials, and the conveniency and splendor of the building; and as he found himself at leisure, and free from all disturbances from his enemies abroad, he applied himself to the works of peace; and sending for *Nathan* the prophet, he said to him: *See now I dwell in an house of cedar; but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains; because the tabernacle, in which the ark was placed, consisted principally of curtains, which encompassed the whole area of it, and covered it over. He thought it disrespectful to his God, that he should have a better house than the ark of God to reside in. Nathan immediately replied, not by any divine influence, but only as the sense of his own mind: Go, do all that is in*

† 2 Sam. vii. 1, &c.

thy heart, for the Lord is with thee. He thought David's design so great and pious, as that God would certainly and abundantly prosper him in it. David over Judah 11, all Israel 4.

But in the ensuing night, God was pleased to order *Nathan* to carry *David* the following message * :

5. Go, and tell my servant *David*: Thus saith the Lord: Wilt thou build an house for me to dwell in?

6. Whereas I have not dwelt in an house, from the day that I caused the children of *Israel* to come out of *Egypt*, even to this day, but I have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7. In every place where I have walked with all the children of *Israel*, have I spoken a word to any one of the tribes of *Israel*, which I commanded to feed my people *Israel*, saying: Why do you not build me an house of cedar?

8. Now therefore, thus shalt thou say to my servant, even to *David*: Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldst be ruler over my people, over *Israel*.

9. And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before

* 2 Sam. vii. 1, &c.

Ver. 6. *I have walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle.* The ark of God followed the *Jews* in all their encampments, and had no other dwelling but the tent or tabernacle, which principally consisted of curtains or veils. And as the cloud and glory, which were the peculiar emblems of God's gracious presence with them, always attended the ark in all its stations, God is figuratively said to walk in the tabernacle; and we need not be informed that God cannot be said really to walk in that, or any other place whatsoever.

9. *I have made thee a great name, &c. i. e. I have made thee a mighty king, a successful warrior, triumphant over*

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

before thee, and I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men who are upon the earth.

10. And I have appointed a place for my people *Israel*, and I have planted them, that they might dwell under their own government, and not be moved any more, and that the sons of wickedness may not afflict them any more, as at the first, and from the day in which I commanded judges over my people *Israel*.

11. And I have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. The Lord also hath declared to thee, that the Lord will make thee an house.

12. When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall come forth from thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13. He shall build an house to my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

thine enemies, have given thee extensive dominions, powerful armies, large riches, and thereby exalted thy name and fame, so that thou art spoken of, honoured and revered, like other great princes and conquerors of the East.

10. וּשְׁכֵן תַּחְתָּיו. *That they may dwell in a place of their own.* So our version, and Cocceius, *in loco suo*. תַּחְתָּיו literally rendered is, *under himself*; i. e. as I apprehend, under his own princes, government, and laws, and not in subjection to a foreign power and authority, as they had often formerly been. The 70th render the word by καθ' εαυτον *by themselves*, separate from others, and in the free enjoyment of their own laws and privileges. Thus we find תַּחַת sometimes used. Thus *David* blesses God because, *them that rose up against me thou hast subdued תַּחְתָּנִי under me*; so that they are subjected to my power. 2 Sam. xxii. 40.

11. *The Lord will make thee an house*, i. e. give thee a family, and perpetuate it, so that it shall never be cut off.

14. I will be to him for a father, and he shall be to me for a son; whom, if he commit iniquity, and I chastise with the rods of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: David over Judah 11, all Israel 4.

15. Yet my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I caused it to depart from *Saul*, when I removed him away from before thee.

16. But thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, and thy throne shall be established for ever.

When *David* had received this message from God by the ministry of *Nathan*, he immediately repaired to the tabernacle or sanctuary of God, and, full of the warmest gratitude for the kind assurances he had received from him, and standing in his presence, he broke out into these acknowledgments, which appear to be extemporary, and dictated immediately by the fervor of his piety and devotion.

18. Who am I, O Lord *Jehovah*, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19. But

14. *I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; i. e. God would not act the part of a severe and angry judge, by utterly destroying him, and extirpating his family, or taking the kingdom from them; but act with the humanity and tenderness of a father to his son, by correcting his offences with a moderate chastisement, as men chastise their sons, with a design not to destroy, but to recover them. Solomon, in the close of his life, met with this human discipline for his offences, and tho' several of his posterity were very wicked princes, God preserved the throne in his family, for many generations; till his posterity and the whole people being incurable in their crimes, God cut off Israel out of the land he had given them, and cast out the house that had been hallowed to his name from his sight, and made Israel become a proverb and a bye word amongst all people; as he expressly assured Solomon he would do. 1 Kings ix. 7.*

18. *Standing in his presence. וישב. He sat before the Lord. There is no other instance but this in all the scripture,*

David
over Ju-
dah 1, all
Israel 4.

19. But even this is a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord *Jehovah*; for thou hast also spoken concerning the house of thy servant for a great while to come, and this according to the constitution of men, O Lord *Jehovah*.

20. And what more can *David* yet speak unto thee, for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord *Jehovah*.

21. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, thou hast done all these great things, to make them known to thy servant.

ture, of persons sitting, when they worshiped, offered thanksgivings, and made their supplications to God; the posture always used being standing, kneeling, or prostration; and the *Jewish* Rabbins from this place think, that it was the peculiar privilege of the king to sit and worship in the temple. But they have no authority, but their own imagination, to support this opinion. The original word frequently signifies, *mansit, constitit*, he remained, continued, or abode. Thus, *his bow* *תשב* *abode* in strength. Gen. xlix.

24. Thus the prophet *Gad* to *David*. *לא תשב* *Thou shalt not abide in the hold.* 1 Sam. xxii. 5. and in many other places that might be mentioned. And so in the passage before us, *David* went into the tabernacle, where the ark was placed, and *abode*, or continued before the Lord; and made, as there is little room to question, his acknowledgments before God, in the reverend posture of standing.

Ibid. *That thou hast brought me hitherto*, i. e. advanced me to this great honour and prosperity, with which I am now distinguished.

19. *Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come*, i. e. promised to preserve and perpetuate it, and not to remove the crown and kingdom from it.

Ibid. *And this according to the constitution of men.* Our version renders the words interrogatively. *And is this the manner of men, O Lord?* *וזאת תורת האדם* literally: *And this the law of man*; viz. that the crown should be hereditary, and pass from one branch of the royal family to another. God was the supreme king and governor in *Israel*, and had a right to transfer the kingdom from one person and family to another, as he did from *Saul* to *David*. But in *David's* favour he receded from his own right, and established the succession in his family, according to the general constitution of the kingdoms of the world.

22. Where-

22. Wherefore thou art great, O God *Jehovah*; for there is none like thee, nor is there any God besides thee, according to all that we heard with our ears.

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

23. And what one nation in the earth is there like thy people, like *Israel*, whom God went to redeem to himself for a people, and to make to himself a name, even by doing for you these great, and these wonderful things in the land, before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed for thyself from *Egypt*, the nations, and their Gods.

24. And thou hast established for thyself thy people *Israel*, to be a people unto thee for ever, and thou, O *Jehovah*, art to them for their God.

25. And now, O *Jehovah* God, establish for ever the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, and do according as thou hast said.

26. And let all magnify thy name for ever, by saying: “*The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,*
“*and let the house of thy servant David be esta-*
“*blished before thee.*”

23. *To make himself a name.* These words may be rendered, to make to him, i. e. to *Israel*, a name, or render him famous and formidable amongst the nations; as God told *David* by *Nathan*, that *he made him a great name*, ver. 9. I refer the words to God, and think the meaning is: To redeem the people out of *Egypt* for himself, to make himself a great name, i. e. as God told *Pharaoh* by *Moses*: *I have raised thee up for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth, and that thou mightest know there is none like me in all the earth.* *Exod. ix. 14. 16.* And this is confirmed by the parallel place, where we read: *To make thyself a name.* *1 Chron. xvii. 21.*

Ibid. Mr. *Le Clerc* thinks the latter part of this verse greatly confused, and indeed they are so, as he says they must be translated, as they now stand, viz. *a facie populi tui, quem li-*
berasti

David
over Ju-
dah 1, all
Israel 4.

27. And because thou, O Lord of hosts, the God of *Israel*; hast revealed to thy servant saying: *I will build thee an house*; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray unto thee this prayer.

28. And now O Lord *Jehovah*, thou art that faithful God, and thy words shall be truth, since thou hast spoken this good concerning thy servant.

29. Let therefore it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee, for thou, O Lord *Jehovah*, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

I can-

berasti ex Egypto, gentes et Deos eorum. But if they are rendered, as they ought to be, the confusion immediately vanishes. *E facie populi tui, quem liberaſti ex Egypto, gentibus et earum Diis*; supplying the preposition in the first word to the two last, which there are many instances to justify. So that there needs no word to be inserted to make up the sense, nor any transposition of the words to bring them into order. And indeed I think the passage, as it stands in the place before us, carries in it greater emphasis, than it doth with the few alterations in *Chronicles*, tho' in both places the sense is intirely the same. For what can be more expressive or affecting, than God's marching to redeem to himself a people, to make to himself a name, or illustrate his own glory, by doing works that manifested his majesty and greatness, and making his people witness to those terrible judgments; which he executed on *Egypt* and the nations, which possessed the land before them, and whom he redeemed to himself from *Egypt*, the nations and their Gods. Their redemption from the Gods of the heathens was the noble part of their redemption, without which, every other salvation would have been partial and incomplete.

27. *Thy servant hath found in his heart to pray.* מצא לבו *Hath found his heart.* We have the like expressions in English. *I have no heart*, or *I can't find my heart* to do such and such a thing, i. e. the disposition and inclination. So *David* found the heart to pray to God. His faith in God's promises by the prophet, and the warm gratitude of his own heart, powerfully prompted him to make his supplications

I cannot help taking notice here of the exemplary piety, gratitude, modesty, and humility, of this great and excellent prince, upon the receipt of this singularly gracious message from his God. *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that I should be so highly favoured as I have hitherto been!* These words want no comment. But he receives with astonishment the promise, that related to the most distant futurity, even to his posterity thro' many generations. As tho' this was a small thing which thou hast already done for me, thy promise extends to a long while yet to come. . And *what can David say more to thee?* What can he ask more? He wants words to express his gratitude to thy goodness. *But thou Lord God knowest thy servant.* I can appeal to thee, the heart-searching God, for the sincerity of my gratitude. But whence is it that God should thus favour and distinguish his servant? *For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, thou hast done all these great things.* It is all owing to the mere motion and dictates of thy goodness, and to demonstrate thy veracity and truth in the performance of thy promises. How natural, after this, is the adoration of God, as supremely great and good, and the prayer that concludes the whole! *Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.* They who cannot see the heart in this solemn address to God on this signal occasion, must be void of all that sensibility, which both dictates devotion, and greatly heightens the pleasure of it.

tions to him. There needs no proof that לב in Hebrew denotes the dispositions and affections of men, which are supposed, in some respect, to have their seat in the heart, and greatly to depend on the temperament of the blood, of which the heart is the receptacle and fountain.

To

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

To perpetuate the remembrance of this great event, the settlement of the crown and kingdom in his family, thro' many future generations, *David*, I apprehend, composed the following ode.

PSALM II.

Ver. 1. Why do the heathen confederate,
And the people imagine a vain thing?

2. The kings of the earth set themselves in
opposition,

And the rulers together instigate each other
Against the Lord and his anointed :

3. " Let

Ver. 1. *Why do the nations* נִשְׁבָּצוּ, *rage*, as our version gives it; but in the margin, *Tumultuously assemble*. The 70th render it by *ἐφραξαν*. *Why do they rage*, or clamour? In the *Chaldee* dialect the verb signifies *to associate* and meet together, and it certainly signifies thus, Dan. vi. 6, 11. where we translate the word, *assemble together*; and we render a derivative from this root by *company* in a good sense, when a man keeps company with his friend; and another derivative by *insurrection*, or the union and conspiracy of bad men. Ps. lxiv. 2. *Cocceius* translates the root by *convenire concorditer*, to meet together with unanimity, or one consent, whatever be the purpose of such meeting. And this sense suits well the place before us, as it represents the nations as confederating together to disturb *David's* reign, and uniting their forces to hinder the increase of his power. It also answers to the fact, as related. 2 Sam. viii. 1, &c.

2. The kings of the earth יִתְצַבּוּ *set themselves*, as in our translation, which is scarce intelligible without some addition. It means, set themselves in opposition, or have settled and determined themselves in it, are fixed immovably in their purpose, as the word sometimes signifies. It may be observed also, that the word is used in a military sense, to denote an obstinate opposition to an enemy, or the waging war with another, and opposing him by arms and fortresses. See *Schult.* in Job i. 6. So that the kings of the earth are obstinately set or bent on the war, to drive God's anointed from the throne, or stand fixed and resolved to proceed.

Ibid. And the rulers נִסְדְּדוּ *take counsel*, as our version hath it. But this seems to have been said in the first verse,
which

3. " Let us break their bands afunder,
" And cast away their cords from us."

David
over Ju.
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

which declares that the confederacy among them was formed, and their measures already concerted. The verb is explained by Goliath, *cervical posuit sub capite*; and the proper meaning of the word is *to bolster*, or pillow any person up, i. e. to prop and support him. So that the meaning of the word, in the place before us, according to this sense of it is, they encourage and support one another, they excite and animate each other in their opposition. And what makes this sense the more probable is, that as the learned Mr. *Schultens* observes from *Goliath*, the *Arabick* critics have this gloss on the word: *Instigavit canem ad pradam*. He instigated, or set on a dog to seize his prey. And this gives a very strong and significant meaning, as *David's* enemies urged and instigated each other in their opposition to him. Or, if we apply it to *David*, in his great successor the Messiah, it answers to real facts; the *Jewish* priests, elders, and council, instigating false witnesses to accuse him, *Pilate* to condemn, and the people to clamour their Messiah to the cross; and the people instigating *Pilate* to release *Barabbas*, and crucify *Jesus*, and the devil instigating them all to perpetrate this impious murder.

Ibid. *Against the Lord, and against his anointed.* The opposition, to which they instigated one another, was to *Jehovah*, because he exalted *David* to be king in *Jerusalem*; and because *Jesus*, whom the princes and people crucified, was that Messiah and Saviour, in whom God had determined, that the throne of *David* should be perpetuated, as long as sun and moon should endure.

3. *Let us break their bonds, and cast away their cords.* This is the language of the nations and princes instigating each other to this impious war. To be in bonds, and tied with cords, is to be reduced to the utmost state of vassalage; and the kings and nations counted their subjection to *David* the most dishonourable servitude, and therefore were determined, if they could, to break their bonds, and cast away their cords, i. e. to renounce the dominion of *David*, whom the Lord had made king, and free themselves from all subjection to him. And thus the *Jews*, the nations, and princes of the earth, united themselves in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, to destroy his authority, extirpate his religion, and prevent men's obedience to, and worship of God, by *Jesus Christ*.

4. He

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

4. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh,
The Lord shall have them in derision.

5. Then

4. *He shall laugh ---- shall have them in derision.* This is spoken of God, *more humano*, to denote his utter contempt of the opposition of his enemies, the perfect ease with which he was able to disappoint all their measures, and crush them for their impiety and folly; together with his absolute security that his counsel should stand, and his measures be finally accomplished; as men laugh at, and hold in utter contempt those, whose malice and power they know to be utterly vain and impotent. The introducing God as thus laughing at, and deriding his enemies, is in the true spirit of poetry, and with the greatest propriety and dignity. See also Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13. *The wicked plotteth against the just---- The lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day is coming.* In the place before us the whole description is grand. *Jehovah* is he, who is seated in the heavens, far beyond the effects of their rage and malice; from thence he sees their secret counsels, confederate armies, and united obstinate endeavours to oppose what he had solemnly decreed. There he securely laughs at them, derides their projects, and will soon make them feel the effects of his vengeance. The heathen poets frequently introduce *Jupiter* and other deities as laughing, but with the utmost indecency, and upon occasions unworthy the majesty of real Gods. Who can read without contempt and indignation the account of *Juno* and all the Gods, breaking out into a long loud laughter, at poor *Vulcan's* limping and hobbling, when he handed to them, as their butler, the cup of nectar? *Hom. Iliad* §. v. 595---599. Or, *Juno's* laughing at *Venus*, when she had wheedled her out of her love girdle, in order to bewitch the father of Gods and men? *Il. α. 222. 223.* Or at *Hercules*, dragging in by the hinder leg a large bull, or a wild boar, for his dinner? *Callim. Hymn in Dian. v. 145---151.* Or, *Jupiter's* laughing at *Diana*, when she sat in his lap, and complained to him, how *Juno* had whipped her? *Il. φ. 508.* and, at another time, for her tickling his beard, when, in the fulness of his joy, he boasted to her of his harlots and adulteries, that had procured him so many pretty boys and girls. *Callim. Hymn in Dian. v. 28.* and finally, for his setting the Gods together by the ears, and seeing all of them fighting together in the quarrel relating to an abandoned prostitute. *Il. φ. 389. 390.* There is such a shocking indecency in these laughters of the Gods, that *Socrates* justly blames *Homer* for ascribing them to them, as unworthy, not only of them, but even of wise and

5. Then he shall speak to them in his wrath,
And confound them in his sore displeasure.

6. I even I, have anointed my king on *Sion*,
The mountain of my holiness.

David
over Ju-
dah 1, all
Israel 4.

7. I

and virtuous men. *De repub. l. 3. p. 389. 390.* But the representation of the Psalmist, as it is figurative and allusive, is with the utmost propriety and decency, and highly expressive of that sovereign contempt, with which he views the princes and rulers of the earth, in their united opposition to the schemes of his providence, and the determinations of his wisdom and goodness.

5. *Then shall he speak to them:* This denotes, not God's speaking to them by an audible voice, but making them to know to their full conviction, by the disappointment of their schemes, and the vengeance taken on them, that *David* was established king in *Jerusalem*, and should reign in his son, the *Messiah*, throughout all generations. For *David* declares, that God would speak to them in his wrath, i. e. by the effects of it: A language the most expressive and convincing of all others.

Ibid. Vex them. יְבַהֲלֵם In the margin the word is rendered, *trouble them*, and by the 70th ταράξῃ αὐτοὺς, to the same purpose. The word hath a very strong and significant meaning, and denotes the utter consternation of mind, which intirely deprives men of the use of their reason, and the strength of their bodies; as *Cocceius* gives the meaning in his excellent *lexicon*. Thus the woman of *Endor*, when she came to *Saul*, saw that נְבַהֵל מְאֹד *he was sore troubled*, as we render it. But it expresses much more, as the foregoing verse informs us; for he was *fallen prostrate on the earth, and sore afraid, so that there was no strength left in him.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 20. 21. See also *Isai. xxi. 3.* where we render the word, *I was dismayed.* So also in the place before us. God should put them into the utmost terror and consternation of mind, and deprive them of all power and ability of soul and body, to save themselves from the vengeance that should be executed on them.

6. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion.* It should have been rendered: *I have anointed* נִסְכַּחְתִּי *my king* עַל צִיּוֹן *on Sion*, or rather, *over Sion*, the mountain of my holiness. We do not read that *David* was ever anointed on *Mount Sion*, or in *Jerusalem*, king over *Israel*; and the meaning is, not that God had anointed *David* on *Sion*, but to be king, and reign in *Sion*, because *David* had chosen it for his own residence,

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

7. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath
said to me:

Thou

dence, and God, for the habitation of the ark. Kings were formerly, as well as now, anointed with oil at their inauguration, and thereby solemnly confirmed in their regal power and authority; and to be anointed is to be, by anointing, established in the kingdom. The words *וְאֲנִי יִסְכֶּתִי* should have been rendered: *Even I, I have anointed my king*; the pronoun and the prefix being here both emphatical. The 70th give a different turn to the words. *Εγω δὲ καταστασὼν βασιλεὺς ἐπ' αὐτῶν. I was constituted king by him*; making the words, not to be spoken by God in contempt of his enemies, but by David concerning God; and F. Houbigant is for altering the present text, and making it conformable to their version. But surely the present reading is much more significant and nervous. David probably had some intelligence of the new confederacy that was forming against him. But he speaks of the princes and nations that combined against him with contempt, fully assured that their schemes and measures should be all frustrated, and end in their own confusion. How could he be thus assured? Why, because God had anointed him king, and therefore as they were confederate against God and his anointed, all their projects must finally come to nothing, and God would soon convince them of it, by speaking to them in his wrath, and letting them know by the most convincing arguments: *I, even I, have anointed and established my king on Sion*. Every thing here runs plain and easy, and God is not only represented as speaking, but what he spake we are actually informed of; whereas in the version of the 70th, what God says is intirely omitted. This is a much stronger objection against their translation, than what the good father objects against the present reading; that the sentence: *He shall confound them in his wrath*, comes between the two sentences: *Then shall he speak to them*, and, *I have anointed*, &c. This is a much less difficulty, than the introducing God as speaking to the nations, without giving us an account of any thing he said. It is usual in all writers sometimes to interrupt the connection, by an intermediate paragraph, that the nature of the subject, or the flow of their thoughts may suggest. We have an instance in the 50th psalm, where we read at the first verse: *The mighty God, even Jehovah, hath spoken*; and yet what God spake is not mentioned till three verses after.

7. I will declare *לֵאמֹר*. The decree. David having introduced God, as declaring that he would speak to the confusion

Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee. David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

fusion of his enemies, and convince them that he had made him king in *Sion*, farther says, for the encouragement of his subjects; that he would relate to them God's purpose concerning him, and the gracious assurances he had been pleased to grant him. Mr. *Mudge* affirms, that these cannot be the words of *David*, because he is spoken of throughout this psalm as a third person, and that probably they were spoken by *Nathan*, who he imagines was the composer of this psalm. But this appears to me extremely improbable, that these words, *I will declare the decree*, should be spoken by *Nathan*; for it immediately follows: *The Lord said to me, thou art my son, &c.* So that the person who says, *I will declare the decree*, is the very person to whom the Lord said: *Thou art my son.* But God never gave this assurance to *Nathan*, but to *David*, who certainly, and not *Nathan*, was the author of this psalm. So thought at least the apostles, who with one accord acknowledged, that by the mouth of his servant *David*, God had said: *Why do the heathens rage, &c.* Act. iv. 25. The objection drawn from *David's* being spoken of as a third person appears to be of no weight. For, in the five first verses, *David* only once speaks of himself as a third person, and that under the character of God's *Messiah* or anointed: *They instigate each other against the Lord and against his anointed*; a much stronger manner of expression, than if it had been said, against the Lord and against me; because the character of God's anointed carries in it a sure reason, why God would protect and defend him. In the latter part of the psalm, in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, he speaks immediately of himself: *I will declare the decree, &c.*

Ibid. *Thou art my son, I have begotten thee.* This is the decree concerning *David*. *Thou art my son.* God himself was properly king over *Israel*. *The Holy One of Israel is our king.* Ps. lxxxix. 18. And *David* styles him, *his God and his king.* Ps. lxxviii. 24. But he declared concerning *David*: *Thou art my son. I will make him my first born.* Ps. lxxxix. 27. viz. by giving him the rights of primogeniture, and advancing him as such to the kingdom. Kings in general and magistrates are styled Gods, and sons of the Most High, in scripture. Ps. lxxxii. 1. 6. And by profane writers.

Επει δὲ οὗτος ἔδειν ἀνακτων

Θεοτερον τω και σφε την εκριναο λαξιν.

Callim. Hym. in Jov. v. 80.

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

8. Ask of me : I will give thee the nations for
thine inheritance,

And the ends of the earth for thy possession.

9. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron,
And dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

10. Now therefore, O ye kings, be wise,
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11. Serve the Lord with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.

But there is a peculiar propriety in this expression : *Thou art my son*, as used of *David*; as God did in great measure, by fixing him on the throne, and making it hereditary in his family, cede and transfer the kingdom and government, which were originally in himself, to *David* and his posterity, hereby making him, as it were, his son and successor in the kingdom. And when God adds : *I have begotten thee*, 'tis not another expression denoting the same, as *Thou art my son*, but implies his being made son and heir by adoption; and the words, *This day*, I suppose, denote the day in which *David* received the divine decree, or constitution, by the hand of *Nathan*. This I apprehend to be the literal meaning of the words, as they belong to *David*, in person; but as they belong to him, in his most illustrious successor, they have yet a nobler meaning. They are cited by *St. Paul*, in his sermon to the *Jews* at *Antioch*, as predictive of the resurrection of Christ. *Act. xiii. 33.* and by the author to the *Hebrews*, applied to him as a proof of his *being made better*, i. e. exalted to higher dignity and honour, *than the angels*, by his resurrection to an endless life. *Heb. i. 5.* God having declared him *to be his son, with power, by his resurrection from the dead*, and session at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Ver. 8. *Ask of me, &c.* This verse, as it refers to *David*, denotes God's promise to extend his dominion over all the neighbouring states and princes that opposed him, around all the borders of *Judea*, and this promise was literally made good. But this extent of dominion is too small to come up to the full meaning of the expressions here made use of, which were more amply fulfilled in his great successor the *Messiah*, to whom God put all things in subjection in heaven and earth, and who shall finally crush, as with an iron rod, all who will not have him to reign over them.

12. Kiss

12. Kifs the fon, lest he be angry,
And, like wandering sheep, ye utterly perish.

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

13. When

12. *Kifs the son.* נשקן בר. The son primarily denotes *David* himself, whom God had adopted to be his son. But the character is more especially applicable to his great successor, who was the son of God in a more appropriate and much higher sense than *David*. The kifs in the east was a token of respect and reverence from inferiors to their superiors, and doing a kind of homage to them. *Exod.* xviii. 7. *1 Sam.* x. 1. and even of adoration. *1 Kin.* xix. 18. *Hos.* xiii. 1. So kissing *David* means, paying that homage and veneration that was due to him, as God's adopted son and king, and that were paid to eastern monarchs by their subjects. Kissing the hand of sovereign princes is now also an act of homage, and a token of fealty and submission. As applied to the *Messiah* it means submission to him in his character of Saviour, and *honouring him as we also honour the father*, in obedience to his father's command. בר and בן are the same word, only differently pronounced according to the difference of dialect; בר being the more common pronunciation in the *Chaldee* dialect, and בן in the *Hebrew*; tho' it should be observed, that the same word, in the same dialect, was sometimes differently pronounced, as Mr. *Schultens* hath shewn in his *clavis dialectorum*.

Ibid. Ye perish from the way. ותאבדו דרך. The 70^l render the words, κ' απολυσθητε εξ οδου. Et percatis a via, as tho' they had read מדרך. But this *F. Houbigant* thinks a strange way of speaking, and without any parallel, because it is not to be found in *Buxtorf's* concordance, i. e. any where else in the bible; as tho' all the forms of speaking amongst the antient *Hebrews* were to be found there; than which nothing can be a more unreasonable and absurd supposition. However, on this weak foundation he corrects the text, alters the pointing and order of the words, and makes a new sense; thus, not reforming, but transforming the passage. כי ידרך ובער אפו פן יאנה ותאבדו lest he be angry and ye perish. Etenim incedit, et exardescit ira ejus. For his anger walks and grows warm. But this interpretation hath no parallel in *Buxtorf's* concordance, nor I believe any where else. The walking of anger is a new expression, and the place in *Micah* v. 5. which the good father cites, is no more to his purpose, than any other place almost that he could have brought. There is indeed the verb ידרך in the passage, but it is not

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

13. When his wrath is kindled but a little,
Blessed are all they, who put their trust in him.

The *Jewish* Rabbins expound this psalm, as *Raschi* informs us in his *comment* on the first verse, of King *Messiah*, tho' he himself explains it in the literal sense, as relative to *David*. The *Chaldee* paraphrase seems also to apply the psalm to the *Messiah*. That in the primary sense *David* speaks of himself, I think there can be no reason to doubt; and Bishop *Patrick* acknowledges, that, under the history of *David*, it contains an illustrious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ; and accordingly he explains it, first of *David*, and then of Christ his son. I have therefore explained the whole psalm, as first describing the history of *David's* appointment by God, to be king of *Israel*; and if the circumstances of the description do, in their literal sense, belong also to Christ,

said that anger shall walk, but spoken of the *Affyrians* treading down the country by an hostile invasion. The good father should have been more exact in his quotations. The original notion of *אָבַד* is not *perire*, to perish, but to wander as sheep do; and consequentially to be lost and perish, by wandering so far, as that they can never return, or be recovered to the fold. Thus Ps. cxix. 176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep*, properly a wandering sheep, in danger of perishing. Thus also Jeremiah 1. 6. *My people hath been, not lost, but wandering sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains, they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.* This is the proper meaning of the word in the place before us: *Ne oberretis, ne vagemini viam*, lest ye wander the whole way, and finally perish.

Ibid. When his wrath is kindled but a little, viz. as to degree, or as to duration; for *זָעַם* refers to both, and is used in both senses, in many passages of scripture. If he awake but a little of his indignation, or should his indignation last but a little while, the effect will be so awful, as that it will abundantly appear, that they only are happy, who trust in, and are secure under his protection.

and

and are more eminently fulfilled in him, than David they ever were, or could be in *David*, then this psalm, in its literal sense, is equally descriptive of Christ as of *David*; and therefore very justly applied to him by the writers of the New Testament. In this psalm God says of David: *Thou art my son*; and the proof given of it is, that God had anointed him to be king in *Sion*. St. Paul says that *Christ is the son of God*, and proves it by his resurrection from the dead to an endless life and kingdom. Act. xiii. 33. and therefore affirms, that what God said of David: *Thou art my son*, he said also of Christ, *David's* great successor in his kingdom, because that glorious character belonged more eminently to him, and received the most illustrious proof that could be given of it. Thus also the author to the *Hebrews* proves that these words: *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*, belong to Christ, because, when he was raised from the dead to the right hand of glory, *he obtained, by inheritance, a more excellent name*, i. e. majesty and authority, than the angels themselves. Heb. i. 5. And therefore these words do as certainly point out what the *Messiah* should be, as what *David* really was, and are therefore justly cited by the apostle, as a prophetic description of his character and dignity. And if we allow *David*, when he penned this psalm, to be under the influence of the prophetick spirit, we may reasonably suppose, that he was directed to make use of expressions, which, though they had a reference to himself, in the more confined sense of them, yet, in a more extensive and noble view, should relate only to his great son and successor the *Messiah*, in whom alone the grand promise to David: *Thy throne shall be established for ever*, was intended to be made good, and in the fulness of

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

David
over Ju-
dah 11, all
Israel 4.

time actually verified; for even in this very expression there are two things certainly intended; that God would never wholly deprive *David* of his throne, and that it should be established in his family for ever. And this was what *David* looked upon as a singular instance of God's favour to him, that *God had spoken of his servant's house for a great while to come*; viz. that he would establish his throne and kingdom in it for ever; and therefore when he declares that God had *anointed him to be king on Sion*, he declares, that then God had not only given him the kingdom, but secured the possession of it to the most distant ages in his family; and when he publishes God's decree concerning himself: *Thou art my * son, this day have I begotten thee*, i. e. I adopt thee for my son and successor; it is publishing God's decree, that he should reign himself, and in his posterity for ever. And if there should any one arise in his family, who should sit on his throne, should have *the heathen given him for his inheritance*, and

* This description, *thou art my son, I have begotten thee*, to denote the adoption of any person by, and his copartnership with another in, or succession to his kingdom, is not peculiar to the sacred writings. *Pliny* in his panegyrick on *Trajan*, whom *Nerva* had adopted for his partner and successor in the *Roman* empire, says to him: *Adscivit, enim te filium, non vitricus, sed princeps, eodemque animo divus Nerva pater tuus factus est, quo erat omnium*. c. 7. p. 10. edit. *Delph.* He adopted you for his son, not as a father-in-law, but as a prince; and *Nerva* became your father, by virtue of the same disposition, by which he was the father of all his people. See also c. 6. pag. 9. And speaking of the month in which *Trajan's* birthday was, he describes that day, as *triplici gaudio lætum*, as a joyful day for three happy events, *qui principem abstulit pessimum, dedit optimum, meliorem optimo genuit*, i. e. as *Ulpian*, in his life of *Trajan*, explains it: *Trajanum, adoptione illa quasi genitum, et ad imperium evectum*; as it removed a tyrant, gave them a most excellent prince, and begot another more excellent than him; *Trajan* being, as it were, begotten by that adoption, and advanced to the empire. c. 92. p. 100.

the

the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, David who should break his enemies with a rod of iron, and in whom all who trusted should be blessed; and over Judah 11, all Israel 4. all this in a sense more extensive and glorious, than it possibly could be verified in David himself; it is evident that all the noble descriptions of this psalm did, in the literal, and original sense too, belong to him, and were even intended by David to be characteristick of him.

It is certain that this psalm was penned, after the translation of the ark to *Mount Sion*, because it expressly calls Mount Sion, *the hill of God's holiness*, which name could not belong to it, till God had chosen it for the residence of the ark; and it must have been composed after the message he received from God by *Nathan*, of the perpetual establishment of his house, his throne, and kingdom; because he makes particular mention of God's determined purpose in favour of himself and family. Nor could any time be more proper for a composition of this nature, than when this instance of God's peculiar favour to him was fresh in his mind, and he was now about to enter into new wars with the neighbouring nations, and some very powerful princes, that envied his prosperity, and attempted to destroy it. For nothing could tend more to inspire his people with resolution and courage, than his assuring them, that God beheld the attempts of his enemies with scorn and derision, and would enable him to break them with as much ease, as he could dash in pieces a potter's vessel.

These were the employments of this great and excellent prince in his intervals of peace, and as soon as he found he was fully settled on the throne of *Israel*. But soon after this the bordering nations created him fresh disturbances, and he

he was engaged successively in several very dangerous wars.

C H A P. VI.

War with the Philistines.

David
over Ju-
dah 12, all
Israel 5.

THE *Philistines* were the inveterate enemies of the *Hebrews**, and of *David* who reigned over them; and whether he found them preparing to invade him again with other neighbouring nations, or was resolved intirely to reduce them, that he might have no farther trouble from them; he beat and effectually humbled them, and took † *Metbeg-Ammah*, or *Gath*, and her towns out of their hands, hereby bridling the country, so as to prevent their giving him any disturbance for more than twenty years afterwards. The whole country of the *Philistines* § was included in the original grant which God made to the *Hebrews*, and which therefore they had a right to possess, when ever they were able to reduce it; and therefore *David* was abundantly authorised to make the conquest of it; especially, as they had twice, without any provocation, invaded him since his accession to the throne. *Gath* || was a royal city, and a frontier town, and the reduction of it necessary to keep the whole country in awe, and prevent the future incursion of the *Philistines*. When they first attacked *David*, as soon as he was settled on the throne, *all the Philistines came up to seek David*; and therefore to be sure the forces of so considerable a city as *Gath* joined in the invasion. Whilst *David*, in his retreat from his own country, sojourned in it, his situation seems to have been very uneasy

* 2 Sam. viii. 1. † 1 Chron. xviii. 1. § Josh. xiii. 2. 3.
|| 1 Sam. xxvii. 5.

and

and insecure in it; for, soon after his arrival, he David desired *Achish* to allot him some town in the over Ju- country for the residence of himself and follow- dah 12, all ers, as not thinking himself safe in so large and Israel 5. populous a city. *David* was therefore under no ties of gratitude to *Gath*, whatever he might be supposed to have to *Achish*; and even He had utterly cancelled them, by joining in the war against *David* as king, however friendly he might have treated *David* as a private person, to gain him over to his interest, and engage him to fight against his own country. I may add, that whatever personal obligations *David* might be under to *Achish*, or the *Philistines*, he would have been an unjust and imprudent prince, had he preferred any private obligations to the honour of his crown, and the safety of his subjects; or refused, on any account, to have redressed the repeated injuries which the *Philistines* had done them.

The account given us in the sacred history of this war is but short, and there is no mention of any severities that he exercised against the inhabitants of *Gath*; and as for any thing that appears to the contrary, *David* might treat them with great lenity and tenderness. That he did so, seems plain from the scripture history §. For tho' *David* conquered it, and probably placed a garrison in it, yet he left it under the government of its own prince; the very *Achish* who protected him, or rather his son of the same name, being king of *Gath* in the beginning of *Solomon's* reign; to whom *Shimei*, in breach of his oath, rashly went in quest of one of his servants, who had fled from him, and taken refuge in that city.

§ 1 Kin. ii. 39.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

War with the Moabites.

David
over Ju-
dah 13, all
Israel 6

DAVID had scarce ended these wars with the *Philistines*, but he was engaged in another with the *Moabites*, of which the scripture history gives, as I understand it, the following account. He also smote * *Moab*, and he measured them by a line, i. e. in one tract † of the country, to

* It is frequent in the sacred writings to put the inhabitants of a country for the country itself, as containing the inhabitants. Thus, *Moab* shall be trodden down. *Isai.* xxv. 10. Again, they shall lay their hands on *Edom* and *Moab*, i. e. seize the country both of the *Edomites* and *Moabites*. *Isai.* xi. 14. They have devoured *Jacob*, i. e. as it is immediately explained, *they have laid waste his dwelling place*. *Psal.* lxxix. 7. and many other places might be mentioned. The version of the 70th favours this interpretation; for they render the place, *ἐπαταξὶ Δαβὶδ τὴν Μωαβ*, *sci. χωρὰν*, the country of *Moab*, καὶ μετρήσεν αὐτήν, and measured it. Thus also *Grotius* understands it. *Tres designavit partes terræ Moabiticæ. In loc.* And to this the *Psalmist* seems plainly to refer, when speaking of his wars with *Moab*, *Edom*, and other nations, he says: *I will divide, וְאֶמְדַּד and meet out the valley of Succoth; viz. in order to divide it. Ps.* lx. 6. *Bp. Patrick* also understands the place of the country of *Moab*, and the survey and division of it that was made by *David*, after he had conquered it.

† The measurement of lands was formerly by a line. See *Josh.* xvii. 14. *Deut.* xxxii. 9. *Ps.* xvi. 6. and because lands were divided by the line into certain tracts and portions, hence the line is often put for the tract marked out by it, and even where the line had never been made use of at all. Thus, *all the region of Argob*, as we render it, is in the original כָּל חֶבֶל אַרְגֹב *all the line of Argob. Deut.* iii. 13. So חֶבֶל הַיָּם *the line of the sea*, means the sea coast. So in the place before us. יִמְדַּד בְּחֶבֶל He measured them *through the region or country; or, he measured them, that is, the country, containing the inhabitants, with a line, i. e., surveyed and divided it.*

throw

throw them down † level with the ground. Then David he measured § out two tracts, *one* to put to death, David over Judah 13, all Israel 6.

† *To throw them down level with the ground.* השכב אותם }
 ארצה *casting them down to the ground*, as in our version. i. e. as it is explained by most writers: *David* caused them to fall down flat, or prostrate on the ground. This is the opinion of the learned authors of *the Universal History*. Ant. Hist. vol. ii. p. 135. note 5. Mr. *Le Clerc* also says, that it seems to have been the manner of the eastern kings, towards those they conquered, especially such as had incurred their displeasure, to command their captives to lie down on the ground; and then to put to death such a part of them, as were measured by a line. He farther supposes that the *Moa-bites* used this practice, and that *David* retaliated their cruelties upon them. But 'tis very strange we should not have the least intimation of this custom, had it been usual amongst the nations of the east, in their wars with each other, and those they waged with the *Hebrews*; and Mr. *Le Clerc* owns, there is no authority to prove it an *Hebrew* one. And indeed it appears to be so absurd and needless a ceremony, and so utterly inconsistent with all the known practices of war, as that I cannot easily be persuaded, that *David* was so ridiculously *systematick*, as to use it, because no one good end could possibly be answered by it. Our learned bishop *Patrick* gives the real sense of the place. He measured them with a line, i. e. having conquered the whole country, he took an exact survey of every part of it; casting them to the ground, i. e. laying level their strong holds, and fortified places, except such as he thought proper to garrison with his troops.

§ The words in the original are, וימדה שני חבלים *Then he measured out two lines*, i. e. tracts of the country; *one tract to put to death*, repeating חבל, απο κοινου, from the foregoing clause; a supplement actually inserted in the *Syriac* version, and quite agreeable to the nature of the language. So: *His heart is fixed, he shall not be afraid, till he see לבו his heart*, or, as our version, *his desire upon his enemies*. Ps. cxii. 8. So also the *Vulg.* version. *Mensus est eos funiculo, coequans terræ. Mensus est autem duos funiculos, unum ad occidendum, et unum ad vivificandum.* The 70th somewhat differently, but observing the same proportion. Καὶ ἐγεγονότα δύο σχοινομαλατὴ θανάτωσαι, καὶ τὰ δύο σχοινομαλατὴ ἐξωγῆσαι. The following period points out also to this meaning. ומלא חבל להחיות, not as we render the words, *with one full line*; the preposition *with* being a supplement, and not in

David . . . in the original, our translation seeing the absurdity of *mea-*
 over Ju- *suring a full line* ; but *the fullness of a tract to keep alive*. The
 dah 13, all meaning of the whole passage is, that when he had beat the
 Israel 6. *Moabites*, and taken possession of their country, he upon a
 survey divided it into three parts. In one of them he le-
 velled all their fortresses and fenced towns to the ground, in
 another he doomed the inhabitants to death, such undoubt-
 edly as he found in arms, or who had been most active in
 the war against him ; and the inhabitants of the other, and
 that the largest part, he saved alive ; *the fulness of a tract*, as
 it stands opposed to the former, meaning a larger tract than
 that, in which the inhabitants were put to the sword. And
 in this there is nothing contrary to the rules of war, nothing
 but what hath been practiced by the most humane, and vir-
 tuous commanders.

The version of this passage in our bible is : *He smote Moab,*
and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground.
Even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one
full line to keep alive. i. e. after he had cast them down to the
 ground with one line, he measured two lines more to put
 them to death, and then another full line to keep the re-
 mainder alive ; according to which account he put two thirds
 of the inhabitants to the sword, and saved alive the other.
 Some interpreters, to soften this account, understand it, not
 of the *Moabites* in general, but of the *Moabitish* army. So
 Josephus. Τα μὲν δύο μέρη τῆς στρατίας αὐτῶν τῇ μάχῃ νικησας,
 διεφθέρει. Το δὲ λειπομένον αἰχμαλωτὸν ἔλαβε. Antiq. 1. 7. c. 5.
 §. 2. *He conquered and destroyed two parts of their army, and*
took prisoners the rest. So also the learned authors of the *Uni-*
versal History suppose, that he destroyed two thirds only of
 those, who appeared in arms against him. *Ubi supra.* I
 find also that the authors of the *Bibliothèque des Sciences*, for
Jan. Feb. and March, observe, that by the *Moabites*, whom
David measured with a line to put to death, may be well
 understood, not the inhabitants of the country in general,
 but the prisoners of war, who refused to surrender, and were
 taken with their arms in hand. And this might be very
 justly supposed, if the version by which they support it, is
 the true one. Others, and particularly those, who would
 load *David* with excessive cruelty, suppose he destroyed two
 thirds of the inhabitants in general, and saved only the lives
 of the other third. Thus the candid Mr. Bayle with a sort
 of a sneer affirms : *He determined to put to death precisely two*
thirds of them, neither more nor less.

But there are, in my judgment, so many inconveniences
 attending our version, as I think it cannot possibly be the
 true one. For according to this, *David* made use of four
 lines in his operation upon the *Moabites*. With the first line
 he

he measured all the *Moabites* throughout the country, in order to cast them down to the ground; or, he first cast them down to the ground, and then measured them. But we read nothing of his gathering all these *Moabites* together, in order to cast them down and measure them; nor is it easy to understand, how he could cast them down by measuring them with a line; or why he used the ceremony of casting them down, in order to measure them, or what end was to be answered by his casting them down at all. But this first measurement of them by one line was most certainly unnecessary, because he immediately measured them all over again by *three lines more*; two lines to put to death, and a full line to keep alive. But why two lines to put to death, when one line might have separated those who were to be destroyed from the others, as well as two, or twenty lines. And when this one line had divided them, there was no need of the fullness of another line, or a long and a strong line, to separate those who were to be kept alive; because, when the line of death was drawn over the prostrate *Moabites*, it was a line of life to all those, who were on the other side of it. And indeed the expression מלא חבל *the fullness of a line*, or, *one full line*, as we render it, leads us to understand חבל, not of a measuring line, but of a tract of land, or part of the country. For what sense can we make of measuring two lines, and the fullness of a line, as it is in the original, and not with two lines, or with the fullness of a line, and of opposing this fullness of a line to two lines? To measure land with a line is intelligible and good sense; but what the measuring of the line itself hath to do here, or what purpose it was to serve, is scarcely intelligible. Again, what doth *the fullness of a line*, or a full line signify? I can think of nothing else, but a very large strong line, or a very long one; and what purpose either the one or the other could serve, will be hard to find out. But the fullness of a tract of country, or a long large tract of the *Moabitish* country, comes in this part of the history with the greatest propriety. And indeed this interpretation, I have been arguing against, is attended with so many absurdities, as that I would frankly confess I did not understand the passage, if I could give no other or better explication of it. That which I have given appears to me the true one. A better will be received with pleasure. So far at least is certainly gained, that no candid writer will venture positively to charge *David* with destroying two thirds of the *Moabites*, merely on the credit of our translation, or without fairly proving, that the *Hebrew* text must necessarily be understood in this sense, and no other.

and

David
over Ju-
dah 13, all
Israel 6.

and one full tract to preserve alive; and *Moab* became *David's* servants, bringing him gifts. When he had beat the *Moabites*, he ordered a general survey to be made of the whole country; in one part or tract of which he levelled *Moab* with the ground, i. e. razed so many of their towns and fortresses, as he thought necessary to secure his conquest. He then proceeded to animadvert on the inhabitants, measuring out two tracts, or parts of the country; one line or tract for death, and the fullness of a line, a very large tract of the country, to keep alive, i. e. to cut off the inhabitants of the one, those who had been most active in the war against him, and to preserve the far larger part of them alive; and thus made the whole nation tributary to his crown.

Who was the aggressor in these two last actions, the scripture history doth not determine. Some authors seem inclined to give *David* the honour of it, though without any shadow of proof. I apprehend the contrary may be collected from what the *Psalmist* * says: That *Edom, Moab, Ammon, Amalek*, the *Syrians* under *Hadadezer*, and other nations, *had consulted together with one consent to cut off Israel from being a nation; and that the name of Israel might be no more in remembrance †?* This seems plainly to refer to the history of the wars with these very nations, related in *Samuel*. Against such a cruel confederacy as this, *David* had a right to defend himself, and to take such a vengeance on his enemies, as was necessary to his own and his peoples future safety. If this powerful league, to extirpate the *Israelites*, was a justifiable compact, because *Israel* was a common enemy, who ravaged ad libitum, not from the common misunderstanding of states, but from an insatiable ap-

* Ps. lxxxiii. 4—8.

† 2 Sam. viii. 1, &c.

petite for blood and murther, as some writers chuse David to represent them; it will certainly follow, that there may be occasions, that will justify this severe execution, in the utter excision of nations; and that if the *Moabites*, *Amalekites*, *Philistines*, and other nations, were common enemies to the *Hebrews*, and ravaged them, *ad libitum*, from an insatiable appetite for blood and murther, *David* had a right to extirpate them, whenever he could, without deserving the charge of barbarity, and a blood-thirsty spirit. This was certainly the character of many of the enemies of the *Hebrew* nation, but can never be applicable to the *Hebrews* themselves.

'Tis allowed, that they were to maintain a perpetual hostility with, and extirpate, if they could, the seven nations, because God had proscribed them, and their own prosperity, and almost being, depended on it. But as to the *Edomites*, *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, * they were expressly forbid to meddle with them, and invade any of their territories, by beginning hostilities against them. And from the whole history of the *Hebrew* nation, from their first settlement in *Canaan*, to their destruction by *Nebuchadnezzar*, there is scarce one instance to be produced, of their invading the neighbouring nations, without being first attacked by them, or of their plundering them any farther, than as their victories over them, gained in their own defence, gave them a right to it, by the common usages and laws of war.

During the period preceding the regal government, we read of nothing almost but their grievous oppressions † by the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Amalekites*, *Midianites*, *Philistines*, and other

* Deut. ii. 4.

† Judg. vi. 1, &c.

David
over Ju-
dah 13, all
Israel 6.

neighbouring nations, who forced them into dens, mountains, and strong holds, deprived them of all manner of arms for their defence; and destroyed the increase of their lands, so that there was no sustenance for *Israel*, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. But we have not a single intimation of the *Hebrews* invading, plundering, and destroying them. And indeed it was not possible that as a nation they could, during this long period, make any considerable invasions upon the neighbouring states. For they had no kings, no settled government, no generals and captains to lead them, nor standing armies to protect them; God, in a very extraordinary manner, and at particular seasons, being pleased to raise them up proper persons, to give them some temporary relief from those, who enslaved and despoiled them; which made them at last resolve to have a king, who might be always ready to protect and defend them. They were in themselves an easy quiet people, never inured to war, employed in husbandry, and raising of cattle; and so far from being a common enemy to all the nations round them, as that they took every method to cultivate their friendship, taking their † daughters to be their wives, and giving their daughters to their sons, forsaking their own God, and following after the Gods of every neighbouring nation. And yet they were almost perpetually under oppression, and their too great fondness to be on good terms with their oppressors, was the very reason why God sold them into their enemies hands, and suffered them so often to groan, by turns, under the yoke of every petty state, that had a mind to enslave them. And as for *David*, he had hitherto been engaged in no wars against

† Judg. iii. 6.

any of his neighbours, except two defensive ones David
over Ju-
dah 13, all
Israel 6.
against the *Philistines*; who, upon his first accession to the throne of *Israel*, invaded his dominions, with an intention to deprive him of his kingdom, or render him and his people wholly dependant on their power. If therefore the *Moabites* joined in the confederacy with the *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, *Philistines*, and others, to extirpate the *Hebrew* nation, *David* treated them with comparative lenity and moderation, if he cut off even two thirds of them, whom he found in arms against him; and especially, if he put to the sword but one half of them, who intended his utter destruction, and the intire extirpation of his people. And as this is certain, that the *Amalekites*, *Philistines*, *Moabites*, and other nations, were perpetual and inveterate enemies to the *Hebrews*, and invaded them whenever they were able, the *Hebrews* had a right to make reprisals, to attack them on every occasion that offered, and to treat them with that severity, that was necessary to their own peace and safety for the future.

I may add, what Bishop *Patrick*, and others, observe, that the *Jewish* writers affirm, that *David* exercised this severity on the *Moabites*, because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he committed to the custody of the king of *Moab*, during his exile. *But I lay no great stress on this tradition, as it is wholly unsupported by the scripture history; and because *David*'s treatment of them is sufficiently justified by the ancient law of nations; as to which my reader will be abundantly satisfied by consulting *Grotius*. ‡

Soon after the conclusion of this war with the *Moabites*, *David* was engaged in another with *Ha-*

‡ De jur. B. L. 3. c. 4. §. 10.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

dadazer, or Hadarezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobab, a Syrian prince, whose dominions bordered upon those of David, to the North East of them. The occasion was, Hadadezer's turning § his hand against the river Euphrates, or endeavouring || to seize the country bordering upon that river; or as it is expressed in Chronicles†, to establish his hand, i. e. as we there render it, to establish his dominion by the Euphrates. The dominions of David extended very near this famous river, and Hadadezer invaded them to enlarge his own territories, and to reduce all that country under his power; and, as being the aggressor, David had a right by force to prevent it, and his war with him was founded on the necessity of self defence. David gained a compleat victory over him, took from him a thousand chariots, seven hundred

§ להשב ידו. *To recover his border, as we render the words. Literally, to turn his hand, ut verteret manum suam in fluvium Euphratem, as Cocceius; ut dominaretur super flumen Euphraten, as the Vulg. agreeable to which is the version of the 70th, επιστραφαι την χειρα αυτη επι τον ποταμον Ευφρατην. יד in the Hebrew and Arabick dialects, amongst various other significations, denotes potentia, vis, power, force, authority, and dominion; and the expression, להשב יד to turn the hand upon, or against, signifies to invade, with a design to seize on, and reduce under one's power. Thus God threatens Ekron השיבותי ידו I will turn my hand against Ekron, viz. by causing their enemies to invade, reduce, and destroy them. And this interpretation is confirmed by the parallel place in Chronicles. Hadadezer went להציב ידו to establish his hand, i. e. his power and dominion upon the borders of the Euphrates. Or, the words may bear a different Turn. David smote Hadadezer, when he, David, went to turn back his, Hadadezer's, hand by the Euphrates, i. e. to repel Hadadezer and his forces at that river, and prevent the intended invasion of his dominions. I prefer the former interpretation, as the most easy and natural, tho' either of them fully justifies David's conduct.*

|| See Bochart. *Phal.* l. 2. c. 6.

† 1 Chron. xviii, 3,

horse

horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen, ham- David
stringing all the chariot horses, reserving only over Ju-
one hundred chariots, with their horses, for his dah 14, all
own use. Israel 7.

After this thorough defeat, *Hadadezer* * called in his neighbours, the *Syrians* of *Damascus*, to his assistance; who attacked *David*, but were bravely repulsed by him, and in the engagement lost two and twenty thousand men. The Hebrew *Hero*, who knew well how to improve his victory, pressed into the heart of their country, took *Damascus*, and all the principal towns that belonged to them, garrisoned them with his own troops, reduced the whole country into subjection, and imposed on them an annual tribute. Thus, as the historian observes, *the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*. He fought his battles, *auspice Deo*, under the divine conduct and protection, and conquered and triumphed over all that opposed him, with justice and honour. The spoils which fell into his hands, after this brave action, were very considerable. Some of the principal officers of the *Syrians*, under *Hadadezer*, wore shields of gold, which were, *jure belli*, seized on by *David*, and, to shew the importance of his victory, sent to *Jerusalem*. Besides this, he reduced the cities of *Betah* and *Berothai*, called by the *Syrians*, *Tibbath* and *Chun*, where he found immense quantities of brass, † which he laid up in his storehouses, of which Solomon afterwards made the *brazen sea*, and the pillars, and vessels of brass, for that magnificent temple, which, in the beginning of his reign, he erected to the honour of the true God.

Upon these repeated successes of *David*, in his wars against *Hadadezer* and the *Syrians*, *Toi*, king

* 1 Chron. xviii. 5. 6.

† 1 Chron. xviii. 8.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

of *Hamath*, which was situated on the North of *David's* dominions, sent compliments of congratulation to *David*, on account of these important victories, by his son *Adoram*, to enter into a treaty of peace with him, and assure *David* of his good wishes for his future prosperity; for *David's* victories over *Hadadezer* freed *Toi* from a very dangerous and troublesome enemy; *Hadadezer* having invaded *Toi's* dominions, and gained some advantages over him; and the better to obtain his desire, agreeably to the custom of those times, for inferior princes to send presents to those of higher dignity and power, *Adoram* brought with him a very large number of vessels of gold, silver, and brass; all which, together with the rich spoils he had taken from the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Philistines*, *Amalekites*, and other conquered nations, without reserving any for his own private use, *David* dedicated to the Lord. As his wars were just, his gains were honourable; and the service to which he appropriated them, shews that he had no illiberal thirst after riches, since he neither consumed them himself, in vain pomp and magnificence, nor enriched the priests with them, *to keep them by bribes steady to his interest*, and put it out of the power of his son and successor, to employ them to any secular purposes whatsoever.

During his wars with the *Syrians*, the *Edomites*, or *Idumeans*, treacherously invaded his dominions, and upon his return from his expedition against the *Syrians*, he met them, attacked them, and beat them, *in the Valley of Salt*; in which engagement, *Abisbai* commanding under *David*, he cut off six thousand men; and, upon *Joab's* coming up with a reinforcement of fresh troops, he destroyed ||

|| Pl. lx. Tit.

twelve

twelve thousand more, in all eighteen † thousand men. After this victory he took possession of their whole country, garrisoning all their strong places with his troops, ‡ and making the whole

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

† There is some difficulty in this short history of the conquest of the *Edomites*. In the book of *Chronicles*, it is said, that *Abishai*, the son of *Zeruiah*, smote *Edom* in the *Valley of Salt*, eighteen thousand men. *Chron.* xviii. 12. In the 60th Psalm, Title, that when *Joab* returned, he smote of *Edom*, in the *Valley of Salt*, twelve thousand men. In the book of *Samuel*, 2 Sam. viii. 13. that *David* got himself a name, when he returned from smiting the *Syrians*, in the *Valley of Salt*. Part of this difficulty is easily obviated, as the rout and slaughter of the *Edomitish* army, in which they lost six thousand of their men, was begun by *David* and *Abishai*. And as, after *Joab's* joining the army, twelve thousand more of the *Edomites* were cut off, the slaughter of those twelve thousand is ascribed to *Joab*, which, with six thousand cut off under *David* and *Abishai*, before *Joab* came up with his reinforcement, make up the number eighteen thousand; the whole eighteen thousand being ascribed to *David*, as they were cut off by his army, that fought under him; and to *Abishai*, who was chief commander under him in this action; so that what was done by the one, was done by the other also. But there is also another difficulty, how to reconcile the two different accounts; the one, that *David* smote the *Syrians*, the other, that he smote the *Edomites*, in the valley of *Salt*. The altering the pointing of the words, as we have them in *Samuel*, and the repeating a single word *απο* *νομ* from the first part of the account, will intirely remove this difficulty; and I render the passage thus: *David* got himself a name, when he returned from smiting the *Syrians*, in the valley of *Salt*, by smiting eighteen thousand men. Or, he got himself a name in the valley of *Salt*, by smiting eighteen thousand men, after he returned from smiting the *Syrians*. And without this repetition of the word *מכה* smiting, or *בהכה* by smiting, the construction and sense is quite imperfect. *Le Clerc*, *F. Houbigant*, and others, add this supplement, and this alone renders all the other emendations of the learned Father quite unnecessary. The version of the *Vulg. Latin* confirms this interpretation, which thus renders the place: *Fecit sibi quoque David nomen, cum reverteretur capta Syria, in valle Salinarum, cæsis decem et octo millibus.*

‡ 2 Sam. xviii. 14.

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David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

nation tributary to his crown. And here also the historian observes, that *the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*: Or, as David himself expresses it: * *Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation, thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.*

After this decisive victory, David returned to Jerusalem, and left Joab † with the army to settle the affairs of that conquered country. Here Joab continued six months with all Israel, until he had, as the scripture history informs us, *cut off every male in Edom*. The occasion of this severity is no where mentioned, and if the circumstances and reasons of it were known, many things might probably be alledged to alleviate, if not vindicate the execution. When the Israelites passed through the wilderness, they were commanded by God ‡ *not to meddle with them, nor to take so much as a foot's breadth of their land, nor to cherish a spirit of hostility and enmity towards them*; nor do we ever read of their invading the Edomites, or using any kind of severity towards them, during the long term of years they were under the occasional government of their judges. And yet the Edomites were some of their bitterest and most implacable enemies. In their journey through the wilderness, the Edomites § refused them a passage thro' their highways, tho' they offered to pay for the very water they had occasion to drink. In Saul's ¶ time they confederated against them, with the Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, and Philistines. So in David's ||| reign they joined the same enemies in order to extirpate them, and they are described as *pursuing §§ their brethren with the sword, casting*

* Ps. xviii. 35. † 1 Kin. xi. 15. 16. ‡ Deut. ii. 5. 23. 7. || Num. xx. 18. 20. 21. § 1 Sam. xiv. 47. ||| Ps. lxxxiii. 4. 5. 6. §§ Amos i. 11.

off all pity, as perpetually tearing them with their anger, and keeping their wrath for ever. Whilst David was employed in the expedition against the Syrians, they treacherously invaded his country in aid of the Syrians, in order more effectually to facilitate the scheme they had engaged in, of cutting off the whole nation of the *Hebrews*. What was now due to them by the laws of retaliation? Might not even a prince of humanity, in the height of his resentment, for such a base and dishonourable conduct, resolve to make examples of them, and put it out of their power ever thus to injure himself and people again?

But to cut off every male in Edom, seems an instance of very great cruelty. Supposing it doth ||, how will it ever be proved that *David* ordered this execution? There is no proof of it in the scripture history. It was *Joab's* action, and when he was absent from the king, and had no one to controul his resentment and fury.

But the charge itself is not true, that *Joab* cut off all the males throughout the whole country of *Edom*.

|| Such executions as these, are undoubtedly very severe, and yet they have, in some extraordinary instances, been thought necessary, and made by the politest nations, and most respectable generals. When the *Melii* had delivered themselves up at discretion to the *Athenians*, they ordered all such of them as were arrived at maturity to be killed, and sold all the women and children for slaves. *Thucyd.* l. 5. §. ult. In like manner *P. Cornelius*, when consul, having attacked and beaten the *Senones*, who were inveterate enemies to the *Romans*, put all of them, who were grown up to be of age, to the sword, and so utterly destroyed the nation, as that there scarce remained any footsteps of them. *Dion. Hal. Excerpt.* p. 711. Whether, and when such executions as these are lawful, and consistent with humanity, I pretend not to determine. The *Edomites* were cruel enemies to the *Hebrews*, and, according to the laws of retaliation, they had but little reason to complain, because they invaded the *Hebrews* with a design utterly to exterminate them.

* *Jose-*

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

* *Josephus* limits it to those who were able to bear arms. I rather think it must be understood only of those whom he found in arms, or had been the most active in the war, and refused to surrender themselves. This is evident from *David's* putting garrisons throughout the whole country, and all they of *Edom* becoming *David's* servants, and paying him an yearly tribute. But what need of garrisons, if there were none but women in their cities and country? Or did *David* make use of women only for his servants, and force them to collect and pay him the tribute he imposed on them? The supposition is ridiculous, and no one but a *thorough believer* will credit it. And therefore, as when it is said that *Joab* † was in *Edom with all Israel*, the meaning only is, with the whole army of *Israel*; so when it is affirmed, that he remained in *Edom*, till he had cut off *every male in it*, it can only be understood of every man that had been, or whom he found in arms, and those who had encouraged and joined in the confederacy to extirpate the whole nation of *Israel*. And this particular of *Joab's cutting off the males*, is added to shew, that *Joab* did not give up all the inhabitants to military execution, nor exercise any cruelty against their women and children, who were frequently put to the sword in the fury of conquest; instances enough of which we have in sacred and prophane history. The *Edomites* being thus reduced, continued in a state of subjection to the *Hebrews* for about one hundred and fifty years, till the reign of *Jehoram*, the son of *Jehosaphat*, king of *Judah*, under whom they shook off their yoke, and made themselves a king.

* Antiq. l. 8. c. 7. §. 6.

These

These great successes over the *Syrians* and *Edomites* greatly heightened the reputation and character of *David*; or, as the historian observes, * *he got himself a name* when he returned from smiting the *Syrians*, and *Edomites* in the valley of *Salt*. He was regarded and celebrated by all the neighbouring princes and states, as a brave commander, and glorious prince and conqueror. To get a name, in the eastern stile, doth not mean to be called by this or the other particular name, which is a ridiculous interpretation of the words, but to be spoken of with admiration and praise, as an excellent prince, and a fortunate victorious soldier. Thus it is joined with praise: † *I will make you a name, and a praise amongst all people*. It is said of God himself, upon account of the signs and wonders he wrought in *Egypt*: ‡ *Thou hast made thee a name as at this day*; which our version in another place renders: § *Thou hast gotten thee renown as at this day*. Thus *David* || *got himself a name*, i. e. as God tells him by *Nathan* the prophet: *I was with thee wheresoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth*, i. e. made thee to be esteemed and revered in all countries round about, as a mighty prince and successful warrior; a name that he must have had even from the *Syrians*, and all his enemies, whom he subdued by his conduct and valour.

When he had no wars to engage his thoughts, and employ his time, he blessed his people, by a wise, honest, and faithful administration of justice, to all of them without exception; for after the account given us of his victories over the several

* 2 Sam. viii. 13. † Zephan. iii. 20. ‡ Jer. xxxii. 20. § Dan. ix. 15. || 2 Sam. vii. 9.

nations,

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

nations, that had leagued in war against him, both the historians in * *Samuel* and † *Chronicles* observe: David *reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice to all his people.* His conquests did not render him despotick and tyrannical. He increased the glory and power of his people by his valour and successes abroad in war, and made them happy by an impartial distribution of justice to them all at home; two circumstances these, that do the highest honour to a prince, and that must render his name and character immortal.

However, he was not forgetful, during the intervals of peace, ‡ of what he owed, as a soldier, to his own honour, and the protection of his people; and therefore to prevent, or to be in readiness to repel, the frequent incursions of his enemies, he kept in constant readiness for service, a militia of about three hundred thousand men; and that the country might not be overburthened and exhausted, by the large expence necessary to maintain them, nor be deprived of so many useful hands, that would otherwise have been employed in the culture of the lands, and tending the cattle, he divided them into twelve bodies or legions, of twenty-four thousand men each, and subdivided them into twenty-four thousand regiments, every one of a thousand men, and each regiment into ten companies of an hundred men. Every legion was commanded by one of the chief of the fathers, every regiment had its own colonel, and every company its centurion or captain, with all other subaltern officers, which were necessary to the good order and discipline of

* 2 Sam. viii. 15. † 1 Chron. xviii. 14. ‡ Ibid xxvii. 1, &c.

the troops. These twelve legions, with their ^{David} general officers, were to attend, each for a month, ^{over Ju-} in constant rotation, to be ready as the king's ^{dah 14, all} affairs might require their assistance, till in their ^{Israel 7.} rotation they had compleated the year; so that none of them were upon duty but for a single month in an year, and when that was finished, they successively returned to their employments in the country. This seems to me to be one of the most excellent methods that can be thought of for establishing a militia; as hereby the national security would be most effectually provided for, without any great expence to the country, the soldiers themselves inured to labour, and rendered as useful in their respective places, as any other part of the people whatsoever.

Besides this, every distinct tribe had its particular prince or ruler, who had the chief command over them in all civil affairs, under the king, to whom they were accountable for their conduct.

He appointed also proper officers for the management of his finances, who had each their proper departments; such as the treasury; the inspection of the royal storehouses, in the fields, the cities, villages, and castles; the culture of the crown lands; the dressing the vineyards, storing the cellars with wine and oil; and the care of his herds, camels, asses, and flocks; appointments these, which shewed his prudent œconomy, the magnificence of his temper, and were necessary to the due regulation of the revenues of so rich and powerful a king.

Jonathan, David's uncle, a person of great wisdom, was one of his privy council, and he and *Seraiah*, his two secretaries of state. *Jehiel* was tutor and governor of the king's younger sons.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

sons, and his elder ones were principal † officers in court. *Abitophel*, *Abiathar*, and *Jehoidah*, were his chief counsellors. *Hushai*, the *Archite*, was his faithful friend and companion, *Joab* captain-general of all his forces, and *Zadock* and *Abiathar*, the chief priests.

In this account of *David's* great officers, there are one or two circumstances, that seem to determine the time, when these regulations were made; whilst *David's* sons were some of them young, and under governors, and whilst *Abitophel* was his principal counsellor; and therefore must have been, at least, before the rebellion under *Absalom*, *Abitophel* having then deserted *David*, and openly engaged in the rebellion against him. And as these regulations were properly the work of lei-

† כהנים. *Principal officers*. This word is generally rendered *priests*, but it also frequently signifies, political or civil ministers, of the first rank. See 2 Sam. ii. 26. 2 Kin. x. 11, &c. *Cocceius* conjectured, in *voce*, and *Vitringa*, in his excellent commentary on Isai. li. 10. affirmed, that the verb כהן in its proper and genuine signification, denoted to apply; move, and closely join, one thing to another; and that, if applied to men, it means the close conjunction of one person to another. That therefore it is applicable to priests, who had immediate access to God, and whom he chose, that they might, in the nearest manner, approach him. And, for a like reason, the principal officers of kings were called כהנים, because they were next in dignity to them, and had the liberty of immediately waiting on them in person. This original sense of the word is confirmed by Mr. *Schultens*, who observes, that כהן the *Gimel* and the *Caph*, being used the one for the other, signifies, in the *Arabick* dialect, *appropinquavit*, he approached to; from whence כהן signifies, properly, *The approacher*, or the principal, nearest minister, whether civil or ecclesiastical. *Clav. dialect.* p. 250. In this political sense of the words, *David's* sons were כהנים some of his principal officers, and ever near his person. Or, as it is said of them, 1 Chron. xviii. 17. הראשנים ליד המלך *principal officers near the king*.

sure

sure and peace, no period can be more proper to fix them in than that, when the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about him; viz. after the conquest of the *Moabites*, *Syrians*, and *Edomites*, mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 1, &c. David over Ju- dah 14, all Israel 7.

During this season he composed, I apprehend, the following excellent psalm.

2 SAMUEL xxii.—PSALM xviii.

Ver. 1. I will affectionately love thee, O Lord, my strength.

2. The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer.

He is my God, my security, in whom I will confide.

My shield, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

3. I will

Ver. 1. *I will love thee, O Lord.* אֲרַחֲמֶךָ. The verb is derived from רָחַם *uterus*, and properly denotes the commotion of the womb or bowels, and from thence that pity, or that tender affection towards another, which is accompanied with this inward sensation, and which the *Greeks* express by their *σπλαγχνίζεσθαι*; which properly signifies *the affection or commotion of the bowels*. David therefore declares, that he would cherish towards God the most fervent, warm, and affectionate love. This first verse is intirely wanting in that edition of this psalm which we have, 2 Sam. 22.

2. *The Lord is my rock, &c.* These words, by which *David* expresses his security, under the protection of God's providence, will appear to be well chosen, if we consider, that under *Saul*, when he was driven into banishment by him, he was forced to conceal himself in rocks and caverns, and to retreat for his safety to steep hills and precipices, rendered by nature almost inaccessible. Thus we find him בְּצוּרֵי הָעֵלִים *in the rocks of the wild goats*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 2. in the סֶלַע or *rock of Maon*. 1 Sam. xxiii. 25. and בְּמַצְדּוֹת *in the strong holds in the hill of Hachilah*. 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. Now, in this verse, *David* applies all these three words to God.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

3. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy
to be praised,
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4. The whirlpools of death in heaps rolled
over me,
And the torrents of wickedness made me afraid.

5. The

God. God, says he, is סלעי *petra mea*, my rock. מצודתי *arx mea*, my fortress. צורי *rupes mea*; which our version translates *my strength*, tho' it properly signifies, *my rock*, because our language hath no other synonymous term to render it by. I think the better word would have been, *my security*. The meaning is, that it was the protection of his providence, that rendered him safe and secure, and inaccessible, more than the rocks and hills and fortresses, in which he was forced to conceal and shelter himself. He farther declares, God is מגני *scutum meum*, my buckler or shield, or who, as the shield in the soldier's hand, protected him from danger, in those perilous wars, in which he was engaged with his enemies. He adds, that he was קרן ישעי *the horn of my salvation*, i. e. he, who by his power saves me from the destruction my enemies intend me; a metaphor taken from the horns of animals, which are their ornament and strength, by which they protect themselves, and assault those who oppose or injure them. The horn is frequently used by the sacred writers, and by the *Arabians*, to denote, *opes, vires, dignitas, potentia*, riches, strength, dignity, and power; and, in a somewhat like metaphorical sense, it is used even by *Horace* himself, who, speaking of the virtues of wine, says:

*Tu spem reducis mentibus anxiiis
Viresque, et addis cornua pauperi.*

Carm. l. 3. Od. 21.

And again:

----- in malos asperrimus
Parata tollo cornua.

Epod. Ode 6.

So also *Plautus*:

*Nimisq[ue] ego illum hominem metuo et formido male,
Ne in re secunda nunc mihi ob-vertat cornua.*

Pseud. Act. 4. Scen. 3.

4. The sorrows of death compassed me about. אפפוני חבלי מות
The proper meaning of the verb אפף is not easily to be determined,

terminated, as it is used but in four other places besides David this; and is rendered in our version by *encompassed*, and in a over Ju-like sense by all the ancient ones. It is applied to *waters*. *dah* 14, all 2 Sam. xxii. 5. Jonah ii. 5. to *evils of every kind*. Ps. xl. 12. *Israel* 7. and to *deadly sorrows*, in the place before us, and Ps. cxvi. 3. And, undoubtedly, the being surrounded by waves, and sorrows, and the evils of life, carries in it a very good and significant meaning, that must be included in the original word, tho' it may not express the whole of its meaning. Mr. *Schultens* conjectures, that the primary notion of the word may be expressed by *cumulando, coaceruando*, in cumulating or heaping up, and that as used in the place before us, it presents us with the idea of one *penitus submersi, cumulisque aquarum super impositis depressi*, overwhelmed and quite sunk with heaps of water, rolling one over the other. See *Dissert. de util. Dialect. Orient. a juniore Schultens*, p. 114. Thus it must signify in *Jonah*, who being in the abyss, was overwhelmed by accumulated floods, that tumbled over him.

Interpreters differ also in their version of חבלי מות rendered in our version by *the sorrows of death*. What a late commentator hath observed, that חבלי must signify cords, or snares, from their surrounding him, is of no force; because he takes it for granted that אפה signifies *to surround*, and because in the parallel place, instead of אפפני חבלי מות *the cords, or sorrows of death*, we have אפפני משברי מות, *the dashing waves, or the breakers of death overwhelm me*, and because חבלי may signify *vortices aquarum, a rotando et torquendo, whirlpools of water*, as well as cords. Our own version, *the sorrows, or tortures of death*, is justified by that of the 70th: *Ωδυναι αιδε, dolores inferni*, infernal pains. The Targum paraphrases the words: *Trouble encompassed me, as of a woman in labour, who cannot bring forth, and is in danger of dying*; for, amongst other significations, חבל denotes the pains of a woman in travel, from the original meaning of the verb, from which all the other senses are naturally derived, which is *torquere*, to twine or twist. And in this I should acquiesce, did not the next words, which seem to continue the metaphor, point out rather the whirlpools or eddies of water, to which חבלי, *the twisters*, may be certainly applied; and did not the משברי מות in the parallel place of Sam. the *deadly breakers*, lead us to this interpretation. The meaning of both expressions, *the breakers, and whirlpools of death*, is much the same, as they signify, literally, such as threaten death; and figuratively, such great distresses, as he was apprehensive would issue in his destruction.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

5. The nets of Hades encompassed me,
And the snares of death prevented me.

וַנְּחַלִּי בְלִיעַל יַבְעִתּוֹנִי. Literally, *the torrents of Belial made me afraid*, i. e. the forces of wicked men came down upon me like a torrent of water, as tho' they would have swept me away by their violence and fury; like an irresistible flood, carrying all before it, and filled me with sudden terror. This was frequently the case during his persecutions by *Saul*; and probably he also refers to the invasions of the *Philistines*, after his accession to the throne of *Israel*; when they came against him with all their forces, intending to dispossess, or reduce him under their power, or destroy him. Various are the derivations of the word *Belial*, which we sometimes retain in our translation, and sometimes render by *wicked, ungodly, naughty, and evil*. Some derive it from בְּלִי עוֹל *sine jugo*, one who hath shaken off the yoke of the law; *exlex*, a lawless person. Others, with greater reason, from בְּלִי יַעַל *qui nihil prodest*; for יַעַל in *Hiphil*, signifies, *utilitatem præbuit*. He was useful. Hence the character denoted by *Belial*, is, that of one who is lost to all goodness and usefulness, and of the most vile and profligate disposition; and is therefore used by the *Hebrews*, as one of the names of the Devil, to denote the utmost degree of wickedness. See *Guffet. Com. L. H. in voce יַעַל*.

5. חַבְלֵי שְׂאוֹל. *The sorrows of hell*, as in our version. Here the word חַבְלֵי is, I think, to be taken in a different sense from what it hath in the former verse, to make it answer to the מִוְקְשֵׁי *snares* in the subsequent clause; viz. for *cords*, of which snares were frequently made. Or, we may render it by *toils*, formed of the same materials. The word properly signifies, *a twisted cord*, or rope; and the cords or toils of hell are such, which, if he had been taken by them, would have sent him into the state of the dead; for he adds:

קָרְמוֹנֵי מִוְקְשֵׁי מוֹת. *The snares of death prevented me*; i. e. deadly snares invaded me, and came on me unawares, so that I had no power or opportunity to prevent them. קָרַם is a military term, and signifies the prevention of an enemy, by first invading him. See ver. 18. of this psalm; as also to do evil to another, without his being able to prevent it; or, to prevent another with kindness, i. e. to do it unasked and unexpected. Pf. xxi. 3, &c. The word never signifies *hemming in*, as any one of the least attention may observe, by the constant usage of it.

6. In

6. In my straits I called upon the Lord,
And I cried unto my God.
He heard my voice from his temple.
And my cry came before him.
It came into his ears.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israei 7.



7. Then the earth quaked and trembled :
Even the foundations of the mountains trembled
and violently shook,
Because he was wroth.

6. וְשׁוֹעַתִּי לִפְנֵי תְּבָא בְּאָזְנוֹ. Our version hath very judiciously made two sentences of these words : *My cry came before him, even into his ears.* It might have been rendered : *My cry came before him. It came into his ears ;* by repeating the verb תְּבָא from the first clause, as is common in all languages. Or, they will bear a different turn, tho' to the same meaning. *My cry was before him. It entered into his ears.* as the Lat. Vulg. *Clamor meus in conspectu ejus, introivit, in aures ejus.* The learned bishop of Chichester, in order to help out his metre, discards the word לִפְנֵי, and makes one sentence of the words. *My cry came into his ears.* But I believe his lordship's metre will never be allowed to be a standard of the genuineness of the text. And tho' he says the sense, as well as the metre, requires that this word should be omitted; few, I believe will be of his lordship's opinion; for the retaining it is not only consistent with sense, but gives a nobler and more emphatical one, than the omitting it; as will appear to any one who compares them. *My cry came into his ears, and My cry came before him. It came into his ears.* We have a parallel expression. Ps. xix. 15. וְהַגִּינוּ לְבִי לִפְנֶיךָ. *Let the words of my mouth be acceptable, and the meditation of my heart before thee, viz. be acceptable, as in the former clause.*

7. In this, and the eight following verses, David describes, by the sublimest expressions, and loftiest terms, the majesty of God, and the awful manner in which he came to his assistance, saved him from his enemies, and extricated him out of all his difficulties; viz. by arming, as it were, the elements of heaven against them, and sending a dreadful storm of thunder, lightning, hail, rain, and tempestuous wind, to discomfit and destroy them. In this description there is every circumstance of horror that can be mentioned; the sentiments and images are grand beyond description, the

David words lofty and expressive, and God is introduced in a manner worthy his majesty, encompassed with all the powers over Judah, all of nature as his attendants, and as the instruments of his vengeance, to execute his purposes in the salvation of *David*, and the destruction of his enemies.

The earth shook. תַנַעַש הָאָרֶץ. The word נָעַשׂ is of a very significant meaning. *Videtur actare solutionem et laxationem partium, moveri, satisficere, dissolvi.* Cocceius in voce. It seems to denote the separation and loosening of the parts from each other, to be moved, cleft, or dissolved. Hence it is joined with the verb עָבַר *to pass away.* Job xxxiv. 20. to denote such a trembling, as is attended with an almost dissolution of what is shaken. Agreeably to this is the meaning of the other word תַרַעַש which the Psalmist makes use of; which denotes a very quick and violent commotion; such as that of the wheels of a chariot in full speed. Jer. xlvii. 3. and which moves what is shaken out of its place. *The earth shall shake so as to be moved from its place.* Isai. xiii. 13. So that the image that seems intended to be conveyed to us, is: That the earth and the mountains were so shaken, as tho' they were going to crumble into dust, and sink out of their former stations. When *Virgil's Jupiter* spoke

——— *Deum demers alta fletiscit,*
Et tremefacta solo tellus. ——— *Æn. 10.*

So in *Ovid*, when going to relate to the Gods, the impious feast of *Lycain*, thro' indignation,

Terrificam capitis concussit terque quaterque
Cæsariem, cum qua terram, mare, sidera movit.
Met. 1. 1.

He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows;
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God:
High heaven, with trembling, the dread signal took,
And earth below from her deep centre shook.

Ibid. מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים. *The foundations of the hills trembled.*

——— *Tonitruque tremiscunt*
Ardua terrarum. ——— *Virg. Æn. 5. v. 695.*

Who shakes the earth out of its place, so that the pillars thereof tremble. Job ix. 5. In the parallel place, instead of the *founda-*

8. There ascended a smোক into his nostrils,
And the fire from his mouth devoured.
Living coals proceeding from it burnt *around him*.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

foundations of the earth trembled, we read, the foundations of the heavens were moved; meaning, either the mountains, on which the heavens seem to rest, or the pillars, which are poetically created, and represented as sustaining the whole frame of the heavens over us. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. Job xxvi. 11.

— *Namque Disjiter*

— *Per praece tenantes*

Egit equos, volucrumque currum;

Quo bruta tellus et vaga flumina,

Quo Styx et in-vsi horrida Tacuari

Sedes, Atlantique finis

Concutitur.

Hor. Carm. l. 1. od. 34.

Concussi tremuere poli.

Sil. Ital. l. 12. v. 612.

8. There went up a smোক out of his nostrils, יִלְה עֵשֶׁן בְּאַפּוֹ.

Or there ascended into his nose, a smoke, as the words, literally rendered, signify. The ancients placed the seat of anger in the nose, or nostrils; because when it grows warm and violent, it discovers itself, as it were, by an heated vehement breath, that proceeds from them, as the learned *Cassaubon* observes on that verse of *Theocritus*, describing the angry disposition of *Pan*.

Και οἱ αἰε δριμύτια χολα ποτι θνα καθεται. Idyl. 1. v. 18.

This, he adds, may be especially observed in the most generous of animals, the horse: *Colle tamque premens volvit sub naribus ignem.* Virg. *Geor.* l. iii. v. 85. The bull: *Tauri spirantes naribus ignem.* Id. *ibid* 2. 140. and the lion; and therefore the physiognomists considered open wide nostrils in a man, as a sign of an angry fiery disposition. And therefore this description of a smোক rising into, and breaking forth from the nostrils of God, denotes, by a poetical figure, the greatness of his anger and indignation.

Ibid. Fire consumed out of his mouth, i. e. consuming fire issued out of his mouth.

Ibid. Coals were kindled by it, as we render the words, גְּהִלִּים בְּעֵרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ. But the original word גְּהִלִּים doth not signify *carbones* coals, but *prunæ*, burning live coals; and the words mean, not that the fire proceeding from God kindled coals, but the burning coals-proceeded from his mouth; and should be rendered: *Living coals from his mouth burned, or consumed around him.*

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

9. And he bowed down the heavens, and descended,

And thick darkness was under his feet.

10. And he rode upon a cherub and flew,
And he rapidly flew upon the wings of the wind.

9. *He bowed the heavens, and came down.* וַיִּט שָׁמַיִם ויָרַד. He made the heavens bend under him, when he descended to take vengeance on his enemies. The verb נָטָה is frequently used to denote the spreading forth and inclination of a tabernacle or tent, when fixed down to the earth. Gen. xii. 8. Hence that noble representation of *Isaiah* xl. 22. *He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in.* The whole expanse of heaven, the immensity of space that surrounds us, is but as a tent for the reception of the Almighty: for he fills even heaven and earth with his presence. I am not fully satisfied, that the Psalmist intended to convey to us the idea of God's making the heavens his tent, in this passage; as the tent is afterwards particularly taken notice of. I rather think, with Bp. *Patrick*, on *Sam.* xxii. 10. that he means, the appearance of the divine majesty in a glorious cloud, descending from heaven, which underneath was substantially dark, but above bright and shining with an amazing lustre; and which, by its gradual approach to the earth, would appear as though the heavens themselves were bending down, and approaching towards us.

Ibid. *Darkness was under his feet.* The thick darkness was his footstool, and the emblem of his anger; as it was well fraughted with all the artillery of heaven; thunder, lightning, hail, rain, and tempestuous winds, to discharge against the enemies of his anointed king.

*Ipse pater media nimborum in nocte corusca
Fulmina molitur dextra. — Virg. Geor. i. v. 328.*

10. *And he rode upon a cherub and fled.* i. e. as it is immediately explained: *Yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind.* He rode with an irresistible rapidity. God was in the storm, and by the ministry of angels, guided the course of it, and drove it on with such an impetuous force, as that nothing could withstand it.

He rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

Angels are, in a peculiar sense, the attendants and messengers of the Almighty, whom he employs as his ministers, in effecting

effecting many of those great events, that take place in the administration of his providence; and particularly such, as manifest his immediate interposition, in the extraordinary judgments which he inflicts for the punishment of sinful nations. *They excel in strength, do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word.* Ps. ciii. 20. *He makes his angels winds, his ministers a flaming fire.* Ps. civ. 4. The cherub is particularly mentioned, as an emblem of the divine presence, and especially as employed in supporting and conveying the chariot of the Almighty, when he is represented as riding in his majesty through the firmament of heaven.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

——— Forth rush'd, with whirlwind sound,
The chariot of paternal deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
By four cherubic shapes.—— Milton, Par. L. b. 6.

This seems to be the image intended to be conveyed to us in the place before us. *He rode upon a cherub, and flew upon the wings of the wind, i. e.* the cherub supported and led on the tempest, in which the Almighty rode as in his chariot. This is agreeable to the office elsewhere ascribed to them. Thus they supported the mercy seat, which was peculiarly the throne of God under the Jewish œconomy. What confirms me in this sentiment is, that God is expressly said to *make the clouds his chariot*, Ps. civ. 3, 1. *and to ride upon a swift cloud.* Isai. xix. 1. So that riding upon the cherub, and riding upon a cloud, is riding in the cloud as his chariot, supported and guided by the ministry of the cherubim. And this poetical description seems to me, more sublime in itself, and more suitable to the majesty of God, and the nature of angels, than the image, which the younger Mr. Schultens thinks intended to be conveyed to us; that of God's riding, like a most powerful warrior, on a cherub, as his horse, speedily carried by him through the expanse of heaven. This is also agreeable to that becoming and divine allegory of Plato, mentioned by Mr. Schultens from Burmann, of Jupiter's driving his winged chariot through the heavens. Ο μὲν δὴ μέγας ἡγεμὼν ἐν ἑρᾷ Ζεὺς, πῖνον ἄρμα ἐλαυνὼν, πρῶτος πορεύεται διακοσμῶν πάντα καὶ ἐπιμελεσμένος. Phædr. p. 246. edit. Serran. Great Jupiter, who rules in heaven, driving his winged chariot, marches first, regularly disposing, and, by his providence, directing all things. Horace, as before cited,

——— Namque Diespiter
Per purum tonantes
Egit equos, volucremque currum. Carm. 1. ode 34.
N 4 I be-

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

I believe there is no place in the sacred writings where God is represented as riding upon an horse. For though the prophet *Habakkuk*, iii. 8. speaking of God, asks: *Was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thy horses, and thy chariots of salvation?* It is evident that the meaning must be, on thy chariots drawn by horses, because in the original, it is not *thy horses* and *thy chariots*, the connective particle, *and*, being a supplement of our translators; but *upon thy horses, thy chariots*, i. e. even on thy chariots drawn by horses. The remark of *Grotius* here is: *Immo te cecidit equis tuis, currus tui salutem attulerunt.* Being drawn by thy horses, thy chariots brought salvation; clouds, storms, and tempests being the chariots of God in the sacred writings. And when the same prophet adds, v. 15. *Thou trodest through the sea with thy horses*, it cannot mean the horse on which he rode, for then it should have been in the single number; but that he made the passage of the *Red Sea* so easy, as that it might have been passed through by an army of horse without interruption, in plain allusion to the chariots and horses of the *Egyptians*; which were all overwhelmed by the waters of the returning Sea. And though God is frequently described as יושב הכרובים *sitting on the cherubim*, it is not once used to represent him as a warrior riding on a cherub as his horse, but as present on the mercy seat between the cherubs over the ark, and rendered rightly by our translators, *sitting* or *dwelling between the cherubim*. Nor will it be easy to cite any profane writer, where *Jupiter* is described in this attitude of being on horseback. The scholiast indeed interprets that passage of *Pindar*, *Ol.* iv. 1, 2. Ελαττη υπερτατε βροντας ακαμαντοποδος, by βροντην ως ιππεν υφιστάται το Διός, *he substitutes thunder as the horse of Jove*; because he calls it ακαμαντοπος, i. e. *unweary footed*. But as *Pindar*, *Ode* 5. 6. gives this very epithet to απηνη, which the same scholiast explains by αμαξα, or αμαξ εξ ημιονων ζευχθεν, *a carriage, or chariot drawn by mules*, no proof can be urged that *Pindar* intended to represent thunder as *Jove's* horse, by giving it the same epithet; for as the word, when applied to the απηνη, or chariot, properly denotes, according to the scholiast, κατα τον δρομον ακοπιαστος, *the unceasing swiftness of its motion or course*; and the two words are well explained in the notes by ταχυδρους *the swift chariot*; so when given to the βροντη it means only in general βροντη ταχυπτερος, *the swift flying rapid thunder*; of which *Jupiter* was supposed to be the ελαττη, or brandisher. I shall only add that ελατω is equally applicable to the chariot as the horse.

Αλλά συ γ' αυτος ελαυνε τε αμαξαι και τω ιππω.

Hom. Il. ε. v. 237.

Ibid.

Ibid. *He did fly upon the wings of the wind.* The representation of thunder and winds, as having wings, to denote their over rapid velocity, is in the true spirit of poetry. *Ταχυπτερος* dah14, all *γνοω*. *Swift-winged blasts.* *Æschyl. Prometheus.* v. 88. *Israel 7.*

Thus Virgil, *Æn.* 5. v. 319.

— *Ventis et fulminis ocior alis.*

So Ovid, *Mét.* l. 1. v. 264.

Madidis Notus evolat alis.

And Silius Italicus, l. 12. v. 617.

Hinc notus, hinc Boreas, hinc fuscis Africus alis
Bella n. vent. —

Other instances might easily be mentioned.

In the parallel place in *Samuel*, instead of *אָרָא* *He fled*; we read, *אָרָא* *apparuit*, he appeared, or, was seen. This difference of reading is preserved in the 70th version of the two places; which may be regarded as some proof of its being ancient and genuine, and that there were two editions of this psalm by the author. It hath been generally thought, that God's *flying upon the wings of the wind* is more sublime and poetical, than the other of his *appearing on the wings of the wind*. But if it be considered, that *אָרָא* often signifies the hostile opposition of armies, front to front, when viewing each other, and ready to engage; see 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 22. 2 *Kin.* xiv. 8. &c. and that the word may, in 2 *Sam.* xxii. 11. be rendered, *apparuit ut praeliator, pugnavit*, he appeared as a warrior at the head of his forces, or fought upon the wings of the wind; this will convey a noble representation of God, as riding in his chariot, borne up by the swift wings of a tempest, and directed by cherubs, as a mighty warrior, going to engage in battle for the assistance of his favourite king. And in this view the passage will be more striking than that in the psalms; where the expressions, *he rode upon a cherub, and did fly, yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind*, seem to convey a sameness of sentiment, that may not be thought altogether so pleasing. However, it should be remarked, that though in our version, the words, *he did fly*, are twice repeated, yet the original words, they so render, are very different. In the first paragraph, *he rode upon a cherub, and did fly*, the word is *אָרָא*; in the other, *yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind*, it is *אָרָא*, which though they

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

11. He made darkness his tent round about him:
His pavilion, the darkness of waters, the thick
clouds of the air.

12. At

they both have the general notion of *flying*, yet have each of them a primitive meaning, peculiar to itself; which, were we better acquainted with it, would convey to us such a difference of ideas, as would keep up the life and spirit of the representation. The verb *הָנִיף* is peculiarly in scripture applied to *the flight of an Eagle*, which is strong and rapid. *Deut. xxviii. 49. &c.* And the ideas will be somewhat altered and heightened, if we render the verse: *He rode upon a cherub and fled, yea, as an eagle, he rapidly fled upon the wings of the winds*; the latter expression conveying a stronger image than the former. Thus God speaks of himself. *I bare you on eagles wings. Exod. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 11.*

11. *He made darkness his tent round about him: his pavilion, the darkness of waters, the thick clouds of the air.* God is frequently represented as surrounded with clouds in the sacred writings. *Clouds and darkness are round about him. Ps. xcvi. 2.* and when he appeared on Mount Sinai, it was *in the midst of darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. Deut. iv. 11.* This representation in the place before us is peculiarly proper; as thick heavy clouds, deeply charged, and with lowering aspects, are always the forerunners and attendants of a tempest, and greatly heighten the horrors of the appearance; and the representation of them, as spread around the Almighty, for his pavilion and tent, is truly poetical and grand. *Ovid* describes the south wind, as let out by *Jupiter*, when he determined to destroy the world by a deluge, as

Terribilem picca teelus caligine vultum. Met. 1. 265.


To denote the darkness that overspread the skies.

So in the storm described by *Silius Italicus*, l. 12. v. 612, 613.

— *Coelumque tenebris*
Clauditur, et terras caeco nox condit amictu.

In the other edition of this psalm in *Samuel*, instead of *הַשְׁכַּת מַיִם* *the darkness of waters*, we read *חֲשֵׁרֶת מַיִם*, which, because the latter word occurs in no other place, Mr. *Le Clerc*, as usual, suspects to be an error of the transcriber for *הַשְׁכַּת*. But the word is undoubtedly genuine, and the 70 version conveys the real meaning of it; rendering it *επαχυνον* *he condensed it*; for as *Capellus* judiciously remarks, the word in the
Arabick

12. At the brightness that was before him, his David
thick clouds swelled over, over Ju-
Hail-stones, and burning coals of fire. dah 14, all
Israel 7.

13. And 

Arabick language signifies, *crassescere, coagulari*, Crit. fac. p. 27. to thicken, or be coagulated, and that therefore **חִשְׁרַת מַיִם** may be rendered, *conspissated*, or coagulated waters. This sense is rendered indisputable by the younger Mr. *Schultens* in the afore cited dissertation, p. 123. and conveys a stronger meaning than *the darkness of waters* in the Psalms.

12. *At the brightness that was before him, his clouds passed. Hail stones, and burning coals of fire.* If we adhere to this sense of the word **עָבַר**, I think the meaning will be, what *Horace* expresses,

— *Namque Diespiter*
Igni corusco nubila dividens. Carm. l. od. 34.

That God, by the lightings he sent forth, divided as it were the clouds, and so made them pass swiftly away. But I confess that Mr. *Schultens* in his *orig. Hebr. c. 5.* seems to me to have given the genuine explication of this, and the following paragraphs. He observes, that **עָבַר** is metaphorically applied to rivers swelling, and increasing, and threatening to overflow their banks. In this sense it is frequently used in scripture. See *Isa. liv. 9. Jer. v. 22. &c.* and that therefore the place before us should be rendered; *At the brightness, or lightning, that proceeded from him, his clouds fermented, i. e. being rarified by the heat, swelled and boiled over.* Thus *Hesiod* represents the whole earth, the currents of the ocean, and the great sea, as fermenting and boiling, when *Jupiter* threw abroad his thunder and lightning.

Εἴτε δὲ γῆδ' ὅλη παύει καὶ ὠκεανὸς φέεθ' αἶ-
Πόντος τ' αἰθρῆςτος. — *Theog. v. 695, 696.*

In the former part of the description, the clouds are represented as condensed, heavy and lowering, ready to burst out with all the fury of a tempest; and here as beginning to disburthen and discharge themselves, by the eruption of the lightning, in fire, flames and hail-stones mixed. The abrupt manner in which the hail-stones and burning coals are mentioned, point out the sudden and impetuous fall of them.

Ibid. Coals of fire. The word signifies, living *burning coals*. Where the lightning fell, it devoured all before it, and turned whatever it touched into burning embers.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

13. And the Lord also thundered in the heavens,
and the most high gave his voice,
Hail-stones and burning coals of fire.

14. And

— Οἱ δὲ κεραυνοὶ

Ἰκταρ ἀμὰ ἔβροντη τε καὶ ἀστεροπὴ ποτεοντο

Χεῖρες ἀπὸ στιβαρῆς, ἱερὸν φλογα εἰλεφωντες.

Id. ibid. v. 690, &c.

13. *The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the most high gave his voice. Hail-stones, and living coals of fire.* The former verse mentioned the lightning with its effects; this gives us the report of the thunder, and the increasing storm of hail and fire that attended it; and the omission of the hail and fire after the thunder, would have made it a sort of *brutum fulmen*, harmless thunder, and disarmed almost the artillery of the Almighty of its vengeance. And I cannot but wonder, that so many learned men should imagine, that these words here were taken unnecessarily from the former verse by careless transcribers. It is indeed said, that the fire and hail in this last verse are omitted in the parallel place in *Samuel*. This is true, but then the whole description there differs from this in the psalms. The reader will be convinced of this by comparing the two places together.

PSALM xviii. Verse.

13. From the brightness before him, *his clouds boiled over hail stones and living coals of fire.*

14. And the Lord thundered *in* the heavens. Even the most high uttered his voice. *Hailstones and living coals of fire.*

15. He threw out his arrows, and made them, *the heavens*, overflow. *He shot out his lightnings, and dissolved them.*

2 SAMUEL xxii. Verse.

13. 'Thro' the brightness before him *were kindled living coals of fire.*

14. The Lord thundered *from* the heavens; even the most high uttered his voice.

15. He threw out his arrows, and made them to overflow. His lightning, and dissolved them.

In the two first verses of the Psalms, the lightning and thunder are particularly mentioned, with the effects of them, in a storm of fiery hail, and both of them contributed to produce it; and the third verse points out, as it were, the dissolution of the clouds into tempestuous showers of rain. Whereas in *Samuel* the hail is quite omitted, and the thunder and lightning

14. And he sent forth his arrows, and made *the* David
heavens overflow : over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.
 He also shot forth his lightnings, and melted them. 15. Then

lightning mentioned only in general, as dissolving the heavens, and making them overflow; leaving it to the reader's imagination to supply the fire and hail which immediately rushed down from them. The *Chaldee* paraphrase and *Syriac* and *Vulg.* versions retain these words in both the verses.

14. *He sent out his arrows.* The *Greek* and the *Latin* poets speak of thunder and lightning as the arrows of *Jupiter*. Thus *Hesiod*,

Βροντῆν τε στεροπὴν τε καὶ αἰθλοεῖντα κεραυνόν,
 Κηλα Διὸς μεγαλοῖο.

Theogon. v. 107, 108.

Aristophanes calls the thunder, *πλεροφορον Διὸς βέλος.* *Av.* v. 1711. The winged dart of *Jupiter*, and the lightning, *Διὸς αμβροτον εγχος πορφυρον*, the fiery immortal dart of *Jupiter*, v. 1747. *Ovid* styles the thunder bolts,

Tela trifulca.

Amor. l. 2. el. 5. v. 52.

See also *Lucan. Phar. l. 7. v. 197.*

*Trifulco flammeam telo facem
 Per pectus hoc trans mitte.*

Senec. Thyest. v. 1089.

Other instances may be easily produced.

Ibid. *And scattered them.* So we render the word **וַיִּפֹּצוּ** referring the pronoun *them* to the enemies of God and *David*; as almost all interpreters have done. But of these enemies there is not the least mention made in nine or ten of the preceding verses; and as there is a proper substantive in that which immediately goes before, viz. *the heavens*, the pronoun should naturally relate to them; especially, as the verb **פִּצַּע**, when applied to them, will yield a very significant meaning, and such as will heighen the horrors of the storm described. It is used to denote the inundation caused by rivers overflowing their banks, and the pouring down large showers from the heavens; and as applied to the heavens here means, that by the thunder and lightning the clouds were made to overflow, and fall down with such violence, as that the heavens themselves seemed to be dissolving down in rain. See *Schult. Orig. Heb.* p. 123.

— Fluit

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

——— *Fluit agmen aquarum,
Turbine confusum piceo et nigrante procella,
Atque omnes circa campos spumantibus undis
Involvitur.*——— Sil. Ital. l. 12. 619. &c.

So Ovid:

----- *densi funduntur ab æthere nimbi.*
Metam. l. 1. v. 269.

Ibid. *He shot out his lightnings.* בּוֹקִים רַב. LXX. ἀσπα-
πας ἐπληθύνει. *Fulgura multiplicavit* Vulg. and so all the ver-
sions. He multiplied his thunderbolts; or, shot them out thick
one after another; as the word properly signifies. וַיִּהַם.
and discomfited them, as we render the word; or rather, as I
think it should be translated, *and melted them*; viz. the hea-
vens. The ἑρπταί, or thunders, are expressly called οὐρεσσοφραταί.
Arist. *Av.* v. 1748. *Imbriferi*, or productive of showers; an
effect of thunder and lightning, that every one is sensible of;
and throughout the whole account of this dreadful storm,
there will be no mention of these falls of water, unless it be
in this verse under our consideration; an incident that could
not well be omitted, where every other circumstance of ter-
ror is introduced, and this particular one is necessary to
perfect the description. That the verb וַיִּהַם hath this sig-
nification of *melting* and *dissolving*, Mr. *Schultens* hath in-
disputably proved in his *Orig. Heb.* vol. i. p. 131, &c. to
whom I refer my reader for a more particular explication of
these verses. It is applied to the melting of snow, and to
clouds melting and flowing down into rain; and nothing
can be a more poetical description than this of the heavens,
overspread with heavy clouds, and by the force of the thun-
der and lightning, all as it were dissolved, and pouring
down in large and stormy showers. *Hesiod* makes the earth
to melt, as tin or iron in the forges, as the effect of *Jupi-*
ter's thunder. Ως ἀρα τηκετο γαῖα, σιλα πυρος ἀιδομενιοις. *Theog.*
v. 867. Thus the Psalmist: *He uttered his voice, and the earth*
melted. Ps. xlv. 6. See also Ps. xcvi. 5, &c. *Lucretius* beau-
tifully compares the dissolution of the clouds in rain, by the
heat of the sun, to the melting of wax by fire.

*Præterea cum rarescunt quoque nubila ventis,
Aut dissolvuntur solis super iæta calore,
Mittunt humorem pluvium, stillantque, quasi igni
Cera super calido tabescens multa liquecat.*
Lib. 6. v. 510, &c.

The

15. Then the torrents of water were seen : David
The foundations of the earth were discovered, over Ju-
At thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the dah 14, all
breath of thy nostrils. Israel 7.

. 16. He

The representation of the Psalmist is still more sublime, as the heavens themselves are introduced, as in a state of dissolution, to denote the vast quantity and violence of the descending rains.

----- *Vehemens imber fit, ubi vehementer utroque
Nubila vi cumulata premuntur, et impete venti.*
Id. ibid. v. 516. 517.

Almost all these circumstances are put together by *Silius Italicus*, in his description of the storm that I have already referred to :

*Et ventos, simul et nubes, et grandinis iras,
Fulminaque, et tonitrus, et nimbos conciet atros.*
Lib. 12. v. 610. 611.

Ver. 15. *Then the channels of water were seen.*

--- *Terram percussit, at illa,
Intremuit, motuque sinus patefecit aquarum.*
Ovid, *Met.* l. 1. v. 284.

Mr. *Le Clerc* imagines, that these words contain a description of the effects of a storm at sea ; because, as he says, the bottom of the sea is sometimes seen, when the waves in a tempest run very high. But the Psalmist doth not say, that the bottom of the sea, but *the channels of waters* were seen ; which is a description of the effects of the earthquake, by which the earth was riven, or rent in sunder, and such clefts made in it, that the subterraneous passages of the waters were discovered, by the eruption of vast quantities of water proceeding from the breaches of it ; as hath been the effects of violent earthquakes. One of the effects of the earthquake at *Antioch* in *Syria*, when the emperor *Trajan* himself was present, was, *ὕδωρ πολὺ, οὐκ ὅν μιν πρότερον, ἀνέβη.* *Dion. Hist.* l. 68. §. 25. *Ed. Reimar.* great quantities of water appeared where there was none before. In the great earthquake, that happened in *Jamaica*, in the year 1692, in some places, out of the gapings, issued forth whole rivers of water, spouted up a great height into the air,

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

16. He sent from above, and took me,
He drew me out of many waters.

air, which seemed to threaten a deluge, even twelve miles from the sea; in others there were formed new lakes of water, covering a thousand acres; a particular account of which may be seen in *Leutbort's* Abridg. of the Phil. Trans. vol. ii. p. 412, &c. Many other instances of the like sort may be mentioned. These dreadful eruptions of water may be well called אֲפִקֵּי מַיִם or יָם *the channels*, or rather *torrents of water*, or of the sea, that discovered themselves, as the effect of the earthquake. The psalmist adds:

Ibid. *The foundations of the world were discovered.* i. e. such large and deep chasms, or apertures, were made by the violence of the earthquake, as one might almost see the very foundations, or as *Jonah* calls them, *the bottoms*, or rather, *the extremities of the mountains*, in the bottom of the sea. Jon. ii. 6. These may be well called *the foundations of the world*, as their bases run deep into the earth, and thereby add greatly to the security and stability of it.

--- Si qua peritius vi terra debiscens
Infernas referat sedes ---
---- Superque immane barathrum
Cernatur -----

Virg. *Æn.* l. 8. v. 243, &c.

At thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. This is a noble description of the majesty and power of God, and the effects of his anger. His single rebuke, the very blast of the breath, proceeding from his nostrils, a poetical description of his indignation and displeasure, see ver. 8. put the whole frame of nature into a convulsion, brought forth from the depths the waters out of their caverns, and cleft as it were the earth even from the very foundations of it. Amidst all these terrors that destroyed his enemies, the Psalmist tells us:

16. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.* This may either denote only in general, that God aided and assisted him by his heavenly or divine power; or that he sent his angels from heaven, to protect and rescue him from the many dangers that surrounded him; which he figuratively calls, *drawing him out of many waters*; afflictions and great calamities being frequently represented by deep waters and floods, in the sacred writings. See Ps. xlii. 7. and many other places.

17. He

17. He delivered me from my powerful enemy, David
And from them that hated me, for they were over Ju-
too strong for me. dah 14, all
Israel 7.

18. They prevented me in the day of my ca-
lamity,

But the Lord was my stay.

19. He brought me forth into a large place,
He delivered me because he delighted in me.

20. The Lord rewarded me according to my
righteousness,

Accord-

17. *He delivered me from my strong enemy*, i. e. from *Saul*, who was his most formidable adversary, and used every method of fraud and force to murder him.

18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity*. i. e. came on me suddenly, unawares, when I was unprovided and helpless, and must have destroyed me, had not God upheld and supported me when I was in danger of perishing. God was to the Psalmist *למשען* for a staff to support him. What the staff is to one that is ready to fall, the means of recovering and preserving him; that was God to *David* in the time of his extremity. For he several times preserved him from *Saul*, when he, *David*, thought his destruction by him almost unavoidable. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 26. 27.

19. *He brought me forth into a large place*. *למרחב* The Psalmist expresses himself much in the same manner, but with an addition, that explains the nature of the phrase, Pf. xxxi. 8. *Thou hast not shut me up into the band of the enemy. Thou hast set my feet במרחב in a large room.* David was several times shut up in close confinement, in rocks and caverns. In opposition to this, he says, God *had brought him into a large place*; set him at liberty, and placed him in such happy circumstances, as that he could live and act with the utmost freedom, without any constraint of his enemies, or danger of his person. It may also be observed, that the eastern writers denote any person's condition in life by *his steps*, or *goings*. Hence narrow or streightened steps, denote a state of distress and great affliction; and large unconfined steps, the contrary state of prosperity and plenty. So that he praises God for his advancing him to great honours, and prosperity, by settling him on the throne, and enabling him to conquer all his enemies. See *Schult.* in *Job* 18. 23.

20. *The Lord hath rewarded me according to my righteousness*. In this, and the five following verses, *David* declares his

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

According to the purity of my hands he recom-
pensed me.

21. For I have kept the ways of the Lord,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.

22. For all his judgments are before me,
And his statutes I have not turned away from
me.

23. For I have been upright with him,
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24. There-

own integrity, and that he had not departed from, but conscientiously observed the precepts and commands, which God had given him by the law of *Moses*; and that therefore God, in the deliverances which he had vouchsafed him, and peaceably establishing him on the throne of *Israel*, had testified his approbation of him, and abundantly rewarded him. His behaviour to *Saul* was exemplary, amiable, highly generous, and commendable; and there is no instance, in this period of his life, that can be alledged against him, in which he violated the known precepts of religion and virtue, enjoined by that constitution he was under. And therefore, conscious to his integrity thus far, he glories and rejoices, that God, who was witness to it, had thus bountifully rewarded it.

23. *I kept myself from mine iniquity.* The affix *Jod* in עניי may probably be merely supplemental, and not point out any particular sin, to which *David* was especially inclined. The *Chaldee* paraphrase renders it: He was the saviour of my soul from sin. And the *Syriac* version: I preserved myself from sins. Or if it was intended to point out any such sin, it may be difficult to determine what it was. *David* certainly was of a warm, eager, hasty disposition. This appears throughout the whole of his character; and when his passions were raised, and in the heat of his temper, he was liable to be transported into unjustifiable proceedings. And yet we find that, in this respect, he had wonderfully the mastery over himself. This appeared in his whole behaviour towards *Saul*, and especially, in twice preserving his life, when, his own resentments, and the violent disposition of his officers, prompted him to cut him off; and tho', in the affair of *Nabal*, he vowed a cruel revenge for an outrageous affront, he immediately grew cool, when reason took place, and blessed God that he had been preserved from executing the

24. Therefore the Lord rewarded me accord- David
 ing to my righteousness, over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.
 According to the purity of my hands in his eye-
 sight.

25. With the holy, thou wilt shew thyself
 holy,
 With the man of uprightness thou wilt deal up-
 rightly.

26. With the pure, thou wilt shew thyself
 pure,
 And with the perverse thou wilt wrestle and sup-
 plant him.

27. But

the purpose he had formed. And this violence of temper may be what he calls *his own iniquity*, which he had learned to conquer, and from the guilty effects of which, he reflects with comfort, that he had been enabled to keep himself.

25. In this, and the two next verses, *David* lays down the general method of the procedure of God's moral providence and government; which will be, in the issue, perfectly agreeable to the moral character and conduct of men themselves. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful*; agreeable to that of our Lord: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* *With an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright*; an invariable friend to his integrity, just to reward it, and faithful in all thy promises to encourage it.

26. *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure*; the lover of purity, righteousness, and truth, free from all deceit, and ever acting towards those, whose character this is, according to the perfect rectitude and unspotted purity of thy own nature. *But with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.* The original word *וּפָּרַס* signifies, *torset, contorset*, to twist or twine, or *wrest*. See *Gol. in voce*; and from thence denotes one of a perverse disposition, who twists and twines himself, just as his humour, passions, and interest lead him; or a crafty wily person, who accustoms himself to all the arts of deceit. With one of this character the Psalmist says of God *תִּתְּפֹלֵל*. *Thou wilt shew thyself froward*, as we render the word. It properly signifies *to wrestle*. Gen. xxx. 8. and should be rendered, *luctatorem te ages*. Thou wilt shew thou canst wrestle with, and supplant him too. Both the words seem to be taken from the practice of wrestlers, who twist their bodies into all kinds of postures,

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

27. But thou wilt save the afflicted people,
And lofty eyes thou wilt humble.

28. Surely thou wilt enlighten my lamp,
The Lord my God will cause my darkness to
shine.

29. For by thee I have run thro' a troop,
And thro' my God I have leapt over a wall.

30. As

and use all the arts they can, to save themselves from falling, and supplant their adversaries. The meaning therefore of the Psalmist is, that God will deal with designing, crafty, perverse men, according to their deserts, disappoint them in all their subtlest devices, and cause them to fall by those very wiles, by which they endeavour to deceive and ruin others. See Levit. xxvi. 23, 24. As to the form of the verbs here made use of, they are fully accounted for by Mr. *Schultens* in his *Institnt. L. Heb.* 482, 483. to which I refer the reader.

28. *Thou wilt light up my candle, or lamp*, i. e. advance me to honour, and increase my prosperity, and make me continually joyful by thy favour. Nothing more usual amongst the oriental writers, than the representing of any person or family, by a lamp enlightening the whole house. Thus God said to *Jeroboam*, by the prophet *Abijah*, that tho' he appointed him king over the ten tribes, yet that he would give to *Solomon's* son one tribe, that *David* his servant might have a lamp always before him in Jerusalem, i. e. his family might continue to enjoy the regal power and dignity in that city. 1 Kin. xi. 36---xv. 4. and in other places. And on the contrary, the utter and sudden ruin of any one's prosperity, and the destruction of his fortune and family, is denoted by the extinction of his lamp, or the putting out his candle. So Job xviii. 5, 6. *The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his lamp shall be put out with him.* See *Schult. Comment. in loc.* In opposition to this, *David* declares: *The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness*, i. e. deliver me from all my afflictions, and establish my honour and happiness.

29. *For by thee I have ran thro' a troop, and by my God I have leapt over a wall.* *David* mentions this as one instance of God's lighting up his lamp, or his purpose to advance him to the greatest splendors of Royal Majesty; his beating the troops of his enemies, and his reducing some remarkable city or fortress; circumstances both of them that render
men

30. As for God, his way is perfect,
The word of the Lord is of approved purity,
He is the shield of all, who put their trust in
him.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

31. For who is God save Jehovah?
And who is a rock beside our God?

32. It is God who girdeth me with strength,
And maketh my way perfect.

33. He

men glorious in the eyes of the world. *David*, soon after his settlement on the throne, drove the *Jebusite* garrison out of *Jerusalem*, and reduced the city to his obedience, making it the future capital of his kingdom. And I think he must refer to these actions, or to his two victories over the *Philistines*, mentioned 2 Sam. v. 17, &c. because I apprehend this psalm was composed soon after he had introduced the ark into *Jerusalem*. *David's* habitual piety should be here remarked, as he ascribes all his successes to the assistance of God, and in the two next verses celebrates the unerring rectitude of his providence; *as for God, his way is perfect*, in every thing just and kind: The truth of his promises; *The word of the Lord, is tried*, free from deceit as gold refined by fire, and certainly to be performed: And that powerful protection which he affords to good men; *he is a buckler*, a sure defence to all those that trust in him. To this he could bear witness from his own experience; and therefore he breaks out in that just acknowledgment, v. 31. *Who is God save Jehovah? or, who is a rock*, can give absolute security from all dangers, *save our God!* He then goes on to enumerate the particular favours God had bestowed on himself, and the various perils he had been in, under which he experienced the divine protection.

32. *It is God that girdeth me with strength.* דָּאָל הַמְּאַזְרֵנִי חַיִּל. The 70th Ο θεος ο περιζωνων με δυναμιν. *Deus qui præcinxit me virtute*, as the Vulg. The form of speaking seems to be taken from the military belt, which officers wore as the emblem of authority and valour; and the meaning is, that God distinguished him by inspiring him with a superior spirit of courage, and the highest resolution and fortitude, in the various wars in which he was engaged against his enemies.

Ibid. *He maketh my way perfect*, i. e. directs me into those methods, which secure my success. A man's way, in the pursuit of any end, is perfect, when the means he uses to attain it, are proper and direct, and will finally render him

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

33. He hath made my feet like the hinds,
And caused me to stand upon my high places.

34. He

successful in it; and thus God made *David's* way perfect, as he gave him the surest directions how to act, and prospered him in all his measures, to support the dignity of his crown and government.

In the edition of this psalm, as we have it in *Samuel*, the expression is very different. יֵתֶר תְּנִים דְּרָכֹו which we render: *He maketh my way perfect*, or, as in the margin, *he riddeth, or looseth my way*, which is scarce intelligible. Mr. *Le Clerc*, *P. Houbigant*, and others, because they could not tell how to explain the verb יֵתֶר, pronounce it corrupt, and order us to read יֵתֶן, as it is in this place of the psalms. This is an easy way of solving difficulties. But the learned junior *Schultens*, in the forecited dissertation, p. 135. and following, hath abundantly vindicated the reading in *Samuel*, and rendered the paragraph: *Elibravī viam sibi meam; eam ad amussim complanavit et munivit*. He hath exactly, as with a line, made my way plain and safe. So the Vulg. *Complanavit viam meam rectam*. He hath smoothed my way, so as to make it even. דְּרָכֹו, as the punctuation shews, is defectively put for דְּרָכָיו *viam meam sibi*; the affix *vau* being an elegant *pleonasm*; numerous instances of which may be produced out of the Old Testament writings. See *Schult. ubi sup. p. 140*. Consult also *Schult.* in *Prov. xxv. 20. p. 332*.

33. *He maketh my feet like hinds, and setteth me upon my high places*, i. e. hath endowed me with agility and vigour, and made me swift to run, so that I can easily ascend the highest hills. This was reckoned a very honourable qualification amongst the ancient warriors, who, as they generally fought on foot, were enabled, by their agility and swiftness, speedily to run from place to place, to give orders, attack their enemies, defend their friends, or for any other purposes, the service might require of them; many instances of which we have in *Homer's* and *Virgil's* battles. Every one knows that *Achilles* was, ποδὺς αἰχμῆς, *swift footed*. *Virgil's Nisus* is hyperbolically described.

Et ventis et fulminis ocior alis.

Æn. 5.

It was one of the warlike *Camilla's* excellencies, that she was able

--- cursum

34. He teacheth my hands to fight,
And my arms have bent the bow of steel.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

---- cursu pedum prævertere ventos.

Æn. 7.

Thus *David* describes *Saul* and *Jonathan*, as *swifter than eagles*. 2 Sam. i. 23, and the men of war that came to *David* at the hold in the wilderness, are said to be *swift as the roes upon the mountains*. 1 Chron. xii. 8. This qualification was peculiarly useful to *David*, as the country of *Judæa*, and some of those, where he was obliged to make war, was very mountainous and steep.

34. *A bow of steel is broken by my arms.* נחתה קשת נחושה ורעותי So also *Le Clerc*, and other interpreters, making חתת *fregit* the root of נחתה. But the real root is נחת *descendit*; and נחתה may be either in *Niphal*, by contraction for נחתה, and the rendering will then be: *The steely bow is bent by my arms.* Or it may be in *Pibul*, and the rendering will be: *My arms have made the steely bow to bend,* or have bent the steely bow. Instances of the like construction we have in Prov. xiv. 1. Isai. lix. 12.

In the parallel place, instead of the feminine נחתה, it is in the masculine נחת, which is well joined with a plural feminine ורעותי according to the ancient method of construction, frequent in the *Arabic* dialect, by which a feminine plural is joined with a singular masculine, as may be seen in the syntax of *Erpenius's* *Arabic* grammar; instances of which also are to be found in the sacred writings. *Vid. Schult. Animad. Philol. ad V. Test. in loc.*

F. Houbigant's emendation here is perfectly needless, who, instead of נחת would have us read ונתת, because he says, that as God in the first part of the verse מלמד *docet*, so it is proper, *consentaneum est*, it is suitable and convenient, *Deus etiam det in posteriore*, that God should be said to *give* in the latter clause. He therefore renders the passage, herein following the 70th, εἰς τοξὸν χαλκὸν τὰς βραχίονας μου. *Et facit esse, ut arcum æneum, brachia mea.* He makes my arms to be like a brazen bow. But what may we not make of scripture, if these liberties are taken, and if texts must be altered to suit our notions of propriety. The reasons he urges, to support this interpretation, are by no means satisfactory. He says, that נחת is passive from חתת *frangere*; whereas the *nun* is radical, and the root נחת *descendere*, and the word may be in the feminine passive, contracted from נחתה for נחתת, and the

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

the expression may be rendered: *A brazen bow is bent by my arms*, the *beth* being to be supplied before ירעת, as must be done in many places, as the good father himself very well knows. It hath been shewn already that נחת may be also in *pibet*, and that the words may be rendered, though *F. Houbigant* disapproves it: *My arms have bent the brazen bow*.

In the foregoing part of the verse, the Psalmist acknowledges, that God taught his hands to war, of which he gives an instance in the latter; that his arms were able to bend and draw together even a brazen bow, and to use it in his wars against his enemies. This was an argument of great strength. The story of *Ulysses's* bow, is well known, which none of the suitors were able to draw. But

Ὡς αὖ ἀτερ σπυγδῆς τανύσε μέγα τόξον Ὀδυσσεύς,
Διξιτερὴ δ' αἶψα χεὶρ λαβὼν πειρήσατο νευρῆς.

Hom. Odyf. l. 21. v. 409, 410.

So the great master drew the mighty bow,
And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
The bending horns, and one the string essay'd. Pope.

When *Ulysses* had thus bent his bow, and shot the arrows through the rings: He glories, and says to his son *Telemachus*:

Τηλεμαχ' εὖ σ' ὀξείης ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐλέγχει
Ἥμενος, εὐδὲ τὴ σκοπεῖ ἡμῆροτον, εὐδὲ τὴ τόξα
Διγ' ἐκαμει τανύων· ἐτὶ μοι μένος ἐμπεδόν ἐστίν.

Id. ibld. v. 424—426,

Then to the prince. Nor have I wrought thee shame,
Nor erred, this hand unfaithful to its aim:
Nor prov'd the toyl too hard; nor have I lost
That antient vigour, once my pride and boast. Pope.

Herodotus tells us, that when *Cambyfes* sent his spies into the country of *Æthiopia*, the king of that country, well understanding the intention of their coming, said to them: *ἐπειὶν ἔγω εὐπετέως ἐλαβον τὰ τόξα Περσῶν ἔντα μεγάρῳ τοσαῦτα, τότε κ. τ. λ.* That when the *Persians* can easily draw bows of this largeness, then let them invade the *Æthiopians*. He then unstrung the bow, and gave it them to carry to their master, *Thalia*, c. 21. The interpretation given of this passage, by the very reverend and learned bp. *Patrick*, in his paraphrase on this psalm, doth not seem to me, to be any proof of *David's* military skill, which yet is the idea, that *God's teaching his hands to war*, is intended to convey to us. The paraphrase is: *If there was need of dexterity or strength, he bestowed it*

35. For thou hast granted me the shield of thy David
salvation,
And the gentleness thou hast given me hath made <sup>over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.</sup>
me great.
36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
And my feet have not faltered.

it on me in such a degree, that I was able to wrest the strongest bow out of my enemies hand, and break it to pieces. This only shews his strength; the other interpretation of his being able to bend his brazen bow, and use it in his wars, shews both his strength and skill, and is a very honourable part of the character of a warlike prince.

35. *Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation.* i. e. The salvation which thou hast afforded me hath been my constant protection and security. *And thy gentleness* עֲנֹתְךָ, i. e. as I think the words may be rendered, according to the usual phraseology of the Hebrew language, that gentleness, forbearance, and freedom from the spirit of malice and revenge, with which thou hast blessed me, *hath increased my greatness;* referring to his conduct to Saul, which God approved and highly rewarded.

In the parallel place in *Samuel*, instead of עֲנֹתְךָ *thy gentleness*, we read עֲנֵתְךָ *respondere tuum*, as Cocceius in his *Lex. Thy answer*. Both the forms, as the younger Schultens observes, are in the *Infin. of Kal*, ab עָנָה *respondit*, and he interprets them in a military sense; as עָנָה is used for such an answer, as one warrior gives to another, when he returns the blows he hath received, and repays one wound with another. See Mr. Schult. *de defect. heb. Ling. Heb.* p. 222, 223. It is in some such sense we must understand these words of the Psalmist: *By terrible things in righteousness תַּעֲנֵנִי thou wilt answer us, O Lord.* Ps. lxxv. 5. i. e. Thou wilt repay our iniquities by thy dreadful judgments: or, thou wilt return our enemies the injuries they have done us, by taking a righteous vengeance on them. In this view the words of the Psalmist before us will be rendered, *the answer thou has given me*, or, the vengeance, with which thou hast requited my enemies, hath made me great. See 2 Sam. vii. 9.

36. *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me.* See the note on ver. xviii. Thou has brought me out of my distresses, given me great prosperity, and *my feet do not slip*, i. e. my happiness continues unmoved.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

37. I have pursued my enemies, and overtaken them,
And I did not return till I consumed them.
38. I smote them so that they could not rise,
And they fell down under my feet.
39. Thou hast girded me with strength for the battle,
Thou hast bowed down under me, those who rose up against me.
40. And thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies,
That I might destroy those that hate me.
41. They cried, but there was none to save them,
Unto Jehovah, but he answered them not.
42. Then I beat them small as the dust, *that drives* before the wind,
As the mire in the streets I trampled them down.
43. Thou hast delivered me, from the contentions of the people,
Thou hast made me the head of the nations:
The people, which I have not known, shall serve me.

44. As

39. *Thou has girded me with strength unto battle.* See note on ver. xxxii. As to the form of the word תַּאֲזַרְנִי in this place, and תִּזְרֶנִּי, I refer my reader to the dissertation of Schulten's before mentioned, p. 142, 143. Thou hast inspired my forces with resolution and vigour, and thereby *hast subdued under me, those who rose up against me*, i. e. my enemies, who joined in battle to oppress me.

40. *Thou has given me the necks of my mine enemies.* אֹיְבֵי נָתַתָּה לִּי עֶרְפָּה Literally: *Hostes meos dedisti mihi cervicem.* By apposition, i. e. as we have it, *Exod. xxiii. 27. I will make all thy enemies turn their necks*, i. e. turn their backs upon thee, by repelling and utterly putting them to flight. Or, as to mine enemies, thou hast given me their necks.

43. *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people;* from that contest between the tribes, or the civil war, that was raised by Abner, in favour of Ishbosheth, the pretender to the crown

44. As soon as they hear, they shall obey me :
The children of strangers shall feign submission
to me.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

45. The children of the strangers shall fade
away,
And by distress be driven out of their places of
refuge.

46. The

crown of *Israel*; and from the invasions of the *Philistines*, who attacked him soon after his succession to the kingdom; and thereby put him into peaceable possession of the throne, and made him lord of those nations, that were become tributary, by this victories over them; probably the *Moabites* and *Syrians*, and *Edomites*, as we read, 2 *Sam.* viii. 1 *Chron.* xviii.

44. *Strangers shall submit themselves to me.* בְּנֵי נִכְחָשׁ לִי. Literally, *fili peregrinitatis mentiti sunt mihi*, the sons of *foreignness*, if I may be allowed the word, have lied unto me. The foreign nations, I have conquered, have promised me their obedience, and dissembling their hatred and hostility, have submitted to my government, offered me their service, and paid me, through compulsion, the tribute I demanded of them. Nothing can argue a more wretched and servile subjection, than to be forced to complement a conqueror at the expence of truth, and liberty, and with a lying mouth and treacherous heart, to give him assurances and oaths of fidelity.

45. *The strangers shall fade away.* יָבֵלוּ. Either, they shall loose their courage and all power to resist, and their prosperity shall decay and come to an utter end. Or, they themselves shall fall and gradually perish, till there be few or none of them left to oppose me. The verb נָבַל is used to denote the withering of the grass, or of a flower, *Isai.* xl. 7. or the fading of the leaf, or branch of a tree. *Isai.* i. 30. and is very properly applied to denote the failure of mens spirit, strength and courage, *Exod.* xviii. 18. or the decay of their fortunes and happiness, their power and grandure. *Pf.* xxxvii. 2. or their wasting away and perishing by any calamities, that may befall them. *Isai.* xxxiv. 4. We cannot do amiss, if we include all these senses in the place before us, as denoting the wretched state to which his enemies were, or should finally be reduced.

They shall be afraid out of their close places. Grotius's comment is: *Ipsa sua suffugia suspecta habebunt.* They shall suspect their safety in the very places they flew to for refuge. The verb חָרַג is used only in this place in the Old Testament,

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

46. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock,
And let the God of my salvation be exalted.

47. It is God who avengeth me,
And reduceth the people under me.

48. He delivereth me from mine enemies,
Thou exaltest me above those, that rise up against
me,
From the man of violence thou hast rescued me.

ment, which makes some criticks suspect the word as not genuine, and willing to amend it by the word יִצְנָנִי *a:cinguntur præ terrore*, in the parallel place in *Samuel*. But by good fortune the word יִצְנָנִי with *Hha*, is preserved in the *Arabic* dialect, with a sense that exactly suits the place before us, and is rendered by *Golius*, *angustus fuit*, and particularly, *angustia pressum fuit pectus*. His breast was oppressed with perplexity and anguish, and in the second conjug. *arctavit, in angustiam redegit*, and the meaning is: *Angustantur claustris suis*, they are straitened and distressed in the places where they shut themselves up, so that they are forced to surrender them into my hands. *F. Heubigant* also hath recourse to the *Arabic* יִצְנָנִי written with *cha*, which signifies *extra prodire*, and renders the place, *exibunt e claustris suis*. They shall go out of their inclosures, or fortresses. But every one must see, that the representing them as forced by distresses and anguish to surrender themselves and fortresses, carries in it a much more emphatical meaning, than merely saying they went out of their places of retreat and shelter. As to the different reading in *Samuel*, *Mr. Schultens* hath fully explained it, in much the same sense, in his *Dissertation*, p. 147.

47. *He subdueth the people under me.* וַיְדַבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתִּי. *Adduxit populos sub me.* He hath brought the people under me. In the parallel place in *Samuel*, the word יִצְנָנִי is changed into מִוֶּרֶד. *He hath brought down, subdued the people under me.* The verb דַּבֵּר, as *Cocceius* in his *Lex.* observes, amongst other things signifies, *agere, ducere, ut pastor, stimulo vel virga, pecudes adigit*. So to lead or drive, as a shepherd doth his cattle, with a goad or rod. So that the meaning will be: That God reduced the nations, like cattle, into subjection to him. Or, as דַּבֵּר signifies in *Pibel*, in which form it is in the place before us, *perdere*, to destroy, the sense may be: Thou hast destroyed the people under me; viz. by giving me the victory over them.

49. There-

49. Therefore will I make my acknowledgments to thee amongst the nations,
I will sing psalms of praise to thy name.

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

50. He magnifies the salvations of his king,
And sheweth mercy to his anointed,
To David, and his seed for evermore.

50. *Great deliverances giveth he to the king.* מַגְדִּיל יַעֲזֹעוֹת מֶלֶכּוֹ. Literally, he magnifies the salvations of his king. They are such, as are great and wonderful in themselves, and as add a dignity and lustre to the king, on whom they are bestowed; there being nothing that can tend more to advance the honour, and heighthen the reverence due to a prince, than to consider him as the favourite of providence, highly distinguished by the divine protection and care, and delivered by it out of numerous dangers, that threatened his prosperity and life: I say nothing can more heighthen the character of a prince than this, except we add to it, his thorough sense of the greatness of his obligations, and his piety in the grateful acknowledgement of them. *David* was highly eminent for both. He was saved from numerous threatening dangers, and he ascribes his deliverances from them to the power and goodness of his God, and concludes this admirable composition by declaring: *Therefore will I give thanks, unto thee, O Jehovah, among the nations, and sing praises unto thy name. He magnifies the salvations of his king, and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

After *David's* victory over *Goliath*, and his being celebrated by the women of *Israel*, as having slain his ten thousands, the whole of his life, during the reign of *Saul*, was one continued state of persecution and danger. When he was advanced to be king at *Hebron*, over the tribe of *Judah*, he had a seven years contest with the house of *Saul*; *Abner* having advanced *Ishbosheth*, the youngest son of *Saul*, to be king over the rest of *Israel*; and tho' he had in some respect the advantage over his competitor, yet the war might have been protracted for many years, had not an unexpected accident brought in all the tribes to *David's* interest, and prevailed with them to acknowledge, and submit

David
over Ju-
dah 1. 4, all
Israel 7.

submit to him as their king. When he was established king over the whole nation, the neighbouring princes and states, knowing the bravery of the man, resolved to crush him in the beginning of his reign; or at least so to weaken and distress him, as to put out of his power ever to oppose or repel them; and accordingly invaded him with numerous armies; and particularly the *Philistines*, who in two expeditions united all their forces, and used their utmost efforts to destroy him, and subdue his people. But God, mindful of his promise to him, supported him under, and carried him through all these difficulties, and at last settled him in the quiet and peaceable possession of his kingdom. In grateful commemoration of these numerous favours of divine providence towards him, *David*, when the Lord *had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul*, composed this excellent psalm, that God's goodness to him might be perpetuated throughout all generations.

It begins with a solemn acknowledgment of God, as his all powerfull protector, and only refuge in danger, when he needed salvation from his enemies. Ver. 1, 2, 3. He then describes the distresses he had been in, v. 4, 5, and the wonderful manner by which God, in answer to his prayers, was pleased to deliver him; in which the terrors and dreadful effects of the divine vengeance are described by the sublimest images, and loftiest expressions, so as to surpass all imitation. Ver. 5—19. He next proceeds to the mention of his own integrity in his adherence to God, and strict observation of the law of *Moses*; declaring, that God's conduct towards himself, in thus rewarding him according to his righteousness, was agreeable to the settled method of his providence; and that all good men might expect from him the constant
marks

marks of his protection and favour. Ver. 20—27. David He then gratefully ascribes all his military power, over Judah¹⁴, all strength and prudence, his successes, victories, ^{Israel 7.} the enlargement of his dominions, and the destruction, or submission of his enemies, to the favour and goodness of God; concluding the whole with a solemn thanksgiving for the mercy God had shewn him, and the settlement of the crown and kingdom of *Israel* on his family for ever. Ver. 28—50.

The description of the storm in the seventh and following verses to the fifteenth, will be allowed by all skilful and impartial judges, to be truly sublime and noble, and in the genuine spirit of poetry. The majesty of God, and the manner in which he is represented as coming to the assistance of his favourite king, surrounded with all the powers of nature as his attendants and ministers, and arming, as it were, heaven and earth to fight his battles, and execute his vengeance, is described in the loftiest and most striking manner. The shaking of the earth, the trembling of the mountains and pillars of heaven, the smok that drove out of his nostrils, the flames of devouring fire that flashed from his mouth, the heavens bending down to convey him to the battle, his riding upon a cherub, and rapidly flying on the wings of a whirlwind, his concealing his majesty in the thick clouds of heaven, the bursting of the lightnings from the horrid darkness, the uttering his voice in peals of thunder, the storm of fiery hail, the melting of the heavens, and their dissolving into floods of tempestuous rains, the cleaving of the earth, and disclosing the bottom of the hills, and the subterraneous channels or torrents of water, by the very breath of the nostrils of the Almighty; are all of them circumstances that create admiration, excite a kind of

horror

David over Ju- dah 14, all Israel 7. } horror, and exceed every thing of this nature, that is to be found in any of the remains of heathen antiquity.

The description which *Longinus* * gives of *Homer's* battle of the Gods, with more reason, and without any mixture of *Homer's* impiety, which that celebrated critick justly complains of, may be, with a very little variation, applied to this noble passage of the Psalmist. *We see here the earth broken up from its foundations, the very regions beneath laid open, the world it self subverted and rent, and all things together, heaven, earth, the sea, and the deepest subterraneous caverns, in danger of becoming one general wreck, trembling and dissolving at the presence of God, and all conspiring to execute the vengeance of the Almighty.*

Hesiod's description of his *Jupiter*, fighting against the *Titans*, from whom our *Milton* hath borrowed many things in his account of the battle of the fallen angels, is perhaps one of the grandest things in all pagan antiquity. But he sinks in his very beginning. For he says, his mind † was filled with vigour, and *he exerted all his strength*; thereby making him merely superior to the *Titans*, and scarce able to overcome them. How much nobler the description of our *Milton*, which he gives of the *Messiah*, when he came against the rebel angels :

Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
His thunder in mid volley.

* Επιβλεπεις ως αναρρηγνυμένης μεν εκ βαθρων γης, αυτη δε γυμνημένης ταρταρης, ανατροπην δε ολη και διαστασιν τη κοσμου λαμβανοντος, παιτ' αμα, θρανος, αδης, τα θνητα, τα αθανατα συνκινδυνευει. *De Sublim.* §. 9. p. 58. ed. Toll.

† Ειδαρ μεν μενεος πληντο φρενις, εκ δε τε πασαν φαινε σιτην. —————

But

But how much superior even to this, is the re-
 presentation of the Psalmist, that the very smoak
 of God's nostrils devoured all before it, and that
 the single blast of his breath, as it were, put the
 whole frame of nature into a general convulsion.
Jupiter had the Gods and Goddesses all engaged
 on his side, who fought against their common
 enemies But *Milton's* Messiah :

David
 over Ju-
 dah 14, all
 Israel 7.

Number to this day's work is not ordained,
 Nor multitude. —————

————— To me their doom he hath assigned,
 That they may have their wish, to try with me
 In battle which the stronger proves, they all,
 Or I alone against them.

And in this description of *David*, God alone a-
 venges his own cause, and needs no partner or
 assistant, to secure the victory over his enemies.
 It may be farther added, that *Hesiod* mixes many
 absurd and monstrous circumstances, which, how-
 ever terrible his *Jupiter* is painted, with his thun-
 ders in his hand, detract from the real dignity
 of his character, and render him, as a God, lit-
 tle and contemptible : Such as taking three huge
 giants out of their confinement, cramming them
 with nectar and ambrosia, to put new strength
 into them, bidding them fight furiously, out of
 gratitude for their deliverance, against the *Titans*,
 and his being at last beholden to them, for driv-
 ing these *Titans* down to *Tartarus*, and there
 putting them into chains. Whereas, in this de-
 scription of the Psalmist, every part is grand and
 noble, and *David's* God appears surrounded with
 a majesty, worthy the great Lord and Almighty
 Sovereign of the Universe.

I would also farther remark, that throughout
 this whole description; God is represented as a
 Vol. II. P mighty

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

mighty warrior, going forth to fight the battles of *David*, and highly incensed, at the opposition his enemies made to his power and authority. When he descended to the engagement, the very heavens bowed down to render his descent more awful. His military tent was substantial darkness. The voice of his thunder was the warlike alarm, that sounded to the battle. The chariot in which he rode, were the thick clouds of heaven, conducted by cherubs, and carried on by the irresistible force and rapid wings of an impetuous tempest, and the darts and weapons he employed, were, thunderbolts, lightnings, fiery hail, deluging rains, and stormy winds. No wonder, that when *God* thus arose, *all his enemies should be scattered, and those who hated him, should flee before him.*

It doth not appear from any part of *David's* history; that there was any such storm, as is here described, that proved destructive to his enemies, and salutary to himself. There might indeed have been such a one, tho' there is no particular mention of it; unless it may be thought that something of this nature is intimated, in the account given of *David's* second battle with the *Philistines*; when, upon asking counsel of *God*, he was ordered not to go up directly against them, but to fetch a compass behind them, and that, *when he heard the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, he should then bestir himself; because then the Lord should go out before him, and smite the host of the Philistines*†. There seems to have been some peculiar interposition of *God's* providence in this affair; for 'tis said, that *the Lord shall go out before thee, and smite the host of the Philistines*; by which *David* gained an easy

† 2 Sam. v. 23, 24.

victory over them. Interpreters differ as to the David meaning of קול צעדה the sound of the march over Ju-
 upon the tops of the mulberry trees. It is said dah 14, all
 of God בצקדך when thou marchedst thro' the wil- Israei 7.
derness, the earth shook, and the heavens dropped,
 denoting God's peculiar presence with them, and
 leading them by the pillar of the cloud thro' the
 deserts of *Arabia*, when his thunders shook the
 earth, and the heavens distilled in plenteous
 rains. I think also we may understand קול צעדה
 of the sound of God's marching, or that sound of
 thunder, or a stormy wind, which agitated and
 founded amongst the tops of the tall trees, where
David was encamped with his army, and which
 ushered in that tempest, by which God terrified
 the host of the *Philistines*. When *David* heard
 the sound, and saw the trees all in motion, he
 was immediately to attack his enemies, with full
 assurance, that they should fall before him. If
 this conjecture, and I propose it only as a con-
 jecture, be allowed, the description of the storm
 is with greater propriety, than if we suppose the
 whole of it to be a mere allusion to the appear-
 ances on *Mount Sinai*, without any fact to sup-
 port it; and that the Psalmist only meant, that
 God, who appeared on *Sinai*, with all the terrors
 of his majesty, and is able to arm all the powers
 of heaven and earth to execute his vengeance,
 assisted *David* in the conquest of his enemies.
 The storm undoubtedly is represented as real,
 tho' *David*, in describing it, hath heightened and
 embellished it, with all the ornaments of the
 sublimest poetry.

I shall only add, that I apprehend this psalm
 must have been penned before *David's* aggravated
 sin, in the affair of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah*; for he

§ Psalm lxxviii. 7, 8.

2

P 2

could

David
over Ju-
dah 14, all
Israel 7.

could not, with truth, after this appeal to God : *I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD.* It plainly appears to have been wrote, after he had subdued some of the neighbouring nations to his dominion, and when he was in the enjoyment of full peace after his victories ; and therefore I have placed it at the conclusion of his wars with the *Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites*, mentioned 2 Sam. vii.

C H A P. VIII.

His friendship to Mephibosheth.

DAVID was not only a wise and a good prince in the administration of justice to his people, but a faithful and generous friend in private life ; and as he had great obligations to *Jonathan*, neither the splendor of victories, nor the pleasures of prosperity, nor the lustre of his crown, could make him unmindful of his covenant and oath to his former friend, and therefore he had no sooner established peace by his victories over his enemies, but he inquired : *Is there yet any that's left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake ?* This was great generosity to be thus solicitous for the welfare of an enemy's family, and to form the resolution of advancing to honour and riches any surviving branch of it, without regarding how dangerous such a step might prove to his own security as king of *Israel*. A suspicious faithless tyrant would at least have kept the family, that imagined they had a right to his kingdom, low enough to have prevented the possibility of their ever disputing it with him ; or at least have shut up the heir of it in close imprisonment, or got rid of his fears upon his

his account by totally destroying him; thinking David he might reasonably dispense with his oath to his over Ju-
deceased friend, thro' the necessity of self prefer- dan 14, all
vation, and securing to his own family the peace- Israel 7.
able succession to his crown. Instances too many may be produced of this conduct. But *David* had too much honour and generosity to be influenced by such a selfish policy, was influenced by more generous principles and views, and when *Ziba*, an old servant in the house of *Saul*, was introduced to him, in consequence of his inquiry after *Saul's* family, *David* asked him: *Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may shew him the kindness of God?* i. e. as I understand it, the kindness, which I have obliged myself, by oath and covenant with *Jonathan*, to shew him. *Ziba* informed him, that *Jonathan* had yet a son living, who was lame in his feet; and who therefore, if *Saul's* family had any real claim to the crown, by hereditary succession, was the immediate heir to it, as the only son of *Jonathan* the eldest son of *Saul*. *David* however immediately orders him to be brought to court, and in the most friendly manner, calling him by his name, assures him: *Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, with all which belonged to his family; but thou shalt eat bread at my table continually, as one of the king's sons.* This was a noble and truly princely grant. In consequence of this grant, he informed *Ziba*: *I have given to thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food for his family to eat. But as to Mephibosheth himself, thy master's son, he shall eat bread always at my table.* As *Ziba* had fifteen sons and twenty servants,

the lands *David* gave to *Mephibosheth* must have been very extensive to require so many hands to cultivate, and to be sufficient for so numerous a family as *Ziba*'s, and to provide for *Mephibosheth*'s household with a becoming plenty and dignity. *Ziba* undertook the charge in obedience to the king's order, accountable to *Mephibosheth* for the produce of the estate, he himself residing continually at *Jerusalem*, and being, in all respects, provided for as one of the royal family. And in this princely manner *Mephibosheth* lived, sixteen or seventeen years, without interruption.

C H A P. IX.

His war with the Ammonites.

David
over Ju-
dah 15, all
Israel 8.

SOME time after this noble instance of generosity and gratitude, *David* was unavoidably engaged in an unexpected, and, on his part, an unprovoked war with the *Ammonites*, on the following occasion. *Nabash*, king of the *Ammonites*, who was on terms of great friendship with *David*, dying, *David* sent ambassadors * to *Hanun*, his son and successor, to condole with him on his father's death, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne, in grateful acknowledgment of the kindness that had been shewn him by *Nabash*, his deceased father. *I will, saith David, shew kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me.* *Hanun*, instead of receiving them, as the ambassadors of so great a king, and sent on so polite and humane an errand, was prevailed on by his princes to regard them as spies, and treated them as such,

* 2 Sam. x. 1, &c,

with

with the vilest indignity; shaving off † one half David of their beards, and cutting off their garments over Judah 15, all in the middle, even to their buttocks, and thus disgraced sent them back, contrary to the laws of Israel 8. nations, hospitality, and good policy.

The news of this infamous treatment was immediately sent to *David* by his ambassadors, who ordered them to continue in *Jericho*, till, by the growing of their beards, they were fit to appear again in publick, and then to return to *Jerusalem*; informing them, no doubt, that he duly resented the indignity done to himself in their persons, and that he would take the proper methods to procure ample satisfaction to himself and them. And indeed he would not have been just to his own honour, nor discharged the duty he owed to his own people, had he not chastised the *Ammonites* with a severity, equal to the outrage committed, unless they had, upon cooler deliberation, made the proper submission and amends to him, by offering to deliver up, or punish, in the most exemplary manner themselves, the advisers and authors of this insolent and unheard of affront that had been offered him.

† The *Hebrews*, and other eastern nations, wore long beards, and the cutting them off was looked upon as a very great indignity and reproach. Thus *Moab* is threatened, that on their heads should be baldness, and every beard cut off. *Isai. xv. 2.* It was sometimes done voluntarily, in token of great affliction and distress. *Jerem. xli. 5.* But shaving off half the beard was adding wantonness to insolence, and using the ambassadors with the vilest infamy. The *Hebrews* also, like other eastern nations, wore long flowing garments; and scarce any thing can be conceived more disgraceful, than the cutting them off to the buttocks, and thus exposing what nature, and the custom of all civilized nations, oblige men to cover. Thus, when God threatens the *Egyptians*, he tells them by his prophets, that the king of *Assyria*, should lead them away, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the reproach of *Egypt. Isai. xx. 4.*

David
over Ju
dah 15, all
Israel 8.

But the *Ammonites*, far from any such intention and measure as this, added injury to † injury; and being informed, that *David* greatly resented the unprovoked and unparalleled outrage that had been offered him, and apprehensive, that a prince of his known magnanimity and bravery, would not sit down § tamely under such an atro-

† But were not *David's* ambassadors treated as they deserved? Because, as all ambassadors are spies, by the very nature of their employment, and tolerated amongst all nations by common consent, *David's* were considered as spies in a more particular manner. They were undoubtedly considered as spies by *Hannu's* princes, who inflamed him by telling him, that *David* sent his servants to search and spy out the city in order to destroy it. But what proof was there of all this? *Hannu's* princes give us none. *David* knew nothing of any such scheme, as these courtiers suggested to their master. The reason he alledges for sending his ambassadors to *Hannu*, was a very humane and benevolent one: *I will shew kindness unto Hannu, as his father shewed kindness unto me*; and therefore sent to comfort him by his servants for his father. On this view, which is what the history gives us, *David's* ambassadors will appear to have deserved a better treatment, and *David* himself a better return for his polite and friendly compliment of condolance. And even supposing they were spies in a particular manner, yet they were spies tolerated by the common consent of nations; and there were other methods to have prevented the bad intention of their embassy, if they really had any such, than by committing outrages upon their persons, and thereby shamefully violating the law of nations.

§ הַתְּבֹאֲשׁוּ עִם דָּוִד. *Putidi facti sunt.* Rendered themselves odious to *David*, as we render the words. 1 Chron. xix. 6. Or, *stank before David*, as in 2 Sam. x. 6. The verb properly signifies whatever is sour, ungrateful, offensive, and putrid; and denotes, in the place before us, that *David* resented their conduct with the utmost indignation and abhorrence. And it is well for *David*, that he was never chargable with such a conduct as this. What reproaches would he not have suffered? What exclamations would have been raised against him, as lost to all sense of honour and decency, and shamefully violating the rights of ambassadors, and the most sacred law of nations? But the *Ammonites*, in thus treating *David's* ambassadors, are quite innocent, and they were treated only as they deserved, because they were spies.

cious

cious insult, and violation of the publick faith, <sup>David over Ju-
dah 15, all
Israel 8.</sup> entered into an open war with him, and sent a thousand || talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of *Mesopotamia*, and out of *Syria*, *Maachab*, and *Zobab*, and joining their own forces to the *Syrian* auxiliaries, which consisted of thirty two thousand men and chariots, attacked the *Hebrew* army under *Joab* and *Abishai*. The *Ammonites* posted themselves under the walls of their capital, and the *Syrians*, in a separate body in a neighbouring plain, that if *Joab* attacked either of the divisions, he might be between both armies, and being surrounded and attacked on all sides at once, the victory over him might be more easy and secure. *Joab* however profited himself by this disposition of the enemy's forces; and, to prevent his being surrounded, and the junction of the *Ammonites* and *Syrians*, he put himself at the head of the best of his troops, in opposition to the *Syrians*, and ordered *Abishai*, his brother, with the remainder of the army, to take care of the *Ammonites*; telling him, that if the *Ammonites* should press too hard upon him, he, *Joab*, would immediately assist him with a detachment of his forces; and ordering *Abishai* to send him the like assistance, if he found the *Syrians* were like to overpower him; exhorting and animating him: * *Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God, and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight.*

Joab easily broke and routed the *Syrian* army, and as soon as the *Ammonites* found that the *Syrians* were defeated, they fled before *Abishai*, regained the city, and shut themselves up within the walls of it; and it being probably too late in the season to attempt the siege of *Rabbah*, the

|| 1. Chron. xix. 6, &c. * Ibid. ver. 13.

David
over Ju-
dah 16, all
Israel 9.

capital of the *Ammonites*, *Joab* returned with his victorious army to the king at *Jerusalem*.

However great this disappointment was, it did not discourage the *Ammonites*, bring them to reason, or prevail with them to sue for peace, by offering a proper satisfaction to *David*, for the repeated injuries and insults they had offered him. The next year after this loss, they procured a fresh army of *Syrians* for their assistance, from *Hadarezer*, a powerful prince of *Syria*, and who had many petty kings of the *Syrian Mesopotamia* for his tributaries and allies, who all furnished him with their proper quotas of men, horses, and warlike chariots; over whom *Hadarezer* made *Shobach* his general commander in chief, who encamped, with all his forces, in *Helam*. When *David* received information of this formidable invasion, he resolved to command his own troops in person, and as soon as he had gathered them together out of all *Israel*, he passed over *Jordan*, and came to *Helam*, where the *Syrians* were encamped, and, after an obstinate engagement, totally routed them, † cut to pieces
seven

† He slew seven hundred chariots of the *Syrians*. 2 Sam. x. 18. In *Chronicles* 'tis said, he slew seven thousand chariots. In *Samuel*, our translators insert, *the men of*. The men of seven hundred chariots. But there is no need of this supplement; for the literal version is: *He backed, or cut to pieces, seven hundred of the chariots of the Syrians*; the verb יָדָרַג not always, tho' frequently, signifying the destruction of men, but the destruction, or breaking to pieces of inanimate things. Thus, Ps. lxxviii. 47. יָדָרַג He killed, or as we render it, destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost, i. e. as it is explained, Ps. cv. 33. וַיִּדָּרַג He smote their vines also, and their fig trees, וַיִּשְׁבֵּר and broke to pieces the trees of their coasts. In *Chronicles*, xix. 18. the literal rendering is: *He slew of the Syrians seven thousand of the chariots*, i. e. of such as rode in, drove them, and attended them;
or,

seven hundred of their chariots, killed *Shobach* David
 their general, forty thousand horsemen, and se- over Ju-
 ven thousand men who fought in the chariots, dah 16, all
 thus gaining a most compleat and glorious victory Israel 9
 over all his enemies. The consequence was fatal
 to the *Ammonites*, as the *Syrian* princes, who
 were subject to *Hadarezer*, immediately made
 peace with the king of *Israel*, became subject and

or, as in our version, seven thousand *which fought in chariots*.
 The words in the original are: דאמם שבעת אלפים יחרג רכב
He slew of the Syrians seven thousand, the chariots, i. e.
 belonging to the chariots, where רכב and אלפים are
 put in Apposition to each other, just as in the words immedi-
 ately following, אלה איש רגלי *He slew forty thousand, the*
men of foot, איש being a noun of multitude. Many instances
 of this construction may be seen in *Glossius*, p. 249. So
 שלשה בנים *trias anni*, or *triada annos*. שלשה בנים
trias filii, or *triada filios*; with many other instances, that
 might be produced, if there was any need of it. These cha-
 riots frequently held six men all armed, and were attended
 with a considerable body of forces to guard and protect
 them. *Liquidare luce aperiente hostem, centum quadrigas et tria*
millia equitum venienti agmini Porus objecit——*Senos viros*
singuli vehabant. Curt. l. 8. c. 14. §. 2. As to the other
 difference between the account in *Samuel*, where it is said,
 that forty thousand *horsemen* were slain, and that in *Chroni-*
cles, where they are said to be *footmen*, Bp. *Patrick* thinks,
 that the horse and foot were all mixed together, and that
 in all there were slain forty thousand of them, part horsemen
 and part footmen. But I should rather think, that there
 were fourscore thousand slain in the engagement, half horse-
 men, and half footmen, if the reading in both places be
 genuine. *Josephus*, A. I. l. 7. c. 6. §. ult. favours this in-
 terpretation, who says, that *Shobach* had under his command,
 μιστραδασοντων, eighty thousand; tho' he is mistaken in saying
 they were all footmen; whereas, they seem to be half foot
 and half horse. And it is extremely probable, that, in this
 second engagement, the *Syrians* drew together a much larger
 number of men, than they had in the first, in which they
 had no more than about thirty-two, or thirty-three thousand
 men, that they might the more effectually be revenged on
David for their first defeat, and preserve the *Ammonites* from
 destruction, to whom they were auxiliaries.

tributary

tributary to him, and left the *Ammonites* to the vengeance that was due to them, refusing to give them any further assistance.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

After this victory, in the beginning of the next year, *David* sent *Joab* to lay waste the country, and form the siege of *Rabbah*, the residence of the *Ammonitish* king, tarrying himself at *Jerusalem* to wait the progress of his arms before the city, and expedite such orders and supplies, as might be necessary for reducing it. Whilst the siege was carrying on, happened the unfortunate affair of *David* with *Bathsheba*, and *Uriah*, the *Hittite*, her husband; his conduct towards both of them being extremely criminal, and attended with the most heinous aggravations of guilt; the unhappy offender being drawn in, by a concurring train of accidents, from the commission of one sin to another, till at length his crimes grew so enormous, as almost to involve him in utter ruin.

But I shall reserve this subject to be treated of in a particular chapter by itself, and proceed, that I may not break the thread of the history, to observe, that the siege of the town went on successfully, till at length *Joab* sent messengers to *David* to inform him, that he fought against *Rabbah*, and had taken the city of *Waters*, i. e. that part of the city, where their † reservoirs of water were; or that he had made such a breach in the walls of that part of the city, as that every thing was now ready for the storming it; desiring him to come with a proper reinforcement, and put himself the finishing stroke to the con-

† Τῶν τε ὕδατων αὐτοὺς ἀποτεμνομένης, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀλλῶν εὐπορίας, ὡς παντὶ ταλαιπῶρην εἰδεῖα ποτὲ καὶ τροφῆς. He cut off from their supplies of water, and all other provisions, so that they were in want of all necessaries of water and food. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 7. c. 7. §. ult.

quest of it, lest if he, *Joab*, should be left intirely to reduce it, it should be called after his name, or the whole honour of taking it, should be ascribed to him. *David* accordingly headed his forces, the city was carried and plundered, the spoil of it was very rich, and *Hanun's* crown weighed, i. e. when estimated by the weight of it, was, with the precious stones that adorned it, worth a talent of gold, or above 5000l. sterling; which was placed on *David's* head, and which, as *Josephus* tells us, he constantly wore afterwards. And as to the people, according to our translation, *he brought them forth, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kilns.* And *Josephus* § tells us, that the men were put to death by exquisite torments. And this hath been the sentiment of many learned commentators.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

Supposing this interpretation of the passage to be true, I cannot help observing, with Mr. *Le Clerc*, on the place, that if the punishments inflicted on this people, were as severe as they are represented to be, they might be inflicted by way of reprisal. That learned commentator thinks, that they were such as the *Ammonites* themselves used, and that when they were conquered by *David*, he used them in the same manner as they had treated their *Hebrew* prisoners. It is very certain that the *Ammonites* used them with great severity. *Nabash*, the father probably of this *Hanun*, in the wantonness of his cruelty, || would not admit the inhabitants of *Jabesh Gilead*, under *Saul's* reign, to surrender themselves prisoners to

§ Τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ ἀνισταμένου διαφθεῖρε. *Viros excruciatos occidebat.*
A. J. l. 7. c. 7. §. ult.

|| 1 Sam. xi. 2.

him,

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

him, but upon condition of their every one's con-
sents *to have their right eye thrust out, that he*
might lay it as a reproach upon all Israel; to which,
consistently enough, *Josephus* * adds, that he
treated his *Hebrew* captives with great barbarity,
by putting out their right eye, to prevent their
being farther serviceable in defence of their coun-
try; because as the left eye was hid by the shield,
they were rendered by the loss of the other, in-
capable of all military duty. Besides, the *Ammo-
nites* frequently used the *Hebrews* with excessive
cruelty, and are represented by the prophet, as
† *ripping up their women with child, that they might*
enlarge their border, i. e. prevent the *Hebrews*
from having any posterity ever after, to inhabit
the cities that had been taken from them. *Is.*
Casaubon also, in his notes upon *Suetonius's* life of
‡ *Caligula*, who cruelly used to saw men asun-
der, produces other examples of the same atro-
cious punishment, and thinks it was common
amongst the eastern people. And if these seve-
rities were now exercised upon the *Ammonites* in
retaliation for former cruelties of the like na-
ture, they certainly had no right to complain;
and it will greatly lessen the horror that may be
conceived upon account of them, and, in some
measure, justify *David* in using them. Retalia-
tions of this kind have been practised by the most
civilized nations. Thus the *Romans* revenged
the death of the brave *Regulus*, by giving up
the *Carthaginian* captives at *Rome* into the power

* Τῶν γὰρ, ἡ κατὰ πίστιν, ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφικνεύμενων, ἡ λαμβανόμενων
πολεμῶν κίμων, τὰς δεξιὰς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξεκοπτε. Ἐποιοῖ δὲ τεθ' ὅπως
τῆς ἀριστερᾶς αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ ὑπὸ τῶν θυρεῶν καλυπτομένης, ἀχρηστοὶ παν-
τελὼς εἴεν. A. J. l. 6. c. 5. §. 1.

† Amos, i. 13.

‡ Cap. 27. Herodot. l. 7. p. 396. edit. Gron. Suicer. in
voce πριω. Gatak. Advcr. sac. c. 45.

of *Marcia*, the wife of *Regulus*, who caused them to be shut up, two and two, in great chests, stuck with nails, there to suffer the same torments which her husband had endured at *Carthage*. If to this we add, that this execution, if made at all, which however is not so very certain as some are willing to believe, it was made in revenge for an infamous outrage on majesty, the violation of the law of nations, the bringing two powerful armies to invade his dominions, the great number of his subjects that must have been lost in these two battles, whilst the injuries were fresh in his mind, the persons who offered them present to his view, the whole nation engaged in an unrighteous war in vindication of the insult, and some severe animadversion was in justice due to the authors and abettors of such repeated acts of violence and injustice.

The character of an ambassador, that

—— *Sanctum populis per secula nomen,*

was held sacred and inviolable amongst all nations, and any injuries offered to them were thought deserving the most exemplary punishments. The *Roman* history affords us many remarkable instances of this nature. When the *Tarentines* † had affronted the *Roman* ambassadors, *Posthumius*, one of them, whose robe a drunken *Tarentine*, in the wantonness of insolence, had defiled, by urinating against it, said to the citizens: *It is not a little blood that must wash and purify this garment.* And when the *Romans* were informed of this outrage, they immediately declared war against them, disarmed them, took

† *Ridete, Tarentini, dum licet, nam postea quidem large sibi-
tis, et quo magis, inquit, stomachemini, prædico, vestem istam
sanguine multo vobis eluendam esse.* Liv. Supplem. Dec. 2. l. 12.
c. 8. & l. 15. c. 1. & Liv. l. 27. c. 16.

their

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

their ships from them, dismantled the city, first made them tributaries, and at last massacred great numbers of the inhabitants, and sold thirty thousand, who escaped the carnage, for slaves to the best bidder. In like manner, when the *Roman* deputies were treated with *insolent language* only § by the *Achaïans*, tho' they offered no injury to their persons, yet the *Romans* revenged it, by the total destruction of *Corinth*, putting all the men to the sword, selling the women and children for slaves, and burning the whole city to the ground.

Let me add here also, that the greatest generals, who have been remarkable for their humanity and mildness of disposition, have sometimes thought themselves obliged to use, *in terrorem*, great severity towards the prisoners. *Fabius Maximus*†, desirous of softening and taming the fierce and turbulent dispositions of the people of *Celtiberia*, now *Arragon*, was forced to do violence to his nature, and act with an apparent cruelty, by cutting off the hands of all those, who had fled from the *Roman* garrisons to the enemy; that, by being thus maimed, they might terrify others from revolting. So also *Lucullus* § used the *Thracians*, destroying many of his prisoners, some by

§ *Legati quod erant superbius appellati, Corinthum, patres æstri, totius Græciæ lumen, extinctum voluere. Cicer. pro L. Manil. §. 5. Vid. Flor. l. 2. c. 16. Justin. l. 34. c. 2. §. 6. Aul. Gell. l. 6. c. 4.*

† *Fabius Maximus, ferocissimæ gentis animos contundere et debilitare cupiens, mansuetissimum ingenium suum, ad tempus deposita clementia, sæviore uti severitate coegit. Omnium enim, qui ex præfidiis Romanis ad hostes transfugerant, captique erant, manus abscidit; ut trunca præ se brachia gerentes, defectionis metum reliquis injicerent. Val. Max. l. 2. c. 11. See also Ælian. V. II. l. 2. c. 9.*

§ *In captivos igne ferroque sævitum est. Sed nihil barbaris atrocius visum est, quam quod abscissis manibus relictis, vivere superstites pœnæ suæ subebantur. Flor. l. 3. c. 4. §. ult.*

the

the sword, others by fire, and as to others cutting off their hands, which the barbarians themselves looked on as an instance of great inhumanity, as hereby they were forced to outlive their very punishments. Many more instances of the like nature may be easily produced, and let *David's* conduct, as a general, be considered with the same candor and equity, as we would consider that of a *Roman* or *Grecian* commander, and those executions, which he may have been supposed to have ordered on particular occasions and offenders, and that appear to have the character of great severity and cruelty, will be found capable of such an apology, as will greatly lessen the blame that hath been so liberally thrown on them, and no more be considered as indications of a disposition naturally inhuman and barbarous.

I think the punishment of crucifixion is one of the most horrid and shocking, that can be inflicted, in which the hands and feet are pierced through, and the whole body is upon the stretch and rack, and the person crucified dies a lingering and exquisitely painful death; a punishment this, equally cruel and inhuman, with *David's* supposed saws and harrows, and brick kilns. Now supposing that *David*, instead of those instruments of death, had crucified the *Ammonites* by thousands before the gates of *Rabbah*; or supposing, that when he took the city, he had condemned all above seventeen years old to mines, or distributed them by thousands and ten thousands, into the provinces of his kingdom, to be leisurely, and in cool blood, thrown to the beasts, or forced to murder each other on theatres, for the entertainment of his blood-thirsty people; would not Mr. B. and his followers have cried out: *Bella horrida bella!* and censured *David's* conduct herein as unworthy a saint, and a man after God's

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

own heart. And yet this was what the gentle, the benevolent *Titus* * did to the *Jews*, whom the *Romans*, by their cruelty and oppressions, forced to take up arms against them; and who may be truly said to have fought for their liberties, of which they had been unjustly deprived. Yet, during the siege, he ordered them to be scourged and crucified before the walls of *Jerusalem*, by hundreds at a time, and in such large numbers, as that they wanted room to place the crosses, and crosses for the bodies of those they condemned to crucifixion. And not only this, which perhaps may be thought to admit of some apology, as done in the heat and fury of the siege, but when the siege was over, and all instances of cruelty should have ceased, he murdered them wantonly†, and in cool blood, for the diversion of the provinces. When he was at *Cæsarea*, he threw great numbers of them to the beasts‡, and made others of them cut each other's throats. He celebrated his brother's birth day, by destroying above two thousand five hundred of them by the same methods, and with the additional cruelty of burning many of them alive; and on his father's birth day, he acted with the same barbarity towards a large number of his captives at *Berytus*§. The whole of them amounted to 97,000; and yet, would one think it, *Titus* thought he was *a man after God's own heart*, or that he executed the divine pleasure and vengeance on the *Jews*; for when he viewed the city after its conquest, he publickly said: *We have carried on the war agreeable to God's will, or under his favour. It is God || who pulled down the*

* *Jos. de B. l. 5. c. 11. §. 1.* † *Id. ibid. l. 7. c. 2, §. 1.*

‡ *Ibid. c. 3. §. 1.* § *Ibid. c. 9. §. 3.*

|| Συν θεω γ' επολεμησομεν, και θεος ην ο τωνδε των εφυματων Ιουδαιων καδελων, επι χειρες τε ανθρωπων η μαχαιαι τι προς ταυτης πυργης δυναται; *Joseph. Beb. Jud. l. 6. c. 9. §. 1.*

Jews from their fortresses, which were unconquerable David by human arms and engines.

ver Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

But we need not these examples to justify David's conduct; for the more carefully I consider the scripture account of his treatment of the Ammonites, I am the more fully convinced, that he did not execute these severities upon them, and that the sacred history, fairly interpreted, will warrant no such charge; and I will now venture thus to render the original words: *He brought forth the inhabitants of it, and put * them to the*

* The words in the original are **וַיִּשֶׂם בַּמִּגְרָה**. *He put them to the saw.* This is the frequent signification of the prefix **בַּ**, as may be seen in *Noldius*, and it hath certainly this signification in construction with the very verb, made use of in the passage before us. *Let not the king וַיִּשֶׂם put this thing בַּעֲבָדוֹ to his servant.* 1 Sam. xii. 15. and in other places that might be mentioned. It may also be observed, that the *Syrac* and *Arabic* versions give a very favourable interpretation of this passage, by rendering it: *He brought them out, and threw them into chains, and iron shackles, and made them pass before him in a proper measure, or by proper companies at a time.* The version of the 70th is thus: *ἔθηκεν ἐν τῷ πριονί, καὶ ἐν τοῖς τριβόλοις τοῖς σιδηρεῖς καὶ υπολομενεῖ σιδηροῖς.* *He put them to the saw, and to iron harrows, and iron instruments, or tools, καὶ διηγάγει αὐτοὺς διὰ τὰ πλυνθία, and made them pass through the bricks, without any mention of the brick-kilns; plainly implying, that he condemned them to those servile labours.* The meaning, which our translators have given to the preposition **בַּ**, *under*, is very unusual; and, of all the places cited by *Noldius*, in which he so renders it, there is scarce one of them, but may be better rendered in the more common significations of it, *To* or *By*; and there are innumerable places to justify this rendering of it. And it should be farther remarked, that even *Noldius* himself, tho' he renders this prefix by *sub, under*, in the place before us; yet, correcting himself in his notes, says: *Abduxit & posuit populum ad ferram trahendam pro secandis lignis, et terrifodinas, et ad scalptra ferrea secandorum lapidum, i. e. adhibuit lapicidinis.* *He put the people to the saw to cut timber, to iron mines, and to iron chissels for hewing and cutting of stones, i. e. sent them to work in the stone quarries.*

David *saw, to iron † mines, and to iron * axes, and*
 over Ju- *trans-*
 dah 17, all
 Israel 10.

במגרה. *Under saws,* as we render the word. Rather, *to the saw,* the word being in the singular number. It comes from the root **גרה** *traxit, distraxit,* to draw, and divide by drawing; denoting rather *the saw* than *the axe*; in which sense, the punishment would be, their being condemned to the cutting of timber and stones with the saw. Solomon had great numbers of servants employed in this work, who divided large stones in the quarries with the saws, and then formed them into proper sizes and shapes. See 1 Kin. vii. 9. where we read of stones **מגרות במגרה** *sawed with saws,* **במדות גוית** cut into proper measure; literally, *according to the measures of their section.*

I cannot help observing here, that if very severe and cruel punishments be intended by those passages, they are very oddly expressed, and so as to render the real meaning of them quite uncertain. For instance: What is the meaning of *putting them under axes of iron*? If it hath any meaning, one would think it should signify, *beheading them.* But this is not the usual way of expressing that manner of death. When *Baanah* and *Rechab* beheaded *Ishbosheth*, it is expressed by **ישירו את ראשו**. *They separated his head from him.* 2 Sam. iv. 7. The heifer that was beheaded in the valley is described by **העגלה הערופה** *Vitula decollata.* Deut. xxi. 6. This conveys a certain determinate meaning; but putting a man under an axe conveys none. In like manner, *putting them under a saw,* doth not necessarily signify their being sawed asunder. That would have been better expressed by **מגרים**, as in 1 Kin. vii. 9. and the putting them under iron harrows, is as undeterminate as any of the rest. And it is confessed, that the precise punishments are not here understood. Why then all these charges, of cruelty against *David* for inflicting exquisite punishments, of which nobody knows the nature. Candor would suggest the contrary supposition, that they might be punishments more consistent with humanity; and if we interpret the words of *David's* putting them to these servile labours, every thing is plain, the expression and construction usual, and the punishments consistent with the practice of the most civilized nations; and nothing more than what was constantly allowed by the laws of war.

† בחרצי הברזל. *Iron harrows.* The verb **חרץ** properly signifies, *fidit, he cleft any thing.* Hence the participle **חרץ** signifies *gold,* as being dug or cut out from the mines. Prov. iii. 14. Ps. lxviii. 14. This renders it extremely probable; that the word used in this place signifies
mines:

transported † them to the brick kilns, or rather, to David
the brick frame and hod, to make and carry over Ju-
bricks. dah 17, all
Israel 10.

mines: He put them to the iron mines; which will determine the whole passage to the more favourable interpretation.

* במגורות הברזל. The word comes from גזר, *secuit*, *cæcidit palmam*, *sive racemos dactylorum*, and therefore seems to be well enough rendered in our version, by *axes*, *iron axes*; so that, in this sense, David condemned some of these prisoners to the felling of trees and hewing of wood. Or, the word may denote any cutting irons, *scalpra ferrea*, as some render the words, such as were made use of to separate the stones in the quarries, and fashion them into proper forms or shapes when they had dug them out; and in this sense, their punishment was, that of being sent to work in the quarries, which I think to be the real meaning.

‡ העביר במלבן. Made them pass thro' the brick kilns, as we render the words. The text here admits of a various reading. Instead of במלבן, as we have it in our text, the *Chetib* במלכן, which some understand of the temple of *Moloch*, and his causing them to pass through the fire; but this is void of all likelihood and proof. I think the present reading is preferable, tho' it will be very difficult to make sense of the version in our bible. For how can men pass through brick kilns? The apertures and passages through brick kilns are not large enough for men's passing through them; and supposing they were wide enough, yet, if they were burning, they would have been suffocated before they could have got through them, and so could not pass through them at all; or, if they were not burning, and the *Ammonites* did actually pass through them, they were not put to death by passing through them, and so the horror of the supposed punishment intirely ceases.

But what I think will put an end to this controversy for the future, is, that the original word מלבן can never be proved to signify a brick kiln. In the *Arabic* dialect it denotes, *modulus reſtangulus, in quo lateres a luto efformantur*. Item, *instrumentum in quo portantur lateres*, as may be seen in *Goliath*. A rectangular mould, or frame, in which bricks are shaped out of the clay, as also an instrument, an *hod*, in which bricks are carried when made. In one of these senses it is used, *Nahum. iii. 14. Go into the clay, tread the mortar, החזיקי מלבן, apprehende formam ducendis lateribus*, as *Cocceius* in his *lexicon* renders the words. Take hold of the brick frame. Go and make bricks. When the clay was well trod, tempered, and mixed, the next thing was to form them into bricks. It is also used once more, *Jerem. xliii. 9. Take*
Q 3
great

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

bricks. He reduced them to slavery, and put them to the most servile employments of sawing, making iron harrows, or rather working in

great stones in thy hand, and hide them, not in the bricks made of clay, but in the clay; במלבן, not in the brick kilns, as we render it; which is at the entrance of Pharaoh's house; for the brick kiln is made not of clay, but of bricks formed out of it; and who would ever think of a brick kiln at the entrance of a prince's palace? But, as Cocceius renders it, in laterculo, i. e. quadrata area, the square court paved with bricks. The Vulgate renders the words: Sub muro latericio, under the brick wall. The 70th, is πυλη της οικιας Φαραω, in the gate of Pharaoh's house. So also the Chaldee paraphrase. בשרע בית פרעה. In porta domus Pharaonis. Either of these senses is preferable to that of the brick kiln; especially as the מלט, in which the prophet was to hide the stones he carried in his hand, doth not appear to be clay for making bricks, but, as Goliis explains it, lutum cæmentumve, quo in ædificando lapidum strues continentur, et lutum quo oblinitur paries, the cement for joining of stones in a building, or plaister for covering the walls. These are all the places in the Old Testament where the word is used, and therefore there can be no reason for rendering it in the place before us by brick kilns, as there is no authority for it, and the Arabick dialect uses it in a quite different sense. The meaning therefore of the passage is, that David העביר made to pass, i. e. removed the Ammonites, jure belli, according to the custom of conquerors, from their cities and lands, into other places, and condemned them to the brick mold and hod, i. e. to the making and carrying of bricks. In this sense the verb is used. Gen. xlvii. 21. where it is said of Joseph, העביר he removed the people into cities, from one end of Egypt to the other. Now this will determine the meaning of the whole passage to the milder sense. For if David sent some of his prisoners for slaves to work at the brick kilns, by making and carrying of bricks, he certainly sent the others to sawing, mining, and working in the quarries, according to the usual custom of treating prisoners of war.

§ The treatment of conquered nations was greatly different in former times, from what the milder laws of christianity should teach the princes and potentates of the earth. And yet how hard and severe is the fate of those, who, in our own times, fall under the power of their enemies? who have their cities and towns and villages laid in ruins, are subjected to the most rigorous and cruel contributions, have their

in the mines, to the hewing of stones, and David making and carrying of bricks. To these drud- over Ju-
geries, ^{dah 17, all} Israel 10.

their houses plundered, their estates seized, their families violated, their persons abused, or shut up in jails, and who are oftentimes wantonly put to death; or if spared, spared only to protract a wretched life in want and misery. Formerly those who were conquered in war, were all looked on and treated as the vilest slaves, sold like cattle, murdered by multitudes for diversion, or condemned to eternal bondage, and put to the most servile employments, such as digging in the mines, building of walls and publick edifices, and every kind of labour that could harass and destroy them. This was the then law of nations, and practised almost all over the world, even amongst the politer nations of Greece and Rome.

When the humane and renowned *Scipio* took *Carthage*, all the cities, without exception, that were confederate with the enemies of *Rome*, were entirely demolished, and their conquered lands divided to the allies of *Rome*. Appian. *Alex. de bell. Pun.* p. 133. 139. It was customary with the *Romans* to buy large numbers of slaves, on purpose to employ them in the mines, where they continued night and day, suffering the greatest miseries, insomuch that great numbers of them died, thro' their hard treatment, or because they had no remission, or end of their labour; and as for those of them who lived, their distresses were such, as that death was more eligible to them than life. *Diador. Sic.* l. 5. p. 359, 360. *Edit. Wessel.* Thus also the *Egyptian* kings condemned their captives in war to the mines. *Idem.* l. 3. p. 181, 182. When *Gelo*, who was a prince of the greatest humanity, had conquered the *Carthaginians* in *Sicily*, he divided the captives amongst his allies, who in chains were employed by them in carrying on the works of the publick; some of them in beautifying the cities, and cultivating the fields, some of them in digging and hewing stones for the publick service, in building their temples, and others in making subterraneous passages for carrying off the waters and soil of their cities. *Idem.* l. 11. p. 423. Thus *Solomon* employed all the people that were left of the *Amorites*, &c. which were not of the children of *Israel*, their children which were left after them in the land, whom the children of *Israel* were not able to destroy, on these did *Solomon* levy a tribute of bond service, i. e. employed them as slaves in carrying on and finishing the many great works that he had undertaken. 1 *King.* ix. 20, 21. And to mention no more, even the compassionate *Titus*, after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, sent all the captive *Jews*, that were above seventeen years old, ei-

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

geries, some to one, and some to another, he condemned them, or by these means brought them into intire subjection, and put it out of their power to give him any further disturbance. This interpretation is so far from being forced, as that it is entirely agreeable to the proper sense and meaning of the original words, and fully vindicates *David* from that inhumanity, by which some have characterised *the man after God's own heart*. The *bella, borrida bella*, all here vanish in an instant.

This account may also be confirmed by the parallel place in || *Chronicles*, where the historian tells us; that *David* brought them forth, and, as I would render the words, *divided* * or separated *them*

ther to work in the mines in *Egypt*, or distributed them through the provinces to be massacred in cold blood by each other's swords, or by wild beasts. Joseph. *de bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 9. §. 2.* It would be endless to mention all the accounts of this nature, recorded by the ancient writers.

Now if *David*, in the severities he used towards some of the nations he conquered, did no more than what the law of arms allowed him to do, and the custom of the most civilized nations justified; if no more than two or three instances even of this can be produced, and if there were peculiar circumstances that he thought rendered it necessary thus to make examples of them; I do not see that he can be justly charged with any great excess of cruelty, or deserve the severe reflections, that Mr. *Bayle* and others have branded him with.

|| 1 Chron. xx. 3.

* The original words are יִשָּׂר בַּמִּנְרָה. Not, *cut them with the saw*, as in our version, but *made them to cut*. For if יִשָּׂר is from the root נִשָּׂר it is in *Hiphil*, and signifies, not *secuit eos*, but *secare fecit eos*; which fully determines the nature of the punishment to be slavery, and not death. It may also be remarked that this verb נִשָּׂר, in its original and primary sense, signifies, *disperfit, di-visit, segregavit*, and from this general radical idea, is particularly applied to the separation and division made by the saw. And in this sense of the word, the meaning will be, that he separated or divided them to the saw, the mine, &c. some to one, and some to

them to the saw, to the mines and ‡ axes; agreeable David
 to what is said in *Samuel*, that he removed them over Ju
 from their former habitations to work in these dah 17, all
 servile employments. Or they may be rendered: Israel 10.
He made them to cut with the saw, the barrow, and
the axe, i. e. condemned them to these slavish em-
 ployments. Or finally, some interpreters give
 this version: *He ruled over them by the saw, the*
mine, &c. kept them in a state of subjection, by
 putting them to these hard labours.

It is a farther confirmation of the foregoing representation, what the historian adds: *Thus did*

to the other. It may be farther observed, that *שָׁרַר* may come from the root *שָׁרַר* to rule and govern, and so may be rendered, *he ruled, or governed*, and kept them in subjection by these servile labours, as *Sebastian Schmidius* renders the passage: *Dominatus est per ferram, &c.* And as the highest power any one can exercise over another, is either to condemn him to slavery, or sell him for a slave to others, so the verb signifies in the *Arabick* dialect; *collegit, eduxit, venum obtulit jumentum*, he brought forth, and offered the beast to sale; so that the rendering will be: *He brought them forth, and sold them like cattle for slaves*, according to the usages of those times in disposing of their prisoners. The *Syriack* version renders this passage: *He bound them with iron chains, and thus he bound them all.* And the *Arabic*: *He bound them all with chains, killing none of the Ammonites.* In every view *David* is cleared from the imputation of inflicting those atrocious punishments, which our translation points out, and on the account of which, others, with so much pleasure, have charged him with inhuman cruelty.

במגרות. *With axes*, as we render the words. We have this very word, in the singular number, the next word but one before, in this very verse, which we render *with saws*. But it is by no means probable, that the same word, in the singular number, should signify *a saw*, and in the plural number *axes*. I am therefore inclined to think, that we should correct this place by that in *Kings*, and instead of *במגרות* properly *saws*, we should read *במגרות* *cutting irons*. See *Capell. Crit. Sac. p. 20.* and *F. Houbigant in Loc.*

David

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

David *unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.* What did he do? What! put them to death throughout all their cities, by those exquisite methods of cruelty? The thing is impossible, for then he would have totally extirpated them, and we should never have heard of them again, as a nation, in history. And yet it is certain, that within a very few years after the taking of *Rabbab*, this very city existed, and was inhabited, and had a tributary king or viceroy; even *Shobi*, the son of *Nabash*, and therefore probably the brother of *Hanun*, who offered this violence to *David's* ambassadors. For whilst *David* was at *Mahanaim**, on the other side *Jordan*, waiting the event of *Abjalom's* rebellion, this *Shobi*, amongst other of *David's* friends, brought him very large supplies of all sorts of necessaries, *beds, basons, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flower, parched corn, beans, lentiles, parched pulse, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese, for himself and people*; for they said, *the people are hungry and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness.* So that the city and country were both inhabited, and the lands cultivated, abounding with plenty of all necessaries; and therefore there could be no general massacre, or very large destruction of the inhabitants, by *David*. Nor is it at all probable, that had *David* made those cruel executions amongst the *Ammonites*, which some ascribe to him, he would have found so much friendship from them in his distresses, whilst the barbarities he exercised on them were fresh in their memories; but rather, that they would have wished his destruction, and at least have waited the fortune of the war, that threatened *David* with intire ruin, and not have supplied him, for fear of their incurring the displeasure of

* 2 Sam. xvii. 27, &c.

Absalom, who aimed at his life, that he might usurp his throne, and would not have failed, had he been victorious, to have executed a severe revenge on them, for the assistance they gave him; especially as they might have urged a very plausible plea for their not assisting him; the scarcity of the inhabitants by the late executions, had that been really the case, and the impoverishment of their lands, for want of hands to cultivate them, and by the ravages committed on them by *David's* army.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

Besides, we read of these *Ammonites*, and the inhabitants of *Seir*, and the *Moabites*, all united, and bringing a very formidable army to invade the dominions of *Jehosaphat*. And tho' this was many years after their being subdued by *David*, yet it is not to be wondered at, that we hear little of them during this interval, as they were kept in strict subjection, and curbed with garrisons by the successors of *David*; just as the *Edomites*, during the same period, who, together with the *Moabites*, endeavoured to shake off the yoke of the *Hebrew* kings, but were reduced by them to their former subjection. Now it is altogether incredible, that if *David* had thus utterly extirpated the inhabitants of these countries, as some represent his conduct, they could, in one hundred and forty years afterwards, under *Jehosaphat*, have brought such a multitude of men against him, as forced him to acknowledge, in his prayer to God, that § *he had no might against that great company that came against him, and that he knew not what to do*; even when he had above a million || of men, mighty men of valour, ready prepared for the war. When therefore the history says, *thus did David to all the cities of the*

§ 2 Chron. xx. 12.

|| Ib. xvii. 14.---18.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

children of Ammon, the meaning can only be, that he condemned to slavery, not the whole nation, but such of the people, in their several towns and cities, as he had done to the inhabitants of *Rabbah*, who had been the advisers of the outrage, or principally concerned in that unrighteous war, which they carried on against him in vindication of it. The rest he permitted to dwell in their towns, and cultivate their possessions, and appointed over them *Shobi*, the brother of *Hanun*, king, as a tributary to his crown; and I doubt not in grateful remembrance of the kindness he formerly received from *Nabash*, *Shobi's* father, which was also the real reason of the congratulatory message he sent to *Hanun* his eldest son, upon his accession to the throne.

I would farther observe, that as *David* certainly had a great deal of generosity and goodness in his natural temper, the sacred writers, who have, with great freedom and impartiality, mentioned his faults, and who have transmitted to us this account of his treatment of the *Ammonites*, have passed no censure on him for having exceeded the bounds of humanity and justice, in the punishment he inflicted on them; and from hence we may, I apprehend, justly conclude, either that it was not so severe, as it hath been generally thought, or that there were some peculiar reasons which demanded it, and which, if we were particularly acquainted with them, would, in a great measure alleviate the appearing rigour of it; or that the law of nations, and the *jus belli*, then subsisting, admitted such kinds of executions, upon very extraordinary occasions; tho' I think there are scarce any that can fully justify them. But if the account which I have given of this affair be, as I think it is, the true one, the *Ammonites* were treated just as they deserved, and

and according to what was practised by the most civilized nations, and all exclamations against *the man after God's own heart* will be unreasonable and unjust. David over Judah 17, all Israel 10.

Mr. Bayle, amongst others, grievously complains on this article. *Can this method, says he, of making war be denied to be blame worthy? Have not the Turks and Tartars a little more humanity? If a vast number of pamphlets daily complain of the military executions of our own time, which are really cruel, and highly to be blamed, tho' mild in comparison of David's; what would not the authors of those pamphlets say at this day, had they such usage to censure, as the saws, the barrows, and brick kilns, of David?* 'Tis pity this learned and candid critick should form his notion of the cruelty of some military executions by a set of pamphleteers, a sort of authors not always of the best information and credit. But what if these same pamphlet writers, should complain of the cruelty of certain military executions, that had no foundation in fact, but only in their misinterpretation of some accounts of them, which they did not understand, or could not translate rightly from the language in which they were written? Or what if some person, assuming the character of a critick, should take upon trust his account, from these very respectable pamphlet writers, of the cruelty of some military executions, and censure the authors of them, as worse than *Turks and Tartars*, without ever searching himself the original relaters of them, to know whether the account of the pamphleteers were genuine or not; what censure would he not deserve from the impartial world for propagating such false and groundless stories? I am confident Mr. Bayle never critically examined, in the original language, the account of these military executions by *David*, for, if he had,

David over Judah 17, all Israel 10. had, he would certainly have found reason, at least to have suspended his judgment, if not entirely to have altered it. I should be in no pain for *David's* character, if I could as well defend him, in what the truth of history obliges me now to relate, as I think he may be justified in his treatment of the *Ammonites*.

C H A P. X.

The affair of Bathsheba and Uriah.

WHILST the siege of *Rabbab* was carrying on by *Joab*, *David* continued at *Jerusalem*, and, on a summer's evening, having reposed himself on his bed after noon, according to the custom of the East, he arose, and walked upon the roof of the royal palace, and, very unhappily for him, he saw a very beautiful woman bathing herself in an adjoining garden.

Λουομένης ολον ειδος εδερκετο.

Struck with the sight of such an unexpected object, and hurried away by his passion, he immediately sent to inquire who she was, not knowing that she was married, and hoping, undoubtedly, that he might accomplish his desires, without any violation of the religion and laws of his country, by adding her to the number of his wives or concubines. Thus far there is little room for severely censuring him; and yet during this uncertainty, whether or no he could lawfully obtain his wishes, the passion was increasing, as there occurred to his mind no considerations, that immediately forbid him to indulge it. But he was soon informed of her name and circumstances, that she was *Bathsheba*, a married lady,

lady, the daughter of *Eliam*†, the wife of *Uriah* ^{David} the *Hittite*, who was a brave distinguished officer over ^{over Ju-} at that very time in his service, and at the siege ^{dah 17, all} of *Rabbah*, with *Joab*, the commander in chief. ^{Israel 10;} Had *David*, as he ought to have done, upon this advice, immediately checked his inclinations, and given up a pursuit, which he now could not but know was highly criminal, he would have been justly celebrated for his self-denial and moderation. But hurried on and blinded by the excess of his passion, he immediately sent messengers to her. She came, he persuaded, she yielded, and sacrificed her honour and duty to the king's inclination, and thereby they incurred both of them the guilt and punishment of adultery.

Some time after this she found herself with child by *David*, and sent to inform him of the condition she was in. This threw them both into the greatest difficulties; and, after considering what he should do to conceal their guilt, and avoid the scandal, infamy, and punishment, to which the discovery of their criminal correspondence might expose them, he immediately sent for *Uriah* from the army, who had been absent from home a considerable time; hoping that he would allow himself in all the satisfactions of domestick life, and that by this means their adulterous commerce might remain a secret, and the fatal consequences, they apprehended from its being publickly known, might be effectually prevented.


† It hath been thought by some learned persons, and not without some reason, that *Bathsheba* was granddaughter of *Achitophel*, *David's* chief counsellor, and one of his principal officers, and that he joined *Abshalom*, to support him in his rebellion against his father, in revenge for *David's* thus dishonouring his granddaughter. For we read, that *Eliam*, probably the father of *Bathsheba*, was the son of *Achitophel* the *Gibeonite*, and one of *David's* principal worthies. 2 Sam. xxiii. 34.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.



Uriah, being returned from the army, immediately waited upon the king; who, after inquiring how the general did, and then into the state of the army, and what progress they had made in the siege, ordered him down to his own house to wait for his orders, and refresh himself after his journey; and, as a token of his peculiar favour, sent him provisions for the entertainment of himself and family. *Uriah* was a rough soldier, and inured to all the difficulties of a camp; and, instead of indulging himself with domestick pleasures, refused to go home, and spent the night amongst the guards of the palace, sleeping only, as the rest of them did, when they were relieved by turns from their duty. *David* being informed of *Uriah*'s conduct, upon his next audience, asked him, what it was that prevented him, after the fatigues of his journey, from going down to his house and family? *Uriah* bravely replied, that, as the ark of the Lord, *Israel*, and *Judah*, abode in tents, and *Joab* his general, and all the forces of the king, were encamped in the open fields, he thought it inconsistent with his station and honour, to lodge in his own house, to indulge himself in feasting, and converse with his own wife; and then bluntly swore, by the king's life, that he would do no such thing.

This peremptory refusal greatly disconcerted the king's measures, and he ordered him to continue amongst his guards for that day and the next, assuring him that he would send him back the morrow after, with proper dispatches for the army. The day before his departure, *David* treated him at his own table; and such are the low and scandalous shifts, to which the consciousness of guilt reduces men, who would otherwise scorn to submit to them, as that *David* made *Uriah* drunk; hoping, that when in liquor, he would

would naturally do, what he could not prevail David with him to do when sober; return to his home, over Ju- and cohabit with his wife. But drunk or sober, dah 17, all *Uriah* was the same, and he still continued with Israel 10. the king's servants and guards as before. 

There is no appearance, from any thing in the history, that *Uriah* had any suspicion of what had passed between *David* and his wife. Had the king imagined that *Uriah* had entertained any jealousy of him on that account, he would scarce have made him drunk at his own table, for fear that in his cups he should have blabbed out the secret, and in his passion reproached him to his face. Much less, I think, would *David* have made him the bearer of the letter to *Joab* for his own destruction; because, had he thought *Uriah* jealous of his having debauched his wife, he would have naturally suspected, that he would have been equally suspicious of the king's design upon himself, and by opening his letter to *Joab*, might have prevented the treacherous and wicked design against his own life, and exposed *David's* injustice and cruelty to the publick detestation and abhorrence.

He was now reduced to the utmost distress. All his arts to cover his guilt had intirely failed him, and his thoughts now suggested to him, that there was but one way left, to prevent the discovery he dreaded, and secure the partner of his crime from the vengeance of her husband, and the punishment of her adultery; and that was, to conceal one sin by committing a worse, and murdering the unhappy husband, to prevent his revenging the infidelity of his wife. The measure was resolved on, and treacherously executed; and, as tho' he imagined it would be some alleviation of his sin, he committed the

David over Ju- dah 17, all Israel 10. murther to another hand, and sent *Uriah* back to *Joab* with the following letter.

SET URIAH IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE HOTTEST BATTLE, AND RETIRE THERE FROM HIM, THAT HE MAY BE SMITTEN AND DIE.

Joab was a fit hand to be employed in such a bloody affair, and immediately obeyed his master's order; for as he went to reconnoitre the city, he observed where the most valiant soldiers were employed in the defence of it, and ordered *Uriah* to an attack on that place; where, with some few of the party under him, being deserted by the rest; according to their order, he was killed by a sally from the garrison, and thus sacrificed, bravely fighting for the unhappy man that murdered him.

Joab immediately sent an express with the news to *David*, who, upon hearing it, calmly writes back to *Joab*, as tho' every thing had been carried on with honour, according to the laws of war: *Lay not the loss thou hast sustained too much to heart. The sword of war knows no distinction. One as well as another, the commander as well as the common soldier; the bravest and best of men, as well as the meanest, are liable to fall by it. Maintain your courage, persevere in your attack, strengthen the parties you employ, and doubt not of a speedy reduction of the city.*

Bathsheba was soon informed of her husband's death, and after the time of usual mourning was over, *David* sent for her to the palace, and married her; both of them no doubt thinking themselves happy; *David*, that he could enjoy as his wife the woman he loved; and *Bathsheba*, that she was now under *David*'s protection, and had nothing

nothing to fear from her infidelity to her former husband.

This is the account of *David's* fall, as related in scripture; a fall attended with numerous circumstances of heinous aggravation, and the attempt to vindicate his conduct, in any of the principal parts of this transaction, would be injurious to the laws of truth and virtue. But if there are any circumstances of alleviation, that can be fairly alledged, justice and candor require, that they should be mentioned; as well as to own and admit others, that heighten his fault, and render him inexcusable. And I think there cannot be a greater pleasure, than what arises to a good mind, from being able, in some measure, to apologize for actions, in some particulars of them, which upon the whole are bad, and extenuate that guilt, where it can be fairly done, which, as far as real, ought neither to be concealed or defended.

There are some crimes, peculiarly aggravated by previous deliberate steps, that men take to commit them; when they lay schemes to gratify bad passions, and accomplish purposes they know to be injurious and dishonourable. *David*, in the beginning of this transaction, seems to be entirely free from every charge of this kind. He did not so much as know who she was, much less that she was a married woman, when he first casually saw her; and the passion he conceived for her, might, for any thing he then knew, be lawful, and such as he might, without any offence, allow himself in the gratification of. And this would have been the case, under the dispensation in which he lived, had she been a single person. *David* therefore, tho' very imprudently, and I think in some degree criminally, did not deliberate upon an affair, which he saw no immediate

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

David over Judah 17, all Israel 10. reason to prohibit him from pursuing; and thereby heightened that inclination, which he ought to have checked, as a good man, till he was sure he had a right to indulge it. By not doing this, it became too strong for his management; and when he had been informed who she was, yet fired with the imagination, that the beautiful object he beheld had railed in his mind, all other considerations at last gave way, and he immediately resolved to gratify his desires, at the expence of his conscience, honour, and duty. He instantly sends for *Bathsheba*, she immediately complied with him, and the whole affair seems to have been compleated the very evening it was begun. Every one must see, that as *David* had but little time for deliberation, it was not very likely, that in the small interval, between the rise of his passion, and the gratifying it, one in his circumstances should be cool enough to use that deliberation, which was necessary to bring him to himself, and restrain him from the crime. he was hurried on to commit; and that therefore his sin, thus far, had not that aggravation which it would have had, if there had been more time and leisure for him to reflect, and had he pursued his criminal inclinations, after having seriously and calmly weighed the nature and consequences of what he was about to do, and used, as too many others in like cases have done, fraud, perfidy, and force, to gratify them.

To say there was no time for any deliberation may be saying too much; for there is scarce any sin so suddenly committed, but there are some moments for reflection; but, in some circumstances, men may be so hurried away by a sudden gust of passion, as that they may be wholly incapacitated by it, rightly to improve those moments. *David* had no time to prevent the first rise

rise of his passion. It was as instantaneous as David the sight, and he might not think himself obliged to suppress it, till after he knew *Bathsheba* was *Uriah's* wife; so that all the interval he could have for reflection was only that between his knowing who she was, and his actually possessing her; an interval too intirely engrossed by imagination and desire, to leave room sufficient for the exercise of reason, or the influence of any good principles to restrain him. If *David* and *Bathsheba* had been casually together, a more sudden and violent gust of passion could not have hurried him away, without allowing him some time for deliberation, than what the attitude, in which he first saw her, would have naturally excited, and did actually excite; which swept away all consideration and reflection before it, and drove him down a precipice, that well nigh proved his absolute destruction.

I cannot help adding, that *Bathsheba* herself seems to have too easily yielded to the king's inclination, and thereby rendered it almost impossible for him to suppress it. For the history informs us, that *David sent messengers, and he received her, and she came in unto him, and he lay with her.* Her compliance seems voluntary, unforced, immediate. She should have refused his invitation. But she went, met his passion, indulged it, without, as appears, any reluctance, without remonstrating against *David's* attempt upon her honour; and thereby prevented those reflections, that her denial and resistance might have occasioned in him, and that might have made him sensible of the enormity of the crime, and preserved him from the commission of it. And how great soever this sin was, *David* is not the only instance of men's being unhappily betrayed in an evil

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

hour, by the power of a sudden, and unexpected temptation. Too many instances may be produced, even of habitually good and virtuous persons, being drawn aside, in some unguarded moment, and by the force of an unthought of strong temptation, into the commission of those sins, which, in other circumstances, they would have trembled at, and abhorred the very mention and thought of.

The first crime thus committed, and the dreaded consequences of it appearing, the unhappy prince found himself involved in difficulties, out of which he knew not how to extricate himself. Conscious guilt, concern for his own character, regard for the honour of the fair partner of his crime, and even fear of his own, and her life; the punishment of their adultery being death; all united, to put him on forming some contrivances, how to conceal, and prevent the scandal of it from becoming publick. Hence, all the little tricks and shifts he made use of to entice the injured husband to his wife's bed, and father the fruit of their adultery upon him. Who can help pitying a great, and I will venture to affirm, an hitherto virtuous prince, reduced to these wretched expedients, to prevent that publick infamy, which he now apprehended to be near him, and dreaded the falling under?

But even these failed him. What must he do? Where can a man stop, when once he is intangled in the toils of vice, and hath presumptuously ventured into the paths of guilt? *Bathsheba* must be preserved at any rate. His own honour was at stake to prevent her destruction, and he saw but one way left to secure that end; which he thought himself obliged, at any hazard, to obtain. If *Uriah* lived, she must inevitably
† die.

† die. *Uriah* could have demanded the punishment, and seems to have been a soldier of that roughness of temper, and firmness of resolution, as that he would have prosecuted his vengeance against her to the utmost. The law was express and peremptory. Which of the two must be the victim? Cruel dilemma! It is at last determined that the husband should be sacrificed, to save the wife; whom *David's* passion had made a criminal; and had he forsaken her in this dreadful situation, and left her to her punishment, he would not only have pronounced sentence of death against himself, but been censured, I am persuaded, by almost every man, as a monster of perfidy, baseness, and ingratitude.

But how was *Uriah* to be got rid of? Poison, assassination, or a false charge of treason, or some secret way of destruction, were methods which the eastern princes were well acquainted with. *David* was above them all, and had a kind of generosity in his very crimes. The man he was to destroy was a brave soldier, and he causes him to fall in the bed of honour, gloriously fighting against the enemies of his king and country; and if dying in the field of battle, by the sword of an enemy, and in a glorious action, be a more eligible and honourable death, than the being dispatched by the stab of a stiletto, the tortures of poison, or as a criminal on a false accusation of treason; the causing an innocent person to die in the former manner, tho' this hath its great aggravation, yet is not so base and villainous an action, as destroying him by any one of the latter methods; and had *David* had recourse to any

† Αποθανεῖν, γὰρ αὐτὴν κατὰ τὰς παλαιοὺς καθεστῆς νόμους μεμοιχένου. She must have died as an adulteress, by the laws of her country. *Joseph. A. J. l. 7. c. 7. §. 1.*

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

of them to get rid of a worthy man, whom he had criminally reduced himself to an almost absolute necessity of dispatching, the crime would have been of a more horrid dye, and justly excited an higher indignation and abhorrence. And tho' I am far from mentioning these particulars to excuse *David's* conduct, or palliate his aggravated offences; yet the circumstances I have mentioned excite my compassion, carry in the nature of the thing some alleviation of his crimes, and should ever be remembered to soften the pen that is employed in describing them.

Having thus, by accumulated guilt, taken off the man, that he dreaded should live; *David*, after *Bathsheba* had gone through the usual time of mourning, took her to his palace, and made her his wife, to skreen her from a prosecution of adultery, to secure her against the penalty of death, and in some measure to repair the injury he had done her, by his criminal commerce with her, during her former husband's life; which, as a plurality of wives was not forbidden by that constitution and polity he lived under, was the least compensation that he could make, and which he was obliged in honour and justice to make her.

One would have thought, that after such a complication of aggravated crimes, *David*, upon a review of his conduct, should have been struck with remorse, voluntarily confessed his sins to God, and humbly intreated from him the mercy and forgiveness he so much needed. But nothing of this appears from the history. He rather seems, on the contrary, to have been insensible and callous, and to have enjoyed his new acquired pleasures, without any uneasiness at the dreadful expence by which he purchased them. The siege of *Rabbah* went on successfully, he saw
no

no appearing proofs of the divine displeasure that threatened him, the affairs of government employed much of his time and thoughts, he esteemed himself happy in the preservation of *Bathshebab*, and at full liberty to gratify the ardent passion he had conceived for her; and probably might persuade himself, that as *Uriah* was an *Hittite*, the taking away his wife and life greatly lessened the aggravation of his sin; or, that as king of *Israel*, he was above the laws, and that however criminal such actions might have been in others, yet that the royal prerogative and power might render them lawful in him, or at least so extenuate the evil of them, as that they would pass unobserved by God, who had solemnly promised him the establishment of the throne and kingdom in his person and family.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

But by whatever means he made himself easy, the history informs us, that *the thing which David had done displeased the Lord*, who resolved to shew his abhorrence of the crime, to execute on him a vengeance proportionable to the heinousness and guilt of it, and thereby to rouse his conscience, and bring him to those acknowledgments of his sin, as might prepare him for, and render him capable of that forgiveness, which, how much soever he needed it, he was greatly unworthy of. He was pleased to employ *Nathan* the prophet on this solemn occasion; who, by an artfully composed fable, brought the king to pronounce his own condemnation, even without suspecting, or intending it.

Bathshebab had just been delivered of a son†, the fruit of her adulterous commerce with *David*, and who was, in the strictness of the letter, *conceived by his mother in sin, and shapen in iniquity*.

† 2 Sam. xii. 14.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

David appears to have been fond of the child, and, in the midst of his joy on this account, *Nathan* demands an audience, and addresses him with the following complaint.

There were two men, who lived in the same city, one of whom was rich, and the other poor. The rich man had flocks and herds in great abundance; but the poor man had not any thing, save only one little ewe lamb, which he had bought, and nourished, so that it grew up together with him, and with his children.

*Tyrrhidæ pueri quem matris ab ubere raptum
Nutribant, Thyrrusque pater.*

Virg. *Æn.* 7.

It did eat of his morsel,

Manum patiens, mensæque adsuetus herili. Id. *ibid.*

and drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a certain traveller to the rich man, and he begrudged to take of his own flock and his own herd, to entertain his guest, but took the poor man's lamb, and provided for the traveller that came to him. *David* was extremely incensed against the man, and said to *Nathan*: *As the Lord lives, the man who has done this is worthy of death, and he shall restore the lamb four fold, inasmuch as he hath done this thing, and because he had no compassion.*

Then *Nathan* said to *David*: THOU ART THE MAN. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: I have anointed thee to be king over Israel, and delivered thee from the hand of Saul. I gave thee also thy master's house, and the wives of thy master into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Ju-
dah,

dah, and if this be but a small matter, I have also added to thee this and the other thing, which thou well knowest. Why then hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do this wickedness in his sight? Thou hast smote Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him by the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord: Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and will take thy wives before thine eyes, and will give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives before the sun. Tho' thou hast done this secretly, yet I will do what I have now said, before all Israel, and before the sun.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

This dreadful sentence roused the conscience of David, and from the fullest conviction of the heinousness of his offence, he immediately made this acknowledgment to Nathan: I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD. Upon this ingenuous confession, Nathan immediately replies: *The Lord also hath put away thy sin. Thou shalt not die. However, since by this deed thou hast caused the enemies of the Lord contemptuously to reject him, the son also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

When Nathan had thus boldly and faithfully executed his commission, he left the king, and the lecture which he read him was worthy the dignity of a prophet's character and station, and such as became the majesty of him to whom it was given. It was grave, strong, affecting, insinuating, and polite. The parable, in which he conveyed to him his message from God, is dressed up with all the circumstances of art, tenderness, and delicacy, to move compassion, and, at the same time, to force from him that dreadful sentence:

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

tence : *As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, because he did this thing, and because he had no compassion*; thus drawing from him the sentence of his own condemnation, even before he perceived it. But how home, how bold was the application, when *Nathan* said to the king : *Thou art the man*——*Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight ? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife.* How dreadful also was the sentence pronounced against him by the order of God ! Such as shewed the height of his abhorrence of the crime, and of his displeasure and indignation against him that committed it. But how did the unhappy offender receive this bold and severe remonstrance ? Why no sooner was the application made, but he falls under conviction, acknowledges his offence against God, and owns himself worthy of death ; and the psalms he penned on this occasion shew the deep sense he had of the guilt he had contracted, and will be a memorial of the sincerity of his repentance throughout all generations.

But was not *David's* repentance *all affectation and hypocrisy*, and did he not bear the reproof, and bumble himself, because he took care not to disagree with his best friends ; or, in other words, to keep fair with the priests and levites ? But if the priests and levites were such kind of men, as some have represented them ; ready to support *David* in all his measures of iniquity, and when he projected any scheme, were never wanting in their assistance to him ; why should any one of them give him any trouble in this affair ? In what had he obliged them, by killing an *Hittite*, and debauching his wife ? Or why should they disagree with him about a transaction that no way related to them ? I should rather think, they should have endeavoured

endeavoured to have made him compound with them for a round sum of money, or a good number of sheep and oxen for sacrifices, that they might have feasted themselves on the price of his forgiveness; especially, as we have been told, that this same prophet, *Nathan*, was a great lover of this sort of food, and very angry when he was excluded from good cheer. But indeed the insinuation itself is wholly groundless; and let any man read thro' the reproof that *Nathan* gave him, and the direct charge of murder and adultery that he urged to his face, and, I think, he cannot but be convinced, that *David's* acknowledgment, *I have sinned against the Lord*, could proceed from nothing but a real and deep sense of the greatness of his crime, and that he deserved to be cut off by the hand of God for that aggravated transgression.

What farther effectually refutes this suggestion is, that his bearing with the reproof, and humbling himself under it, did not at all reconcile *Nathan* to him, who left him with a threatening dreadful in its nature, enough to make his ears tingle, and his heart tremble within him. The only favourable thing *Nathan* said to him was: *Thou shalt not die*; but, at the same time, tells him, that the murder he had been guilty of should be revenged by the sword's never departing from his house, and his adultery retaliated in the most exemplary and publick manner, upon his own wives; threatnings that were made him, before he owned his fault, and submitted himself; and therefore his submission could be with no view of reconciling himself to *Nathan*, because that prophet had already peremptorily pronounced his punishment, which *David's* after confession did not in the least mitigate or alter; for the punishment threatned was inflicted to the full;

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

full; and the particular nature and circumstances of it were such; and the events on which it depended were so distant and various, as that no human wisdom and sagacity could foresee them, or secure their futurity; and therefore *Nathan*, who pronounced his doom, must have been immediately inspired by God, who foresaw and permitted the means, by which his threatnings should be punctually executed; and thus brought upon *David* all the evils that his prophet had foretold should certainly befall him.

The nature of his repentance my reader will be the better enabled to judge of, if he carefully reads over the 51st psalm, which he certainly penned on this occasion.

P S A L M li.

Ver. 1. Have pity on me, O Lord, according to thy great loving kindness:
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies,
utterly blot out my transgression.
2. Thoroughly

Ver. 1. The petitions contained in this first verse shew the deep sense, which the Psalmist had of the greatness of his crimes, and are a plain acknowledgment, that unless the mercies of God were exceeding rich and numerous, he could expect no forgiveness. I cannot but observe here, the gradation in the sense of the three words made use of, to express the divine compassion, and the propriety of the order in which they are placed; which would be regarded as a real excellence and beauty in any classical writer. The first *אניני* denotes that kind of affection, which is expressed by moaning over any object, that we love and pity; that *σλεπν* natural affection and tenderness, which even brute creatures discover to their young ones, by the several noises which they respectively make over them; and particularly the shrill noise of the camel, by which it testifies its love to its foal. *Vid. Gol. in voce.* The second *רחם* denotes a strong proneness, a ready, large, and liberal disposition to goodness.

2. Thoroughly wash me from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

3. For

ness and compassion, powerfully prompting to all instances of kindness and bounty; flowing as freely and plentifully as milk into the breasts, or as waters from a perpetual fountain. Vid. *eund. in voce, med. rad.* Sjin. This denotes an higher degree of goodness than the former. The third רחמין denotes, what the *Greeks* express by *σπλαγχνισμός*; that most tender pity, which we signify by the moving of the heart and bowels, which argues the highest degree of compassion of which human nature is susceptible. And how reviving is the belief and consideration of these abundant and tender compassions of God to one, in *David's* circumstances, whose mind laboured under the burthen of the most heinous complicated guilt, and the fear of the divine displeasure and vengeance!

Ibid. *Blot out my transgressions.* The original word מחה which we render *blot out*, properly signifies *to wipe out*, or wipe any thing absolutely clean, as a person wipes a dish. The original meaning is preserved, 2 Kin. xxi. 13. *I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down*, i. e. so as that there shall not remain inhabitant or house in the city, any more than there doth any thing in a dish, that is wiped intirely clean, and then turned upside down. So that what the Psalmist alludes to, is not, as Mr. *Le Clerc* imagines, *debts entered into a book*, and so blotted out of it, when forgiven; but the wiping or cleansing of a dish, so as nothing afterwards remains in it. The meaning of the petition is, that God would intirely and absolutely forgive him, so as that no part of the guilt he had contracted might remain, and the punishment of it might be wholly removed.

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity.* In the original it is: *Multiply, or in multiplying wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*; for the word *multiplying* refers to both the verbs, *wash me, and cleanse me*, and is well rendered in our version by *thoroughly wash me*; as a garment, that is often washed, is thoroughly cleansed from its impurity. This form of expression is frequent in the Old Testament. Thus, *wash you, make you clean*, i. e. as it follows: *Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, and cease to do evil.* Isai. i. 16: The meaning of the Psalmist is, that God, by repentance, would recover him from all his past transgressions, and enable him to live free from the practice of them
for

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

3. For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is continually before me.

4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned,
And done this evil in thy sight.

So that thou wilt be just in thy sentence,
Thou wilt be pure in the judgment *thou hast pronounced.*

5. Behold,

for the future. כִּבֵּשׁ is peculiarly applied to the washing and cleansing of garments, as fullers wash and cleanse their cloaths. 2 Kin. xviii. 7. Exod. xix. 10. Levit. xvii. 15. and is figuratively used of men's cleansing themselves from their former sins, by which they contract that moral impurity, which is, in the highest degree offensive to that God, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* with approbation.

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions.* יָדַעְתִּי I know, I am conscious to my transgressions. Many months after he had committed the sins he now confesses, he seems to have been greatly insensible of his guilt, and enjoyed the fruits of his crimes without remorse. No man could call him to an account, or had courage enough to put him in mind of his heinous offences; and even God himself had not yet interposed to awaken his conscience, and bring him to a becoming sense of the guilt he had contracted; so that he hoped for impunity, and continued easy in the prospect of it. But when he saw himself in the parable, and had pronounced his own condemnation, he then saw his sins in their proper aggravations, *and his iniquity was ever before him.* His own conscience condemned him, and he was in perpetual fear of the effects of the divine displeasure.

4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned.* Injuries done to private persons are offences against government, and as to the right of punishment, offences only against government. And therefore, tho' David had injured Bathsheba, whom he had corrupted, and Uriah, whom he had murdered; yet, as no one could call him to an account, or punish him for those crimes, but God only, whose immediate substitute he was, as king of Israel, God himself being properly the supreme governor; he could say with great propriety and truth: *Against thee only have I sinned*; not as tho' he had not sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, and to extenuate his sin; but by way of aggravating his guilt, in that tho' he was not arraignable at any earthly tribunal, he was at God's; and that to his punishment he had rendered himself obnoxious, and was worthy of having it inflicted on him in
the

5. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, David
And in sin did my mother warm and cherish me. over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

the most exemplary manner. For thus it immediately follows:

Ibid. *That thou mayst be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* When Nathan had represented the crying and shameful injustice of the rich man, David declares with an oath, that *he was worthy of death*, and thereby condemns himself as deserving that punishment. And tho' God mercifully declared, *he should not die*, yet he pronounced a very severe vengeance against him. 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. And this sentence he acknowledges to be just. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil*, and subjected myself to thy punishment, למען *ita ut*, see Nold. in voce, *so that thou wilt be just בדברך in what thou hast spoken*, i. e. the sentence thou hast pronounced against me, and pure, i. e. free from all reproach in judging me, i. e. shouldest thou pass sentence of condemnation and death against me. F. Houbigant transposes these words from the place where they now stand, and joins them to the end of the second verse. *Wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins, that thou mayest hereby be justified in what thou hast spoken, and clear when thou enterest into judgment*; and explains the words, *in wh. & thou hast spoken*, of God's promises to David in reference to his glory, and the prosperity of his kingdom. But I apprehend this is too bold a criticism to be easily allowed; nor do I see it at all necessary to vindicate the Apostle's citation of these words. Rom. iii. 4. for he there quotes them, only as containing this general truth; that God would be justified in the whole of his procedure with men, and even in the condemnation of the Jews themselves for their unbelief. And nothing could be more applicable to his purpose, than these words of the Psalmist, in the sense in which I have explained them.

5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* I do not find that the original word חוללתי, which we render *shapen*, doth ever certainly so signify. It unquestionably denotes *to bring forth*, as a woman doth her child, and in all the places where it is rendered *shapen*, it would better bear another signification. The rendering in the place before us should be: *Behold I was brought forth in iniquity*; and then the ensuing words will contain the reason of it, because *in sin did my mother conceive me*. I was brought forth in iniquity. This refers to the Psalmist himself, to what he was from his birth, and his state as he came in-

David . . . to the world. It *was in sin*, i. e. with great propensities and over Ju- dispositions to sin; in a state of sensuality, with more irre- dah 17, all gular and much stronger tendencies to animal and criminal Israel 10. indulgencies, and the gratification of those lusts which are dishonourable in themselves, and which when gratified, are sinful in their nature, and highly offensive to God, than they would have been if the parents themselves had been entirely free from them. And this, as opposed to rectitude of nature, and the regulation of our passions and appetites, is a depraved sinful state; and, I should think, that there is need of no other proof, that we are all born in such a state, but our own experience, and the present condition of the world we live in. And I do not see how it could be otherwise with the Psalmist, if what he says of his mother be true, *that she conceived him in sin*; or was herself a sinner, when she was first warmed with the conception of him, or first cherished him in her womb. I shall not easily be persuaded to think, that parents, who are sinners themselves, and too much under the influence of bad affections and passions, will be very likely to produce children, without transmitting to them some of those disorders and corruptions of nature, with which they themselves are infected. And if this be a difficulty, I would beg leave to observe, that it is a difficulty which affects natural, as well as revealed religion; since we must take human nature as it is, and if it be really in a state of disorder and corruption, and cannot be otherwise, considering the common law of its production, the difficulty must have been as ancient as the first man that was born; and therefore can be no objection against the truth of revelation; but it must be equally so against natural religion; which must equally allow the thing, if it be in reality a fact, with revelation itself. The sense therefore, as I apprehend, of the whole passage is; that the Psalmist owns himself to be the corrupted degenerate offspring of corrupted, degenerate parents, agreeable to what was said long before he was born: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Job xiv. 4. Nor is it unusual with good men, when confessing their own sins before God, to make mention of the sins of their parents for their greater mortification and humiliation. See 2 Chron. xxix. 6. 2 Kin. xxii. 13. Nehem. ix. 6. and elsewhere. So also *Horace*:

*Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.*

Od. 1. 3. Od. 6.

I shall only farther observe, that *David* doth not mention this circumstance of his being born of sinful parents, and
born,

6. Behold thou approvest constancy in the in-ward parts,
 And do thou cause me to know wisdom in secret.

David
 over Ju-
 dah 17, all
 Israel 10.

7. Purge

born, as hath been explained, in sin himself, as an excuse for, but rather as an aggravation of his sins; since he ought to have been more upon his guard, and watched more carefully over his sensual passions and affections, as he knew his natural tendency to evil, and had been instructed by the law of God to correct and suppress it; as he more than intimates in the following words:

6. *Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts.* The common interpretation here is, that *David* makes mention of God's loving sincerity, *in the inward parts*, i. e. the mind and spirit, by way of aggravating his own guilt, for the shameful dissimulation he had been guilty of, with respect to *Uriah*; to which he adds: *In the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom*; that wisdom, which would have enabled him to have maintained his sincerity, had he followed the dictates of it. I confess I cannot acquiesce in this interpretation, because the original word *מחיות* which we render, *the inward parts*, signifies more properly, *the reins*, and is not used to signify the mind; the only place produced for this meaning, Job xxxviii. 36. requiring another sense. Nor doth the word *סתר*, in the other clause, which we translate *hidden parts*, signify so, any otherwise, than as any thing may be concealed by being obstructed and confined. I would render the words; *Thou desirest אמת truth, or constancy and firmness in the reins*, i. e. chastity and continence; moderation in the indulgence of all the sensual appetites, and the strict regular government of all the animal propensities and affections; the reins being accounted by the *Hebrews* as the seat of the passions and inclinations. *ובסתם חכמה תודיעני Et in obstructo, sci renum, sapientiam me doces, or doce.* And by their being obstructed, thou teachest, or do thou teach me wisdom, i. e. by their being restrained and kept within bounds, may I learn to act a wiser and a better part for the future. In the 14th verse he prays, that God would deliver him from the guilt of blood, which he had incurred by the murder of *Uriah*. In the verse before us, he acknowledges; that his adulterous commerce with *Bathsheba*, was contrary to that purity and self government, which were pleasing and acceptable to God; and prays, that notwithstanding any inordinate tendencies

David
over Ju-
dah, all
Israel 10.

7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

8. Cause me to hear joy and gladness :

The bones, which thou hast broken, shall rejoice.

9. Hide

he might derive in his constitution, by his being conceived by a sinful mother, yet that God would give him wisdom, to obstruct and lay them under such restraint, as would enable him to approve himself better to God for the time to come. Mr. *Schultens* thus explains the last words: That *when his heart was obstructed by sin, God would teach him wisdom, so as to shew him hereby more abundantly the extream evil of it.* See him on Job xxxviii. 36. I rather prefer the former exposition, as more easy and natural.

7. *Purge me with hyssop.* תְּחַטְּאֵנִי. Properly *expiate my sin*, with hyssop. The Psalmist alludes to the purification from the leprosy. Levit. xiv. 52. or, from the touch of a dead body. Num. xix. 19. both which were to be done by the sprinkling of water and other things with hyssop. The Psalmist well knew that his sins were too great to be expiated by any legal purifications, and therefore prays, that God would himself expiate and restore him, i. e. make him as free from those criminal propensities to sin, and from all the bad effects of his aggravated crimes, as tho' he had been purified from a leprosy, by the water of cleansing, sprinkled on him by a branch of hyssop, and that he might be, if possible, clearer from all the defilement and guilt of sin, than the new fallen snow. I think both these senses are included in the expiation which the Psalmist prays for, as the person whose leprosy was expiated, was wholly cured of his disease, and freed from all the incapacities attending it.

8. *Make me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* The displeasure which God expressed against the sins he had been guilty of, and the deep sense he had of the aggravated nature of them, filled him with those pains and agonies of mind, as that he compares them to that exquisite torture he must have felt, had all his bones been crushed; for the original word דָּכִית signifies more than broken, viz. being entirely mashed; and he compares the joy, that God's declaring himself fully reconciled to him, would produce in his mind, to that inconceivable

9. Hide thy face from my sins,
And wipe out all mine iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a constant spirit within me.

11. Cast me not away from thy presence,
And take not thy holy spirit from me.

12. Restore

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

ceivable pleasure, which would arise from the instantaneous restoring and healing those bones, after they had been thus broken and crushed to pieces.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins.* The verb סָתַר properly signifies *to veil*, or hide with a veil. See *Gol. in voce*. The meaning is: Do not look upon my sin with a severe eye, nor place them in the light of thy countenance with all their aggravations; but draw as it were a veil between thyself and them, that the sight of them may no longer provoke thee to anger, nor draw down the deserved vengeance on me.

10. *Create in me a clean heart.* A clean heart is an heart free from those impure and disordered passions, which *David* had too fatally felt the effects of, and in possession, and under the influence of those sacred dispositions of piety and virtue, in which the moral rectitude and purity of the mind consists. *And renew a right spirit with me.* The רוּחַ נָכוֹן the right spirit, or more properly, a firm, constant, determined spirit. — Ἰσχυρὸν ἐνστάδης ὑπακοῦ πνεύμα, as *Apollinarius* renders it, i. e. such a resolution and firmness of soul, as should effectually secure him against the power of all future temptations. See 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10.

11. *Cast me not away from thy presence* מִלִּפְנֵיךְ *from before thy face.* To come into God's presence is to approach the tabernacle of the ark, and its courts, where the sacrifices were offered, and the visible tokens of God's majesty appeared in the cloud and glory. 1 *Chron.* xvi 17. *Psf.* xvi. 11.— c. 2. And therefore to be cast out of his presence is to be debarred the privilege of appearing in his house, and joining in the solemnities of his worship. This was what *David* dreaded as the consequences of his offences, and what he grievously lamented, when driven from *Jerusalem* by the rebellion of *Abiſolom*; as appears by what he said to *Zadoc*: *If I shall find favour in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me the ark and his habitation.* 2 *Sam.* xv. 25. And he therefore prays, that this might not be one part of his punishment; his being wholly driven from the house and

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

12. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,
And let thy free spirit uphold me.

13. I will teach transgressors thy ways,
And sinners shall be converted to thee.

14. Deliver

worship of his God, nor his being deprived of the influences of his good spirit. For thus it follows:

Ibid. *Take not thy holy spirit from me.* רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ. *The spirit of thy holiness.* I see no reason here to understand, with Mr. *Le Clerc*, the prophetick spirit, though the *Chaldee* paraphrase, and many of our modern interpreters do the same. Nor do I apprehend the meaning to be, that God would not deprive him of a disposition of mind studious of sanctity or holiness, which is the other sense of the expression, which Mr. *Le Clerc* gives; for I do not think God ever deprives men of such a disposition. If they loose it, it is their own fault, and not God's. As the Psalmist had been praying for a clean heart, and a confirmed spirit, I think this petition for God's holy spirit, and the continuance of it, must mean that spirit of God, which was necessary to effect this great change in the temper and habit of his mind, and to confirm and establish it. He had forfeited this great blessing by his presumptuous crimes, and therefore earnestly deprecates his being deprived of it, that he might not be involved again in the same guilty practices, the recollection of which now gave him the deepest distress.

12. *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation*, i. e. the pleasure I have formerly enjoyed of having a special interest in thy favour, and of being assured that thou wilt continually protect, and deliver me from all mine enemies and troubles.

Ibid. *And uphold me with thy free spirit.* Or nearer to the original: *Let a free spirit uphold me*; for the pronoun *thy* is not in the original. נְדִיבָה is used as a substantive only in two or three places; and hath a very significant meaning; denoting a princely, ingenuous, free, liberal disposition. His spirit had been depressed, and greatly terrified by the sense of God's displeasure, and he was filled with shame and confusion for the greatness of his sins; and he prays that God would restore him to his former freedom; ease and alacrity of mind, both in discharging his duty as king of *Israel*, and as a worshiper of his God, and that this free spirit might uphold, or perpetually influence and carry him through the remainder of his life.

13. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, that sinners may return unto thee*, i. e. be persuaded, by my declaring to them
the

14. Deliver me, O God, from the guilt of blood, David
 O God of salvation, over Ju-
 And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteous- dah 17, all
 nefs. Israel 10.

15. Open

the mercy I have experienced in the forgiveness of my sins, to return to thee by repentance, that they also may obtain the pardon of their offences.

14. *Deliver me from blood guiltiness.* דְּחַיִּלְנִי מִדָּמִים. This is the proper sense of the expression. When *Shimei* cursed *David*, he said to him: *Come out thou bloody man.* צֵא אִישׁ דָּמִים. *Come out thou man of bloods.* And the reason he gives for this bloody reproach is: *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul.* 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. So that he was a man of blood, because as *Shimei* pretends, he was guilty of the shedding the blood of *Saul's* house. So in *Pf.* v. 6. אִישׁ דִּימָם וּמִרְמָה *the man of bloods and deceit* must mean, as well the bloody as the deceitful man. So in *Proverbs* the אֲנָשִׁי דָּמִים *the men of bloods* are expressly described, as *hating the upright, and seeking the life of every just person.* Prov. xxix. 10. And indeed wherever the expression is used, the plain obvious meaning is, *a cruel man*, who makes no scruple to shed the blood of another, whenever he thinks it for his advantage. So *David* prays: *Save me from men of bloods, for lo they lie in wait for my life.* *Pf.* lix. 2, 3. Hence the plural substantive דָּמִים *bloods* is used for murders. Thus *Ezek.* vii. 23. *The land is full* מִשִּׁפְּטֵי דָּמִים *with bloody crimes*, as we render the words. They seem to denote murders under the form of law, or the condemning the innocent to death by unjust sentences, and unrighteous judges. *The land is full of the judgment of bloods*, the judgment that condemns the innocent to death; which is one of the most atrocious kinds of murder. So *David* declared upon the death of *Abner*. *I and my kingdom are guiltless* מִדָּמֵי אֲבִנֵר *from the bloods*, i. e. the murder of *Abner*. And when God makes inquisition for bloods, *Pf.* ix. 12. it is to make inquisition for blood unrighteously shed, in order to avenge it on those who have spilt it. So in the place before us: *Deliver me* מִדָּמִים *is deliver me from the bloods I have unrighteously spilt; or the guilt of Uriah's murder.* Many other places might be alleged in support of this interpretation.

Ibid. *My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* Mr. *Le Clerc*, and others, think, that the equity and mercy of God

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

15. Open thou my lips, O Lord,
And my mouth shall declare thy praises.

16. For thou takest no pleasure in sacrifice, that
I should give it:

Thou approvest not whole burnt offering.

17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt
not despise.

18. Do

are denoted under this term of *righteousness*. But I see no reason to depart from the proper natural meaning of the word. For though God had promised *David*, before he had fallen into this complicated transgression, that *he would not take his mercy from him, as he took it from Saul, but establish his house, and kingdom, and throne for ever*, 2 Sam. vii. 15, 16. Yet as all the promises of God, suppose the persons, to whom they are made, faithful in performing the conditions annexed to them; *David* had great reason to fear, least for so heinous an offence, God should revoke the grant, and turn the kingdom to another family. And therefore he might well say, that if God would forgive him his sin in the affair of *Uriah*, he would sing aloud of his righteousness, *i. e.* his truth, veracity, and steadfastness to his promises, of which nothing could be a stronger proof, than his fulfilling the covenant he had made with *David*, though he had so notoriously forfeited all claim to the blessings ensured by it. And therefore he further prays:

15. *Open thou my lips.* Remember thy gracious promises, and accomplish them, notwithstanding my unworthiness, that I may have renewed reasons to celebrate thy praises; for this is the meaning of God's opening his lips, furnishing him with new motives and occasions of gratitude and thankfulness.

16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice, ואתנה עלה, . si dem holocaustum, even should I give an whole burnt offering, thou wilt not approve it;* for I think this is the true version of the place. For murder and adultery, there were no sacrifices of atonement appointed by the law; and therefore the Psalmist says, God did not in his case desire them; and that if he was to offer them, as a propitiation for his sins, they would not be accepted; the punishment annexed to these crimes being death.

17. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* The sacrifices of God, are either such as were fit to be offered to God, to expiate such grievous offences, as *David* had committed; or
such

18. Do good, in thy good pleasure, unto Sion: David
Build up the walls of Jerusalem.

19. Then <sup>over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.</sup>

such as God would regard, and could be in any degree available to secure his forgiveness. These sacrifices were *a broken spirit*, or *a broken and contrite heart*. The expressions mean in general, a mind greatly depressed, humbled, and almost overwhelmed with affliction and grief, of whatever kind, or whencesoever they arise. *Psf.* xxxiv. 17, 18, 19. Whether from poverty, as *Psf.* lxxiv. 21.—cix. 16. or banishment, *Psf.* cxlvii. 2, 3. captivity and imprisonment; *Isai.* lxi. 1. or from moral and religious causes, as in the place before us. For *David* unquestionably means by it, that deep sense of his offence, that affecting concern and grief of heart for the guilt he had contracted, as made him humble himself before God, take to himself the shame that was his due, filled him with terror lest he should be deserted of God, and rendered him incapable of possessing himself in peace, till God should mercifully restore him to his favour. And it may be observed that the second word נדבה which we render *contrite*, denotes the being bruised and broken to pieces, as a thing is broken and bruised in a mortar. See *Numb.* xi. 8. and therefore in the moral sense signifies, such a weight of sorrow as must wholly crush the mind, without some powerful and seasonable relief. Such a broken and contrite spirit, upon account of deeply aggravated and heinous sins, such as *David's* were, was the only sacrifice that he possibly could offer to God, and which he knew *God would not despise*, i. e. would graciously regard and accept. Religious men argued from the infinite goodness of God, and the promises he made to his repenting returning people, that he would forgive, upon a sincere repentance, even those more aggravated sins, to which the law of *Moses* denounced death, and for the expiation of which it had appointed no sacrifices of atonement whatsoever.

The Psalmist concludes this penitential affecting psalm by praying: *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Sion. Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.* It hath been observed here, that this and the next verse seem plainly to shew, this psalm to be written during the captivity, and therefore the title to be wrong; and that when the psalm was penned God could not accept any offering, because the temple and altar were destroyed. But I think there is little weight in these observations. The inscriptions to the psalms are very ancient, and all the versions agree in referring this psalm to *David*, and making the occasion of it to be the unhappy affair with
Uriah

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering.
They shall offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Uriah and Bathsheba; and nothing could be more suitable to his circumstances than this composition in the whole of it. As to the objection brought from the words, *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem*, there is no strength in it. When *David* made it the place of his residence, he greatly enlarged it, and fortified it, that it might be safe against the attacks of the neighbouring nations. These works must require a considerable time to carry them on; and as they were not yet probably finished, he prays, that though he was unworthy of being prospered by God in this great undertaking of rendering *Mount Sion* and *Jerusalem*, which he had fixed on for the capital of his kingdom, secure by the fortifications, with which he intended to encompass it; yet that God would prosper according to his good pleasure *Sion*, and enable him to build up the walls of *Jerusalem*, till he had fully compleated them. Or if these walls were actually compleated, *David* might pray with great propriety that God would build them, i. e. defend and protect them, uphold and preserve them in safety; for in this sense the word בנה *to build* is frequently used. Thus, every wise woman buildeth her house, i. e. establishes the welfare, and encreases the prosperity of it. Prov. xiv. 1. *Mercy shall be built up forever*; shall be firm and stable, and continually increasing. Ps. lxxxix. 2. and in the next verse but one: *I will build up thy throne to all generations*; or support and continue it through all ages. What is farther added, that *God could not accept any offering, because the temple and altar were destroyed*, is without any foundation; because there is not one word mentioned about the temple, nor the destruction of the altar; and the reason why God would accept no sacrifice, was, not because there was no altar, but because God had appointed none for adultery and murder; which by the law were incapable of being expiated, any other-wise than by the death of the offender. But as God had by his peculiar mercy remitted the sentence of death, the psalmist adds, that if God would graciously favour *Sion*, enable him to finish the walls of *Jerusalem*, and establish the safety of the city by his protection,

19. *Then shalt thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness*, i. e. such sacrifices as God had appointed by the law, offered on such occasions, and for such ends as God himself had prescribed, in opposition to those which he had just before declared

No one can read this psalm, but must see all the characters of true repentance in the person who wrote it, and the marks of the deepest sorrow and humiliation for the sins of which he had been guilty. The heart appears in every line, and the bitter anguish of a wounded conscience discovers itself by the most natural and affecting symptoms. How earnestly does he plead for

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

clared God would not accept. Had *David* offered sacrifices of propitiation for his adultery, and murder, they would have been illegal, unwarrantable, impious sacrifices, and not sacrifices of righteousness. These sacrifices, as described in the place before us, were the *עולה* burnt offering, and the *כליל* the perfect, or the whole burnt offering, as our version rightly renders the words. It doth not appear to me that the *עולה* was always to be wholly consumed by fire. The contrary seems very probable from *Exod. xviii. 12.* and especially from *Deut. xii. 6.* where God commands the people by *Moses*, to bring to the place, which God should choose, their *עולות* burnt offerings and other sacrifices, and there to eat of them before the Lord their God; so that tho' *עולה* frequently signifies the whole burnt offering, or that which was to be entirely burnt, yet not necessarily and always. And therefore we find, that in particular cases the words *עולה* and *כליל* are joined together, particularly to denote, that the sacrifice was to be wholly burnt. Thus *Samuel* offered *כליל עולה* a burnt offering to the Lord. *1 Sam. vii. 9.* In the place before us they are evidently distinguished. Then shalt thou be pleased—*עולה* with burnt offerings, *וכליל* and whole burnt offerings. If God would please to prosper and protect *Sion* and *Jerusalem*, *David* would provide for the solemnities of publick worship, where all these sacrifices, which God had appointed, should be constantly offered up by himself and his people. The whole burnt offerings frequently consisted of bullocks. *Levit. i. 5.* These the Psalmist adds, should ascend to his altar, as some render the words; or, as our version, they shall offer bullocks upon thine altar. The words are capable of both versions, and the sense in each is the same. He seems to refer principally to the peace, or thank offerings, which when made by pious men, according to God's prescription, could not fail of being acceptable to him.

mercy,

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

mercy, and thereby acknowledge his own unworthiness ! How ingenuous are the confessions he makes of his offences, and how heavy was the load of that guilt that oppressed him ! The smart of it pierced thro' his very bones and marrow, and the torture he felt was as tho' they had been broken, and utterly crushed to pieces. He owns his sins were of too deep a dye, for sacrifices to expiate the guilt of, and that he had nothing but a broken heart and contrite spirit to offer to that God, whom he had so grievously offended. How earnest are his prayers that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him ! How doth he dread the being deserted of God ! How earnestly deprecate the being deprived of his favour, the joy of his salvation, and the aids and comforts of his holy spirit ! Let but this psalm be read without prejudice, and with a view only to collect the real sentiments expressed in it, and the disposition of heart that appears throughout the whole of it ; and no man of candor, I am confident, will ever suspect that it was the dictate of hypocrisy, or could be penned from any other motive, but a strong conviction of the heinousness of his offence, and the earnest desire of God's forgiveness, and being restrained from the commission of the like transgressions for the future. And those, who run riot upon *David's* character, on account of his conduct in the matter of *Uriah*, tho' they cannot too heartily detest the sin, and must severely censure the offender ; yet surely may find some room in their hearts for compassion towards him, when they consider how he was surprised into the first crime, and how the fear and dread of a discovery, and his concern for the life of the woman he had seduced, led him on, step by step, to farther degrees of deceit and wickedness, till he

com-

completed his guilt by the destruction of a great and worthy man; especially when they see him prostrate before God, confessing his sin, and supplicating forgiveness; and even exempted by God himself from the punishment of death he had incurred, upon his ingenuously confessing: *I have sinned against the Lord* *; an evident proof that his repentance was sincere, as it secured him immediately forgiveness from God, whom he had offended.

David --
over Ju.,
dah 17, all
Israel 10,

I shall conclude this article by the remarks which Mr. Bayle makes on it. “ His
“ amour with the wife of *Uriah*, and the orders
“ he gave to destroy her husband, are two most
“ enormous crimes. But he was so grieved for
“ them, and expiated them by so admirable a
“ repentance, that this is not the passage in his
“ life, wherein he contributes the least, to the
“ instruction and edification of the faithful. We
“ therein learn the frailty of the saints, and it is
“ a precept of vigilance. We therein learn in
“ what manner we ought to lament our sins, and
“ it is an excellent model.” Let me add, that the wisdom and equity of the law of *Moses* evidently appears, in that it appointed no sacrifices to atone for such crimes, the pardoning of which would have been inconsistent with the peace and safety of civil society; such as those which *David* laments in this psalm, murder and adultery: Here the punishment prescribed by the law was death, and *David* had no other way of escaping it, but by the undeserved mercy of God. This God was pleased to extend to him, to shew how acceptable the sinners unfeigned repentance will be, whatever be the nature and aggravations of his offences; and if we learn from hence, what the scripture calls *the deceitfulness of sin*, to be

* 2 Sam. xii. 13.

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

cautious of the first beginnings of it, and not to indulge those sensual appetites, which, when given way to, draw men insensibly into crimes, they would have once trembled at the thoughts of committing; we shall make the best and wisest improvement of this melancholy part of *David's* history, and be real gainers by his sins and sorrows.

—— *Felix, quicunque dolore
Alterius disces posse carere tuo.*

Tibul. l. 3. el. 6.

The last part of the sentence, that *Nathan* pronounced on *David*, soon took place, for he told him, that † *because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall die.* Accordingly the child was suddenly taken ill; when *David*, extremely desirous of the child's life, and hoping that the sentence, that it should die, might not be absolute, greatly humbled himself, fasted, and lay all night upon the ground, acknowledging the greatness of his offence, and humbly beseeching God, that as the evidence of his being forgiven, and restored to favour, God would spare the child's life. The officers of his household, pitying the king's distress, and being apprehensive he might injure his own health, endeavoured to raise him from the prostrate condition, in which they saw him, and persuaded him to take some proper refreshment. But he would not yield to their intreaties. However his humiliation was in vain; for, on the seventh day after its birth, it died. His servants were afraid to inform him of it; very naturally reasoning, that as he was

† 2 Sam. xii. 14, &c.

so distressed whilst the child was alive, as not to be persuaded by their intreaties, he would be much more inconsolable, when he heard that it was dead. However, the king soon perceived, by their whispering with one another, what had happened, and asked them whether the child was dead? And when they told him he was, he immediately arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, put off his mourning habit, dressed himself in his usual manner, went to the tabernacle where the ark of the Lord was deposited, paid his adorations to God, then returned to his own house, ordered his table to be spread, sat down, and refreshed himself. His servants, surprised at his conduct, took the liberty to ask him, why he fasted and wept for the child whilst it was alive, and rose from the ground, and eat his food, as soon as he heard the child was dead? He told them, that whilst the child was alive he fasted and wept, because he could not tell but God might be so far gracious to him, as to preserve the child's life; but, that since he was dead, his fasting could be of no avail to restore him to life, and that he must follow him to the grave, tho' the child could never return to him.

One would be inclined to think, that *David* should not have been so desirous of the life of this child, as he appears to have been, as, had it lived, it would have been a living monument of his sin and guilt. But *David* was in his nature extreamly fond of children, God had pardoned his sin, and he wished for the child's life as one proof of it; *Uriah* was dead, he was actually married to *Bathsheba*, and the child born in matrimony. These, and other like circumstances, he might probably think would in some measure lessen or cover the reproach, that might
other-

David
over Ju-
dah 17, all
Israel 10.

otherwise have been cast upon himself and child, for the sin to which it owed its birth; and as *Bathsheba* seems to have been greatly concerned for the preservation of its life, apprehending probably that should it die, *David's* affection for her might be lessened, and that he might upon more serious reflection have intirely dismissed her, as the occasion of the guilt he had contracted, and the punishments that had been threatened to him upon account of it; his affection to her, added to the other mentioned considerations, might make him more ardently wish for the child's preservation, and earnestly pray God to spare it. But when the child was dead, he quietly acquiesces, and immediately pays his devotions to God, the great disposer of life and death; and thus humbly submits to the first part of the punishment inflicted on him.

David
over Ju-
dah 18, all
Israel 11.

When these melancholy transactions were over, * *David* comforted *Bathsheba* upon the death of their son, and cohabiting with her, he had another son by her, whom he called *Solomon*, whom God was pleased to favour from his earliest infancy. *David* put † him under the care of *Nathan* the prophet,

* 2 Sam. xii. 24, &c.

† *He put him under the care of Nathan.* Our version renders the words: *He sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet*, i. e. God sent, and he, God, called his name *Jedidiah*, because of the Lord. The original words will certainly bear this rendering, but I think the sense and connection will not. For if God had called his name *Jedidiah*, I imagine this must have been the name he would have been ever called by. Besides, what can the meaning be of the last words: *God called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.* *Hæc nihil dicunt*; they convey no meaning, saith father *Houbigant*. But these words will bear a great propriety, if they are added as the reason of *Nathan's* calling him *Jedidiah*; for he gave him this name *because of the Lord*, or because the Lord loved him. The original words will bear this version: *He sent him under the hand,*
or

prophet; who called his name *Jedidiah*, because *he was beloved of the Lord*, as the name *Jedidiah* properly signifies.

C H A P. XI.

Amnon's rape on Tamar.

THE loss of *David's* son by *Bathsheba* was but David the beginning of sorrows; † for not long after this, the unhappy affair between *Amnon* and *Tamar* occasioned him great uneasiness and displeasure. *Amnon* fell desperately in love with *Tamar*, who was his sister by *David*, but not by the same mother; she and *Absalom* being whole brother and sister. *Amnon* thinking it a very difficult matter to obtain his desires, as she was his half sister, fell sick through the strength of his passion, and the despair of being ever able to gratify it. *Jonadab*, nephew to *David*, and *Amnon's* friend, inquired of him the cause of his illness, and what could occasion him to languish and pine away, as he was the king's son, and might therefore expect that his father would grant him every thing he could reasonably desire of him; *Amnon* told him he was in love with *Tamar* his brother *Absalom's*

or into the hand or care of *Nathan* the prophet. יד is used to denote care, instruction and guidance. All these were יד לך under the hand, i. e. the instruction of their father. 1 Chron. xxv. 3, 6. So the heart of the king ביד יהוה is in the hand of the Lord, is under the direction of the Lord. But if we retain our own version, we must add, to make up the sense, with the *Vulgate*, *Syriac* and *Arabick* versions, loved him: The Lord loved him, and the Lord sent by the hand of *Nathan*, and called his name *Jedidiah*, because the Lord loved him. But I prefer the other version. See Bp. *Patrick* upon the place.

† 2 Sam. xiii. &c.

David
over Ju-
dah 19, all
Israel 12.

sister. *Jonadab* || advised him to keep his bed, and to desire the king, when he came to visit him, to permit his sister *Tamar* to provide him some sustenance in his presence, that he might receive and eat it at her hand; whereby he might find an opportunity to enjoy her according to his wishes; in consequence of which, as the affair could not be remedied, he might be allowed to marry her.

Amnon took his advice, and the king, not suspecting any intreague, too readily consented to *Amnon's* proposal, sent *Tamar* to attend him, who provided him the food § he wanted, and when she

|| What *Amnon's* original view was is hard to determine. The history says, that *Amnon* thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. As she was his half sister he could not by the law marry her; and as she was a virgin, she was under such strict custody, as that it would be extremely difficult for him to obtain the liberty of being alone with her. *Jonadab* puts him into a very probable way of getting into her company, and being alone with her. One can scarce think *Jonadab*, who was so near a relation of *David*, would have suggested this counsel, had he thought that *Amnon's* design was merely to debauch *Tamar*, without afterwards repairing the injury, as far as he could, by marrying her; which he thought *David* might think himself obliged to consent to, to keep the whole affair secret, and prevent the scandal that might otherwise be brought on his family; and especially as *Tamar* was but half sister to *Amnon*. But even supposing this to be the case, *Jonadab's* advice was execrably wicked, thus to indulge a most criminal passion in his friend, and suggest the means by which he might effectually accomplish it, at the expence of his own honour, and his sister's innocence.

§ It seems to have been the custom of ancient times, for ladies of the first rank and fashion to be well versed in cookery, and employ themselves on proper occasions in dressing food. *Tamar* had been brought up to this, and Dr. *Shaw* assures us, that the greatest princes of the *Arabians* are not ashamed to fetch a lamb from the herd and kill it; whilst the princess is impatient till she hath prepared her fire and her kettle to dress it. *Travels*, p. 301. And he observes, that they are the same people, except their religion, that they were two or three thousand years ago; without ever embracing any novelties in their dress and behaviour. *Ibid.*

brought

brought it to him to eat, he laid hold on her, David and plainly discovering his intentions by beginning to use violence towards her, *Tamar* cried out: *Nay, my brother do not force me; for this is such a wickedness as ought not to be done in Israel.* Think of the infamy it will bring on me, and as for yourself, you will be accounted throughout the nation as a profligate fool, void of all honour, conscience and virtue. *Speak to the king, and he will give * me to you in marriage.* But *Amnon* was deaf to all the remonstrances of his sister, and being stronger than she, he violated her honour, and impiously indulged his own incestuous desires. When he had thus obtained his wishes; struck probably with horror at the crime he had committed, and with having the object of his criminal passion present before him, or by some sudden unaccountable change of his temper, he conceived an absolute aversion towards her, and the violence of his hatred was much stronger than that of his former love; so that he bid her instantly arise and be gone. *Tamar* said, he could have no reason † for

over Judah 19, all Israel 12.

* *Speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee.* *Tamar* could not but know, that her marriage with *Amnon*, her half brother, was forbidden by the law, and therefore she seems to have said this in her hurry and fright, hoping by this means to prevent her brother's violence, and bring him to reason, by putting him in mind, that if he really loved her, he might obtain her in a more honourable way, and marry her even by *David's* consent. *R. S. Jarchi* says, that her mother was with child of her, whilst she was an alien, and that *David* took her captive in one of his wars; and that therefore *Tamar*, being born of a slave or captive woman, was not regarded as a daughter, and that therefore *Amnon* might lawfully marry her. But I leave the Rabbins to answer for the story and casuistry.

† There is no reason, or cause. על אדות. *Neutiquam causa est.* There can be no reason for this treatment of me. The root of אדות is not preserved in the *Hebrew* bible, but

David
over Ju-
dah 19, all
Israel 12.

for such a cruel treatment of her, and that it did not become him to make the first injury he had done her, the pretence of doing her a farther greater injury, by exposing her to publick infamy

it still remains in the *Arabick* dialect. See *Golius in voce* **תֵּן**, and signifies, *inflexit, occupatum eum habuitres*; and from thence is used to denote, the reason, or cause, or occasion, on account of which any one bends or sets himself, or endeavours to do any particular thing. The word is the plural feminine of the infinitive mood. Our translators render the whole passage: *There is no cause. This evil in sending me away is greater than the other which thou didst unto me.* But as *Gusfatius* observes under the word **תֵּן**, the words are placed in the order, as is unusual, when any comparison is intended, and therefore I would render the whole passage thus: *Let there be no occasion of this great evil, from the other which thou hast done to me, thus ignominiously to dismiss me; i. e. don't make the injury you have already done me the occasion or reason of this other great evil of thus thrusting me out of your house, and exposing my dishonour to publick notice.* This was what *Amnon* did, and there could not be a greater aggravation of his crime than this, nor an higher instance of injustice and cruelty. See *Gusset. in voce, and Nold. sub. partic. לֵן*. Mr. *Le Clerc* thus renders the passage: *Ne causam præbeas huic malo, majori eo quo me affecisti, dimittendi me.* *F. Houbigant* thinks Mr. *Le Clerc* did not understand what he meant himself by this version, though I think nothing is more plain, than that he meant: Don't take an occasion to commit this evil in thus dismissing me, which is greater than the injury you have already done me; that by making *Tamar* complain, that the injury of thrusting her out of doors, was in some respects greater than that of the violence he had already committed on her; which is the very sense that the good father puts on the expression; though he draws it from a different version of the place; viz. this great evil of the rape *Amnon* had been guilty of was less than that, which he was now committing, of thrusting her out of his house. But his rendering the word **מֵאֲחֵרָה** by *minus eo, or, less than that*, is, to say the least, very unusual. The literal version and order of the words is plainly thus: Let there be no occasion of this great evil, taken from the other which thou hast done with me, of casting me out. The great evil she complains of was his casting her out of door with abhorrence and infamy, and the only pretext for it was, his having impiously forced her, and in consequence of it abhorring her.

and

and reproach. But this brute of a brother was not to be softened, and calling one of his servants, immediately ordered him : *Send away this creature out of my sight, and shut her out of the house.* The servant did as he was ordered, and Tamar rent the royal variegated robe that was upon her, threw ashes * upon her head, and laying her hand † upon it, went crying through the streets to her brother Absalom's house. Absalom seeing his sister's distress, suspected what had happened, and said to her : *What hath Amnon thy brother been with thee ? Say nothing of the affair, my sister. As he is thy brother, lay it not to heart, but bear the injury with patience ; and as she had no remedy, she continued with Absalom, secluding herself from all company, and utterly disconsolate. Absalom was not of a temper to brook the injury done to his sister, and mortally hated Amnon upon account of it, but concealing his intended revenge till a proper opportunity, said nothing to him either by way of civility or reproach. Such an affair as this could not long be kept secret from David, who when he heard it was exceeding wroth, and I doubt not made Amnon feel the effects of his displeasure.*

Mr. Bayle, who takes every occasion to depreciate the character of David, says that *his indulgence to his children exceeded all reasonable bounds, and that had he punished, as the crime deserved, the in-*

* The rending the garment, and throwing ashes upon the head were the tokens of great mourning and very deep grief amongst Jews and Gentiles. See Martin. Guier. *de luctu*, c. 9. et 22.

† Laying her hand upon her head, i. e. as I apprehend, covering her face with them, as ashamed to be seen, after the dishonour done to her by her brother. So the prophet describes Sion. *Thou shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head*, i. e. covering thy face, through the shame of thy disappointment. Jerem. ii. 37. See M. Guier. c. 14. §. 2.

David
over Ju.
dah 19, all
Israel 12.

famous action of his son Amnon, he would not have had the shame and uneasiness, to see another person revenge the injury done to Tamar. Note F. I suppose he means, that he should have punished *Amnon* with death. But *Amnon* was *David's* * eldest son, and heir apparent to his throne and kingdom, and he might not think it prudent, or that it would have been well taken by the nation, if he had put him to death without consulting them. And this would have been exposing, in the most public manner, the disgrace of his own family, which he thought it was best to conceal, as far as he was able. That *David* did not punish *Amnon* in some very exemplary manner is more than Mr. B. could be sure of. There are some circumstances that make it very probable he did. The history assures us, that when *David* heard of the affair, *he was very wroth.* And it is very natural to suppose he made *Amnon* feel the effects of it. He seems to have put him under arrest and confinement, and allowed him to go no where without his express leave. For when *Absalom* invited the king and all his servants to go to his sheep-shearing feast, and the king denied him, he particularly pressed him to let *Amnon* go with him; which shews, that, though all the other sons of *David* easily obtained leave to attend *Absalom*, yet that *Amnon* was under greater restraint than all the rest, otherwise there would have been no need for him particularly to have pressed *David* to grant *Amnon* leave to accompany him, or reason why *David* should with difficulty and reluctance grant it. This was two full years after *Amnon's* affair with *Tamar.* So long a confinement as this to a king's eldest son, was itself a very severe punishment, and probably attended with several

* 1 Chron. iii. 1.

circumstances, that rendered it peculiarly grievous. David It is not however consistent with candour to accuse men of faults, which there is no real proof of, and especially when there are some intimations, that they never committed them; or to aggravate them beyond the real demerit. David over Judah 19, all Israel 12.

One cannot help observing here, how *David's* adultery with *Bathsheba* was punished by his son's incest with his sister *Tamar*; and as he now saw the threatnings of God by *Nathan* beginning to take place, he had too much reason to fear they should be all of them executed to the full. It was a circumstance also that must greatly affect him, that he had been, though unwillingly, a sort of accessory to *Amnon's* crime, by yielding so readily to *Amnon's* desire, of having his sister sent to him; the very proposal he made of her dressing and receiving his food from her, seeming enough to create some suspicion in *David*, that he had some design upon *Tamar*, which he ought to have been peculiarly careful to guard against. But probably *Amnon* had never offended him, nor given any occasion to suspect him capable of so heinous a crime, as he was now meditating, and therefore *David* more easily consented, that his sister should have the liberty of attending him.

C H A P. XII.

Abfalom kills Amnon.

David
over Ju-
dah 20, all
Israel 13.

TWO full years after this infamous conduct of *Amnon*, *Abfalom* * intended to give a feast at his estate in *Baal-Hazer* near *Ephraim*, at the shearing of his † sheep, inviting all his brethren to be present at it, and applying himself to the king, intreated that he also, with his attendants, would favour him with their company. But this *David*, though pressed to it, would by no means consent to, but softened his refusal by blessing him, or wishing him prosperity. As *Amnon* seems to have yet been under the king's displeasure, and under confinement by his father's order, *Abfalom* particularly asked the king's leave, that his brother *Amnon* might be permitted to attend them. *David* seemed unwilling to consent to it, and said: *Why should he go with thee?* Don't ask my consent to it. However, upon *Abfalom*'s further pressing him, he allowed him to accompany the rest of his brethren; little suspecting, that as he had been himself invited, *Abfalom* could have any intention of destroying *Amnon*. Having now got his brother into his possession, he had the desired opportunity of executing his long intended revenge on him, for the dishonour he had done his sister *Tamar*, and accordingly gave orders to his servants, who attended the feast, that as soon as ever they saw *Amnon* grew warm and merry with drinking, they should, upon his giving them notice, immediately dispatch him; assuring them, that as

* 2 Sam. xiii. 23, &c.

† Sheep shearing. This was a time of festivity and gladness. Thus *Nabal* held a feast at the shearing his sheep, 1 Sam. xxv. 8. 36. See also *Gen.* xxxviii. 12.

they

they acted by his command, he would justify and protect them. *Have not I commanded you? Be courageous and valiant.* Do not be afraid, but execute my orders with firmness and resolution. *Absalom's* servants did as they were commanded, and upon *Amnon's* murder, the king's sons all of them arose from the table, fled every one upon his own mule, and made the best of their way to *Jerusalem*. But before their arrival there, a report had spread through the city, and reached *David* himself, that *Absalom* had slain all his sons, and that not one of them had escaped the slaughter. This apprehension put *David* into the greatest agony, and tearing his garments he threw himself on the earth, all his servants standing round him with their cloaths rent, expressing their concern and grief upon so mournful an occasion.

David
over Ju-
dah 20, all
Israel 13.

But *Jonadab*, *Amnon's* friend, who guessed what the real fact was, immediately set the affair right, by telling the king, that he need not distress himself by supposing that all his sons were cut off, for that *Amnon* only was killed, and that *Absalom* had declared, that he would be thus revenged on *Amnon*, from the very day he heard that he had forced his sister *Tamar*; and therefore begged the king to moderate his grief, since *Amnon* was the only person that had lost his life, and that the rest of his sons were all safe. Whilst he was thus endeavouring to comfort the king, the centinel, who was placed to observe and give notice of all persons coming to *Jerusalem*, gave information that there was a great number of people coming behind the post where he was stationed, and by the hill side; upon which *Jonadab* immediately said to the king: *Behold the king's sons are just here,* and confirm the truth of my conjecture. He had no sooner said this than they all of them arrived, and

David
over Ju-
dah 20, all
Israel 13
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and upon coming into *David's* presence, they all burst into tears, and drew fresh tears from *David* and all his attendants. In this assassination of *Amnon*, *David* could not but see the farther just retaliation of providence, for his own aggravated sin, in the murder of *Uriah*, and the recollection of it must greatly enhance the bitterness of his grief, open afresh the wounds of his conscience, renew his repentance before his offended God, and cause him to deprecate the further effects of his displeasure.

As for *Absalom*, after he had thus murdered his brother, he immediately fled to *Talmai*, king of *Geshur*, his grandfether by his mother, with whom he was safe from the effects of his father's displeasure, and intended to continue there till he could find out some means to pacify his anger, and be restored to his favour and presence. He \* abode here full three years, in which time *David's* grief for *Amnon* subsided, and as he could not be recovered to life, his affection to his banished son began to revive, he wished to be reconciled to him, and wanted to find out some method, whereby he might be induced to recal him from his exile, and bring him back again to *Jerusalem*.

### C H A P. XIII.

#### *Absalom's reconciliation with David.*

**J**OAB † soon perceived the inclinations of the king, and his uneasiness at his long absence of *Absalom*, and took the following method to engage him to consent to, and order his return to the city and court. He sent to *Tekoa*, a town not far from *Jerusalem*, and brought from thence a

\* 2 Sam. xiii. 38.

† 2 Sam. xiv. 1, &c.

woman

woman remarkable for prudence, and whom he knew he could trust with the management of the affair, on which he intended to send her to the king. He ordered her to personate the character of a widow woman in great distress, to put on her mourning habit, not to anoint herself \* with oil, nor do any thing for the culture and ornament of her person, but to appear in all respects, as one that had been long mourning for a dead son; and instructing her in the nature of the complaint she was to make, and how she was to apply it, when she found she had moved the royal compassion towards her; he sent her to the king, not doubting but that by this artful management, he should bring over the king to his design, and ingratiate himself with *Absalom*, by procuring his restoration, who was *David's* eldest son, and whom he looked upon as his heir and successor in his kingdom. The woman, according to *Joab's* instructions, having obtained an audience of the king, prostrated herself on the ground before him, and earnestly implored his help. He asked her what was her complaint? She replied, that she had lost her husband, and was a disconsolate widow; that she was left with two sons, who having quarrelled in the field, and there being no person present to part them, one of them was unhappily killed by the other. On this account the whole family of the deceased is risen up against

David  
over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

\* Ointments were in great esteem and constant use amongst the ancients, as the means of cleanliness, and to give a grateful odor to their bodies, as these ointments were mixed up with the richest perfumes. At their festivals, especially amongst the rich and prosperous, they used them for the refreshment of their guests, and to render the entertainment more acceptable and delightful. But as great affliction and distress naturally create negligence of person and dress, they forbore anointing themselves at such seasons, as inconsistent with the condition of mourners. See *Guier, de Lucr. c. 21. §. 9.*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

thine handmaid, demanding that he who killed his brother should be delivered up to them, that they might put him to death, for having taken away his brother's life, that by destroying the heir, they may divide his inheritance amongst them. Thus will they quench *my † living coal*, and not leave to my deceased husband either name, or remainder, on the face of the earth.

*David*, moved with compassion at the woman's story, and finding by her account there were some alleviating circumstances in the case, that he might be slain accidentally, and without premeditated design and malice, that there were no witnesses of his being wilfully murdered, as the quarrel happened in a field where no one was present, † that two witnesses were necessary by the law in case of murder, and that the prosecution was carried on, rather with a desire to strip the poor family of its patrimony than from a regard to justice; immediately said unto her: *Return home, and I will give orders according to thy desire.* The woman, to take away any scruple the king might have for rescuing her son from the avenger of blood, said to him: *My Lord, O king, if there be any sin in thy preserving him from death, let the punishment of it fall on me, and on my father's house,*

† *Quench my coal.* נִחַלְתִּי. The word signifies, not *carbo* but *pruna*, a burning, or live coal. She compares her son to it, because he was the only hope of continuing her husband's name and family, as a burning coal, when a man hath but one left, is the only means of preserving his fire. The Greek writers use the word ξωπυρον, *scintilla*, *fomes*, to express the the small remainder of a family or nation. Μικρα ατλα διασωζεσαι ξωπυρα τω Πελασγικω γενει. *Parvas quasdam generis pelasgici scintillas servabant.* Dion. Hal. A. R. p. 16. l. 39. And again, Ζωπυρα ατλα περιλειπομενα τω παλαιω γενει. *Quædam generis antiqui scintillæ reliquæ extabant.* P. 35. l. 34. Other instances may be seen in H. Stephen's *Thesaurus*, under the word Ζωπυρον.

† Numb. xxxv. 30.

but

but the *king and his throne be guiltless*. He immediately replied, that if any person spoke to her on the affair, she should bring him before him, and he would prevent him from giving her any farther trouble. The woman not yet seeming fully satisfied, said to him: *Let the king remember \* the Lord thy God*, and let me beseech thee by his mercy, that thou wouldst not suffer the avenger of blood to make any farther † destruction in my family, and after I have lost one son, to take away the life of my other. The king, to give her the fullest assurance of saving him, that she could desire, solemnly swore by the living God, that he would protect him, and that not the least injury should be done him.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

It appears by *David's* answers to the widow, that he did not yet guess at the drift of her complaint to him, and had not made the least application of it to his own case; though the circumstances of her story, of one brother's killing the other, of the avenger of blood, and destroying the heir, might have naturally created in him some suspicion of her real intention. However

\* *Remember the Lord thy God*. i. e. as some think, let the king confirm his assurance to me by oath. I rather think, that she intended to put him in mind of the mercy of God, and to imitate his example, who had provided cities of refuge for him, that had been guilty of casually killing another, that he might flee into one of them, lest the avenger of blood should pursue him, and so destroy him. Deut. xix. 5, 6. Or, she might intend tacitly to insinuate, that he knew himself God did not always punish with death even wilful murderers, and that therefore the king could not do wrong in shewing mercy to one who had been guilty of it, because herein he imitated the clemency of God himself.

† *Thou wouldst not suffer the revenger of blood to destroy any more.* כְּהִרְבִּית לַשָּׁחַת. *Neminis perdat vindex sanguinis*, as Cocceius renders the words. Literally, *may not multiply to destroy*, i. e. destroy my living son to revenge the death of him that is dead.

the

David  
over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

she had artfully prepared the way to discover it to him, as she had got him to promise, that he would preserve her living son from the avenger of blood, and to swear that no harm should come to him for the crime he was charged with; as she had brought to his mind the mercy of God, and thereby insinuated, that as he sat on God's throne, he had the example of God himself to justify him in extending mercy, on particular occasions, to persons who had forfeited their lives to justice, by taking away the lives of others; she therefore begs the king to indulge her in what she had farther to offer to his consideration; and having obtained his permission, she thus proceeded: Since thou hast granted this favour to thine handmaid, that the avenger of blood shall not pursue my son to destruction, why wilt thou deny the same grace \* to thine own son, to the prejudice of the whole people of God? In extending his compassion to me, the king seems to blame † his own conduct, in not rescuing his son from the avenger of blood, and restoring him from his banishment. We are

\* *Wherefore hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?* Here she discovers her real intention, and from the concessions which she had drawn in the king to make in favour of her son, she argues the propriety and reasonableness of his making the same in favour of his own, from the regard he had to the inclinations and desires of the people of God. As he had promised that the revenger of blood should not pursue her son to destruction, why should he continue resolved not to forgive and secure from vengeance his own son, especially as the publick good seemed to require it? She adds:

† *The king doth speak this thing, as one that is faulty,* i. e. by promising me full protection from the avenger of blood for my son, the king censures his own conduct, by not granting the same protection to his own, and suffering him to languish in a state of banishment.

all

all naturally subject † to death, and when dead, David  
 our lives are no more capable of being recovered <sup>over Ju-</sup>  
 than the water that is spilt upon the ground, and <sup>dah 20, all</sup>  
 can the decease or banishment of thy living son <sup>Israel 13.</sup>  
 recover to life him that is already dead? God  
 himself doth not take away || the life of the slayer,  
 but hath contrived the means for his safety, and  
 that though banished for a while, he may not be  
 for ever driven from his presence. I have there-  
 fore presumed to speak of this affair unto my lord  
 the king, especially as I have been terrified § by the  
 murmurs

† *For we must needs die, &c.* This is urged as a reason, why the king should prevent the avenger of blood from destroying *Abshalom*, because by destroying him he could not recover *Amnon* to life, any more than water can be gathered up again, that is once spilt upon the earth; and that as death is what all are subject to, the loss of one son should not be so resented, as to put the king upon taking away the life of the other.

|| *Neither doth God respect any person.* וְלֹא יֵשׁ אֱנוֹשׁ. Bp. Patrick justly observes, that the words וְלֹא יֵשׁ never signify *respect of persons*, and therefore says they should be translated: *God doth not take away the soul or life.* Dens non aufert animam, as father *Houbigant*, and several of the antient versions. Mr. *Le Clerc's* rendering, *Amnon princeps ignoscere potest alicui*, is very forced, though the sense would very well suit the place. The law had provided, not only that the slayer should be safe from the avenger of blood in one of the cities of refuge, but that after the death of the high priest, he should return from the place of his retreat into the land of his inheritance; and the argument which the woman makes use of, to induce *David* to pardon and recal his son, was that God, not only ordered a place of refuge for the slayer, where he might be secure from vengeance, but also limited the time of his confinement to that place, after which he was to return to, and be put into full possession of his inheritance; thereby insinuating that having such an example, he might and ought to pardon and recal his son. God doth not take away life, but hath devised the means whereby his banished might not be expelled from him; viz. by providing that he should not always remain in a state of banishment?

§ *It is because the people have made me afraid:* This whole affair seems to have been privately concerted between *Joab* and the

David the widow, and the making it publick before it was transacted, must have prevented the effect of it; and therefore the over Judah 20, all fear she speaks of could not arise, as bishop *Patrick* supposes, Israel 13. from any advice that she could receive from others, about the danger of applying to the king, because she advised only with *Joab*, who put her on making this application, instructed her what to say, and bid her intimate to the king, that the people were discontented, and that it might prove very prejudicial to the peace of his government, if he did not soon gratify them in recalling the heir of his crown from banishment. She therefore pretends, that it was affection and loyalty to him, that encouraged her to make the representation she had taken the liberty to lay before him.

I cannot help here remarking, that whereas *F. Houbigant* supposes a very great dislocation of passages in this conversation between *David* and the widow of *Tekoa*, it appears to me to be without the least necessity, and that the present order of the narration in our copies is far preferable to that which he supposes it ought to have been. He thinks, that after those words in the eleventh verse, *least they destroy my son*, the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth verses should immediately follow, in this manner: *Let the king not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, least they destroy my son. For whereas that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid*, and so on to the words: *The Lord thy God be with thee*. After this he brings in the end of the eleventh verse: *And the king said: As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth*. The good father tells us, that he cannot divine how the order of the text came to be disturbed, but that it is plain it hath been disturbed, because some interpreters have been led into an error by order of the words, as they stand in our copies. But I do not think that the mistaken interpretations of others, are any proof of this. The unanimous consent of all the ancient versions, who retain the present order, is a very strong argument of the contrary; especially as the present order renders the whole discourse well connected, and shews the widow's good sense, prudence, and modesty. According to the present order she first prevailed on the king to promise her, that he would give order about her affair, then to bring the person before him, that should give her any disturbance about it, then to swear that he would protect her and her son, from the avenger of blood. This was the point she drove at, and that in the most effectual manner prepared *David* for the application of what she had said about her son to the case of his own; and this she doth immediately in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses. But how bold was the attempt thus to impose on the king by a feigned story? Can it be imagined that

murmurs of the people, who are grown uneasy David at the continued banishment of the king's son, and because I encouraged myself to hope, that he would grant the request of his handmaid in his behalf. For I thought that if the king, in his great clemency and mercy, would deliver me from the hands of the man, who would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God, he would give me a favourable answer with respect to his own, as it will give great satisfaction to all his people; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king ready to attend to the voice of mercy, as well as the demand of justice; and let the Lord thy God be continually with thee to direct and prosper thee.

over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

that this wise woman would make no apology to the king for such a conduct? She doth make one, and a very polite one too, in the following verses. In the 15th verse she tells him; that *she come to speak of this thing; viz.* Absalom's restoration from banishment, because *the people made her afraid*, by talking disrespectfully of the king's severe conduct to his eldest son and heir, as *Joab* had instructed her to tell him, and that therefore she resolved, that *she would venture to acquaint the king with it, hoping that he would perform the request of his handmaid.* In order to move him to this, she had represented her own case as an afflicted mother, in pain for the life of her son and heir, threatened with death by the avenger of blood; assuring herself, from his great compassion, that *he would not suffer him to be destroyed out of the inheritance of God.* And from thence she farther tells him, that she concluded, he would not suffer his own son to be cut off by the avenger of blood, or to be for ever banished from the inheritance of the Lord. And therefore she promised herself, that the resolution of the king towards him would be *למנוחה* to the rest, the ease, the satisfaction of his whole people, who were solicitous for his being recalled from banishment. But that upon the whole she referred the matter to his great wisdom; for that as an angel of God, he had the most perfect discernment, when it was proper to extend mercy, and when to punish with severity. She concludes with praying God to direct his conduct in this affair for the best. I think nothing could be more politely, or affectionately urged, upon so important and delicate an occasion.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 20, all  
Israel 13.

There is, as Bishop *Patrick* observes, a great deal of artifice in all this; for to presume upon the kindness of another, and to expect gracious answers from their noble characters is very moving; men being loath to defeat those, who think so highly of them; and we may add, especially when the requests they make are agreeable to the inclinations and wishes of those, to whom they address them. Indeed the whole management of this affair, shews the widow's great sagacity, and the knowledge she had of the human heart. Her arguments, if not always conclusive, are very plausible, and by drawing in the king, by the dictates of his compassion, solemnly to promise his protection to her son, she awakened all his pity and tenderness towards his own, and almost engaged him, before he was aware, to bring him from his exile, and restore him to favour.

*David*, upon this explication of the widow, immediately perceived, that she had been tutored in her lesson by some of his courtiers, to make this attempt for the restoration of *Absalom*, and therefore commanded her to answer him plainly the question, he was going to ask her; and when she had promised to obey him, he said to her: *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* Is not this whole affair his contrivance? and is not he the person, who hath sent you to me on this errand? She immediately replied, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, no evasion whatsoever can conceal the truth from my lord the king. It is even as thou hast said; for thy servant *Joab* commanded me, and put all that I have now spoken into the mouth of thy handmaid; that by representing the case of my son, and obtaining protection for him, I might put the king in mind of his own son, and induce him, by the goodness of his nature, to forgive him his offence, and recal him from banishment.

ment. *The wisdom of my lord is like that of an an-* David  
*gel, for he knows every thing that passes throughout* over Ju-  
*the whole land.* dah 20, all  
 Israel 13.

*Joab* was in waiting to know what would be the event of the widow's representation, and being called in by the king, he said that he had granted his request, and immediately ordered him to go and bring back *Absalom* to *Jerusalem*; imagining, that as *Joab* had interposed in the affair, the recalling his son from exile would be agreeable to the army he commanded. *Joab* immediately prostrated himself before the king, and thanked him for this instance of his goodness; adding: This day hath thy servant had the fullest assurance of my lord the king's great regard for him, in so graciously vouchsafing to answer his request. After this he immediately set out for *Geshur*, and soon returned with him to the city. Upon his arrival, the king refused to see him, confined him to his own house, where he remained two full years, without being admitted to the presence of his king and father.

*Absalom* \*, as to his person, was the handsomest man in the whole kingdom, and there was no blemish in him, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, so that he was held in admiration by all that saw him. He was remarkable for hair, both for the thickness and length of it, and which grew so heavy and burthenfome to him, that he was forced every year to poll his head, and the hair that was taken from him was so extraordinary, as that it was worth two hundred shekels, after the king's weight. He had three sons, and one daughter, named *Tamar*, who was a very fair and lovely woman.

He was of too impatient and enterprising a nature to bear the confinement his father had put

\* 2 Sam. xiv. 25.

him under; especially as he looked upon himself to be the heir to the crown, and might probably suspect, by his father's long refusal to be reconciled to him, that he had an intention to exclude him from the succession, and substitute one of his brethren in his room. This he had well deserved by the murder of his brother *Amnon*, and there is little room to doubt, that this was what *David* had determined in his own mind, after he had seen this instance of his perfidious, revengful and bloody temper. *Absalom* therefore wanted to enjoy his full liberty, that he might be able to take the proper measures to defeat his father's purpose, and secure the succession of which he was ambitious.

## C H A P. XIV.

*Absalom's Rebellion.*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

**A**FTER two full years confinement, he sent for *Joab* once and again, to desire him to wait on the king, in order to obtain leave to see him, and be fully restored to his favour. *Joab*, either supposing, that such an application would not be agreeable to the king, or from some disgust he had taken to *Absalom* himself, refused to come near him. This provoked *Absalom*, who was resolved to take more effectual methods to procure an interview with *Joab*, and as their two estates were contiguous to each other, ordered his servants to burn down a field of barley belonging to the general. They obeyed his orders, and when *Joab* had been informed of the injury that had been done him, he immediately went to *Absalom* to complain of it, and to ask the reason why he had destroyed his corn. *Absalom*, without making any farther apology, told him, it was because he would not  
I come

come to him, after his repeated desire to see him, <sup>David</sup> for that he wanted him to wait upon the king his <sup>over Ju-</sup> father, and represent to him, that his being re- <sup>dah 21, all</sup> called from *Geshur* gave him but little satisfaction, <sup>Israel 14.</sup> and that it would have been a less punishment to him to have continued there, than to be so near the king, and yet wholly excluded from his presence; and therefore to intercede with him, that he might be admitted to pay his duty to him, and be entirely restored to his favour; that since his return to *Jerusalem* his conduct had been unblamable, and that if in any thing he had behaved contrary to his allegiance and duty to the king, he willingly submitted to be put to death. *Joab* immediately carried this message to *David*, who, when *Absalom* was introduced by *Joab*, and had prostrated himself before his father, raised him from the ground, kissed him, in token of his forgiving him what had passed, and thorough reconciliation to him for the future.

This important point being gained, this ungracious son, finding himself now more at liberty to pursue his ambitious schemes, resolved to secure the crown \*, by the most unnatural and criminal measures, either by forcing his father to admit him to a share in the government, during his own life, or by an impious rebellion to deprive him both of his life and crown, if he could not secure the kingdom without it. Soon after his reconciliation, he took on him the state of the king's eldest son and heir, prepared himself a pompous equipage of chariots and horses, and was attended by a guard of fifty men, that were to run before him, whenever he appeared in public. To ingratiate himself with the people, he rose early in the morning; that he might have the fewer to observe his conduct, and placing himself in the way

\* 2 Sam. xv. 1.

David that led to the king's palace gate, if he saw any  
 over Ju- person that had a suit depending, going to the  
 dah 21, all king for his determination in the affair, *Absalom*  
 Israel 14. *familiarly called to him, and said to him; Of what*  
*city art thou?* And when he informed him, that  
 he was of such a city, in such a tribe, *Absalom*  
 said to him: *Be sure that the business on which you*  
*come is fair and just, tho' I am sorry to tell you,*  
*there is no person deputed from the king to hear you;*  
 adding, the more effectually to gain their esteem,  
 and to insinuate an ill opinion into them, of the  
 negligence of his father's government, if any one  
 could procure him to be made a judge in the land,  
 that every one who hath any suit or cause depend-  
 ing might come before him, he would immediate-  
 ly hear and do him justice; hereby tacitly re-  
 proaching his father for not advancing him to the  
 seat of justice, and thereby defrauding his people  
 of the services he was able and disposed to do  
 them. When ever any person came to pay his  
 respects to him as the king's son, he took him by  
 the hand, familiarly embraced and kissed him, in  
 token of his great regard and affection for him.  
 This was his behaviour to all that came to the  
 king for the decision of their causes, whatever  
 tribe they belonged to; by which means he wound  
 himself into the affection and esteem of many of  
 the people, weakened their loyalty to the king,  
 and prepared them to join with him, and support  
 him in his intended usurpation of his father's  
 crown and kingdom.

When he had by these means secured consider-  
 able numbers in his interest amongst all the tribes  
 of *Israel*, he resolved to put in execution the im-  
 pious scheme he had projected; a scheme in which  
 he was assisted and encouraged by *Achitophel*,  
*David's* chief counsellor, and probably in revenge  
 for the injury done to *Bathsheba*, who was  
 daughter

daughter to *Eliam*, the son of *Achitophel*; and in order to accomplish his design, he masked his treason with the pretence of piety, and presenting himself before the king, acquainted him that he had brought himself under a vow, whilst he continued at *Geshur* in *Syria*, that if God would please to bring him again to *Jerusalem*, he would offer to him a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving at *Hebron*, and intreating permission to go thither to perform his vows, where was an high place on which sacrifices were frequently offered, and where *Absalom* himself was born, the king, who had no suspicion of his disloyalty and treasonable intentions, readily gave him leave, and wished him prosperity.

*Absalom* took his leave of the king, and soon arrived at *Hebron*, having previously sent his emissaries, whom he had drawn into the conspiracy, into the principal towns and cities of the tribes of *Israel*, and ordered them, upon a signal given, the sound of a trumpet, to proclaim him king, and to repair with all the forces they could collect to his standard in *Hebron*. When he retired from *Jerusalem*, under the pretence of a sacrifice \*, he invited two hundred

\* By a somewhat like contrivance *Civilis*, the Roman general, wanting to bring over the *Batavians*, who had refused to list under *Vitellius*, to his own interest, in opposition to *Vespasian*, invited the principal persons of the nation, and such of the lower sort, as he thought he could most readily influence, into a certain sacred grove, under the pretence of entertaining them at a feast, and when he found they were well warmed, and full of joy, he addressed them by extolling the ancient glory of their nation, and then recounting the injuries, rapes, and innumerable other evils they were forced to suffer under other generals in the service of the *Romans*; and by this and some other insinuations, he drew them all over to his interest, and to bind themselves by execrations to list under him, and serve him in the expedition he had projected. *Civilis primores gentis et promptissimos vulgi, specie epularum, sacrum in nemus vocatos, ubi nocte et letitia, incaluisse videt, a laude gloriaque gentis orsus, injurias et raptus, et*

David over Ju- dah 21, all Israel 14. hundred men, probably some of the principal citizens, to go with him, and partake of his feast. They attended him out of respect to him as the king's eldest son, but without the least knowledge of his intentions, or any thoughts of joining him in the unnatural conspiracy against his father: and as they were persons of integrity, and attached to *David* and his government, their waiting on him to partake in his sacrifice at *Hebron*, could create in the king no suspicion of *Absalom*'s treasonable design, but was intended the more effectually to prevent it. However the attendance of such a body of respectable persons from the capital, could not but add some credit to the cause, and greatly encourage the conspirators, who would naturally imagine they were *Absalom*'s friends, and disposed to countenance and support him in all his measures; and this step was probably taken by *Achitophel*'s advice, not only to prevent any jealousy that might have arisen in *David*'s mind of his son's treachery, but to deprive him of the assistance of such a large number of his friends, by drawing them from the city, and when in his power, seducing them by fraud, or forcing them by threatenings, to join in the conspiracy at *Hebron*, and thus to propagate the belief that the disaffection to *David* was general even in *Jerusalem* itself, which would not fail to receive *Absalom*, as soon as ever he had forces sufficient to appear before it.

Soon after his arrival at *Hebron*, *Absalom* sent for *Achitophel*, who came from *Giloh*, the city where he lived, as the sacrifices were offering, by whose presence the conspirators were greatly encouraged, the number of whom continually encreased, by the daily resort of those, whom *Absalom*'s emissaries

*cetera servitii mala enumerat. — Magno cum assensu auditus, barbaro ritu et patriis execrationibus, universos adigit. Tacit. Hist. l. 4, c. 14, 15.*

ries

ries had corrupted thro' all the tribes of *Israel*. David  
 Some of the friends of *David*, who were with *Ab-* over Ju-  
*salom* at *Hebron*, dispatched a messenger to *Jeru-* dah 21, all  
*salem*, to inform him, that *Absalom* had gained the *Israel* 14.  
 affections of great numbers of the people, through-  
 out all the tribes of *Israel*, that they had pro-  
 claimed him king, and would soon march to take  
 possession of the capital. When *David* received  
 this intelligence, not having a sufficient number  
 of forces about him to defend the city against the  
 rebel army, he summoned all his attendants that  
 were with him in *Jerusalem*, and said to them, let  
 us immediately make our escape, to prevent our  
 falling into the hands of *Absalom*; lest he come  
 on us suddenly, and surprise us in the city, and  
 put us and all the inhabitants of it to the sword.  
 They answered, they were all ready to obey his  
 orders, and would follow him whithersoever he  
 should lead them. He immediately departed  
 from the city on foot, attended by all his family,  
 his household, and by a great number of the in-  
 habitants of *Jerusalem*; by the whole body of his  
 guards, the *Cherethites*, the *Pelchites*, and all the  
*Gittites*, who marched on each side of him, for  
 the protection of his person, leaving only ten wo-  
 men, his wives of the second rank, to take care  
 of the palace; and the six hundred men who fol-  
 lowed his fortune from *Gath*, who all marched be-  
 fore him to prevent any surprise. With these  
 faithful friends he continued his flight till he  
 found himself at such a distance from *Jerusalem*, as  
 that he was in no immediate danger, where he  
 might receive some information of what passed  
 in the city, and take the proper measures for the  
 safety of himself and followers.

Upon this melancholy occasion *David* penned  
 the following excellent psalm.

PSALM

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

## PSALM III.

1. O Lord, how numerous are mine enemies!  
How many are they, who rise up against me!

2. How many, who say concerning my soul,  
There is no help at all for him in God!

3. But thou, O Lord, art a shield around me,  
Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of my head.

4. I

Title. מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד. A Psalm of *David*. The word מִזְמוֹר comes from זָמַר *to cut, to etch, or engrave*; and denotes a psalm, or song, not, I think, as Mr. *Le Clerc* supposes, because these composures, were cut into short periods, but because they were set to music, and cut into notes; the song being engraven with the tune. So that it is properly *a psalm in score*. The occasion, on which it is declared to have been written, and the nature of the hymn, shew it to have been *David's*; and it was impossible an hymn could be composed with greater propriety, or nobler sentiments of piety, upon so extraordinary an event, as that of the rebellion of his own son; who had drawn in many from most of the tribes of *Israel* into the conspiracy, so that he was given over by many as absolutely lost, and his enemies thought it was beyond the power of God to save him.

סֵלָה. *Selab*. Various are the conjectures about the meaning of this word. But whatever hath hitherto been offered in explication of it, is no more than conjecture, and I am far from being able to satisfy myself or others about it. The reader may consult *Noldius* in his annotations, Ec. p. 940, §. 1877, and *R. Pfeiffer*. p. 295, edit. Ult. 1704.

Ver. 2. *How many are there that say concerning my soul: There is no help for him at all in God.* This could never be said by men that had any real principles of religion; but was, as I apprehend, the impious language of his enemies, who imagined they had him as their prey so secure, as that God himself was not able to deliver him. Thus the chief priests, scribes and elders insulted his great son, the Messiah, when they had clamoured him to the cross: Mat. xxvii. 43. *He trusted in God. Let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the son of God*; bidding defiance to the power of God himself to rescue him out of their hands, and bring him down from the cross.

3. *Thou art my glory.* I rejoice and glory in thy protection,  
2 and

4. I cried with my voice unto the Lord,  
And he heard from his holy hill.

5. I laid me down and slept,  
I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.

6. I will not be afraid of ten thousand of the  
people,

Who set themselves round about against me.

7. Arise, O Lord. Save me, O my God.

Surely

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

and thou art able to restore me to my former dignity and power.

*The lifter up of my head.* The hanging or bowing down of the head is the posture of affliction, distress, shame, and disgrace. Thus Isaiah lviii. 5. *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush?* So Lament. ii. 10. *The virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.* In opposition to this, *to lift up the head* is the mark of prosperity, ease and comfort, and of a mind elated and joyful in the possession of it. Thus Zophar speaks of the prosperous hypocrite, that *his joy should endure but for a moment, tho' his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach up unto the cloud:* Job xx. 4. Something like Horace,

*Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.*

which Mr. Dacier interprets: *Je porterai mon superbe front jusqu' aux cieux.* When therefore David speaks of God as *the lifter up of his head*, he means, that God would remove his distresses, make him to triumph over all his enemies, and cause him to look up with cheerfulness and joy upon the full recovery of his prosperity and honour.

4. *Out of his holy hill.* i. e. Mount Sion, which was consecrated to God, as the place of his habitation, because the ark was settled there.

5, 6. *I laid me down, &c.* It was an argument of settled courage, and shews the unspeakable advantage of a religious confidence in God, that David was able, in such distressing and dangerous circumstances, thus to lie down, calmly sleep, and wake in peace. But, what cannot that man do, who is sustained of God; *propped up* by him, as the word properly signifies, by inspiring his mind with resolution and courage.

7. *Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone, &c.* The words may be rendered: *Thou hast smitten the cheek-bone of all mine enemies.* They are here compared to savage beasts, that

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

Surely thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek-bone.

Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.

8. Salvation be unto God.


Thy blessing be upon the people.

This psalm answers in every part of it to the inscription, that it was on occasion of *David's* flight from *Absalom* his son. When he was resettled on his throne, he penned it to commemorate both his danger and deliverance. It begins with a representation of his danger. *Lord, how many are they increased that trouble me!* *Absalom* had stolen away the hearts of many of the people. *Achitophel* aimed at his destruction, and *Shimei* with others of his enemies reproached him, as utterly forsaken of God, and many of his friends undoubtedly trembled for his safety, and had *Achitophel's* advice been followed, his ruin would, morally speaking, have been unavoidable. In the midst of this distress, after he had recollected himself, he immediately quieted his mind by trusting in God, v. 3. By prayer he recommended himself to the divine protection, and so calmed his

that tear their prey with their teeth, and grind it with their jaws. In countries abounding with these ravenous creatures, such allusions are very natural and expressive. And *David* here encourages himself in God, by the experience he had of his gracious interposition in his favour, by saving him from his cruel enemies, who frequently attempted his destruction; and particularly from *Achitophel*, who advised the murdering him, and would gladly have been employed in dispatching him. But God smote them on the cheek-bone, and broke their teeth, i. e. utterly deprived them of the power to hurt him, as a wild beast is disabled from devouring his prey, when his jaws are broken, and his teeth dashed out.

The conclusion, *Thy blessing be upon thy people*, shews his generosity of heart, in thus becoming an intercessor for the prosperity of his people, many of whom engaged in support of the unnatural rebellion of his son.

fears

fears, at that he quietly laid himself down, slept <sup>David</sup> comfortably, and waked tranquil and easy, as tho' <sup>over Ju-</sup> no dangers surrounded him, and resolved that the <sup>dah. 11, all</sup> most formidable combinations against him should <sup>Ishrael 14.</sup> not discourage and terrify him, v. 4, 5, 6.  Thus far he relates the state of his mind during his flight. Then follows his thankful acknowledgment to God for his deliverance, which he ascribes intirely to his power and goodness; and conscious that his future safety must depend on his favour, he suddenly cries out: *Arise, O Jehovah, and save me, O my God*; and then instantly recollecting the salvation God had wrought for him, he starts into the thankful acknowledgment of it: *Verily thou hast smitten all mine enemies*. They who know what the pleasures of devotion are, cannot be unacquainted with these sudden transitions of the mind from one object to another, and the various affections that are excited, as the different thoughts of the heart awaken and enliven them.

*Ittai*, who was himself a *Gittite*, followed *David* in his retreat from *Jerusalem*, out of gratitude for the protection that had been given him, as an exile from his native country. When *David* saw him, he was greatly surprised at this instance of *Ittai's* affection and fidelity to him, and said to him: “ Why should you run any hazard by attending me? you had better return to your house  
 “ at *Jerusalem*, and abide with *Absalom*, who will  
 “ give you no disturbance, as he knows you are  
 “ a stranger and exile from your own country.  
 “ As you came but a very little while ago to *Jerusalem*, you are under no obligations to accompany me in my wanderings. I must go where  
 “ I can find a retreat, and providence shall direct  
 “ me; but desire you not to expose yourself to my  
 “ dangers. Return, and take your friends and  
 “ fol-

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

“ followers with you, and God reward the affection and fidelity you have shewn me.” But *Ittai* generously replied: *By the living God, and by the life of my lord the king, I am resolutely determined to share your fate, wherever you retreat I will follow, be the event life or death, I will never be separated from you.* The king then ordered him to pass over the brook *Kedron*, which he immediately did with all his followers, and the little ones that were with him. After him all *David*’s attendants, and last of all the king himself passed over; the whole country round about expressing their affectionate concern for him, by their loud lamentations, to see so excellent a prince forced into exile by an ungrateful and unnatural son. The rout they took was towards the wilderness.

After he had gone over the river, he was joined by *Zadok* the priest, and all the *Levites*, who bear with them the ark of the covenant of God, in order to encourage the king with this emblem of the divine presence with him, and that he might the more readily consult it in every exigence of his affairs. They sat it down where the king halted, till all his friends out of the city joined him; for *Abiathar* the high priest had gone back to *Jerusalem*, staid there till all the people had passed out of it, and then accompanied them to the king over *Kedron*. When he saw the ark, he commanded *Zadok* to carry it back to *Jerusalem*; as one who knew, that tho’ God was peculiarly present with the ark, yet that his presence and providence were universal, and that his salvation from the impious rebellion of his son did not at all depend upon the ark’s attending him; for he said to *Zadok*, when he ordered him to carry it back with the true spirit of piety, and an entire resignation of himself to the disposals of his God: “ If  
“ God is pleased to favour me with his protection,  
“ and

“ and deliver me from mine enemies, he will  
 “ bring me back again to *Jerusalem*, that I may  
 “ see the ark, and revisit his habitation. But if  
 “ it should be his pleasure to reject me, as one  
 “ whom he no longer approves and favours, here  
 “ I am, I submit to his pleasure, let him do to  
 “ me as seemeth good to him.” Here was afflic-  
 tion with true dignity, and deep humiliation un-  
 der the hand of God, sweetened and supported by  
 hope and trust in his mercy !

David  
 over Ju-  
 dah 21, all  
 Israel 34.

As *David* was well acquainted with *Zadok's* fi-  
 delity, sagacity and prudence, he determined to  
 make the best use of it he could, to his own ad-  
 vantage, and therefore said to him, “ As thou  
 “ art a seer, a man of intelligence and wisdom,  
 “ go quietly back to *Jerusalem*, and may God  
 “ protect you, and take *Abimaaz* thy son, and *Jo-*  
 “ *nathan* the son of *Abiathar*, your two sons,  
 “ along with you, and I will tarry in the plain of  
 “ the wilderness, near the passage over *Jordan*,  
 “ till I am certified by you of what passeth in  
 “ the city.” On this *Zadok* and *Abiathar* carried  
 back the ark to *Jerusalem*, and continued there  
 till the rebellion was entirely suppressed.

After he had thus prudently provided for re-  
 ceiving the necessary intelligence from the city,  
 he immediately retreated towards the wilderness,  
 and going up by the ascent of *Mount Olivet* \*, the  
 sense of his danger, the apprehension of God's  
 displeasure, which he knew he had deserved, and  
 the thought that a son, he so tenderly loved,  
 should act so unnatural a part, cut him to the

\* The mount of olives was a hill situated on the east of  
*Jerusalem*, and at so little distance from it, as that, according  
 to Mr. *Shaw's* observation, when our Saviour was there, he  
 might be said, almost in a literal sense, to have wept over it.  
*Travels*, p. 334. It was in the way from *Jerusalem*, to the  
 plain of the deserts, and the fords of *Jordan*.

heart,

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

heart, and drew tears from his eyes. He travelled as a mourning penitent, with his head \* covered, bare † footed, and all that attended him wept with him, and covered their heads as he did, thus giving him the proof of their affection for him, and that they deeply shared in his affliction. In his journey he received information, that *Achitophel* was engaged in the conspiracy, and had joined *Absalom*; and as *David* knew the deep policy and cunning of the able counsellor, he said,

\* *Covering the head* was used by persons in great distress, or when they were loaded with great disgrace and infamy, and signified they were ashamed to see or be seen by others, or that they gave themselves up and all their affairs as desperate and lost. When *Haman* had carried *Mordecai* upon the king's horse, and proclaimed him thro' the city, the king's favourite, he halted to his house mourning, viz. at the dishonour he thought was done him, and covering his head, as despairing of prevailing against *Mordecai*, as ashamed to be seen, or to see others. *Esther* vi. 1. See also 2 *Sam.* xix. 4. *Ezek.* xii. 6. Thus also *Darius*, when he was informed by *Tyriotes* the Eunuch, that his queen was dead, and that she had suffered no violence from *Alexander*, *capite velato diu flevit*, he covered his head and wept a long while at the news of the queen's death, and then throwing off the garment that covered him, he gave the gods thanks for *Alexander's* moderation and justice. *Curtius*, l. 4. c. 10. § 33. So also, when the same prince was in the power of *Bessus*, who soon after murdered him, he took his leave of *Artabazus*, *capite velato ne inter gemitus digredientem a rogo intueretur, in humum prorum corpus abjecit*. *Id.* l. 5. c. 12. § 8. He resigned himself to his fate, and covering his head, that he might not see *Artabazus*, who sighing left him, as tho' he went from his funeral pile, threw himself prostrate on the ground.

† *He travelled bare-footed*. This also was an indication of great distress; for in ancient times the shoes of great and wealthy persons were made of very rich materials, and ornamented with jewels, gold and silver. When any great calamity befel them, either public or private, they not only stripped themselves of these ornaments, but of their very shoes and walked bare-foot. In this manner prisoners taken in war were forced to walk, both for punishment and disgrace. See *Bynæus de calceis Hebræor*, l. 2. c. 5. and *Guier de Lucet*. c. 15. § 4.

*I be-*

*I beseech thee, O Lord, frustrate his counsels, and let it be recorded as mere foolishness.* David over Judah 21, all Israel 24.

On this perfidy and treason of *Achitophel*, David penned the following psalm:

## PSALM LV.

Ver. 1. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer,  
And hide not thyself from my supplication.

2. Attend unto me. Answer me.  
I bath myself with tears in my complaint.

3. And am in the greatest consternation,  
Thro' the clamour of the enemy;

Be-

2. אָרִיד בְּשִׁיחִי. *I mourn in my complaint.* The verb cannot, consistent with the rules of analogy, come from יָרַד *to descend*, which makes אָרִיד regularly in the first person singular of the future in *Hiphil*; but comes regularly from רָוַד, in that form. It may not be improper, however, to observe that יָרַד seems originally to denote, to *descend* or come down to the water, and is particularly referred to cattles coming down to the watering-place. Thus it is used of Rebecca's going down to the well with her pitcher, to draw water for the cattle. Gen. xxiv. 16. Hence the word is figuratively applied to denote plentifully weeping, or the shedding as it were a flood of tears. Thus *Isaiah* xvi. 3. Every one יֵרֵד בְּבִכִי *descendit in fletum. Descends into weeping.* So also *Lament.* i. 16. מַיִם יֵרֵד עֵינֵי יֹרְדָה *Oculus meus descendit aquas, or, in aquas. My eye descends to the water, to denote its being intirely bathed and immersed in tears.* In this and many other figurative senses, the word is used in the *Arabic* dialect, as may be seen in *Goli-us. Schult. in Prov.* v. 5. *Confess. Hariz.* 2. p. 25. Possibly these remarks may throw some light upon the word before us; for יָרַד in the *Arabic* dialect, see *Gol. in voce*, signifies, amongst other things, *pabulum, aquatumve ivit; he went to feed and water himself*; from whence it figuratively denotes, what יָרַד doth in *Hebrew* and *Arabic*, the going or descending, for so it sometimes signifies, into weeping and tears, the washing and bathing one's self, as it were, in the abundance of them. See *Pococke in Hosea* xi. 12. p. 551. and I would therefore render the words before us, by, *I bath myself with tears in my mourning or complaint.* Somewhat agreeable

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

Because of the oppression of the wicked,  
Because they heap on me iniquity,  
And in their anger implacably hate me.  
4. My heart is tortured within me,  
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5. Fear

to this is the the version of the 70'', ελυπηθην εν τη αδολεσχεια μου, and the Vulg. *Contristatus sum in exercitatione mea*. I am grieved in my meditation. Cocceius and others make the verb to signify *perseverance* and continuance in any thing, and Mr. Le Clerc's version is: *Pergo in sermone meo*. I go on, or persevere in my discourse. But I see no ground for this interpretation.

3. וַאֲדִימָה. *And make a noise*, as in our version, and in the Targum; which doth by no means fully express the strong idea which the original word conveys. The 70' render it by ηταραχθην, and the Vulg. *Conturbatus sum*. I am troubled and distracted. It appears from all the places where it is used, that some very grievous distress is intended by it. In the Arabic language it denotes, as may be seen in Golius, the consternation and astonishment of the mind, when it is in a state of perplexity and distress, dissipated, uncertain, and incapable of fixed attention and resolution. Thus also Deut. vii. 23. which we render, *God shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed*, which is a very unpleasing tautology, and should be rendered, *God will perplex them with a great perplexity, or confound them with a great confusion, till they be destroyed*; denoting the utter consternation they should be thrown into, when God should give them up to the sword of his people for their destruction. And I have therefore rendered the word, *I am in the greatest consternation*. He was brought into such immediate danger, as that he knew not scarce what method to take, to avoid the destruction that threatened him. The signification of *making a noise*, which our translators, and other interpreters affix to it, cannot agree to the place cited out of Deuteronomy, nor indeed to any other whatsoever.

4. יָמִינוּ עָלַי אֵין. *For they cast iniquity upon me*. The psalmist here declares the causes of his consternation and perplexity. It was upon account of the clamour of his enemies, when the conspiracy against him was strong, and the רָשָׁע עָקָר opposition of the wicked; properly, the presence of the wicked was round him, so that he had scarce any way or method of escaping; and because they cast iniquity upon him. יָמִינוּ עָלַי.  
pro-

5. Fear and trembling are come upon me,  
And horror hath over-spread me.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

6. Then I said : O that I had wings like a dove,  
I would fly away and dwell at rest.

7. Lo, I would wander far away.  
I would lodge in the wilderness.

8. I would hasten my escape from the sweep-  
ing wind, and furious tempest.

9. Con-

properly, *molientur super me, quasi veste*. They heap up iniquity upon me, as with a bar or a lever, to denote the heavy reproaches they threw on him, and the violence of their accusations. The derivative *מח* from the verb signifies a *bar* or *lever*, made use of in the moving of heavy bodies.

6. I said, *O that I had wings like a dove!* in the Heb. *Who will give me wings like a dove?* The dove is remarkable for the swiftness of its flight.

*Columbæ sæpe quum fugissent milvum  
Et celeritate pennæ vitassent necem.*

Phædr. Fab. l. 1. fab. 31.

and therefore the psalmist, who saw himself in the extremest danger, and knew that his very life depended on his immediate escape, wishes for the swift wings of a dove, that he might with the utmost speed fly from the destruction that threatened him. Several writers have taken notice of a passage in Seneca's *Octavia*, ver. 915, &c. similar to this.

*Quis mea digne deslere potest  
Mala? Quæ lacrimis nostris questus  
Reddet Ardon? Cujus pennas  
Utinam miseræ mihi fata darent!  
Fugerem luctus ablata meos  
Penna volucris, procul et cætus  
Hominum tristes, cædemque feram  
Sola in vacuo nemore, ex tenui  
Ramo pendens, querulo possem  
Gutturæ moestum fundere murmur.*

8. *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.* The word *מח* is one of the *אפאז λεγομενα*, used no where but in this place, and the lexicographers are not agreed as to its root. Cocceius derives it from *מח*, without giving any in-

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

9. Confound, O Lord, and disunite their counsels.

For I have seen violence and contention in the city.

10. Day

terpretation of it. Mr. *Schultens* observes, that סעי or סעה in the *Arabic* dialect signifies, amongst other things, *currere, to run*, and he therefore renders the words רווח סעה, *ventus currens, a running*, or what we call a *sweeping wind*; and that the wind is frequently said *to run* in that language; instances of which he produces, *Animad. Philol. in loc.* and in this sense I have rendered the expression. The convulsions of states and kingdoms, and the miseries that attend them, are frequently represented in scripture under the figure of storms and tempests, that carry away every thing before them, and spread confusion and terror wherever they reach. See *Isaiab* xxix. 6. *Amos* i. 14. and the same figure is made use of by other writers. *Cicero*, in his invectives against *Clodius*, represents the disorders and distresses of the state by *illis reipublicæ tenebris, cæcisque nubibus, et procellis, pro domo sua*, c. 10. He calls *Clodius* himself: *Tu procilla patriæ, turbo, ac tempestas pacis atque otii*. Id. *ibid.* c. 53. And to mention no more, he describes *reipublicæ navim*—*fluitantem in alto tempestatibus seditionum ac discordiarum*, the ship of the republic, floating about in the sea, tost by the tempests of seditions and discords. *Pro festio* c. 20.

9. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues. בלע פלג לשונם. The *Chaldee* paraphrase after בלע adds עצת *consilium*, to make a full sentence. Dissipate their counsel. The very expression בלע עצת Destroy their counsel, as we render it, is to be found, *Isaiab* xix. 3. The proper meaning of the verb is to *swallow up*, and to *intirely abolish and destroy*. And as it is here joined with פלג the plain meaning is: Destroy their consultations by dividing them. And agreeable to this, the *Syriack* version adds הפכא *Conversationem* linguarum eorum. Overwhelm the conversation of their tongues. And there is no doubt but that לשון signifies not only the tongue, the instrument of speech, but speech itself. Thus it signifies in the *Arabick* language; and this I think it must do in the place before us. For it would be an odd sort of imprecation, if the meaning was; that God would split or divide their tongue, properly so called. But the praying that God would destroy their consultations by dividing them, was the prayer of a wise man, and verified by the event;

10. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof,  
 And the most injurious wickedness is in the midst of it.

David  
 over Ju-  
 dah 21, all  
 Israel 14.

11. The deepest corruptions and distresses are within it;  
 Deceit and fraud depart not from her streets.

12. For it was not an enemy that reproached me;  
 Then I would have born it:  
 Not one that hated me, who magnified himself against me;

event; as the counsels of *Achitophel* and *Hushai* were divided, and thereby *Achitophel's* advice was utterly frustrated and destroyed.

The eleventh and twelfth verses, express in very strong terms, the confusion, contention, the deceit and treachery, and other crimes that abounded in the city, by the managers and abettors of this conspiracy. They watched the walls, they used violence and fraud to increase their number, and the emissaries of the rebels used every art to alienate the hearts of the people from the king, and engage them in the interest of his unnatural and impious son.

12. Amongst other persons who joined in this conspiracy against *David*, there was one from whom he expected a quite different conduct, and whose infidelity and treachery were aggravated with the highest ingratitude. He was reproached by one whom *David* never suspected as an enemy. That would have been tolerable, and nothing more than what might have been expected. It was not one that had ever expressed or been suspected of enmity and hatred to him, that magnified himself against him. From such a one he would have withdrawn himself, and never intrusted him with his secrets. This rebellion was raised and encouraged by spreading and propagating false reports concerning *David*, thereby to disaffect his people to his person and government. The original word *לִגְדֹּל* which we render *magnified himself*, is rendered by the 70<sup>th</sup> and Vulg. *εμεγαλοφημονησεν*, *magna locutus est*, spake haughtily and disdainfully of me, by calumniating my administration, and representing me as unfit for, or unworthy to be entrusted with, or continued in the kingdom; an almost constant method, to spread disaffection, and spirit up a rebellion against the wisest and best of princes.

David  
over Ju.  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

From him I could have concealed myself.

13. But thou, the man, whom I regarded as myself;

My intimate and acquaintance.

14. Who sweetly shared each other's secrets,  
Who with mutual concord walked together to  
the house of God.

13. *But it was thou a man כְּעָרְכִי mine equal, or as our margin hath it, a man according to my rank.* The Targum renders it *וְדָמִי who wast like me*, the 70" *ισοψυχε*, the Vulg. *homo unanimitis*, a man of one mind with me, the Syraic and Arabic by, *My equal*. Cocceius, in his lexicon, by *homo secundum taxationem mei*, according to the estimate I form of myself, i. e. *instar mei*, *ομοτιμος* vel *ισοτιμος* μοι; *like myself*, whom I equally esteemed and honoured as myself. And this I take to be the proper meaning of the word; one whom I looked upon as almost in the same rank with myself, and honoured and esteemed as my equal.

*אלופי. My guide.* רַב דְּאֵלִיפַת *the master who hast taught me.* The 70" and Vulg. *ηγεμων, dux meus*, my guide, or leader. The word properly signifies an intimate familiar friend. Thus the word is rendered, *Prov. xvii. 9. He that divulgeth the fault separateth אֱלֹוֹק very friends.* Cocceius also renders it, *Amicus familiarissimus*, a most familiar friend.

14. *נִמְתִּיק סוֹד.* *We took sweet counsel together.* Cocceius. *Dulce secretum habebamus.* We had our sweet secrets together. Guffetius periphrastically. *Simul alter alteri suaves eramus, quoad arcana; vel, suavitatem alter alteri creabamus, respectu arcanorum, qua tenus sci illa nobis in vicem quam amicissime communicabamus.* The 70" give the words quite another turn. *Ος επι το αυτο εγλυκαταις εδισματα.* So the Vulg. *Qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos.* Who didst make sweet meals together with me. So also all the other ancient versions, except the Targum, who explains it by *נִתְרָץ רֹזָא.* *We entered into right secrets; we rightly directed our secrets.* The true version undoubtedly is: *We sweetly enjoyed our mutual secrets*, which is one of the highest privileges and pleasures of friendship. We may observe here that this description agrees perfectly well to *Achitophel*, whom *David* had used as his counsellor and friend, and to whom he had committed his most important secrets. And accordingly the *Caldæe* paraphrase expressly names *Achitophel*; as the person intended, *v. 14. And ibev, Achitophel, a man like to myself.*

15. Let

15. Let death exact the debt with usury.  
 Let them descend alive into Hades :  
 For wickednesses are in their dwellings amidst  
 them all.

David  
 over Ju-  
 dah 21, all  
 Israel 14.

16. As for me I will cry unto God, and the  
 Lord will save me.

17. Evening and morning, and at noon day  
 I will meditate and make my moan :  
 And he will hear my voice.

18. He will redeem my soul from their con-  
 flict with me,  
*And restore me to peace :*  
 For with multitudes they came against me.

19. God

15. ישי מות. The verb ישי comes from נשה which, amongst other things, signifies, *mutuum dare sub usura*, to lend upon interest, and is the third person feminine, sing. of the future in *Hiphil*, for ינשי, the first radical being dropped, as usual in verbs beginning with *Nun*. The Targum renders the words יהיבנודיי קטל. *Let the judgment of death condemn them.* The 70<sup>th</sup> and Vulg. ελθτω θάνατος ἐπ' αὐτούς. *Veniat mors super illos.* Cocceius, with much greater propriety. *Fœneratorem in illos agat mors. Exigat ab illis debitum.* Let death exact the debt with usury ; and the Targum adds, upon *Doeg* and *Achitophel*. This version preserves the propriety of the verb, and greatly adds to the force of the expression. *Death shall exact it with usury ;* For there is no need of rendering the words, so as to make them an execration, as the verb is in the future tense, and only points out what would be the punishment of such perfidy and wickedness. This was verified by the event, as *Achitophel* hanged himself, and went down as it were alive into *hades*.

18. מקרבלי. *He hath redeemed my soul from the battle that was against me.* The Targum renders the words by, דלא למקרב בישלי, *that no evil might approach me.* The 70<sup>th</sup> ἀπὸ τῶν ἐγγιζόντων μοι, *ab his qui appropinquant mihi.* Our version is unquestionably the true one, as קרב frequently signifies a battle, and סרה is frequently used in the same construction, as in the place before us. So פרה מכל צרה *He redeemed my soul from every affliction*, 2 Sam. iv. 9. and in other places. And when the Psalmist adds, to set forth the

David  
over Ju-  
dah & all  
Israel 14.

19. God shall hear and distress them,  
Even he who reigns from everlasting.  
They think of no succeeding changes,  
Therefore they fear not God.

20. He

greatness of his danger and deliverance, **כִּי רַבִּים הָיוּ עִמָּדִי**, the words should be rendered, not as in our version, *for there were many with me*, but, *many were against me*, tho' the ancient versions run generally in the first sense. *F. Houbigant* renders the whole passage thus. *Reddet ad pacem animam meam ab eo, qui bellum infert mihi, etiamsi permulti sunt adversum me.* He will restore my soul in peace from him who makes war on me, tho' there are many against me. *Noldius* cites many places, in which he gives the sense of *against me* to **עִמָּדִי**. Or if we retain the more common rendering, *with me*, the meaning will be, not with him to assist him, but to fight with and destroy him.


19. **וְיָשֵׁב קֶדֶם**. *Even he that abideth of old.* So our version. *Cocceius*, in his Lexicon, renders the words: *Sedens antiquitus.* He who sits from old, i. e. as he explains it, *habens regnum ab initio.* Who possessed the kingdom from the beginning. 'Tis certain that **יָשֵׁב** frequently denotes reigning, because kings and princes sit upon their thrones. *Pf. ii. 4. Isai. xvi. 5.* and elsewhere. So also *sedere* in Latin is used for *reguare*,

— *Celsa sedet Aeolus antro*

*Sceptra tenens, mollitque animos, et temperat iras.*

*Virg. Æn. i. v. 60. 61.*

and in this sense I have rendered the words. Mr. *Le Clerc's* version is, *sedebit judex ut olim.* He shall sit judge as formerly, inserting the words *judex ut*, to compleat the sense, which, when made up, is but low and unaffecting. The 70<sup>th</sup> and Vulg. **וְיָשֵׁב קֶדֶם** *Qui est ante secula.* Who exists before ages. And so the ancient versions in general. *F. Houbigant* dislikes them all, and says, they were led into a wrong interpretation, because they did not apprehend the text was corrupted; for, according to him, **קֶדֶם** is a mutilation of **קֶדְדָם**, and he renders the words, *avertet cervicem eorum.* He will turn away, or turn back their neck. But I am apt to think, that no man of taste will allow a corruption here, for the sake of such an unmeaning alteration. Surely the introducing here God, as reigning of

20. He, mine enemy, hath put forth his hand <sup>David</sup>  
 against those that were at peace with him. <sup>over Ju-</sup>  
 He hath prophaned and violated his covenant <sup>dah 21, all</sup> of <sup>Israel 14.</sup>  
*allegiance and friendship.* 

21. Smooth and deceitful are the buttery words  
 of his mouth,  
 But war is in his heart.  
 His speeches are softer than oil,  
 But they are drawn swords.

22. Cast

of old, and holding the government of the world from before all ages, is with great propriety, and was one of the principal considerations that established *David's* hope in God, that he would deliver him from this unnatural rebellion against him.

Ibid. *אֲשֶׁר אֵין חֲלִיפוֹת לָמוֹ.* *Because they have no changes.*  
 The 70<sup>th</sup> and Vulg. render the words, *καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἀνταλλαγμὸς.* *Non enim est illis commutatio.* They have no exchange, which the original words never signify. Nor is the sense given by the Targum, tho' different, much better. *דְּלֹא מִהֲשֵׁנִין אִירְחֲתוּן בִּישֵׁיָא.* *They change not their evil ways.* However, *F. Houbigant* seems to have adopted this sense, and renders the words, *neque enim resipiscere eorum est.* They refuse to repent. But the original word *חֲלָה* never is used to signify conversion or repentance. The interpretation that others give, is more probable. *They have no changes*, i. e. they are prosperous, and have no reverse of fortune, think of none, and fear none, and so fear not God. *David's* enemies had succeeded, driven him from his capital and throne, thought themselves secure, and had no apprehension and fear from the power and providence of God. And in this sense I acquiesce. I cannot however forbear mentioning another interpretation of the very learned *Mr. Schultens* in his commentary on Prov. xxxi. 8. who interprets the words by, *quibus nullæ sunt successiones melioris vel vitæ, vel œconomice,* who expect no succession either of a better life or œconomy, i. e. a better state of things here or hereafter. But, as he gives this only as a conjecture, I shall content myself with having only mentioned it. 'Tis scarce worth while to mention *Mr. Le Clerc's* version of this passage. *Quibus non sunt vestes, quas mutant ii non timent Deum.* They who have no change of garments do not fear God; by which he means the very poorest of the people. But sure  
 it

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

22. Cast thou thy cares and projects upon the Lord,

And he shall sustain thee, and bring them to perfection.

He will not permit the righteous to be moved for ever.

23. But thou, O Lord, bring them down into the pit of corruption.

Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days :

As for me I will trust in thee.

it doth not follow, that because a man hath not two suits of cloaths, he cannot fear God ; and it is very observable, that they who have the greatest variety of cloaths fear God less, generally speaking, than they who have fewer.

21. חלקו מחמאת פיו. *The words of his mouth are sweeter than butter.* So the generality of interpreters ; a sense not at all agreeable to the natural and proper construction of the words. The learned F. Houbigant, sensible of this, hath found out a corruption in the text, and for חלקו *lubrica mollia sunt*, reads, חלוק *mollius* ; and interprets the words, *mollius est butyro os eorum*. And this alteration he makes, because פיו *his mouth*, which is singular, cannot agree with חלקו which is plural. And this is true, but nothing to the purpose ; because חלקו doth not agree with פיו, but מחמאת *butyrina*, as Cocceius, or *butyracea*, as Mr. Schultens. Prov. ii. 16. And the true version is this : *Lubrica sunt butyracea oris ejus : the buttery things, or words, of his mouth, are smooth and deceitful.* And thus we keep the text, and preserve good sense and grammar too.

22. Cast thy burthen יקבך on the Lord. F. Houbigant greatly suspects that this word is corrupt, because it is nowhere else made use of, and because he can fix no proper meaning to it ; reasons, which the learned father should not have urged, because there are many words but once used in the Old Testament, and the genuineness of the reading doth not depend upon others understanding it. I think there may be a very good sense affixed to the word. The Targum explains it by מברך *spem tuam, thy hope*. The 70<sup>th</sup> and Vulg. and other versions, by תרך *curam tuam, thy care*. Let it be observed that the verb יקב, in

*Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew, signifies dare, permit- David*  
*tere, conceāere, tradere, and in this sense יהב will signify over Ju-*  
*donum tuum, quod tibi datur, whatever is given, permitted, ap- dahz 1, all*  
*pointed, of God to befall thee. Hence in the Chaldee יהב Israel 14.*  
*is rendered onus, a burthen, because sometimes it falls to*  
*good men's lots to bear burthens, and יחבא signifies, por-*  
*tio, any portion that is allotted us. And this will give a*  
*very good meaning to the place. Whatever is gi-ven, or,*  
*permitted to befall thee, cast it upon the Lord, commit it to*  
*the management of God, and he will sustain thee. It may be*  
*farther observed, that יהב in Arabic, amongst other things,*  
*signifies, apparavit, paravit, and the derivatives from it,*  
*parans, paratus; and accordingly, יהב may signify pa-*  
*ratum tuum, quicquid paras, apparas; and accordingly the*  
*rendering will be, whatsoever thou preparest, or intendest,*  
*cast it on the Lord, and trust in him for the success of it.*  
*And thus I have rendered the words, tho' the former in-*  
*terpretation is most agreeable to the context. I would only*  
*farther observe, that this construction of יהב donum tuum,*  
*for donum quod tibi datur, what is allotted to you, is very fre-*  
*quent in the sacred writings. Thus חייך It is thy life,*  
*means not the life which thou givest, but which instruction*  
*gives to thee, Prov. iv. 3. And again: His reproach shall*  
*not be wiped away, i. e. the reproach with which others shall*  
*load him. Prov. vi. 13. In this sense also I understand that*  
*difficult text, Josh. v. 9. This day have I rolled away the re-*  
*proach of Egypt; i. e. not the reproach which Egypt threw*  
*on you, but with which you reproached Egypt, viz. for being*  
*uncircumcised. The same way of expression is also usual*  
*in the Greek language. Thus, ἐπὶ διαβολῇ τῇ ἐμῇ λέγει. He*  
*says it to throw a calumny on me. Plat. Apol. Scr. p. 20.*  
*E. Ἀγνοῖα μὲ πολλοῦ διημαρτυρίας. You are mistaken, not thro' my*  
*ignorance of you, but thro' the ignorance of me. Phaler.*  
*Epist. 42. Σὺ ἑαξί, fama tua is dete fama. Not your re-*  
*port, but the report of others concerning you. Soph. Ajax. v.*  
*1018. Many other instances might be mentioned.*

This psalm begins with earnest prayer to God for support and relief, upon account of the greatness of the Psalmist's distress, thro' the conspiracy that was formed against him under *Absalom*, and the confusion and clamour, the treachery and violence, that abounded in the city, on that unhappy occasion. These made such an impression on

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

on his mind, and excited within him such strong apprehensions of his own danger, as that he wished as it were for the wings of a dove, that he might immediately hasten his escape from that scene of confusion and wickedness, that excited his abhorrence, and threatened his destruction.

The circumstance that gave him peculiar distress was the baseness and treachery of one, who had been his particular intimate and friend, who loaded him with calumnies, and treacherously joined in the conspiracy against him, and he describes their former mutual friendship by such tender and affecting circumstances, as that the reader will scarce be able to refrain from joining in the imprecations of the Psalmist against such a monster of ingratitude and perfidy, and wishing he might be made a publick example of the divine vengeance.

As to himself, he expresses his firm confidence that God would protect and save him, and that sooner or later he would avenge his cause, and cut off his bloody and deceitful enemies by a sudden and unexpected destruction, as in our version.

There are many excellencies in this psalm. The description of *David's* own distress is very pathetick, and the occasion of it, such as must deeply affect any man of real virtue and honour, viz. the undeserved reproaches with which his enemies loaded him. His wishing for the wings of a dove to carry him into the wilderness, and representing the confusions and violences that were occasioned by the rebellion under the similitude of a sweeping storm, and furious tempest, is truly poetical. The character and treachery of his false friend is painted out in such strong colours, as that no one who reads it can help detesting the man, and abhorring his falshood and treason. His conduct in casting his cares  
upon

upon God, under all the distresses he was in- David  
 volved in, and his assurance that God would over Ju-  
 sustain, and cause him at last to triumph over all dah 21, all  
 his treacherous and bloody enemies, discover his Israel 14.  
 high sentiments of the benevolence and faithful-  
 ness of God, and shew us, that the principles of  
 religion will support good men, under the great-  
 est afflictions, and most threatening dangers to  
 which they can be exposed.

As no one circumstance of the rebellion seemed to threaten *David* with greater danger than *Achitophel's* supporting it, he did not think, that all he had to do for defeating his counsels and measures, was praying to the Lord, but that he was bound, out of regard to his own safety, and the welfare of his people, to use all the prudent measures, that appeared to him the most likely, to secure the ends he aimed at; and therefore when his old friend *Hushai*, the *Archite*, met him on the top of *Mount Olivet*, with his coat rent, and earth upon his head, intending to accompany him in his flight, *David*, after he had solemnly worshipped God on the Mount, persuaded him to return to *Jerusalem*; and said to him: “ If thou goest along with me, it will be  
 “ a real inconvenience, rather than any advan-  
 “ tage to me; for you may serve me more ef-  
 “ fectually, by returning to the city, and mak-  
 “ ing your court to *Absalom*\*, and telling him

\* A something like stratagem was practised by *Hamilcar* the *Carthaginian*, who, by applying to *Parmenio*, one of the chief generals and favourites of *Alexander* the Great, obtained by his means an audience of that prince, at which he informed him, that he was expelled his country, and offered his service to him in his future expeditions. *Alexander* accepted his offer, by which means *Hamilcar* became acquainted with his measures, and sent intelligence of them to the *Carthaginians*. *Atque ita consiliis ejus exploratis, intabellis ligneis, vacua desuper cera induc̃ta, civibus suis omnia perscribat.* Justin. *Histor.* l. 21. c. 6.

“ that

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

“ that as you have been his father’s servant, you  
“ would now become his, and by this means  
“ you may counteract and defeat the measures  
“ advised by *Achitophel*. And as you will be  
“ able to inform yourself of what passeth in the  
“ palace, you can acquaint *Zadok* and *Abiathar*  
“ the priests with it, who continue with the ark  
“ in the city, who will send their two sons, to  
“ bring me the intelligence you shall give them.”

*Hushai*, who was *David*’s sincere friend, returned immediately to *Jerusalem*, and found that *Absalom* had taken possession of the city before him.

This stratagem of *David* to defeat *Absalom*’s rebellion hath excited Mr. B——’s indignation, and he very severely censures it, as *an action unworthy a prophet, a saint, and an honest man*; for, says he, *a good man, as such, would rather choose to loose a crown, than to be the cause of the damnation of a friend. Now it is to damn our friend, as much as in us lies, to feign that we embrace with warmth the party of a man, with a design to destroy that man, by giving him bad counsel, and revealing all the secrets of his cabinet.* But to this it may be answered, that *David* did not so much as think of damning *Hushai*, as for any thing that can be proved, by desiring him to defeat the measures of *Absalom*, and the counsels of *Achitophel*, nor *Hushai* of being damned for consenting to it. Probably *David* might rather think that *Hushai* was bound in duty to it, and *Hushai*, that he should deserve to be damned, if he could do it, and refused to do it; and it is the first time that I ever heard, that the endeavouring to save the life of a good prince, and to counteract the schemes of traitors and rebels, by prudence and policy, to dethrone and murder him, exposed a good and loyal subject to damnation. *Achitophel* was this traitor, and *Absalom* an unnatural rebel

rebel and parricide. The religion and prosperity of the kingdom depended upon *Absalom's* destruction, or quashing the impious rebellion that he excited against his father. What therefore *David* desired of *Hushai*, to defeat the counsel of *Achitophel*, was right in its nature, what he owed to *David* as his friend, and what every good subject, who wished well to his king and country, was bound in duty to do. *Hushai* did this, by giving such counsel to *Absalom*, as he himself, and all the men of *Israel* thought better than the counsel of *Achitophel*. David over Judah 21, all Israel 14.

Mr. Bayle calls this *the most treacherous piece of villany that can be imagined*. But he might have spared the reflection, for he could easily have produced instances of much greater villany than this, practised for the most criminal and execrable purposes. *Hushai's* treachery was to prevent the effects of the most detestable treachery, and an instance of loyalty and fidelity to his king and country. His villany was the dictate of publick spirit and patriotism, and to counteract the plots of a most desperate and bloody villain, who advised the murder of a father, and incest with his wives, in support of an unnatural, ambitious, and desperate son. How far these policies of princes and great men are reconcileable with the rules of those rigid casuists, of which Mr. B. speaks, I pretend not to determine. This I know, that without these and the like stratagems, government cannot be frequently supported, and that the most nefarious attempts to destroy all that is valuable to mankind can never be defeated; and that they have been practised by the best and wisest of princes, who have been so far from being blamed on account of them, as that they have been recorded as the proofs of their wisdom, and regard to the honour and interest

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

terest of their country. And this Mr. B. himself confesses, when he says, that *stratagems of this nature are undoubtedly very laudable, if we judge of things according to human prudence, and the politicks of sovereigns.* If *David* therefore acted in this affair, according to the rules of human prudence, and the constant policy of sovereigns, why should he be censured more than other great and excellent princes, who have acted like him? Especially as he had none of those rigid casuists about him, who judged this conduct unworthy a saint and an honest man. Supposing this conduct not quite reconcileable with the rules of rigid casuistry, yet, if *David* was not acquainted with them, he might possibly be a saint and an honest man, if he did not regard them. If *Hushai* had stabbed *Absalom* to the heart, under pretence of friendship, as *Brutus* did *Cæsar*, must not those who defend *Brutus* defend *Hushai* too? But is it a more base and criminal part, by pretences of friendship, to betray a tyrant's, an usurper's, a paricide's counsels, than, in like circumstances, to assassinate him? I leave *David's* censurers fairly to state this important point of casuistry: Whether it be in itself absolutely unlawful to make use of stratagems, i. e. arts of deception, in the management of wars between princes and states: If not, in what instances they are lawful, and reconcileable with the rigid rules of morality and virtue. When these points are settled, we shall be the better able to determine concerning the morality and honesty of *David* and his friend *Hushai* in the instance before us; and, till this is done, Mr. B——'s charges will appear to be uncandid and groundless. I have only to add, that *David's* character, as a man after God's own heart, in the scripture sense of it, by no means implies, that, as a prince, he should always act accord-

according to the rules of morality laid down by David rigid caluists; or, that he should not, in the management of his wars, and defeating unna-<sup>over Ju-</sup>tural rebellions, act with the usual policy of wise <sup>dahzi, all</sup> and good princes, and make use of proper stra- <sup>Israei 14.</sup> tagems, when necessary, to the defence of his country, and the safety of his person.

In *Cicero's* consulate the conspiracy of *Catiline* broke out, and it was fully discovered by that great consul's vigilance, prudence, and policy. Ambassadors from the *Allobroges*, the ancient inhabitants of *Savoy* and *Piedmont*, were then at *Rome* to solicit the senate for the removal of their grievances. *Unibrenius*, one of the conspirators, attempted to bring over these ambassadors, to engage in the scheme that had been concerted for the destruction of *Rome*. In order to this he opened to them the nature of the conspiracy, names the principal persons concerned in it, and promised them every thing they desired, if they would engage their nation to join with them in support of it. The ambassadors, upon considering the affair, discovered the whole conspiracy to *Fabius Sanga*, as they had been informed of it by *Unibrenius*. *Sanga* immediately acquaints the consul with it, and introduced the ambassadors themselves to him. What doth he do? Why, like a very wicked and ungodly man, as the scrupulous and righteous Mr. B. to be sure, thought him; bid them carry on the pretence, warmly favouring the conspiracy, go to as many of the conspirators as they could, make them fair promises, and use all their endeavours fully to discover them. The ambassadors, as *Cicero* ordered, met them, and demanded from the chief of them an oath, to be signed with their own hand, that their countrymen might be more easily induced, to give them that assistance which they desired

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

of them. They all but one, without suspicion of any design, signed the oath. The ambassadors discovered all to *Cicero*, who immediately seized the principal conspirators, and greatly rejoiced, that as the conspiracy \* was discovered, the city was delivered from the danger that immediately threatened it.

The senate thought that *Cicero* had acted a noble patriotic part, for they immediately † decreed, that public thanks should be given to him in the most solemn manner, by whose *virtue, counsel, and providence*, the republic was delivered from the extreamest dangers; and that a publick thanksgiving should be rendered to the Gods, in *Cicero's* name, for his having delivered the city from being laid in ashes, the citizens from a massacre, and *Italy* from a war.

Now did *Cicero* act in this affair as a patriot and an honest man? Or did he, by this policy, damn himself, and damn the ambassadors? by causing them to feign, that they embraced the party of those men, they designed effectually to destroy? What censure would he not have undergone, had he suffered the conspiracy to take place, and his country to be ruined, by refusing to make use of that policy which was necessary to discover, and defeat the conspiracy? Of two evils, 'tis an old maxim, a man must choose the least, when he is under the necessity of submitting to one. Thus were *David* and *Cicero* circum-

\* *Salust. Bell. Catil. c. 45.--46. Cicer. Orat. 3. 4. cont. Catilin.*

† *Primum mihi gratiæ verbis, amplissimis aguntur, quod virtute, consilio, providentia mea respublica periculis sit maximis liberata-----Atque etiam supplicatio diis immortalibus, pro singulari eorum merito, meo nomine decreta est----quod urbem incendiis, cæde civis, Italiam bello liberassem. In Catilin. 3. c. 6. Edit. Olivet.*

stanced.

stanced. They both chose the patriotic part; David and, as *Cicero* is justly celebrated as *the Father* <sup>over Ju- dah 21, all Israel 14.</sup> *and Saviour of his country*, from the ruin that was intended, *David* will deserve the like commendation, for defeating, by like measures, the projects of impious conspirators, and delivering the nation from the destruction that threatened them.

A little after *David* passed the top of *Mount Olivet*, he was met by *Ziba*\*, the steward of *Mephibosheth*, who brought him a liberal supply of provisions, consisting of two hundred loaves of bread, an hundred bunches of raisins, an hundred of summer fruits, and a vessel of wine; *David*, surprised to see *Ziba* with such a large quantity of provisions, asked him what he intended by it. *Ziba* told him, the asses were for the use of the king's household, and the bread and summer fruits for his servants to eat, and the wine to refresh and support those who might be faint thro' fatigue, and the difficulties they might meet with in the wilderness. *David* then inquired of him where his master, *Jonathan's* son, was, he answered: He abideth at *Jerusalem*; for he said: *To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.* *David* immediately revoked his grant to *Mephibosheth*, and said to *Ziba*: *Behold thine are all that pertained to Mephibosheth.* And this revocation of the grant to *Mephibosheth*, and giving the inheritance to *Ziba* was just, if *Ziba's* report was true, of which more hereafter.

He was also met, when he came as far as *Baburim*, in his retreat to the wilderness, by *Shimei*, of the tribe of *Benjamin*, and of the family of the house of *Saul*; who followed *David*, cursing him, as he went after him; and proceeded to

\* 2 Sam. xvi. 1.---4

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

that insolence and outrage, as to cast stones at *David*, and all the people, and all the mighty men, that were on his right hand, and on his left. In the fury of his passion, and in his curses he threw out upon the king, he said: *Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son. Behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.* It was no wonder that such an infamous and malicious insult upon the king, should excite the indignation of his officers; for *Abishai*, one of his generals, asked leave to take off the head of this insolent reviler. But *David*, who considered *Shimei's* curses, as part of the chastisement of his own sins, and permitted by the providence of God for this purpose, forbade *Abishai* to intermeddle with the affair, and calmly said: *Let him curse, because the Lord hath said concerning him: Let him curse David. Who shall then say: Wherefore hast thou done so? God hath given him permission to curse me; I therefore patiently submit to it, and give him full leave to vent all his reproaches against me. Behold, my own son, who came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life. How much more this Benjamite! Let him alone, and let him curse, since God hath thus spoken concerning him; sent him by the instigation of his own hatred and malice, thus by his curses to aggravate my affliction. It may be, that the Lord will look on my distress, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing me this day:* An Answer, which, as it shews his high reverence for God, and the consciousness, that all *Shimei's* reproaches were undeserved, demonstrates the generosity of his temper, and his humble hope that God would reward him for his pa-


tient submission to the punishment allotted him. <sup>David</sup> *Shimei*, growing bolder by *David's* forbearance, <sup>over Ju-</sup> continued his curses on *David*, as he marched on <sup>dah 21, all</sup> with his followers, pelting him with stones, and <sup>Israel 14.</sup> endeavouring to cover him with dust. How great was this moderation under an injury, attended with almost every circumstance of aggravation, and which richly deserved the punishment of immediate death! Mean while, *David* continued his retreat, till he came to *Baburim*, in the tribe of *Ephraim*, where he halted, and refreshed his people, who were greatly fatigued by their hasty march.

Soon after he had left *Jerusalem*, *Absalom* and the rebel army took possession of it, accompanied by *Achitophel* as his chief counsellor; whose advice was regarded in those days to be almost as infallible, as if it had been received from the very oracle of God, and he himself was, on that account, in the highest esteem both with *David* and *Absalom*. *Hushai*, amongst others, paid his compliments to *Absalom*, upon his arrival in the palace, and when he approached him said: *God save the king. God save the king.* *Absalom*, who knew the intimacy between *David* and him, with an unparalleled effrontery, and too hardened to feel how much more severely he reproached himself for his ungrateful and unnatural conduct towards his own father, by his answer, said to *Hushai*, with an air of contempt and indignation: *This is your compassion to your friend: Or, as we render the words: Is this your kindness to your friend, thus to desert him in his distress? Why didst thou not go with thy friend, to assist and support him?* *Hushai*, to exculpate himself from the charge of ingratitude, and prevent *Absalom's* suspecting him of insincerity, replied, in a very artful manner: I follow him: *No. For whom-*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*soever the Lord, the army that is with thee, and all the men of Israel shall choose, his will I be, and with him will I continue; as I prefer the appointment of God, and the general choice of the whole nation, to the interests of any private friendship whatsoever. And unquestionably, had Absalom's advancement to the throne been the order of God, and by the unanimous consent of the whole nation, Hushai would have done right in submitting to it, notwithstanding the mutual friendship between David and himself. Besides, added Hushai, upon the same principle: Whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? To approve my friendship to the father, as I have been a faithful servant to him, whilst he was in possession of the kingdom, I will now enter into the service of his son, since the kingdom is transferred to him. As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.* Absalom, pleased with the seeming frankness of Hushai's answer, readily admitted him into the number of his followers and friends.

*Absalom then summoned a great council of his principal adherents, to advise what measures were proper to take, to accomplish the revolution in his favour, that had been so successfully begun. And now was accomplished that dreadful part of Nathan's threatening from God: I will take thy wives, and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun. To this execrable measure Absalom was advised by Achitophel, to cut off all possibility of a reconciliation between father and son, and render Absalom's adherents more firm to his cause, and desperate in his defence, as their own safety, after having aided and abetted so infamous a rebellion, depended on their courage and resolution in making it successful. All Israel shall know, that thou art*  
*abhorred*

*abhorred of thy father, and then shall the hands of all* David  
*that are with thee be strong. Absalom,* without fear <sup>over Ju-</sup>  
 or shame, immediately perpetrated the wicked- <sup>dah 21, all</sup>  
 ness, to which he had been advised, and on the <sup>Israel 14.</sup>  
 house top, and in the sight of all *Israel*, comple-   
 ed a crime, which, had there been any remains of  
 conscience in him, he would have shuddered at the  
 very thought of being guilty of in the most secret  
 retirement.

When *Achitophel* had once prevailed with his  
 graceless pupil thus to abuse his father by open  
 incest, he next advises him to make sure work,  
 immediately to murder him, and offered himself  
 to accomplish his destruction, by a method,  
 which had it been followed, must in all human  
 probability have proved fatal to *David*. *Let me,*  
*says he, choose out twelve thousand men, and I will*  
*arise and pursue after David this night, and I will*  
*come upon him whilst he is weary and weak-handed,*  
*as having but few forces to defend him, and I will*  
*make him afraid, by so unexpected an attack, and*  
*smite the king only. The man whom thou seekest is as if*  
*all returned, so all the people shall be in peace.* This  
 advice at first pleased *Absalom*, and all the elders  
 of *Israel*, who had joined him. But as he thought  
*Hushai* was now firmly in his interest, he was wil-  
 ling to have his opinion also; who being called,  
 and informed of *Achitophel's* scheme, immediately  
 condemned it. *The counsel,* says he, *that Achito-*  
*phel hath given, is not good on the present occasion.*  
 “ For as to thy father and his men, thou know-  
 “ est that they are men of valour, and exasperat-  
 “ ed and enraged, as a bear in the field, robbed of  
 “ her whelps, and will not, as *Achitophel* thinks,  
 “ be easily put to flight, but make a desperate  
 “ resistance when they are attacked. And as to  
 “ thy father, he is too well versed in the arts of  
 “ war to trust himself in his present situation to

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“ the

David ( " the open field, and it will be a very difficult  
 over Ju- " matter for *Achitophel* to find out and surprise  
 dah 21, all " him; for after having rightly disposed his  
 Israel 14. " troops, he will conceal himself in some cavern,  
 " or other place of security, where he will be  
 " out of the reach of his pursuers. And when the  
 " forces that are with him, by their furious resist-  
 " ance to those who attack them, shall make some  
 " slaughter amongst *Absalom's* men, the report of  
 " it will soon spread throughout *Achitophel's*  
 " whole party, and strike them with a pannick,  
 " and thus utterly dishearten even the stoutest and  
 " strongest of them, even tho' their hearts were  
 " as intrepid as that of a lion, especially as they  
 " dread thy father's bravery and courage. For  
 " it is well known to all *Israel*, that thy father  
 " is a brave and experienced soldier, and the  
 " troops that are with him are all valiant men,  
 " and worthy the great commander they serve  
 " under.

" My advice therefore is, that thou gather all  
 " *Israel* to thee from *Dan* to *Beersheba*, from one  
 " end of the kingdom to the other, and that thou  
 " put thyself in person at the head of them, and  
 " inspire them with courage by thy own example.  
 " By this means, we shall come upon him,  
 " wherever he retreats, and as the ground is co-  
 " vered over with the drops of morning dew,  
 " overpower him with our numbers, whereby our  
 " victory will be certain and easy, and we shall  
 " utterly destroy him, and all his forces, so that  
 " there shall not one of them be left. Or if, with  
 " his followers, he shall shut himself within some  
 " fortified city, as we have all *Israel* with us, we  
 " shall be able entirely to demolish it, and with  
 " our tackle to draw along the stones of it into  
 " the ditches that surround it, so that there shall  
 " be none remaining in it."

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This advice of *Hushai* was plausible enough, and the arguments he drew from *David's* known courage and military skill, the bravery of his soldiers, and the pannick *David's* men would create in *Absalom's* troops upon their first rencounter, carried some degree of probability in them. Besides, the gathering all *Israel* together, and *Absalom's* putting himself at the head of them, and thereby utterly crushing *David* and his men in the field, or destroying them in the ruins of any town, where he might retreat with them, seemed to be a surer method than *Achitophel's*, who, if he had failed in his attempt of surprising and cutting off *David*, would have entirely ruined *Absalom's* affairs; whereas the forces of all *Israel* under *Absalom's* command, could not fail, as *Hushai* boasts, of utterly cutting off *David* and his men, whereby *Absalom* would be firmly settled in the kingdom, without any further opposition whatsoever. This soothed the prince's vanity and ambition, and the measure was immediately approved by him; and his whole council, and they resolved to pursue it, tho' almost the only one, that could have preserved *David*; as it gave him time to recruite his army; to refresh his harassed followers, to recover them from their consternation and terror, and take all proper measures, as the circumstances of his affairs might require; *for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom*, or that punishment, which was due to him, for those unnatural and aggravated crimes, of which he had been guilty. God made use of a wicked son to punish the father's offences, and then cut off the very instrument of his vengeance, who, by the means he took to distress and destroy his father, had rendered himself the abhorrence of God and man; an usual method this in the dispensations of divine pro-

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.



providence, and which hath not passed unobserved even by the wisest heathens. God\*, saith *Plutarch*, sometimes makes use of some wicked men, as a sort of executioners for the punishment of other offenders, and then crushes them. This is generally the case of tyrants; for as the gall of a hyena, and the rennet of a sea-calf, and other unclean animals, have a certain medicinal virtue in them, so when some persons want stinging and punishment, God gives them over to the implacable cruelty of a tyrant, and doth not deliver them from what grieves and distresses them, till he hath taken away and cleansed them from their disorders.

When *Hushai* had given this opinion to *Absalom*, he immediately acquainted *Zadok* and *Abiathar* the priests of what had passed, what *Achitophel* advised, and himself had counselled, and desired them immediately to send information to *David*, and earnestly to intreat him to depart that very night from the plains of the wilderness where he then was, and instantly to pass over *Jordan*, lest *Achitophel* should suddenly overtake him with his detachment, for as yet he knew not what *Absalom*'s council had determined, lest he should be overpowered, and cut off with all his people. *Jonathan* and *Abimaaz*, the priests sons, had concealed themselves at *Enrogel*, a place near the city, not venturing to enter it, for fear of being discovered, waiting there for instructions from their fathers, as had been agreed between

\* Εἰποὺς γὰρ ἀμελεῖ καὶ κατασαιε ἑτέρον πτερυγόν, οἷον δῆμοκοίτης, ἀπεχρησάτο το ἀειμονίαν, ἡτα ἐπετρίψε. καθάπερ αἱμαὶ τῆς πλειυτῆς τυραννὸς· καθάπερ γὰρ αἱμαὶς χολῆ, καὶ φωνῆς πυτία, θηριῶν ταλλα μίαιροι, ἔχουσιν τι πρὸς τὰς ἰασθῆς χρῆταιμον, οὕτως ἐμοὺς δαγμῶν δειρμενοὺς καὶ κατασαιε, ἐμβάλων οὐδὲς πικρὸν τινα τυραννὸν δυσμελιχτον—ἡ προτέρων ἐξήλθε το λυπὸν καὶ ταρατῆαν, ἢ το ἰασθῆν ἀπαλλάξαι καὶ καθαίρει. *Qui sero in Numin.* *fun.* P. 552, 553.

them. They sent by a trusty girl, to avoid all suspicion, to acquaint them with *Hushai's* conduct in council, and advice to *David*; and tho' they were discovered and pursued, they got safe at last, through a great deal of danger, to the king, and acquainted him with their intelligence. *David* immediately took the opportunity of the night, and, with all his followers, passed over the river, so that by day break there was none of them remaining behind, and pursuing his march arrived safely at *Mahanaim*.

However, *Absalom's* council followed *Hushai's* advice, which as soon as ever *Achitophel* was informed of, he gave up all for lost, saddled his ass, went home to his house and city, settled his family affairs, and hanged himself thro' disappointment, rage, and despair; a death worthy the wretch that had betrayed his princes counsels, excited a civil war in the kingdom, had been the author of such execrable advice, and hurried on an ambitious son, to such impious violations of an affectionate father's honour, and such unnatural attempts on his life and kingdom; whereby was fulfilled *David's* imprecation: *Let death seize upon him, and let him go down quick into Hades.\**

Whilst *David* continued at *Mahanaim*, he received plentiful supplies for himself and men, from *Shobi*, the son of *Nabash*, the *Ammonite*, who came from *Rabbah*, the principal city of that country, and whom *David* had made king there in the room of *Hanun* his elder brother, whom he had cut off for violating his ambassadors, and endeavouring to support and vindicate that injury by an unrighteous war; and from *Machir* the son of *Ammiel* of *Lodebar*, who had taken care of

\* 2 Sam. xvii. 27, &c.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*Mephibosheth*, the son of *Jonathan*; after he had fell in battle with *Saul*, and from *Barzilai* the *Gileadite*; who were persons of great substance in that country, and brought beds, basons, and earthen vessels; with wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentils, and parched pulse, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese of kine; in a word, with every necessary for the support and convenience of himself and his soldiers. This was a very seasonable relief to them, after their long and fatiguing march from *Jerusalem*, and in a country, where he had reason to think many of the inhabitants might be disaffected to him, in favour of the house of *Saul*. Here he had time to collect his friends, to recruit his forces, and gather such an army, as would enable him to crush the rebellion, and secure his restoration to his throne and capital.

Nor was *Absalom* wanting in his endeavours to maintain by force, what he had gained by impiety and treachery. According to *Iushai's* advice, he made levies throughout all the tribes of *Israel*, and when he had finished them, he crossed *Jordan* in pursuit of his father, and encamped in *Gilead*, near the royal army, waiting for an opportunity to engage it. As *Joab* had continued faithful to *David*, *Absalom* appointed *Amasa*, cousin german to *Joab*, captain of his host, to command under him in the engagement.

*David* was prepared to receive him\*, and having made a general muster of his forces, he formed them into regiments and companies, and having set the proper officers over them, he divided them into three parts; one division he put under the command of *Joab*, a second under that of *Abishai*, *Joab's* brother, and the third under

\* 2 Sam. xviii. 1, &c.

that of *Ittai*, the *Gittite*, resolving himself to share David the dangers of the field. But his people would not permit him to hazard his person in the engagement, telling him, that it was not so much their lives as his, that *Absalom* sought after, and that if half of them perished, it would signify nothing to him, whilst *David* remained alive, and that his destruction would be of more consequence to *Absalom*, and give him greater pleasure, than the slaughter of ten thousand of them. They thought it therefore more advisable that he should continue in the city, with a considerable body of his troops for the security of it, and that he should fall with them out of the city, if in the engagement there would be any need of his assistance.

The king acquiesced in their advice, and as his forces marched out of the gate for the engagement, he stood by the side of it, viewed the several regiments and companies, no doubt exhorting them, as *Josephus* says†, to behave with courage and resolution in the engagement, and praying God to grant them success. When the three generals, *Joab*, *Abishai*, and *Ittai*, took leave of the king, he commanded them, in the presence of all the captains of the army, that if the young man *Absalom* should fall into their hands, they would deal gently by him, and spare his life, out of regard to his, *David's* peace, and the tender affection he had towards him.

† A like advice was given by *Clearchas*, the *Grecian* general, to *Cyrus*, *αὐτὸν μὴ μηδὲν εἶναι τὴν μάχην, ἀλλὰ ἰδεῖν τὴν μάχην, καὶ πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῦ βασιλέως πρὸς τὴν ἀποτυχίαν τοῦ βασιλέως.* *Pelican. de Strateg.* l. 2. §. 3. that he should not hazard his person in the engagement, but rather inspect the fortune of the battle, that he might give the proper advice as circumstances should require; for that his own fighting would be of little consequence; but that if any misfortune should come to himself, they were sure to be all of them destroyed.

† *Joel* l. A. l. 7. c. 10. §. 10.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

Soon after the royal army took the field, the engagement began, which seems to have been a very obstinate one; *David's* men, as *Josephus* & well observes, exerting their courage to restore their dethroned prince, and *Absalom's* soldiers to support his usurpation, and save him and themselves from the punishment they so richly deserved. The issue of the battle was in *David's* favour, the rebel army being intirely routed, with the loss of twenty thousand men||. It was fought near the wood \* of *Ephraim*, which was on the rear of *David's* army, where, when *Absalom's* forces gave way, it is probable that a large body of them retreated into the wood from the pursuit of *Joab's* troops, who there destroyed them in great numbers, as they were in their confusion incapable of making any regular defence; inso-much that, as the sacred historian observes, there were more slaughtered in the wood, than in the open field, where the engagement began.

*Absalom*, seeing the battle lost, endeavoured to save himself by flight, and meeting some of *David's* men, and endeavouring to ride from them, thro' some part of the wood, his mule carried him under a large oak, where his head

& Jos. J. A. l. 7. c. 10. §. 2. || Jos. ibid.

\* *The Wood of Ephraim*. The wood here called, the Wood of *Ephraim*, was not in the tribe of *Ephraim*, who had no lands in *Gilead*, or on this side of *Jordan*, where the battle was fought; that country being intirely allotted to the *Gadites*, *Reubenites*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*. *Kimchi* says, it had this name, because the wood was near to the *Ephraimites*, and only separate from them by the river *Jordan*; and that by an agreement made with *Joshua*, the *Ephraimites* had a liberty of feeding their cattle in the thickets, and amongst the shrubs of that wood. But it is more probable, as *Bishop Patrick* observes, that it was called the Wood of *Ephraim*, from the great slaughter that was made of the *Ephraimites*, in or near this wood, by *Jephtha*, mentioned *Judg. xii. 1*; &c.

and

and hair were so entangled in the thick boughs of it, as that he could by no means extricate himself out of them; and being thus caught hold of, his mule passed from under him, and he was left hanging on the tree, between heaven and earth. David over Judah 21, all Israel 14.

In this situation he was seen by one of *David's* officers, who immediately informed *Joab*, that he saw *Absalom* hanging in an oak. *Joab* said to him: *Why didst thou not smite him dead to the ground? I would have rewarded thee with ten pieces of silver, and a military girdle.* The soldier answered him: *Could I have received a thousand pieces of silver, I would not have killed the king's son; for, in the hearing of all the officers, the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai, to take care that no violence should be offered to Absalom; and had I done it, it could not have been concealed from the king, and thou thyself wouldst have been one of the first to have demanded my punishment; and, by disobeying the king's orders, I should have justly deserved it.* *Joab* replied, I have something else to do, than to stand here debating with thee, and immediately, in contempt of the king's order, went to the oak, where *Absalom* was hanging, and stabbed him to the heart with three darts, whilst he was yet alive in the midst of the tree; after which, ten of his guards finished the tragedy by cutting him to pieces.

*Quem postquam diro suspensum robore vidit,  
Deformem, leti famulus clam corripit ensen  
Atque immite ferit geminato vulnere pectus.*

*Sil. Ital. lib. 2.*

They then took his mangled body, and threw it into a great pit in the wood, and covered him over with a large heap of stones. During his life time he had erected, in the king's dale, a large pillar

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

pillar to perpetuate his memory, he having no son to keep up his name, and it was called *Ab-salom's* place, and continued for a great number of years after. But tho' that pillar hath for many ages been intirely lost, he hath erected to his own infamy, by the enormous and unparalleled crimes he was guilty of, a standing monument, which

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*nec ignes,  
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.*

and which will be preserved intire, in the faithful records of history, till time shall be no more.

*Joab* undoubtedly, was influenced to the destruction of *Absalom* by a spirit of revenge, for his having burnt down his field of corn, and for abusing the friendship he had shewn him, in introducing and reconciling him to the king his father, by stirring up an impious rebellion against him, and endeavouring to rob him of his life and kingdom; of which he, *Joab*, was in some respect the occasion, tho' the involuntary and undesighing one; and because, as he knew *David's* affection and fondness for him, he was apprehensive, that he might again restore him to favour; and thereby put it into the power of that ambitious and faithless son, to create new disturbances to his father. However, *Joab's* killing him, in the manner he did, was nothing less than a cruel and deliberate murther; for tho' *Absalom* had certainly well deserved to die, and had he been slain in battle would have met with his just deserts, yet *Joab* had no right to put him to death, as he had the king's positive orders to spare him, and might have taken him prisoner, if his desire of revenge had not taken place of

of his duty; and therefore by destroying him, *Joab* added treason to his murder. David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

After he had thus intirely routed the rebel army, and, by cutting off *Absalom*, prevented any farther attempt and insurrection in his favour, he immediately founded a retreat, and recalled his victorious troops from their pursuit, to prevent the farther effusion of blood; when *Abimaaz*, the son of *Zadoc*, for whom *Joab* had a particular esteem, applied himself to that general, and desired leave of him, that he might run to *Mahanaim*, and acquaint the king with the good news, that *the Lord had avenged him of his enemies*. *Joab*, who knew with what regret *David* would receive the account of *Absalom's* death, and unwilling that *Abimaaz* should be the messenger to give him the first notice of that unwelcome event, refused to let him go and inform \* him that his son was dead; but promised to send him upon a more favourable opportunity; and turning himself to *Cushi*, probably one of his guards, who was with him when he dispatched *Absalom*, bid him inform the king of the whole affair he had been witness to. *Cushi*, being pleased with the order, immediately ran off to execute his general's commands. *Abimaaz* however renewed his request to *Joab*, that he would permit him to run after *Cushi*. *Joab* still unwilling to employ him on so melancholy an occasion, said to him: Why, my son, wilt thou run after him, since thou canst carry the king no

\* The original words, *לֹא אִישׁ בְּיָשָׁרָה אַתָּה* literally run: *Thou wilt not be a man of good news to day*; but *בְּיָשָׁרָתָהּ* *You shall be the messenger of good news some other day*. *Joab* knew that tho' *Abimaaz* should acquaint him with the victory, *David* would be greatly distressed when informed of *Absalom's* death, whereby *Abimaaz* would lose the reward usually given to the messengers of agreeable tidings.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

news but what *Cushi* will inform him of? But as *Abimaaz* still persisted in his request, he at last granted it. *Abimaaz* either being swifter than *Cushi*, or knowing a nearer way to *Mahanaim*, immediately set off by the way of the plain, and out-ran *Cushi*.

*David*, who was undoubtedly solicitous to know the event of the battle, and the fate of his son, was sitting between two of the gates of the city, expecting every moment a courier from the army. As soon as ever *Abimaaz* came in sight, the centinel, who was on the watch tower over the gate, cried out, and informed the king, that he saw a man running alone ; on which the king said, if he be alone, he is an express from the army. Soon after the centinel told the porter, that he saw a second person running alone, *Abimaaz* being come somewhat nearer, and that, as far as he could guess, at that distance, the foremost ran like *Abimaaz*, the son of *Zadoc*. This was agreeable news to the king, who immediately said : *Abimaaz is an honest man, and comes with good tidings*. Soon after, presenting himself before *David*, he told him : *All is well ; and, prostrating himself, added : Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath delivered up to destruction the men who took up arms against my Lord the king ; who immediately asked : Is the young man Absalom safe ?* *Abimaaz* replied, that when he, and the other courier were sent off by *Jacob*, he saw a great tumult, but knew not the occasion of it. The king then bid him rise up, and pointed to the place where he would have him stand. Soon after *Cushi* was brought before the king, and said : *Good tidings for my Lord the king ; for the Lord hath now avenged thee of all them that rose up in arms against thee*. The king eagerly replied : *Is the young man Absalom safe ?* *Cushi*, in a tender and

and delicate manner, said : *May all those be as that* David  
*young man is, who are the enemies of my Lord the* over Ju-  
*king, and rise up in rebellion against him : This* dah 21, all  
 news greatly affected *David*, who immediately *Israel 14.*  
 withdrew into one of the apartments over the  
 gate, weeping as he went, and crying out : *O my*  
*son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! Would*  
*God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my*  
*son\* !*

This grief of *David* ‡ was as immoderate as it was unseasonable, and shewed the intemperate passionate affection he had for the unnatural and impious youth. It damped the common joy of his friends and soldiers for the glorious victory that had been gained, when they heard the excessive grief which he expressed for his son ; insomuch that they almost repented of their success, and stole into the city where *David* was, as tho' they were covered with infamy for having been dishonourably defeated ; for he, covering his face, in the excess of his grief, still continued to cry out, : *O my son Absalom ! O Absalom, my son, my son !* *Joab* was soon informed of the king's distress, and instead of apologising for his own conduct, or sympathising with his sovereign, in the bitterness of his grief, and tenderly laying before him the ill consequences that might at that time have

\* Bishop *Patrick* mentions it as an instance of the inconceivable absurdity of the *Jewish* doctors, that they fancied *Absalom* would have cut his hair by which he hung with his sword, had he not seen hell gaping for him, if he fell down, which made him chuse to die in the oak, *Rabbi* also mentions another very curious observation of these ancient doctors, that *David* cried out eight times, *O my son* ; that he cried out seven times, *O my son*, that he might bring him out of the seven dwellings of hell ; and the eighth time, that he might introduce him into eternal life. *Comment on 2 Sam. xix. 1.*

‡ 2 Sam. xix. 1, &c.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

attended it, with an unparalleled insolence, said to him: *Thou hast this day shamed the faces of all thy servants, which have this day saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and daughters, and wives, and concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably to thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there † shall not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee, than all the evil that beset thee from thy youth until now.* Can any thing be conceived more imperious and haughty, than this remonstrance! More injurious to the king, or false in its nature! It was plainly justifying to his face the murder of his son, telling him, that, as he was above his reach, and fearless of his displeasure, he would immediately depose him, if he would not appear to justify that murder, and himself, the author of it. *David* was now too much in his power to refuse the imperious orders of his bloody general; he appeared in public, and, as soon as the people were informed of it, they came to congratulate him, and were very graciously received by him.

This defeat of *Absalom*, and the extinction of the rebellion under him was no sooner known amongst the tribes of *Israel*, by the flight of those who had escaped out of the battle to their respective places of abode, than *David's* friends, who were very numerous through all the king-

† Thus *Josephus* understands the words. Εγω τημερον, αν επιμενης τοις αρετι πραττομενοις, αναπεισας αποστηναι σε τον λαον, κ' ηκη βασιλειαν εις εγω. παραδουαι. J. A. l. 7, c. 10. §. ult.

dom, used the proper methods to bring over to David their duty, all who were engaged in, or favoured <sup>over Ju-</sup> the rebellion. In order to this, they every where <sup>dah 21, all</sup> put them in remembrance, that *David* had by <sup>1 Sam 14.</sup> his victories saved them out of the hand of their enemies, and delivered them out of the hands of the *Philistines*, and yet notwithstanding these eminent services he had been forced to abandon his capital, and flee out of the land, by *Absalom* his son, who had been advanced to the kingdom in his room. But that, as *Absalom*, whom we had chosen for our king, was now dead in battle, there could be no reason for their delaying to return to their allegiance to *David*, and coming to an unanimous resolution to bring him back to *Jerusalem*, and restore him to his throne and government. These representations had their proper effect; insomuch that all the tribes of *Israel* were every where in motion, and eagerly desirous to recal him from his banishment, and re-establish him in the kingdom; his friends, out of their affection and loyalty to him, and those who had joined *Absalom* in his rebellion, to atone for their crimes, and more effectually to secure their pardon. *David*, who continued at *Mahanaim* after his victory, waiting to see what effect the news of it would have upon the people, received the agreeable intelligence, that they were universally disposed in favour of him, and concerting measures for his restoration.

But as the tribe of *Judah*, and the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, had as yet shewn no disposition to return to their obedience to him, nor sent him any invitation to take possession of the city, he wrote to *Zadoc* and *Abiathar* the priests, to repair to, and expostulate with the elders of *Judah*: *Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house; seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the*  
Z 3
king,

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*king, even to his house. Ye are my brethren, my bones, and my flesh. Wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? To Amasa, the rebel general, he sent a particular message. Say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone and of my flesh, i. e. of my own family, and my near relation? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me, continually in the room of Joab. This part of David's conduct was extremely prudent and necessary. The tribe of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were under the command of Amasa, who was peculiarly guilty, as he had headed the rebellion under Absalom, and had great reason to fear David's resentment; and who would undoubtedly have kept possession of Jerusalem, and continued the spirit of disaffection to the king, without at the least the assurance of indemnity for himself and his adherents. David therefore, who with the single force of the tribe of Judah, had himself supported a seven years war with the house of Saul, assisted by all the other tribes, well knew the importance of the tribe of Judah, and of Amasa, who had seized the city, and garrisoned it with a strong body of troops, that had fled with him after the loss of the battle, thought it absolutely necessary to regain their affections, and recover them by the gentlest methods to his interest, to prevent the further effusion of blood, the damage the city must have sustained, had he been forced to reduce it by a siege, and that the rest of the tribes might have no encouragement, from the example of that of Judah, to make any further opposition to his re-establishment on the throne; and therefore to effect this, without mentioning one word of the rebellion, he only puts them in mind he was of their own tribe, and gently reproaches them with being the last of the tribes, who should*

have

have been amongst the first, to obtain his resto- David  
 ration. And as for *Amasa*, he compliments him over Ju-  
 on his being his near relation, and assures him, dah 21, all  
 that he should be captain general of his army in Israel 14.  
 the room of *Joab*. The prudence of this conduct  
 immediately appeared by its effects. For he, i. e.  
 † *Amasa*, bowed the hearts of all the men of Judah,  
 even as the heart of one man; and in return for  
 this great generosity and goodness to them, they  
 immediately sent a deputation to invite *David*,  
 and all his servants, to *Jerusalem*.

But Mr. *Le Clerc* and others object, that *Da-  
 vid*'s resolution to remove *Joab* from the chief  
 command of the army, was but an unthankful re-  
 turn for the victory which that officer had just  
 gained him, and for his attachment to his inte-  
 rest all along, and therefore *David*'s conduct in  
 this instance was imprudent and unaccountable.  
 What *Joab*'s share in obtaining this victory was,  
 the history doth not say. *Abishai*, and *Ittai*, who  
 each commanded a third part of the forces, might,  
 as for any thing that appears, as much contri-  
 bute to the victory over the rebels as *Joab*. But  
 be that as it will, the imprudence of *David*'s  
 conduct is effectually disproved by the event;  
 and that it was not unaccountable is certain, be-  
 cause of the evident prudence of it; especially  
 if it be true, as I think it certainly is true, that  
*Joab* had now lost the favour of his master, of  
 which the murder of *Abner*, the killing of *Abša-  
 lom*, in direct contradiction to *David*'s order, and  
 lastly, his want of sympathy, and his delicacy in  
 the present instance, were the undoubted causes. And  
 surely it could be nothing unaccountable, nor ar-  
 gue any great ingratitude to turn out an impe-  
 rious general, even after he had helped to gain

† Joseph. A. J. l. 7. c. 11. §. 1.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

a victory, who had stained his laurels by the treasonable murder of the king's own son, in defiance of his most express command, and then insolently threatened him with a fresh rebellion, if he did not openly appear to justify and approve his crimes: Crimes, that a successful battle few will think to be a sufficient atonement for, or a just reason to exempt him from disgrace, and the punishment he deserved.

The ancient *Roman* discipline was much more severe and rigorous than this, and a victory obtained, if contrary to the general's orders, was punished with death. When *T. Manlius*, the son of *Manlius* the consul, upon a challenge of *Metius*, one of the generals of the *Latins*, with whom the *Romans* were then at war, had engaged him in single combat; slain him, taken his spoils, and presented them in triumph to his father, the consul immediately ordered him to be beheaded in sight of the whole army, because it was an express breach of his orders; telling his son, † *If thou hast any thing of my blood in thee, thou thyself wilt not, I think, refuse to restore, by thy punishment, that military discipline, which hath been impaired by thy offence.* In like manner, when *Papirius*, the *Roman* dictator, had commanded *Fabius*, the master of his horse, not to engage the enemy during his absence; *Fabius* being informed that the army of the *Samnites* were in a state of great disorder, attacked them with his forces, intirely routed them, and slew twenty thousand of them on the field of battle. The dictator, upon his return to the army, in a council of officers, ordered him to be beheaded, because in breach of

† *Nec te quidem, si quid in te nostri sanguinis est, recusare censeam, quin disciplinam militarem, culpa tua prolapsam, pœna restituas.* T. Liv. l. 7. c. 8. p. 674. Edit. Delph.

the † rules of war, and the ancient discipline, he had dared, contrary to his orders, to engage with the enemy. He was however at last saved by the intercession of the *Roman* people. *David's* removing *Joab* from his command, was a much less punishment for much more aggravated crimes. David over Judah 21, all Israel 14.

As to the promise to *Amasa*, of constituting him general in *Joab's* room, the prudence of this may be also easily vindicated. For *Amasa* stood in the same degree of consanguinity to *David* as *Joab* did, and the offer to him of making him captain general must, as it hath been well observed, have been influenced by the personal qualities of the man, the importance of gaining him over, he being a person of great power and authority, and a resentment against *Joab* for the murders of *Abner* and *Abshalom*. Besides, I doubt not, but that *David* thought he should now be able to break *Joab's* power, and bring him to an account for his repeated assassinations and treasons, as well as fix *Amasa* for ever in his interest, by placing so high a degree of confidence in him, as to give him the command of all the forces in his kingdom. This hath been frequently the method by which great men have endeavoured to gain over their enemies, and it argues a real generosity of soul, of which little minds are utterly incapable, to win an adversary to his duty, by such unexpected instances of confidence and friendship. When \* *Cinna*, the grandson of *Pompey*, and other great men, conspired against *Augustus*, he not only pardoned them, but nominated *Cinna* consul for the ensuing year; and

† *Tu spreto imperio meo——adversus morem militarem, disciplinamque majorum——ausus cum hoste confligere.* Id. *ibid.* c. 32. p. 716.

\* *Dion. Hist. l. 55. c. 22. Edit. Reimar.*

*Cæsar,*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*Cæsar*||, not only spared *Brutus*, after he had appeared in arms against him, but took him into favour as his intimate friend, and intrusted him with the government of *Gaul*.

One cannot help being surprised, at first view, how so excellent a prince as *David* was, who had exalted the kingdom of *Israel* to so high a degree of glory and power, who had subdued and rendered tributary all the neighbouring nations, which had so often oppressed them, who had made the best and wisest regulations for the honourable performance of the solemnities of their public worship, who, in the whole course of his reign, had administered justice and judgment to all his people, and who certainly deserved to be loved and esteemed by all ranks and degrees of them, for the happiness they enjoyed under his government; I say, one cannot help wondering at the sudden revolution that was brought about in favour of an ungrateful and perfidious son, who was well known to have stained his hands with the blood of his elder brother. But there were many things that concurred to bring it about.

By the death of *Amnon* he became heir apparent to the crown, and being suspicious that the king his father might exclude him from the succession, upon the account of his character and crimes, he resolved to stick at no measures to obtain his ambitious views, and put it out of his father's power to set him aside. To accomplish this, being the handsomest man in *Israel*, he shewed himself every where in public, to captivate with his person all that beheld him. He then set up a princely equipage to attract their admiration of his splendor and magnificence. He treated all that approached him with great condescension

|| Plutar. vit. Brut. p. 986.

and

and affability; and as any were approaching the David city from the other tribes of *Israel*, to have their over Ju- causes heard before the king, he, in the most dah 21, all friendly manner, inquired of them, of what Israel 14. tribe they were, and hoped their cause was good; but reproached his father with remissness of government, and neglect of his people; telling them, that how just soever their cause was, they could have no audience, and that there was no man deputed of the king to hear them; wishing, for their sakes, that he was constituted a judge in the land, that every man, who had any suit or cause, might come to him, and have immediate justice done him; and thus persuaded them to return home, without making any application for an hearing, discontented with the king's government, and highly pleased with *Absalom's* condescension and goodness; greatly disposed to spread disaffection and sedition in the places to which they respectively belonged. And in order to secure the popularity he courted, whoever approached him to pay their respects to him, as the king's son, he familiarly took by the hand and embraced him. By these means he won the affections of great numbers amongst all the tribes; who, tho' probably at first they had no design of deposing the king, and advancing *Absalom* in his room, wished to see him intrusted with the principal administration of affairs under his father, and were willing to enter into any measures with him to obtain it, and to prevent his exclusion from the throne after his father. Besides this, he sent emissaries throughout all the tribes to strengthen his interest, and to secure a good body of men to join him, whenever his affairs required their assistance.

*Absalom* did not at first open his intention of dethroning his father, but wished only to be a judge

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21; all  
Israel 14.

judge in the land; following herein the crafty counsel of *Achitophel*, who was *David*'s chief counsellor, and treated by him as his intimate friend, and who having been admitted to his secrets, probably informed *Absalom* of his father's design to exclude him from the succession, in favour of one of his younger brethren; advising him, what steps he should take in order to prevent it. His appearance to countenance the rebellion allured many to become partners in it, as he was esteemed the ablest politician in the kingdom. What added farther strength to it was, *Amasa*, *David*'s own nephew, joining the conspiracy, and putting himself at the head of the rebel army, who, by his relation to the king, was a man of great consequence, and an able soldier, and who therefore would be thought by many incapable of entering into a conspiracy against his uncle to dethrone him, without some very great and justifiable causes. It may be added, that *Absalom*'s carrying off with him two hundred of the principal citizens of *Jerusalem*, and retaining them with his followers at *Hebron*, where the standard of the rebellion was first set up, added to the credit of the cause, and drew in many to abett and support it, who could not know but they engaged voluntarily in *Absalom*'s party, and were not drawn in to espouse his interest by subtlety and force.

Nor must it be forgot here, that the providence of God permitted the conspiracy to go on without discovery, and to arise to that height, as to drive *David* from his throne, and thus bring on him the punishments he had threatened him with by *Nathan* the prophet, for his sin in the matter of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah*.

All these circumstances together considered, 'tis no wonder that *Absalom* should draw together

ther a number of men sufficient to oppose and oppress his father, who suspected nothing of the conspiracy formed against him, and who appears to have had no part of his army with him, but some of his officers and ordinary guards, and which therefore made him take the resolution of retiring from *Jerusalem*, to prevent his being surprised by a superior force, that he knew himself unable to resist.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

But then it should be considered, that this sudden insurrection was not the effect of a general or national disaffection to his person and government. This is evident from many hints in the sacred history. The best part of the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* were firmly attached to him, and followed him in his retreat from the capital, and all the country through which he went, shewed their affection to him by loud acclamations. The *Cherethites* and *Pelethites*, the *Gittites*, and the ablest of his officers, continued steadfast in their attachment to him, and followed his fortune. The tribes on the other side *Jordan* gladly received him, and the richest persons of that country supplied him and his forces with all necessary provisions, and he soon collected amongst them an army sufficient to check the rebels, and at one blow to crush the rebellion. And this was no sooner known, than the tribes in general were all in motion to shew their loyalty to the king, and restore him to his throne and government.

The truth is, that *David* was surprised unawares and unprovided, by a wicked and impious faction, who had, by their emissaries, drawn together a large body of men, wherever they could pick them up, amongst all the tribes; gaining over, probably some well minded persons, by lies and slanderous reports of the king's government, and such others, as, in all nations, are always ready

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

to enter into any measures of wickedness and violence, in hopes of making their advantage by the publick confusion and calamity, by those methods which are constantly practised by profligate conspirators, in order to gratify their pride, ambition, and revenge, tho' at the expence of the religion, liberties, and prosperity of their country. And 'tis therefore no wonder, that this rebellion, which was evidently contrary to the general sense and inclination of the people, was so suddenly suppressed, and *David's* restoration to his throne and government, was immediately resolved on by the unanimous consent of all the tribes of *Israel*; whereby God was graciously pleased to put an end to his troubles, bringing him in safety to his capital and palace, and preserving his life, till he happily settled the succession on *Solomon* his son, the wisest of princes, and the most prosperous monarch in the world.

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A  
CRITICAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
LIFE OF *DAVID*,  
*The MAN after GOD's own HEART.*  
In FOUR BOOKS.

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BOOK IV. 2

CHAP. I.

*David's restoration and return to Jerusalem.*

*AMASA*, and the tribe of *Judab* being thus David gained over, and all the other tribes being well disposed in his favour, the king resolved to set out immediately on his return to *Jerusalem*, and was accompanied by *Barzillai*, by a large number from the tribes in whose country he had resided during the rebellion, and by the deputies from *Judab*, who had waited on him at *Mak-*

over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*Mabanaim*, in their name to invite him to return ; and who had assured him, that the whole tribe would in a body assemble at *Gilgal*, and from thence march to the river, provide every thing necessary for his passage over it, with his servants and attendants, and supply him with all accommodations for his journey to the city.

## C H A P. II.

### David's reception of Shimei.

WITH the tribe of *Judah* came also *Shimei*, who had cursed and stoned *David* in his flight, attended with a thousand *Benjamites*; and to shew his extraordinary zeal and joy, at *David's* restoration, went down to *Jordan* before the king had passed over it, and before those of *Judah* could reach it; hoping\*, undoubtedly, that by this appearance of his peculiar affection to him, he should atone for his past insolence and treason, and more readily obtain the king's forgiveness. With them came *Ziba* also, with his fifteen sons, and twenty servants attending him.

*Shimei*, as soon as the king had got on the other side of the river, presented himself before him, fell down prostrate at his feet, and, in a

\* *Pitiseus*, in his notes on *Q. Curtius*, takes notice of the case of one *Lyncestes Alexander*, as parallel with this of *Shimei*. *Lyncestes* had conspired with *Pausanias*, a young *Macedonian* nobleman, to murder *Philip* king of *Macedonia*, father of *Alexander* the Great. But that *Alexander* pardoned him, *quia primus Alexandrum regem salutaverat*, he had the first of any saluted him king, on his father *Philip's* decease. *Curt.* l. 7. c. 1. §. 6. And as *Arrian* adds, οτι εν πρώτοις τε αφικετό των φίλων παρ' αυτον, επειδε Φιλιππος ειλευήσεν, και τον θωρακα συνενδεας, συτηκολαθησεν αυτον εις Βασιλεια. *Alexan.* l. 1. c. 51, 52. *Edit. Gronov.* He, amongst the first of his friends, put on his breast plate, and attended him to the palace.

very suppliant manner, made an apology for his David villanous behaviour, recanting all his accusations, over Ju- , acknowledging that he had grievously offended, dah21, all and humbly imploring forgiveness. *Let not, says* Israel 14. he, *my Lord impute iniquity to me, neither do thou remember what thy servant did perversely, the day that my Lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For thy servant doth know, that I have sinned. Therefore behold I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my Lord the king.* Abishai, moved with a just indignation against a wretch, who first, in the malice of his heart, falsely and virulently blasphemed his sovereign, and attempted to murder him, and then meanly retracted his calumnies, to save his life, gave himself the lie, and made a merit of an officiousness that could proceed from nothing but the fear of being punished like a traitor and regicide, as he well deserved, said to the king: *Shall not Shimei be put to death, because he hath cursed the Lord's anointed?* But David, tho' warm, could not be deliberately vindictive, and, displeased with Abishai's proposal, tells him, that he intermeddled with an affair that did not belong to him, and that the prompting him to revenge himself on Shimei, tho' it might proceed from zeal in him for his service, yet was in reality the advice of an enemy, as it was exciting him to an unnecessary instance of severity, since his restoration was now happily accomplished, and needed not the death of Shimei, or any other person to secure it; and that therefore he was resolved, that no man should be put to death that day in Israel. *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah, that ye should THIS DAY be adversaries to me? Shall there any man be put to death THIS DAY in Israel? For*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*do I not know, that I am THIS DAY king over Israel?* He then immediately turned to *Shimei*, and to relieve him from his fear of immediate death, said to him : *Thou shalt not die*, and confirmed it by an oath.

Soon after *Shimei*, *Mephibosheth* also, *Jonathan's* son, came to congratulate *David* upon his re-passing over *Jordan*. But as he had received some impressions, unfavourable to him, upon *Ziba's* representation, he was not admitted to an audience, till the king was resettled in his palace and government in *Jerusalem*.

### C H A P. III.

#### *David's gratitude to Barzillai.*

**A**FTER *David* had thus extended mercy to *Shimei*, he shewed how grateful a remembrance he had of *Barzillai* the *Gileadite's* friendship to him, during the time of the rebellion, who had brought him a very large supply of provision whilst he continued at *Mahanaim*. Before he left that city, *Barzillai* came down from his estate where he resided, to take his leave of the king. The king gave him an invitation to accompany him to *Jerusalem*, and promised that he would there liberally provide for him. The good old man answered him : *How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Have I any relish for the pleasures and enjoyments of a court? Can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink? Can I any more hear the voice of singing men and singing women?*

———— επιληλησμεν ἡδονῶν,

Terentius omnes ——— Eurip. Bacch. v. 188, 189.

*Where-*

*Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burthen to my Lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompence it me with such a reward?* hereby positively acknowledging, that the honour he did him by his kind invitation to his court, was a much greater recompence than the small proofs he had given him of his affection and zeal for his person and government. He then desires the king's permission, that he might turn back again, that he might die in his own city, and be buried by the grave of his father and mother. But that he might not seem to undervalue his favour, he adds: *Behold thy servant, Chimham, let him go over with my Lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.* David assured him: *Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good to thee, and do for him whatsoever thou shalt require of me.* Barzillai accordingly attended the king over Jordan, where he embraced and kissed Barzillai, wished him all happiness, took his leave of him, and sent him highly pleased to his own habitation and family.

## C H A P. IV.

*Insurrection under Sheba.*

FROM Gilgal the tribe of Judah went down to Jordan, where they received the king, and returned back with him to that city, attended not only by that tribe, but by considerable detachments from half of the other tribes; those who lived beyond Jordan, amongst whom the king resided during the rebellion, and that bordered nearest upon that of Judah, and a thousand men with Shimci, of the tribe of Benjamin. When

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

they came to *Gilgal*, they found that the rest of the tribes were come down, by large deputations, to pay their submission to *David*. But understanding that the tribe of *Judah* had been particularly summoned by *David* to repair to him, which none of the other tribes had been, and that, upon their single invitation, without waiting for that of the other tribes, he had resolved to return to *Jerusalem*, and that he was actually conducted over *Jordan* by that tribe, such a difference arose between *Judah* and them, as ended in a new rebellion. For the men of *Israel*, thinking that the credit of the king's restoration would hereby redound principally to that single tribe, expostulated with *David*: *Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away, clandestinely, as it were, taken thee from the rest of their brethren, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him over Jordan? as tho' he was their peculiar exclusive property, with whom the rest of the tribes had no share. The men of Judah, without suffering him to interpose, imprudently replied: Because the king is near of kin to us, as being of our tribe, and therefore we have some peculiar interest in him. Wherefore then be ye angry with us for our being the first to shew our affection to him? Especially, as we have put the king to no expence for our attendance on him, nor received any gratification from him for our zeal in serving him. This answer inflamed the men of Israel, who said, with indignation: As David is king over all the tribes, we have ten parts in him as king, as we are ten tribes, and more right in him than you, who are but a single one.*

*Res est publica Cæsar,*

*Et de communi pars quoque nostra bona est.*

Ovid, de Trest. l. 4. El. 4.

adding,

adding, in great displeasure: *Why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first asked in bringing back our king?* This the men of Judah treated with contempt, and answered the discontented tribes in so haughty a manner, as that they needed nothing but a leader to head them, to bring about a second revolution, and prevent David's resettlement on his throne. Turbulent and factious persons are seldom wanting on such occasions, and such a one soon appeared amongst the Israelites. For Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, who probably had been an officer in the late rebellion, was certainly a man of influence and authority in his country, tho' a man of Belial, one of a profligate temper and character, taking advantage of these discontents, immediately blew the trumpet of sedition, and cried out in the midst of the assembly: *We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tent, O Israel.* This was spoken by way of indignation to the claim of the tribe of Judah, of a superior interest in David as king: Since you will have it, that the king is yours, be it so. We renounce all interest in and claim to him; and you and the king may go together. Let us return to our camp, O Israel, and provide a king for ourselves; the immediate effect was, that the body of the Israelites in general deserted David, marched off under Sheba, and probably would have advanced him, or one of Saul's family, to the crown, had not proper measures been immediately taken to quash the defection in its infancy; the tribe of Judah intirely remained faithful to the king, and attended him to Jerusalem; whilst the rest of those who were present put themselves under the conduct of Sheba.

David.  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

The blame of this new rebellion hath been charged on *David*, and he censured, for *thus inadvertently plunging himself into fresh troubles, by suffering himself to be conducted home by a deputation from the tribe of Judah*. The learned authors of the *Universal History*†, have made a like observation on this part of *David's* conduct, and say; that *the partiality, which he shewed to his own tribe, in inviting it to come foremost to receive him, raised such a jealousy in the other ten, as ended at length in a new revolt*. But where doth the history justify this reflection, that he was partial to his own tribe, in inviting it *to come foremost to receive him*? The truth is, that he did not invite them at all to come and receive him, till he had been informed by expresses from all the other tribes, that they were universally in motion to restore him, and his message to them only was: *Why are ye the last to bring back the king? Not, why are ye not the foremost?* And tho' the other tribes complained to that of Judah: *Why did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?* Yet the tribe of *Judah* was so far from coming to meet the king, out of any regard to, or contempt of their brethren, that the very zeal and movements of those tribes, in *David's* favour, was the principal motives urged by him, to bring back the tribe of *Judah* to their duty, and their great inducement to return to their allegiance to him. This was paying a real deference to their judgment, and what they ought to have been pleased with, and highly applauded.

'Tis true, that the tribes all concurred in their resolution to restore him, and were taking the proper methods to effect it, yet that *David* con-

† Vol. IV. p. 81.

tinued at *Mahanaim*, till the deputies from *Judah* David came to him there, with an invitation from the over Ju- whole tribe to repair to *Jerusalem*, and to assure dah 21, all him, that they would receive him in a body at Israel 14. *Gilgal*, and prepare every thing necessary for his passage over *Jordan*. Nor could he indeed set out for *Jerusalem*, till he had received certain information, that the men of *Judah*, and *Amasa*, who was in possession of it, would quietly permit him to return to it, without endangering his own person, or hazarding the peace of the nation, should he attempt to reduce the city by force. But when he knew that the city would open her gates to him, 'tis no wonder he should resolve immediately to begin his march to it, as he had now nothing to fear from that quarter, and imagined, that as all the tribes had declared for him, the sooner he acted agreeably to their desires, they would be the better pleased, and without the formality of any particular invitations, receive him with open arms, wherever he should meet them.

The pretence, that the men of *Judah* *had stolen him away*, was unreasonable and unjust. For whilst he was at *Mahanaim*§, the tribes on that side *Jordan* all declared for him, and accompanied him to the passage of that river, and went over with him to join the rest of their brethren, who were come down to meet him; so that when they were all united at the passage of the river, there were actually present, by large deputations, the tribes of *Judah*, *Benjamin*, and five others, who waited on him in his march to *Gilgal*. The truth of the case seems to be, that the deputations from the more distant tribes, not being able to get farther than *Gilgal*, before the king's

§ 2 Sam. xix. 40.

David over Ju- dah 21, all Israel 14. arrival there, envied the other tribes, and particularly that of *Judah*, which had the principal share in providing every thing necessary for the king's passage over *Jordan*, and laid hold of the first opportunity to express their resentment against them. This was heightened by the imprudent haughty answer, which the men of *Judah* made to their expostulation, that they had a peculiar right in the king, as he was near akin to them, because he was of their own tribe; and seeming to insinuate, that they came voluntarily, but that the other tribes came with an expectation of being provided for at the king's expence, and hoping some donative from him, as the reward of their submission to him: This, I think, is plainly implied, when they told them: *Have we eaten at all at the king's cost? Or hath he given us any gift?* Words which seem to carry a tacit insinuation, that other tribes expected both. This reflection, and the claim of a particular interest in the king, disgusted all the other tribes in general, and disposed them to enter into violent measures to revenge themselves. *David*, upon the whole, seems to me to be no ways blamable on account of *Sheba's* revolt, but that it was occasioned by misunderstandings between the tribes themselves, which it was not at that time in his power to prevent.

## C H A P. V.

*The insurrection under Sheba suppressed, and the murder of Amasa by Joab.*

AFTER David had taken possession of *Jerusalem*<sup>\*</sup>, and was resettled in his palace, he ordered the ten women, his concubines, who had been incestuously violated by *Absalom*, into a proper apartment, where they were kept in close confinement, honourably maintained, but never touched by him afterwards, to the day of their death. David over Judah 21, all Israel 14.

And as the insurrection under *Sheba* was become too serious to be neglected, he gave orders to *Amasa*, who was now general in *Joab*'s room, to assemble the troops of the tribe of *Judah*, within three days, and put himself at the head of them, that *David* might review them in person at *Jerusalem*. *Amasa*, by some means or other, did not appear at the time appointed, and therefore *David*, to prevent the inconvenience of any farther delay, and the increase of *Sheba*'s party, ordered *Abishai*, *Joab*'s brother, to gather together the king's guards, and what other forces he could collect, and immediately pursue *Sheba*, and to prevent him, if possible, from seizing any of the fortified cities for his security. *Abishai* accordingly took *Joab*'s own regiment, the *Cherethites* and *Peletites*, and all the mighty men that were in or near the city, and marched out of *Jerusalem*, in pursuit of the rebel. *Joab* attended them, tho' not as general; and when they were arrived at the great rock of *Gibeon*, *Amasa* joined them with the men of *Judah* he had collected,

\* 2 Sam. xx. 3.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.



and put himself at the head of them as commander in chief. *Joab's* garment was girt round him in the military manner, and over that was the belt of his sword, so fastened, as that the sword hung upon his loins in the scabbard. And as *Joab* went up to *Amasa*, the sword \* falling out of the scabbard, *Joab* caught it in his left hand, and said to *Amasa*: *Art thou in health, my brother?* And immediately took hold of *Amasa's* beard with his right hand to salute him. *Amasa*, either not seeing the sword in his left hand, or because he suspected no treachery, not regarding it, received *Joab's* salute, who immediately plunged his sword into *Amasa's* body, ript up his bowels, killed him on the spot, left him weltering in his blood, and then haughtily and treasonably put himself at the head of the army. This was, as *Josephus* || observes, a very

\* Mr. *Le Clerc* supposes, that *Joab's* sword fell out of the scabbard, either by accident or design, upon the ground, and that *Joab* pretended to take it up from thence, that he might not terrify *Amasa*. So also *Josephus* explains it. But, as *F. Houbigant* observes, there is no mention in the history of the sword's falling, or *Joab's* gathering it up. The sword, by *Joab's* contrivance, being loose in the scabbard, was falling out of it, which he immediately caught, as by accident, in his left hand, to prevent its falling; which if *Amasa* saw, he would naturally think it was merely casual. The words are: וַהֲרִיץ יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל. Literally: *He went,* and *That fell,* viz. the sword out of the scabbard. The sense of which is easy and natural. For it was by *Joab's* coming up to *Amasa*, that the sword began to fall out of its sheath. I can therefore conceive no reason, but the good father's love of correcting the text, why he should alter the present reading into וַהֲרִיץ יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל. And the sword going out, fell out of the sheath; as tho' we need to be told, that the sword must go out of the scabbard, when it was actually dropping out of it. I see neither information nor elegance in this version.

|| A. J. l. 7. c. 11. §. 7.

impious

impious and execrable action, thus to murder David a relation who had never injured him, out of over Ju-  
 envy for his being created general, and having dah21, all  
 an equal share in the king's favour with himself. Israel 14.  
 He had murdered *Abner* before on the same ac-  
 count. But for that he had a specious pretence,  
 that he did it to revenge the death of his brother  
*Asabel*; whereas he had no such excuse for the  
 murder of *Amasa*.

When *Joab* had thus murdered *Amasa*, he left one of his servants to stand by his body, and least the troops should be at a loss what to do, when they saw their general dead, to say to them, as they marched by; whosoever is in *Joab's* interest, and *David's* faithful friend, let him follow *David*. But when the soldiers saw *Amasa* wallowing in his blood, they flocked around him, shocked at the spectacle, and seemed unwilling to follow *Joab* in the expedition. The officer observing this, removed the dead body out of the road, into a neighbouring field, and covered it with a cloth; after which the people went on after *Joab*, who was gone before in pursuit of *Sheba*. That rebel, in order to draw together a considerable army, marched with his adherents from *Gilgal* thro' all the tribes that lay in his way to *Abel* † and *Beth-Maacab*, and the *Berites*, which probably lay in the tribe of *Dan*, or *Naphthali*, the most northern parts of the *Hebrew* territories. Hither *Joab* and his men speedily ‡ pursued him, and found him shut up

† *Abel* and *Beth-Maacab* seem to be two cities, as they are expressly distinguished from one another, ver. 14. *Abel* was the principal one, and is called *Abel of Beth-Maacab*, because *Beth-Maacab* was near it, and to distinguish it from other cities of the same name; of which there were many. See *Reland Palest.* p. 519, &c.

‡ *Joab and his men speedily pursued him.* Our version is: *And they were gathered together, and went also after him.* Most

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

in the city of *Abel Maacab*. He immediately ordered his men to throw up a sort of rampart against the wall of the city, from whence he battered it in order to beat it down. When they had made some progress in it, a prudent woman in the city, cried out from over the wall of it, and said, let *Joab* know, that I desire to speak with him. *Joab* came, and she said to him; Hear, I beseech thee, the words of thy handmaid. He bid her tell him what she wanted with him. She replied, that it was \* said amongst the

interpreters refer these words to the *Berites* and others, who followed *Sheba*. But I apprehend they are a description of *Joab's* men, warmly pursuing that rebel. The word we render, *were gathered together*, is, in the *Hebrew*, ויקלדו. But as the *Masorab* reads ויקדלו, which properly signifies, *they were gathered together*. F. Houbigant cries out, with an air of sovereign contempt, that unless the *Masora* had given us this reading, probably, certain *Grammarians* and interpreters would have taught us, that the *Hebrews* sometimes wrote קלה for קהל. But this contempt is ill placed, and the *Masora* is mistaken in the criticism. ויקלדו, as it is in our present copies, is a good and significant word. קלה, the root signifies, *urere, ardere, terrere*, to burn, inflame, and scorch; and from thence ardently to desire, warmly, and hotly to pursue any body. This last sense is expressly mentioned by *Goli*us. *Valide et properanter propulit agmen camelorum, celeriter proripuit se, rupide abduxit insequorem suum camela*. In voce. Nothing could be more applicable than this word to denote *Joab's* rapid and warm pursuit after *Sheba*, from city to city, in the several tribes, to crush the insurrection under him, before it became dangerous by the increase of his adherents, or gaining over any fortified places to his interest. In this sense *ardeo* is used in *Latin*, for warmth of desire and passion. *Amore ardeo*. *Ter. Eun. i. 1. 27. Ardeo iracundia*. *Adelph. iii. 2. 12.* and to denote the speedy and hasty doing of any thing. *Instant ardentes Tyrii*. Where *Servius* explains the word by, *multum festinantes*. *Æn. i. ver. 127*. Other places might be easily mentioned.

\* This whole passage is rendered in a very different manner by our translators: They were wont to speak in old time,

the inhabitants of the city, when it was first be- David  
 sieged, they will send into *Abel* to inquire of us, over Ju-  
 and we shall soon put an end to the affair. I dah 21, all  
 am one of the peaceable and faithful subjects in Israel 14.  
*Israel*. But thou seekest to destroy a city, and  
 a mother city in *Israel*. Why then wilt thou  
 swallow up the inheritance of the Lord? *Joab*  
 answered: God forbid; God forbid that I should  
 swallow up and destroy any part of the Lord's  
 inheritance. This is far from my intention. I  
 am only in pursuit of one of *Mount Ephraim*,  
 whose name is *Sheba*, the son of *Bichri*, who  
 hath rebelled against the king, even against *Da-*  
*vid*. Only deliver him to me, and I will imme-  
 diately cease my attacks against the city. The  
 woman said to him: See, his head shall be thrown  
 to thee over the wall. From *Joab* she prudently  
 went where the people were assembled, and re-  
 ported the conference she had had with the ge-  
 neral, and they immediately ordered *Sheba's* head  
 to be cut off, and then threw it to *Joab*. He  
 immediately ordered a retreat to be sounded, and

time, saying: They shall surely ask counsel at *Abel*, and so  
 they ended the matter; intimating, that the city of *Abel*  
 was very famous, in ancient times, for giving advice, and  
 determining controversies. But of this there is no intima-  
 tion except in this place, and the sense seems very forced  
 and unnatural. I think *R. S. Jarchi's* exposition leads to  
 the true interpretation, which our learned Bp. *Patrick* seems  
 also to approve; who observes, that the word *ברשונה*  
 refers not to old time, but the beginning of the siege. As  
 if she had said, when the people saw thee lay siege to the  
 city, they said, surely they will ask us, if we will have  
 peace, and then we shall soon come to an agreement, and  
 make an end; putting *Joab* in mind of the rule in the law,  
 Deut. xx. 10. which commands them to offer peace to the  
 cities of other nations, when they came to besiege them, and  
 therefore much more to a city of their own, as *Abel* was.  
 This agrees well with what follows, that they were a peace-  
 able people, and faithful to their prince, and therefore would  
 not have refused to yield to him upon summons.

the

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

the soldiers dispersed every man to his tent. *Joab* having thus finished the rebellion returned to the king at *Jerusalem*, and was continued in the post of captain general, which he had usurped after the murder of *Amasa*.

This hath occasioned a very severe reflection on *David's* honour and justice, and he is reproached because *Joab* was continued in the command, and not a single syllable of any notice taken by *David* of the murder of *Amasa*, whom he himself had appointed general; as tho' *David* had acquiesced in the murder, and confirmed *Joab* in the command of the army, as the reward of it. But that *David* greatly resented this murder of *Amasa*, is evident from his last advice to *Solomon*, in which he nobly recommends, and gives it in charge to him, to do justice on that bloody assassin for the murders of *Abner* and *Amasa*. *David* was not now able himself to do it, and *Joab* was too powerful a subject to be brought to any account. We have seen that he had insolence enough, after *Absalom's* death, to threaten the king with a new revolt, if he did not do what he ordered him; and after the assassination of *Amasa*, he usurped, in defiance of his master's appointment, the command of all the forces. They seem to have had an affection for him as a brave and successful general; he had just now restored the quiet of the land, by intirely quelling the insurrection under *Sbeba*, and returned to *Jerusalem*, without fear of the king, and in defiance of justice, as generalissimo of the army; and continued to assume this rank, not by *David's* order and inclination, but by his mere acquiescence in a measure that was contrary to his will, but which he was not able to set aside.

It

It should be observed to *David's* honour, that *David* when the rebellion under *Abjalom*, and the insurrection by *Sheba*, were intirely suppressed, we read of no bloody executions for treason and rebellion. *David* resolved that not one man should be put to death on that account. He was all mercy and forgiveness. The cursing *Shimei* was reprieved. The suspected *Mcphibosheth* was restored, and the rebel general constituted captain of the forces of the kingdom. Had he been the *Nero*, or the *Turk*, he hath been figured out by Mr. *Bayle* and others, this occasion would have abundantly enabled him to gratify his revenge, and satiate himself with blood. Should it be said, that *David's* clemency was owing to his thinking it hazardous to make examples of any of them; and his not being able to do it, because the revolt was general; or, to his policy, considering the precariousness of his situation; the answer is obvious; that neither of these suppositions hath any probability to support it. There could be no possible hazard in executing *Shimei*, and such other as had been the principal incendiaries and promoters of the rebellion. This was now totally suppressed, his victorious army at his devotion, and his general ready to support him, and obey him even in the most sanguinary measures, as appears from his conduct in the affair of *Uriah*; so that there could be no hazard in his making proper examples of just indignation and vengeance. *David* knew this, and said to *Abishai*: *Do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?* restored to my power and authority as king? and I will execute it at my pleasure. And in truth he could have none to controul him in his present situation. The assertion that the revolt was general, is not true in fact, as hath been elsewhere proved. As to *David's*

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*vid's* policy, that it induced him to resolve that no one should be put to death on account of the rebellion, I acknowledge there might be somewhat in this; but then it could not arise from the precariousness of his situation, of which there is no appearance or proof; for he was restored by the almost unanimous consent of his people; but from the noble policy, which never influences tyrants, but is inspired by benevolence and humanity, that suppresses the vindictive spirit, and chooses the obedience which arises from affection and esteem, rather than that which flows from fear, and is enforced by severity. Charges of acting from criminal and unworthy motives, without facts to support them, deserve no regard from persons of integrity and honour.

I shall only farther observe, that from *Nathan's* threatening *David*, to the suppression of the rebellion under *Sheba*, by which the punishment, as far as it related personally to *David*, was accomplished, were, by the marginal chronology of our bible, thirteen years; which shews how groundless the observation is that hath been made; as to this melancholy part of *David's* history; viz. that it would not be easy to select any period of any history more bloody, or abounding in wickednesses of more various dyes, than that which hath been now mentioned. Instances succeed so quick, that the relation of one is scarce concluded, but fresh ones obtrude upon our notice. Supposing this observation true, how do the vices of other men, or the misfortunes of his own family, affect *David*, as a man after God's own heart? Or is he the first good man who hath been unhappy in some of his children? Or whose affection towards them hath been much more tender and passionate than they deserved? Insulting great and good men, and holding them  
up

up to public view, as objects of horror and detestation, from those crimes of their family which gave them the greatest anxiety, is what virtue abhors, and is shocking even to humanity.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

*David* had in all seventeen sons\*. Two of them were profligates, and perished by their crimes. As to the rest, they appear to be worthy men, and were employed by *David* in the principal departments of the administration; a circumstance, that shews he took great care of their education, and that, upon the whole, he was very far from being unhappy in his family. The crimes committed by the two eldest, were *Amnon's* affair with his half sister *Tamar*, *Absalom's* murder of *Amnon* for the injury done his sister; his impious rebellion against his father; and his publick incest with his wives, to which *Achitophel* advised and prompted him. These were the wickednesses of various dies complained of, to which may be added, the murder of *Absalom* by *Joab*, contrary to the king's express order. These instances, as related in the history, succeed so quick, as that the account of one is scarce concluded, but fresh ones obtrude upon notice. But then the relation of these things is much quicker than the succession of years in which they happened, and many events intervened between the commission of the one and the other. Between *Amnon's* rape, and his murder by *Absalom*, were more than two years. From *Absalom's* banishment to his being restored to the king's presence, were more than five years, and from this to his rebellion and death, three or four; in all eleven or twelve years. But are there no instances in history to be found of more numerous crimes; and as various dies, committed within a much shorter

\* 2 Sam. iii. 2, &c.—v. 14, &c.

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

period of time? Will not our own history furnish us with such an instance?—From the year 1483 to 1485, *i. e.* in less than three years, one man, *Richard* duke of *Gloucester*, usurped the crown, actually murdered the king and his brother, both of them his nephews; poisoned his own queen, to make way for an incestuous marriage with his niece, embrued his hands in the blood of many of the *English* nobility, was the author of a civil war in the kingdom, and was himself slain in an engagement with the duke of *Richmond*, afterwards *Henry VII.* I refer the reader for another instance of complicated wickedness, still of a more terrible nature, in *Xerxes* the *Persian* emperor, related at large by *Dr. Prideaux* in his *Connection*, v. I. p. 348, &c. and it would be easy to mention several others, both in the *Roman* and eastern histories, to shew the rashness of this observation on which I have been remarking. But men of reading and learning need them not, and therefore I shall proceed with the history.

## C H A P. VI.

*David's reconciliation to Mephibosheth.*

SOON after *David's* return to *Jerusalem*, *Mephibosheth*, *Jonathan's* son, who had neither dressed his feet nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his cloaths, from the day the king departed, until the day he came again in peace, came, it is probable, by the king's order, to have his audience of him; to whom *David* said: *Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?* He answered him: *My Lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for thy servant said: I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because*

*because thy servant is lame; and he hath slandered thy servant unto my Lord the king. But my Lord the king is an angel of God. Do therefore what is good in thine eyes; for all of my father's house were but dead men before my Lord the king. Yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?* David replies: *Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said: Thou and Ziba divide the land.* Mephibosheth, glad of so favourable a declaration, and of the restoration of his estate, passes an high compliment on the king: *Yea, let him take all, for as much as my Lord the king is come again in peace to his own house.*

This conduct of David to Mephibosheth is objected against, as a very ungenerous and unjust action; in that, when Ziba's accusation against Mephibosheth was found to be false, instead of equitably punishing the asperser of innocence, and reinstating Mephibosheth in his former favour, he restored him but half the forfeiture for his supposed guilt, leaving the villain Ziba in the quiet possession of the other half, as the reward of his treachery. Supposing this account true, that Mephibosheth had but half his patrimony restored to him, there might be reasons of state, reasons of great prudence and equity, that might induce David, at that time, to give this check to the house of Saul; especially, if David had any suspicion that Mephibosheth had really behaved ill, and as Shimei, one of Saul's family, had used him with peculiar marks of indignity, and discovered that they wanted only the opportunity to revenge themselves on him, and place one of Saul's house upon the throne of Israel.

But I think there is great reason to question, whether the behaviour of Mephibosheth was so in-

David  
over Ju-  
dah 21, all  
Israel 14.

nocent, as hath been asserted, during the progress of the rebellion. The late ingenious and learned Mr. *Hallet* and others, think he was guilty and deserved punishment; and after having reviewed his apology to *David* for not accompanying him in his flight from *Jerusalem*, with the utmost impartiality and care, that apology doth not seem to me sufficient wholly to exculpate him. For what is the apology he makes? Why, only this; that he said, *he would saddle him an afs, and go on it to the king, because he was lame, and could not go on foot.* Why then, what hindered him from saddling his afs, and riding after his royal patron and benefactor? Surely there were more asses than one to be had at *Jerusalem*, and he had servants enough of his own to have saddled one, had he been disposed to go after *David*. For when that prince was restored, he found means to wait on him, without *Ziba's* assistance; and I suppose the same means might have been found, if he had pleased, to have attended *David* when he fled, as well as to go to meet him when he returned. He pretends indeed that *Ziba deceived him*; but he doth not say how, nor offer any proof of it; nor could he deceive him about the getting him an afs, because he could have got one, whether *Ziba* would procure him one or not. So that his justification was as lame as his feet, and, as far as I can judge, is but a poor shuffling vindication of his innocence.

He seems to me to have been very well pleased to stay at *Jerusalem*, and wait the issue of the rebellion, as not knowing, but that during the confusion of affairs, some fortunate circumstances might arise, by which, as heir to *Saul's* house, he might be advanced to the throne in the room both of *David* and his rebellious son.

The

The only circumstance that can be alledged in David his favour is, that he did not take the usual care of himself, as to his cleanliness and dress, but appeared in the squalid habit of a mourner. But this might be merely political, and would equally serve to excite compassion to himself amongst the people, to see *Saul's* heir reduced to this forlorn condition; and to provide some excuse for himself to *David*, should his affairs at last take a favourable turn, and to urge as an argument and proof of his affection and concern for him, during the continuance of his troubles.

This was a well known custom amongst the *Romans*, and other nations, for those who were accused of any crimes, to clothe themselves with a black garment, to let their beards and hair grow, and to appear in a negligent dirty manner, in order to raise the publick pity in their behalf. And not only thus, but the friends and patrons of such unhappy persons, appeared publicly in the same manner, as those whose cause they espoused. Thus *Cicero* tells us, that the whole senate, and all good men, did it to express their grief on his account, and the better to obtain his recall from banishment†. Yea, this very art hath been made use of by a dethroned prince to obtain the recovery of his crown and kingdom. Thus *Ptolemy Philometor*, king of *Egypt*, being driven out of his kingdom by his brother *Physcon*, came attended only by a few servants to Rome, *squalore obsitus*, covered over with filth, to implore the assistance of the senate. And in this wretched condition he presented himself before them. They advised him, that *deporitis foribus*, laying aside his wretched habit, he should petition for an audience. So that this affectation

† Cic. Orat. pro Sexto c. 12.

David of *Mephibosheth*, of appearing at *Jerusalem*, with these external marks of grief, was really no proof over Ju- of his affection to *David*, but might be with an dah21, all artful intention to serve himself. Israel 14.

~~~~~ Ziba's charge against him was direct and positive, and the only answer is, that Ziba *had slandered him*. So that here are two positive assertions contrary to one another. Ziba's charge had probability to support it; because it is natural to suppose, that *Mephibosheth* might think that he had, as heir to *Saul*, some claim to the crown, and would be glad of any occasion to recover it, that he might not be beholden to *David's* generosity, and live by courtesy at his table; and that he might mention it to Ziba, as he also was one of *Saul's* house and family. *Mephibosheth's* answer to the charge hath nothing satisfactory in it, because he could never want an ass, or a servant to have conveyed him, had he desired or resolved to make use of them.

Besides, as Ziba's carrying provisions to *David* plainly shewed Ziba's belief and hope of *David's* restoration, he must know that if he had charged *Mephibosheth* falsely, the falsehood must have been discovered when *David* was resettled on the throne; and that being convicted of calumniating his master, he would, in all probability, have been so far from having *Mephibosheth's* whole estate confirmed to him, as that he would have lost his maintenance out of it for himself and family.

And indeed *David* himself seems to me not to have been thoroughly satisfied with *Mephibosheth's* apology, by the answer he makes him: *Why speakest thou any more about thy matters? Let me hear no more of thy affairs. I will neither regard Ziba's charge, nor your vindication; an answer that evidently carries an air of coldness,*
indif-

indifference, and displeasure, and of one who did David not chuse to make any strict enquiry into *Mephibosheth's* conduct, but to admit his excuse, tho' ^{over Ju-} ^{dah 21, all} ^{Israel 14.} in itself insufficient and unsatisfactory; and he therefore only adds: *Thou and Ziba divide the land.* If this be the true state of the case, as it appears to me to be, *David's* annulling the grant to *Ziba*, so far as to reinstate *Mephibosheth* in the possession of even half the land, was a noble instance of *David's* generosity, and of the grateful remembrance he retained of *Jonathan's* affection and friendship for him.

But I much question the truth of the account, that *David* restored to *Mephibosheth* but half of the estate. *Ziba* had been an old servant in *Saul's* family, who had fifteen sons, and twenty servants. To him *David* had said: *I have given thy master's son all that pertaineth to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore and thy sons and thy servants shall till the land for him, and bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat, viz. for his household and family.* As for *Mephibosheth* himself, *he shall always eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.* *Ziba* therefore was to take care of the estate, to account for the profits of it to *Mephibosheth*, and to be himself and his whole family maintained out of the annual produce, for his care in cultivating it. This was a proper division of it between *Mephibosheth*, as lord of the estate, and *Ziba* as the farmer and manager of it. What now is the determination of *David*, upon his restoration to the throne? *Mephibosheth* had been intirely outed upon *Ziba's* complaint; but after he had made his apology, *David* said to him: *I have said: Thou and Ziba divide the land.* But where and when did *David* ever say: *I give each of you a moiety of the estate?* He first gave the whole in property to *Mephibosheth*, and afterwards

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

to *Ziba*; but never divided it, share and share alike, between them. And yet, *I have said*, thou and *Ziba* divide the land, must refer to some former division of the estate by *David's* order. But no such determination or order is to be found, but in that original one, in which the estate was divided between *Mephibosheth* in property, and *Ziba* as husbandman, for his own and family's maintenance. So that this last determination of *David* was so far from taking away one half of the estate from *Mephibosheth*, that it was in reality confirming the original grant, and restoring him to the possession of the whole, upon the same terms on which that possession was originally granted him*. So that if *David* was too hasty in giving away *Mephibosheth's* estate to *Ziba*, he was, upon better recollection, as hasty in restoring it to him; and it ought to be acknowledged as a proof of his inviolable regard to his oath to *Jonathan*, since he had reason for just suspicion, that his son had been wanting in that affection and fidelity which he owed him, as his generous protector and benefactor. And tho'

* This opinion will receive great weight from the judgment of that excellent lawyer and scholar, Mr. Selden, whose words are: *Quid plura de ea re loqueris? Tu in favorem mihi receptus. Etiam decrevi pridem, dixi, pronunciavite et Zibam, servum tuum, partiaris fore; te ut dominum, cui, ut potest in integrum restituto, subministrantur agrorum proventus; illum ut colonum glebæ adscriptum, servum agros colentem, atque inde etiam, pro hominis statu, victum capientem. Adeo ut nihil illa sententia breviuscula amplius innuatur, quam id quod fusius exprimitur. 2 Sam. ix. 10. Ubi proventus domino, cultura servo a donatore assignantur. De success. c. 25. p. 67, 68. So also F. Houbigam, not. 29. Stabit hæc distributio quam antea decrevi, ut tu agros tui patris possessionis jura teneas, et ut Ziba, qui eos coluit et culturus est, habeat inde sibi et familiæ cibam. Verbum תחלקו allegat nos ad distributionem eam, quam vidimus, cap. 9. Neque id significat habiturum Zibam dimidiam partem agrorum jure possessionis. In loc. And indeed the words of *David* are not fairly capable of any other interpretation.*

by

by his confirming the original grant, he left *Ziba* and his family a maintenance out of the estate, it was not as the reward of his treachery, of which there is no proof, but out of respect even to *Saul*, of whose house *Ziba* was, and as a recompence for his faithful adherence to him in his distresses, and that reasonable and noble supply, with which he furnished him and his followers, when he was forced to abandon his capital, by the unnatural rebellion of his son *Absalom*. Hereby *David* did more than full justice to *Mephibosheth*, and at the same time rewarded *Ziba* by continuing him on the estate, upon the former conditions of possessing it.

Mr *B* — hath a long article on this affair, in which he takes it for granted, that *David* restored *Mephibosheth* but one half of the estate, and says, that *some interpreters maintain, that Ziba's accusation was not unjust*; or at least, that *it was founded on so many probabilities, that it might be credited without passing a wrong judgment*; but there are but few, says he, of that opinion; and he affirms, that *David found him a false accuser*. But Mr. *B* — offers not a single proof for these assertions, and he who relates the different opinions of others concerning any fact, and declares on the unfavourable side of it, without giving his reasons for it, doth not act like a candid critic, but with the spirit of partiality and party. I must therefore leave these particulars to the judgment of the more candid and impartial reader, when he hath duly considered what hath been said above in order to obviate them; agreeing at the same time with him, that if *Mephibosheth* was unjustly treated, *David's* holiness could never make that sentence just, tho' pope *Gregory* hath insisted upon it; and that to conclude the sentence was just, merely because *David* passed it,

it, tho' it was unjust in itself, is to establish a very dangerous principle.

C H A P. VII.

The affair of the Gibeonites.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

WE now enter upon a part of *David's* † history and conduct, that hath been thought exceptionable by many persons of good sense and sober minds; and which others have represented as a master-piece of wickedness, and for which they have censured him as the most accomplished hypocrite, and a perjured and profligate villain. It will therefore be necessary more particularly to consider it.

I confess, for my own part, that I think it one of the most unexceptionable parts of his behaviour, as a king, and an illustrious proof of the generosity of his temper, the regard he paid to his oath to *Saul*, and the friendship he owed to the memory and family of *Jonathan*. That the reader may the better judge of this, I shall give the history just as it is recorded in the Old Testament writings.

The inhabitants of *Gibeon*, a large * royal city, which, after the division of the country, was ‡ yielded to the tribe of *Benjamin*, were *Amorites* by birth and nation; and when the *Hebrews*, under *Joshua*, invaded the land of *Canaan*§, the *Gibeonites* hearing what *Joshua* had done to *Jerico* and *Ai*, and fearing for their own safety, fraudulently persuaded the *Hebrews* to enter into a league with them; which was solemnly ratified by a publick oath, so that they had the national

† 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c. * Josh. x. 2. ‡ Ibid. xviii. 25.
§ Ibid. ix. 15.

faith for the security of their lives and properties ; ^{David over Ju- dah 24, all Israel 17.} for which reason the children of *Israel*, when they came to their cities, and understood the fraud, murmured against the princes, because they had made a league with them. The princes to appease them, said to them || : We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of *Israel*, therefore we may not touch them §. We will even let them live, least wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore to them ; and they were accordingly spared, but condemned to servitude*, and made hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, perpetually, in the place which he should choose ; *i. e.* wherever the tabernacle or ark should reside.

But *Saul*, in his zeal to the children of *Israel* and *Judah*, to ingratiate himself with them, under the specious pretence of publick spirit, to enrich his servants and soldiers, and to appear warm and active for the publick interest, *sought to slay them, and to destroy them from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel*, and actually put many of them to death, employing those of his own house or family in the execution. This was a notorious violation of the publick faith, laid the nation under the guilt of perjury and murder, and subjected them to the displeasure of God, who is the righteous avenger of these national crimes, but seems to have been regarded as an affair of no consequence, or rather acquiesced in as an useful and publick-spirited measure.

God however was pleased to make inquisition for the blood which had been thus unrighteously shed, and sent a famine upon the land, which lasted three years, in the third of which, *David*,

|| Josh. ix. 19. § Ibid. ver. 19. * Ibid. ver. 27.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

moved by so extraordinary a calamity, enquired of the Lord the cause of it, and was answered by the oracle, that it was for Saul, *and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.* In consequence of this, *David* sent for some of the principal persons who had escaped the massacre, and said to them: *What shall I do for you, and where-withal shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* What satisfaction do you require for the injuries that have been done you, that you may be induced to pray for the prosperity of my people? The *Gibeonites* answered him: *We will have no silver or gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.* The king then bid them ask what they would have, and promised that he would do it for them. They replied: *The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel; let seven of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, who was chosen of the Lord.* The king immediately replied: *I will give them;* and in consequence of it, sparing *Mephibosheth*, the son of *Jonathan*, and all the male line of *Saul*, who had any claim to, or were capable of contending with him for the crown, and disturbing him in the possession of it; he delivered to them the two bastard sons of *Ris-pah*, *Saul's* concubine, and the five sons of *Micah*, his youngest daughter, by *Adriel*, the son of *Barzillai*, the *Meholathite*, not one of which was capable of succeeding *Saul*, especially whilst any of the male line, and particularly those by the eldest son, were alive. Now, at this very time, *Mephibosheth*, *Jonathan's* eldest son, dwelt in *David's* family at *Jerusalem*; and tho' lame in his feet, yet he was sound enough to be the father of a son, named *Micah*, who had a numerous poste-

posterity, the descendants of which continued down through many generations.

In this account the reader will observe, that what gave rise to this execution in the family of *Saul*, was a three years famine. The famine is not denied. The cause of it, some think, was the preceding intestine commotions. But this is highly improbable; for there is no intimation or probability, that the civil war continued so long as twelve months, as it was determined by a single battle, and as that battle was certainly fought not long after the rebellion broke out. For *David* continued in the plain of the wilderness, where he first retreated, and which was not far distant from *Jerusalem*, till he was informed what measures *Absalom* was determined to follow. These were fixed on soon after that rebel's entrance into *Jerusalem*, and as soon as the affair would admit, put in execution. Nay, so soon was the plan of operations fixed, that *Hushai*, *David*'s friend, who continued with *Absalom* at *Jerusalem*, sent an express to *David* to acquaint him, that he had defeated the counsel of *Achitophel*, but withal to advise him, not to lodge a single night more in the plains, but instantly to pass over *Jordan*, lest he and all his people should be swallowed up by a strong detachment from the rebel army. *David* immediately hastened to and passed the river, and could have but a few weeks or months to draw together his troops; for *Absalom* was soon after him, attacked his father, and his death put an end to the unnatural rebellion. Besides, the country in general must have been free from any great commotions; for, as *David* retreated beyond *Jordan*, collected his forces, and fought the rebels in the territories of the tribes on that side the river; the principal commotions must have happened there, and could not much affect the

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David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

ten tribes, and occasion a three years famine throughout that whole country.

The natural cause of that famine was the want of the usual rains, and the violent heat and drought of the seasons during that period; for it is observed of *Rispah*, that as soon as her two sons were put to death, she spread herself a tent upon the rock where they were hung up from the beginning of harvest till water dropped on them out of heaven, *i. e.* till the rain came, which had been so long withheld, and it thereby appeared that the displeasure of God towards the nation was fully appeased.

But tho' *David* could account for the natural cause of the famine, yet its long continuance was so unusual and extraordinary an event, as that he thought himself obliged to enquire of the Lord for the reasons of it, that he might prevent, if he could, the further continuance of it, by averting the displeasure of God, of which the famine seemed to be the immediate effect. Upon his enquiring, he was answered, that it was upon the account of *Saul*, and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites; after which the historian immediately informs us, that *Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah*; and the Gibeonites themselves complained to *David*, that *Saul* was the man that consumed them, and devised against them, that they should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel. And indeed the murder of these poor people was an action suitable to *Saul's* sanguinary temper; and if he was bloody enough to put to the sword, without any provocation, a whole city of his own subjects, what should hinder him from endeavouring to extirminate these *Amorites* out of the land, if he could hereby oblige his own people, by enriching them

them with their *fields* * *and vineyards*, and thereby David better establish himself and his family in the kingdom. over Judah 24, all Israel 17.

Samuel indeed is not any where said to have charged *Saul* with any such slaughter. Probably that prophet was dead before this carnage of the *Gibeonites* happened, and therefore it was no wonder he never charged *Saul* with it. He lived long enough after *Samuel's* death to perpetrate this crime, when it would not be in *Samuel's* power to reproach him with it. If *Samuel* was alive, it is absolutely certain that he never visited *Saul*, and so could not reproach him for his barbarity. But to question the fact is to deny the history, which as peremptorily fastens it on *Saul*, as it doth any other fact whatsoever.

The deed itself was a perfidious and bloody one; the destruction of many of the *Gibeonites*, and a determined purpose wholly to extirpate the remainder of them out of the country, in violation of the publick oath and faith that had been given them for their security, without any provocation, or forfeiture of life on their part. He cut them off in cold blood, defenceless and unarmed, tho' they were serviceable to the nation, and many of them appropriated to the service of God, and of his tabernacle, merely for secular and political views, and that he might serve himself, by gratifying some of the tribes amongst whom they lived, and who wanted to possess themselves of their cities and lands. It is probable his death prevented the full execution of this barbarous purpose, which therefore seems to have been begun but a very little while before it, in order to support his declining interest, and ingratiate himself with the children of *Israel* and

* 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

Judah; with *Judah* particularly, of which tribe *David* was, and in whole territories some of the *Gibeonitish* towns were, to whom he thought the expulsion of that people might be agreeable, and so might be a means of retaining that powerful tribe in his interest.

The crime therefore was enormous in itself, and aggravated with the most heinous circumstances; a crime, if any could be so,

Deo vindice dignum,

and which all civilized nations, almost in all ages, have looked upon with horror, and as highly deserving the divine displeasure and vengeance. *Antiphon*†, one of the principal orators of *Greece*, pleading for the bringing a murderer to justice, against whom the evidence was not so full as was desired, but the circumstances exceedingly strong, urges this as a reason why the judges should not clear him; that it would be extremely dangerous to the publick, to permit such an impure polluted wretch to enter into the temple of the Gods and defile them, and to sit down at the tables of those who were innocent; because this would produce barren and unfruitful seasons, and render the publick affairs unfortunate. *Ælian*‡ also relates, that the *Lacedemonians* were punished with the intire ruin of *Sparta* by an earthquake, which left only five buildings in the city standing, for the murdering some of the *Helotæ*, who were slaves, and had fled into a temple for safety, after they had surrendered themselves on the promise of safety. When the noble *Roman*, *Horatius*||, who, by his victory over the *Curatii*, had

† Εξ γὰρ τέλει αἱ τὸ ἀφείλει γινώσκει, καὶ δυσχερὲς αἱ πράξεις.
Antiph. Orat. 2. in fine.

‡ Vid. *Hist. l. 6. c. 7.* || *Dion. Hal. A. R. p. 153.*

established the supremacy of *Rome* over *Alba*, was accused by some of the principal citizens of *Rome* for having murdered his sister, who, upon his return from his victory had unseasonably and severely reproached him, for killing her lover; they urged his being brought to justice, because he had violated the laws, and recounted several instances of the divine vengeance on cities who had suffered such atrocious crimes to go unpunished.

David
over Ju-
dah 21, al-
Israel 14.

But may it not be asked, that if God sought vengeance for a particular act of cruelty, perpetrated by *Saul*, when was vengeance demanded for *David's* massacre of the *Geshurites*, *Gezrites*, *Amalekites*, *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Jebuzites*, and others, who, at times, became the objects of *David's* wrath? The answer is, it was never demanded, because there was no vengeance due, and the cases are by no means parallel. There was no violation of the national faith, no breach of oath, that *David* and his people had been guilty of in any of these instances. In most of them, the people mentioned were the aggressors; and, as to the rest of them, they were the inveterate enemies of the *Jews*, wandering clans, who lived upon robbery and plunder, and had been long before justly devoted to destruction. Besides, the *Gibeonites* were massacred in cold blood, in times of peace, unarmed, and incapable of any self defence; and therefore every one must see the difference between these unhappy people, whom *Saul* causlessly and treacherously destroyed, and those whom *David* cut off; who provoked their own ruin by unjustly making war on his subjects, whom he was in duty and honour bound to protect and defend, or who had been proscribed by God himself for the crimes of which they had been guilty.

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

The persons employed with *Saul*, in perpetrating these murders, were *those of his own house*. The history here is express: *It is for Saul* and his bloody house, because he*, viz. by them as his instruments, *slew the Gibeonites*; for which reason they justly said to *David*, that they demanded satisfaction only of the man that had consumed them. He thought the destruction of the *Gibeonites* so popular a thing, as that he was resolved, himself, his family, and relations, should have the whole credit and merit of the affair. Whether *Jonathan* and his brethren, who seem to have been brave men, were concerned in it, is not said. I think it probable they were not; for as they were good soldiers, they would be ashamed to massacre unarmed slaves, and of too generous a disposition to have any hand in so base and cruel an assassination. But if they every one refused to be employed in it, there were others of *Saul's* house, *i. e.* his family, who certainly were; who either in person, or by the soldiery, put many of these poor people to the sword; in which latter case they were equally guilty of the murder, as tho' they had killed every one of them with their own hands; just as *Saul* was guilty of the murder of the priests, and the massacre at *Nob*, tho' he employed *Doeg* in the first, and his soldiers in the latter execution.

I think it probable from the choice which *David* made, that the very persons he gave up to the *Gibeonites*, were employed by *Saul* in this butchery, and that for this reason he delivered them up as sacrifices to publick justice. These were the two bastard sons of *Rispah*, *Saul's* concubine, and the five sons of *Michal*, the daughter of *Saul*, which she bare to *Adriel*, the son of *Bar-*

* 1 Sam. xxi. 1.

zillai, the *Meholathite*. It appears to me, that *David Michal* was married to this *Adriel* before she was married to *David*, and had five children by him, which would be all of them of age sufficient to be employed in this unrighteous affair. *Saul* || was about forty years old when he came to the crown ; for his sons were all men grown, men of strength and valour, and his two daughters are spoken of as not being children at that time, but as women arrived to some maturity. From his being made king to *David's* marriage with *Michal*, was, by the chronology of our bible, thirty-two years. Allow her therefore to be *ten* years of age, on her father's advancement to the kingdom, she must be above *forty* years of age when *David* married her ; a space of time, in which she might have had many more children than *five* by a former husband, that would be of age sufficient, in the latter part of *Saul's* reign, to act under his commission in the slaughter of the *Gibconites*. 'Tis not very probable that *Saul's* daughter should continue unmarried, till she was forty years old and more, and the scripture is express, that she bare to *Adriel*, the son of *Barzillai*, the *Meholathite*, five children. It is indeed said, that *Saul* married his eldest daughter *Merab*, to *Adriel* the *Meholathite*. But this *Adriel* might be a very different person from *Adriel* the son of *Barzillai*, who was the husband of *Michal*, who seems to have been thus particularly described, to distinguish him from the other *Adriel*, who, tho' a *Meholathite*, is no where said to be the son of *Barzillai*. If these remarks are just, we need no critical emendation of the text, and can defend the justice of *David* in giving up these persons to the vengeance of the *Gibeonites*.

|| 1 Sam. xiv. 47, 48, 49.

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

But supposing these sons of *Michal*, or *Merab*, were *too young* to have any hand in the guilt of this transaction, I do not see that an immediate command from God to deliver them up to death is any ways inconsistent with the rectitude of his nature, or the justice and equity of his moral providence. The judgment of *Grotius* † on this affair is worthy our regard. God, says that great man, *threatens in the law of Moses, that he would visit the iniquity of the fathers on their posterity. But then he hath an absolute dominion and right, not only over all we have, but over life itself; so that he can take away from any one his own gift whensoever he pleases, without assigning any reason for it. And therefore when he takes away the children of Achan, Saul, Jeroboam, and Achab, by an untimely and violent death, he exercises his right of dominion, not of punishment, over them; but, at the same time, he by this means more grievously punishes the parents of them. For whether the parents survive them, which the law principally supposes, the parents are certainly punished by seeing their children thus taken from them; or whether they do not live to see their children cut off, yet the fear that they may suffer for their crimes, is a very great punishment to the parents. He farther observes, that God doth not make use of this extraordinary vengeance, except it be against crimes peculiarly dishonourable to him; such as idolatry, perjury, sacrilege, and the like.*

The crime of *Saul* was a wilful breach of the laws of God and man, a perjurious violation of the national faith and honour, which it became God, the supreme governor of the *Jewish* nation, to manifest his resentment against. Suppose all who were actual perpetrators of this aggravated crime were dead, and out of the reach of ven-

† De J. B. et P. l. ii. c. 21. §. 14.

geance,

geance. Yet some of their posterity were still David remaining. But they were *innocent*. Allowed. ^{over Ju-} Therefore. What? That God was unjust in ^{dah 21, all} taking away their lives? But what right had they ^{Israel 14.} to live longer? Doth the gift of life convey an unalienable right to live for ever, or to any particular period of life? And that in bar of God's right to resume it when he pleases, and when there are valuable ends to be answered by his resuming it? The evident intention of God, in ordering the death of this part of *Saul's* family, was to be a publick attestation of his abhorrence of *Saul's* perfidy and cruelty, to strike a terror into the princes his successors, and caution them against committing the like offences, as they would not have them avenged by the sufferings of their posterity, and especially to prevent all future attempts against the lives of the *Gibeonites*, whom God now declared to be under his protection, tho' they seem to have been looked on with an evil eye by the *Jewish* nation; who probably would have in time compleated the extirpation which *Saul* began, had it not been for this remarkable manifestation of God's displeasure against it.

The death of these seven persons therefore, supposing them all innocent, was, in this view, no punishment at all inflicted on them by God, but an appointment of God in virtue of his sovereign right over the lives of all men; to teach princes moderation and equity, and prevent for the future the commission of those enormous crimes, which if permitted to go with impunity, would be inconsistent with the peace and welfare, and even being of civil government; and God did these innocent persons no more injustice, by ordering them to die by the hands of the *Gibeonites*, than if he had taken them away by any

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

kind of natural death, which I presume no *real* *Theist* will deny his right to, because it is a right which he exercises in the daily dispensations of his providence. And as he intended their death should be subservient to promote the publick virtue, welfare, and safety; the manner of their death, whatever it might be in the imagination of others, was to them much more honourable, than if they had been cut off at the same age in the ordinary course of things, when no publick utility could have been so perfectly answered by it.

That children do, and very frequently too, suffer and die for the *sins of their parent*, in which they have had no share, and even by the constitution of God himself, is evident from history, and the constant experience of all ages and nations. Thus God punished *David* † by the death of his first child by *Bathsheba*, and *Jeroboam*, by the death of his eldest son, who was a religious and virtuous young prince; and, for any thing that we can tell, the death of both might, instead of being a punishment, be a real blessing to them; and God ever hath it in his power to compensate those whom he deprives of life for the promoting any publick good. Indeed this is a case that frequently happens, according to that divine threatening, *of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*; i. e. by such punishments, the effects of which should continue, and be felt by their children to the *third and fourth generation*. And if this be a difficulty, it affects *natural* religion as well as *revealed*, since the fact itself is indisputable. How frequently do parents by their vices transmit to

† 2 Sam. xii. 14.

their innocent children a miserable corrupted constitution, and entail upon them distemper and death? In publick calamities, such as pestilences, earthquakes, famines, and the like, by which God chastises the sins of nations, how frequently are the guilty and innocent, parents and their children, involved in one common destruction! Why then might not God, by an immediate command, appoint some of the innocent children of *Saul's* bloody family to be put to death for his sins, as well as command a pestilence or an earthquake to destroy children of other families for the crimes of their parents? It makes no difference in the nature of the thing, whether God takes away their lives by that course of nature which he established, or by a command immediately given for the purpose, since, in both cases, the loss of such children's lives is equally the appointment of God, who hath a right over life supream and unalienable. Every one can see one wise intention of providence in this constitution of things, *viz.* to render children a sort of *security* for the good behaviour of the parents, as they are indeed in all human government, and that their affection for their families may be a powerful means to guard them against the practice of those crimes which tend to involve their children in misery and ruin; or that if they will not be restrained by these motives, the distresses of their families may teach others wisdom, and shew them the necessity of a more regular and virtuous behaviour.

It is indeed a constitution of the *Mosaic* law, and founded in natural equity, that the *fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers. Every one shall be put to death for his own sins.* This constitution ought to take place in all human government;

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

vernments; because, as far as these are concerned, every one hath an unalienable right to keep his life, till he forfeits it to human justice; and for men to take away the life of one for the fault of another, is to take it away without forfeiture, and is therefore an act of evident injustice and cruelty. But because God forbids, that men who have no sovereign right over the lives of any, to punish one person with death for the offences of another, doth he therefore lose his own right of taking away the lives of others, whenever, and by what means soever he pleases? Or, is he guilty of injustice and cruelty because he resumes his own gift, and what no one living hath any right to demand the continuance of from him, for one single moment longer than he is pleased to continue it, and what every man is bound willingly to lay down when God calls him to it, in order to promote any publick good, and it is necessary to answer any valuable purpose in the moral providence and government of God?

Besides we see, in the constant course of things, that infants, children, persons of every age and stage of life, are cut off by death, without any peculiar guilt or forfeiture of life, either to human or divine justice, and by various kinds of death, some of them extreamly mortifying and affecting. Will any sensible *Theist* dare to arraign the justice of God in this constitution of things, or complain that God properly punishes those who are thus taken off in the common course of nature? As for myself, I cannot comprehend all the reasons of providence in this dispensation, nor do I think that I have a right to demand that God should acquaint me with those reasons. It must be right, because it is the constitution of God; and therefore he had an equal right

right to cut off these *seven* persons of *Saul's* family by the hands of the *Gibeonites*, as he hath to cut off any other persons in the common course of things, and, in taking them away, he no more properly punished them, if they were wholly innocent of the murder of the *Gibeonites*, than he punished any of those, who may be esteemed innocent, and yet are every day taken off by distemper or accident; and *Rispah* and *Michal* had no more reason to complain of the injustice of providence for the loss of their children, than any other tender mothers have, when providence bereaves them of any of the valuable branches of their family, by an untimely death.

It is evident from what hath been said on this article, that God's ordering these seven persons to be delivered up to the *Gibeonites*, is not in the least contrary to the *Mosaic* law, nor any true notion of justice and equity, nor making justice, when applied to God, one thing, and when applied to men, a quite different thing; for the rights of God and man over life are infinitely different. For life is his gift, given by him without claim or merit, given for that period only for which he intended it, and may therefore be justly resumed, as his gift, at any period he thinks proper to demand it, without doing any injustice to him from whom he takes it; because he violates no right that belongs to him, nor takes from him any property, which he hath a real claim to, as his proper inheritance. But, with regard to men, every one hath an unalienable claim to his life, and he who takes it from another without a just forfeiture of it, violates the most sacred rights of nature, and wickedly robs him of his most valuable treasure, which he can never restore to him, and for the loss of which he cannot make him any possible compensation.

But

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

But it may be asked, what equity there is in punishing a whole nation with a three years famine, for the crimes of *Saul* and his bloody house? The equity of their punishment appears, because both *Israel* and *Judah* consented to and acquiesced in the massacre. This is plainly intimated in the history, which says, that *Saul slew the Gibeonites in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah*, because he knew they would like it, and esteem it, as a proof of his desire and readiness to serve him. The *Israelites*, as Mr. *Le Clerc* on the place observes, seem, for some cause or other, to have envied the *Gibeonites*, so that by extirpating them *Saul* thought to oblige them. And from hence it is evident, that he did not destroy them because they had formerly deceived the *Israelites*, and that the slaughter of them was far from being displeasing to, or opposed by the people.

It hath been asked, how we are to account for the deferring the punishment of *Saul's* crime, for so many years after the fact was committed, and *Saul's* death. I do not think myself obliged to account for all the reasons by which God proceeds in the administrations of his moral providence, and am content to be ignorant, whenever those reasons of divine conduct are not some how or other revealed to me. However, tho' *Saul* was dead, yet there were some of his bloody house still remaining, and the circumstance of *Saul's* death could be no reason against bringing to justice those of that bloody family, that had been employed by him as the instruments of his treachery and cruelty; or why providence should never express its disapprobation against such a notorious violation of the publick faith and honour. If no satisfactory account could be given for the delay of this punishment for several years,

it would by no means follow that there were David none. Had we lived in those times, we might ^{over Ju-} have been better able to solve this difficulty. ^{dah 21, all} Some things however offer themselves on this sub- ^{Israel 14,} ject which deserve our regard.

Whilst *Saul*, the principal actor in this tragedy, was living, and was well known for his contempt of the prophets, and the cruelty of his disposition, who was there to call him to an account, and execute the just vengeance on him and his bloody house? In the beginning of *David's* reign, his own unsettled condition for seven years and more, when *Saul's* family disputed the crown with him, and could none of them have been brought to justice by him; the many necessary wars he was afterwards in, and perhaps his not thinking himself obliged to take notice of *Saul's* conduct during his reign, or his very tenderness for the family of his predecessor and father-in-law, might all concur to prevent any publick inquisition into this cruel transaction, or calling any of the offenders to an account for it in the common course of justice. And God permitted things to take their natural course, and not to manifest his displeasure on this account, till it could be done in such a manner, as should make his justice, as the God and king of *Israel*, more conspicuous, and the execution of his vengeance more observable and awful, and as should, at the same time, most effectually prevent all future attempts to injure or extirpate that unhappy people.

Particular events may for a long while be delayed, and the very delay of them may, in concurrence with the operations of providence, be one means at last of bringing them to pass with greater observation, and more convincing evidence of the interposition of God in bringing them about, as is frequently the case in long con-

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

concealed murders. God therefore, in a time of profound peace, when *David's* government was settled, and there was nothing to interrupt the course of justice, punishes the people with a three years famine, to let them feel his displeasure, to render them solicitous to know the cause of it, and take the proper methods to appease it. So that tho' no train of intervening and unavoidable circumstances can impede the operations of providence, or prevent what God is determined to bring to pass, yet such circumstances may, for a very considerable while, impede the operations of human justice; nevertheless, how long soever that justice may be delayed, it will certainly at last take place, when ‡ God judges it the proper season to execute it, and when such execution shall most effectually demonstrate his inspection, and tend to secure the purposes of his moral providence and government over mankind.

It is, I think, more than obscurely intimated, in those words of *David* to the Gibeonites: *What shall I do for you, and wherewithal shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* That they had loudly exclaimed against the violation of the publick faith, and the perfidy and cruelty of *Saul* and his family, who had destroyed them; had demanded that some satisfaction should be made them, and had invoked the vengeance of God against their murderers. To demand satisfaction they had a right, as the *vindices sanguinis*, the avengers of blood, or the

‡ *Lento gradu ad vindictam sui divina procedit ira, tarditatemque supplicii gravitate compensat. Valer. Max. l. 1. c. 1. p. 33, 34.*

*Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede poena Claudio.—*

Horat.

near

near relations of those whom *Saul* had cut off; *David* and 'tis probable that they took occasion, from over Judah 21, all Israel 14. the continuance of the famine for three years, to renew their complaints for the injuries they had suffered, and to desire that justice might be done them. This must greatly embarrass *David*, as *Saul* and his sons were killed in battle, and no satisfaction possibly could be obtained from them; and therefore, in order to know the real cause of the famine, and whether any, or what satisfaction was to be made to the *Gibeonites*, he determined to inquire of the oracle, and govern himself by the directions of it. The answer he received was, that the famine was sent for *Saul*, for his bloody house, because he slew the *Gibeonites*.

'Tis true, that the oracular response did not in words dictate any act of expiation that was to be made to the *Gibeonites*, but only mentioned the cause of the famine. And the reason is plain, because when it was known that the famine was sent for the slaughter of these poor people by *Saul* and his bloody house, it was as well known they were to have some justice done them on that bloody family, for the outrages that had been committed on them; for *David* knew that, in the ordinary course of justice, the shedding of blood was only to be atoned for, by the shedding of his or their blood, on whom the murder was chargeable. So that the oracle did really dictate, tho' not in words, the necessity of an expiation, by pointing out the crime for which the famine was sent. And thus *David* understood it, when sending for the *Gibeonites*, he said to them: *What shall I do for you? Wherewith shall I make the atonement?* i. e. the atonement for the blood of your people, that hath been unrighteously shed.

The

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

The *Gibeonites* replied: *We will have no silver or gold of Saul, neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.* No compensation could be made under the law, for wilful murder, by silver and gold; and indeed nothing could have argued a meaner and more sordid disposition in these people than a demand of money, in satisfaction for the massacre committed on them; and tho' the nation might have been, and certainly was, in some respect criminal, for permitting *Saul* to cut them off, yet, as *Saul* was the contriver of the mischief, and his family the immediate agents who destroyed them, they did not desire that any one person in *Israel* should be put to death on their account, which was an argument of their great moderation and regard to justice.

David then bid them name the satisfaction they demanded, and promised that he would give it them, acting herein in obedience to the prophet's direction, who, as † *Josephus* rightly observes, ordered him to grant the *Gibeonites* whatsoever satisfaction they should demand of him. We have something of a like history in *Herodotus*§, who tells us, that after the *Pelasgi* had murdered their *Athenian* wives, and the children had by them, they found that their lands became barren, their wives unfruitful, and their flocks failed of their usual increase. On this account they sent to the oracle at *Delphos*, to know by what means they might obtain deliverance from these calamities. The oracle ordered them to give the *Athenians* whatsoever satisfaction they should demand of them. The *Athenians* demanded, that they should deliver up their country to them, in the best con-

† Εάν δίκην, ην αύτοι θελουσιν οι Ταρσωνίαι, λαβειν υπερ των αθηνημα-
των. Ant. Jud. l. 7. c. 12. §. 1.

§ Erat. §. ult.

dition they could. This the *Pelasgi* promised up- David
on a certain condition, which they thought im- over Ju-
possible. However, they were forced in virtue dah 21, all
of this promise, many years after, to surrender it Israel 14.
to *Miltiades*, some of them making no resistance
to his forces, and those who did, were besieged
and taken prisoners.

The *Gibeonites* having received this promise from *David*, demanded seven of *Saul's* sons to be delivered to them, that they might hang them up unto the Lord in *Gibeah* of *Saul*. It appears by this, that the demand of these seven persons, to be put to death, was by order of God, and the sacrifice that he appointed to be made to the publick justice, to expiate the murthers committed by *Saul*, for they were to be hung up to the Lord; *i. e.* in obedience to his will, and to appease his displeasure, because wilful murthers are highly offensive to God, and are properly to be expiated by the death of those who have committed them; in which sense every offender who is guilty of capital offences, expiates his guilt by suffering the penalty of death, and thereby becomes a sacrifice to justice human and divine.

It deserves also to be remarked, that the *Gibeonites* did not intend to exterminate the family of *Saul*, in revenge for his intention to destroy them out of the coasts of *Israel*, but only demanded seven of his sons, and even left the choice of these seven to *David* himself, hereby putting it out of their power to sacrifice the male line of *Saul* to their revenge, and giving *David* a glorious opportunity to shew how religiously he remembered his covenant with his friend *Jonathan*, and that no policy of state should ever induce him to the violation of it.

It appears from hence, that *David* could not instigate the *Gibeonites* to make this request, that
seven

David
over Ju-
dah 21, all
Israel 14.

seven of *Saul's* sons might be delivered to them, that they might kill them, to prevent its being said that he killed them for their sakes, and that the *Gibeonites* might hereby take the blame of their destruction upon themselves, and screen *David* from being charged with that murder which he himself had contrived, and by them perpetrated. For if the *Gibeonites* had acted with a determined purpose to cut off all *Saul's* family, they would have named their men, and made sure work by a demand of *Mephibosheth* and his family. Or if *David* had the same view, he would have prompted the *Gibeonites* to have asked the delivery of the same persons; or, when the choice was left to himself, would readily have seized the opportunity of giving up those that he apprehended it was most for his interest to get rid of.

Indeed nothing can be a more improbable absurd supposition than this of *David's* instigating the *Gibeonites* to demand seven of *Saul's* family to be delivered up to death, as an expiation for his having destroyed many of them. Whether there was, or was not, such a massacre of them by *Saul*, must be universally known to the people of *Israel*. For such an execution could not have been committed in a corner. If there was not, how could the *Gibeonites* demand satisfaction? For what could they demand it? Or how demand it from the house of *Saul*, if they, and all the people of *Israel* knew, that *Saul* and his house had never injured them? Or, how could *David* instigate them to ask satisfaction for a massacre, that he and all his people knew had never been committed on them? No man of common sense would openly pretend a reason for an act of cruelty and injustice, which had not the shadow of a reason in it, and which every one must know
the

the absolute falshood of; and it must have been ^{David} much less exceptionable to all *David's* subjects, ^{over Ju-} had he put *Saul's* family to death by an act of ^{dal. 24, all} power, and openly avowed, that he did it to ^{Israel 17.} secure himself and his own family on the throne, than to cut them off by such a barefaced paultry contrivance, which every one must see through, and which could not diminish the guilt and horror of the fact, but only serve to heighten his own impudence and wickedness, and expose him for his perfidy, subornation, and cruelty, to the greater abhorrence of all his people.

And indeed it is acknowledged that a more barefaced deceit was never exhibited; such indeed as could only have been attempted amongst the poor bigotted *Jews*. But I would observe, that as this transaction was carried on in an open publick manner; as it was occasioned by a three years famine; as the oracular response declared the famine was sent, because that *Saul* and his bloody house had consumed the *Gibeonites*; as they demanded *Saul's* sons for an expiation; and *David* delivered them up for an attonement; stupid as the *Jews* were, it was too barefaced a deceit to pass even on them; for if there had been no massacre of the *Gibeonites* at all, nor a famine of three years continuance, the oracle would have been convicted of an immediate lie, and could never have persuaded the people into the belief of facts, which they themselves were absolutely certain never existed.

If *David* was so vile as to attempt this deceit, and the *Jews* so stupid as to be deluded by it, what must the *Gibeonites* be, who acted in this tragedy by *David's* instigation, charged *Saul* with consuming and destroying them, and demanded seven of his sons as victims? For what? Why for nothing; for destroying and consuming them,

David when, in reality, they knew that he did not de-
 over Ju- stroy and consume them, and all the nation knew
 dah24, all that this charge against *Saul* was an imposture
 Israel 17. and a lie, and the demand of his sons for an ex-
 { piation was the highest villany and impiety.
 There is, I believe, no man living who can re-
 ally believe, that either *David* or the *Gibeonites*
 could be thus designedly, shamelessly, and with-
 out inducement wicked, since the *Gibeonites* were
 to have neither gold nor silver for the part they
 acted, and since *David* might have cut off *Saul's*
 family, had it been in his heart to have done it,
 and assigned reasons for it, that would have car-
 ried some appearance of necessity and justice. If
Saul was in reality guilty of the murder of these
Gibeonites, it became the providence of God, who
 was supreme king and judge in *Israel*, to make
 inquisition for the blood that was shed, and mani-
 fest his displeasure against such a notorious viola-
 tion of the publick faith and honour. Thus
 also will *David* be fully vindicated from the
 charge of instigating the request of the *Gibeonites*,
 and they from the iniquitous imputation of con-
 certing with him so extremely childish, but wicked
 a scheme, of cutting off *Saul's* posterity.

It hath been suggested to the dishonour of *Da-
 vid*, that *in consequence of this request of the Gibeo-
 nites, which he himself must have instigated, David,
 not withheld by any motives of gratitude towards the
 posterity of his unhappy father-in-law, indirect violation
 of his oath to Saul at the cave of Engedi, granted
 it; SPARING ONLY Mephibosheth, who luckily was
 so unfortunate as to be a cripple, and so much depen-
 dent on David, that he had no room for apprehen-
 sion from him. He therefore reserved Mephibosheth,
 in memory of another oath between him and his fa-
 ther, Jonathan; for he was under obligations by two
 oaths; and forgot one, and remembered the other.*

But

But this charge is contrary to the most express David account of the history, and *David's* conduct in ^{over Ju-} this affair was worthy a man of probity and ho- ^{dah 24, all} nour, and consistent with the strictest regard to ^{Israel 17.} his oaths both to *Saul* and *Jonathan*. That in granting the request to the Gibeonites, *he directly violated his oath to Saul at the cave of Engedi; or cut off the remainder of Saul's family, in defiance to the solemn oath by which he engaged to spare that unhappy race,* needs no other refutation than the oath itself. *Saul* asked *David* to swear by the Lord†, *that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.* *David* gave him his oath accordingly. I will not urge here, that had *Saul's* family committed crimes worthy of death, *David's* oath would have been no reason against punishing them according to their deserts; and such punishment, if deserved, had been no breach of his oath. But I shall only observe, that if *David* did not cut off his seed after him, so as to destroy his name out of his father's house, he did not violate his oath to *Saul*. Now *David* did not cut off one single person of *Saul's* family, whose death had the least tendency to destroy his name out of his father's house. The seed is always reckoned by the males, and not the females of a family, and the name in a father's house could only be preserved by the male descendants. But *David* gave up only the sons of *Saul's* concubine, who were not the legal seed of *Saul*, and those of his eldest daughter, who could only keep up *Adriel's* name, and not *Saul's*; and hereby conscientiously observed, without the least violation, his oath to *Saul*, or need of any mental reservation to help him out.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

To this it is objected, that if the seed is always reckoned by the males, and not the females, then *Jesus Christ* could not be the son of *David*, because he did not descend from *David* by the male line, but from the female. But it should be observed, that the son by a daughter is as really the son of the grandfather, as a son in the male succession, and that the only difference is, that the succession in a family is kept up by the sons, and not by the females, who by marriage enter into other families, and therefore cannot keep up the names of the families from whence they sprang. *Jesus Christ* therefore was the son of *David*, tho' only so by the mother's side; and as he was not to keep up *David's* line according to the flesh, it was expressly predicted of him, by a double prophecy, that he should be of the female line. The one, that he should be *the seed of the woman*; the other, that *his mother should be a virgin*; so that he could not have been that son of *David* who was to be the Messiah, and to sit on his throne for ever and ever, had he been *David's* son by an earthly father. The same spirit of prophecy that declared he should be *David's* son, as expressly declared that he should be so by the mother; an exception that makes no alteration in the general rule of family's successions, which was constantly amongst the *Jews*, and almost every nation in the world, in the male line, and not in the female.

Nor is it true that *he spared ONLY Mephibosheth*, and that *he reserved ONLY ONE CRIPPLE*, from whom he could have no apprehensions, and who being the son of Jonathan, gave him the opportunity of making a merit of his gratitude. The history expressly contradicts this assertion, for *Mephibosheth* had a son, whom he called *Micah*, who was now
old

old enough to have † children, and had four sons, David from whom descended a numerous posterity. See over Judah 24, all his line || in the following table. Israel 17.

Saul, Jonathan, Mephibosheth, or Merib-baal,

||

Micah,

||

Pithon, Melech, Tarea, Abaz,

||

Jehoadab,

||

Alemeth, Zimri, Asmaveth,

||

Moza,

||

Binea,

||

Rapha,

||

Eleasah,

||

Azel, - - - - - Eshek

||

||

Azrikam, Bockeru, Ishmael, Shearjab, Obadiab, Hanau, Ulam, Jeush, Eliphelet,

||

150 sons and grandsons.

Oh faithless *David*, thus to leave *Saul* ONLY ONE poor cripple! and who, not withheld by any mo-

† That *Micah*, *Mephibosheth*'s son, was old enough to have a son at this time is most certain. For, by the marginal chronology of the bible, *Mephibosheth* had this son *Micah*, An. C. 1040, and he had been then born some time; and the affair of the *Gibeonites*, according to the same chronology, was An. C. 1021, which makes a period of nineteen years. Now supposing *Micah* was one or two years old, at the time he was said to be young, he must have been twenty or one and twenty years old, when the *Gibeonites* demanded *Saul*'s children. So that *Micah* might have a child, or children at this time, and very probably had.

|| 2 Sam. ix. 12. 1 Chron. viii. 33. 40.—ix. 39. 44.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

tives of gratitude, and in direct violation of his oath to *Saul*, did thus wickedly cut off *all his seed* after him, and *wholly destroy* his name out of his father's house!

It appears from what hath been said also, that when 'tis insinuated that *David* spared *Mephibosheth*, only because as a cripple, and dependent on *David*, he had no room for apprehension from him, it is mere suggestion, and inconsistent with the plainest appearance to the contrary. For as this could not be the reason for his saving *Mephibosheth's* son *Micah*, and his family, it is not likely he acted from it in sparing *Mephibosheth* himself, but from a more worthy motive towards both, out of regard to his oath, and the grateful remembrance he still preserved of his former obligations to, and friendship with *Jonathan*, *Mephibosheth's* father. This the scripture § asserts; that *the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.*

I have one remark more to make on this part of the history, which turns out to *David's* immortal honour. 'Tis observed, that *some certain contemplations*, which are put into *David's* head, calling to his remembrance, that *some of Saul's family were yet living, he concluded it expedient to cut them off, lest they should hereafter prove thorns in his side; and that whenever † David projected any scheme, a religious pretence, and the assistance of the priests were never wanting.* But for this charge there is not any foundation. For *Saul's* bastard children, and the children by his daughter, could never be thorns in *David's* side, any more than other people, or the other branches of *Saul's* family, because incapable of the crown; especially, whilst there continued a lineal descent in the male

§ 2 Sam. xxi. 7.

† P. 74.

line from *Saul* himself. *David* therefore could not be guilty of all this villainy and folly with which he hath been charged, for the sake of cutting off *Saul's* family, least they should be thorns in his side, because he cut off none but those who could be no thorns in his side, and suffered all those to live, who alone were capable of proving thorns in his side; and therefore *David* projected no such scheme as this of cutting off *Saul's* family; yea, his conduct in this affair was directly the reverse of what he must have done had he projected any such scheme; and therefore I must conclude, that as no such scheme was ever projected, there was, and could be no occasion for a religious pretence, or the assistance of the priests, to sanctify and accomplish it.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

There have been, I acknowledge, commotions excited in states by illegitimate children, and by descendants in the female line. But I know of no instance, in ancient or modern history, of any prince, who remembering that some of his predecessor's family, who might dispute with him his crown by their descent, were living, and concluding it expedient to cut them off, least they should hereafter prove thorns in his side, should, to answer this end, cut off only the bastard children, and those of the daughters, and leave the son and grandson of his predecessor alive to propagate their descendants, and in them claimants to his crown, and thorns in his side, to all generations. Suspicious and jealous tyrants love to make surer work; but *David*, under a necessity of delivering up some of his predecessor's family to justice, generously preserved the claimants to his crown alive, and delivered up those only from whom he could have nothing to fear, as having no kind of legal right to the government and kingdom.

David
over Ju-
dah 24, all
Israel 17.

Illustrious prince! Be thy name and memory ever revered, thy generosity ever spoken of with praise; who, when forced by providence to give up to justice some of the guilty family of thy persecutor and sworn enemy, didst from the greatness of thy mind, thy prevailing humanity, thy regard to thy oath to one who sought thy life, and thy pleasing remembrance of thy once loved friend; refuse to cut off the seed of him that persecuted thee, and to destroy his name out of his father's house, but didst nourish his seed in thy bosom, maintain it in thy family, suffer it to increase and prosper, and spread itself out into numerous branches, even when policy might have dictated other measures, and a wicked craft would certainly have pursued them. Fresh be thy laurels to the latest posterity, and thine unexampled generosity ever be remembered with the veneration and esteem, which it claims from all the benevolent and virtuous part of mankind.

It should be further mentioned, on this occasion to *David's* honour, that tho' he was necessitated to deliver up some of *Saul's* family to justice, to give satisfaction to the injured *Gibeonites*, yet that he took the first opportunity to pay the last tokens of respect that could be to *Saul* and his unhappy family. For as soon as ever it appeared, that the natural cause of the famine was over, by the return of the rains, *David* ordered the bones of *Saul* and *Jonathan* to be fetched from the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, who had recovered them from the *Philistines*, and took them, together with the bones of those that had been hanged up, and buried them honourably in the sepulchre of *Kish*, *Saul's* father; whereby he shewed, that he had no inveterate enmity to *Saul's* family, but was pleased with the opportunity of shewing respect to his name and memory. This whole account

con-

concludes with this observation of the historian† : *They performed all that the king commanded, and after that God was intreated for the land.* God approved his generosity to the family and remains of his enemy, and, as the reward of it, sent prosperity to him and his people.

C H A P. VIII.

Wars with the Philistines.

AFTER these things, *David* was again engaged in war with the *Philistines*, and fought four battles with them, in every one of which his usual success attended him; in the first of which the *Philistines* certainly were the aggressors, and probably in the other three; as there was in each of them a person of a gigantic stature, and in the last of them, one who defied *Israel*. The *Philistines* were irreconcilable enemies to the *Hebrews*, and took every occasion to insult and attack them. And thus much must be said in honour of *David* as a soldier and conqueror, that, in far the greater number, if not in all his wars, he was forced to them by the injustice of the neighbouring princes and nations, who envied his greatness, invaded his territories, and drew upon themselves the chastisements they suffered. Nor is there any instance to be produced in which he behaved himself with cruelty, or contrary to the laws of humanity in the management of these wars,† or beyond what the law of arms in those

David
over Ju-
dah 25, all
Israel 18.

† 2 Sam. xxii. 14.

† *Humanitatis dulcedo etiam in efferrata barbarorum ingenia penetrat, terrosque et truces hostium mollit oculos ac victoriæ insolentissimos spiritus fleclit. Vincit iram, prosternit odium, hostibemque sanguinem hostilibus lachrymis miscet.* V. Max. l. 5. c. 1. 4. 6.

times

times and countries allowed ; the case of the *Ammonites* only excepted. And as the expressions by which the affair is represented, are capable of a much more favourable turn than what is usually given them, *David* appears free from that excess of cruelty with which some writers have endeavoured to load him. And even supposing that fact to be as our translation represents it, the provocation was high ; and if, as some think, *David*, in destroying them, treated them only as they treated their conquered enemies, and some even of the *Hebrews* themselves whom they had taken prisoners, they had no reason to complain of a retaliation, which however severe, they brought upon themselves, and so justly deserved.

C H A P. IX.

David's numbering the people.

David
over Ju-
dah 29, all
Israel 22.

THESE wars being thus happily ended, *David* enjoyed for some time a settled peace and prosperity, without any foreign invasions to call him into the field, or domestick troubles to interrupt him in the affairs of government ; but being at length persuaded and prevailed on to number the people, he became the cause of trespass to *Israel*, and brought on them the severe punishment of a pestilence. The author of the books of *Samuel*, in relating this affair, says : *That the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say : Go, number Israel and Judah.* The author of the *Chronicles* differently expresses it. And Satan stood up against *Israel*, and provoked *David* to number *Israel* ; and this is objected against as an absurd thing, that *David* should be said to be moved both by God and Satan to number the people. But

But I apprehend this difficulty may be easily re- David
 moved, by observing, that these two places are ^{over Ju-}
 capable of a more favourable turn, so as to ren- ^{dah 29, all}
 der them perfectly reconcileable with each other, ^{Israel 22.}
 according to the genius of the language, and the
 common forms of expression in it.

The text in *Samuel* may be thus rendered * :
And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against
Israel ; for he moved David, or David was moved
against them, to say : Go number Israel and Judah ;
 active verbs † in the third person, being fre-
 quently to be rendered as *impersonals*, and not to
 be referred to the nouns immediately foregoing ;
 and thus the text will be fully reconcileable with
 that in *Chronicles*, which says, that Satan *moved*
him to number the people.

Or, it may reasonably be supposed, as the
 original words we render, *He moved David against*
them, are the same in *Samuel* and the *Chronicles* ;
 that the word *Satan* hath been omitted by some
 careless transcriber in the text in *Samuel*, which
 is expressly mentioned in, and to be supplied from
 that of *Chronicles* ; and then the version will be :
That the anger of the Lord was kindled against Is-
rael, for Satan moved David to number the people :
 And very probable, had we more ancient MSS.

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

† It is a passage exactly parallel with this, that we have,
 Gen. xvi. 13, 14, where it is said of *Hagar* : *She called the*
name of the Lord, that spake unto her : 'Thou God see'st me ; for
she said : Have I here looked after him that seeth me ? Therefore
he called the well, The well Lachai-Roi. Who called it so ?
 Not that God who saw her ; therefore the words must be
 rendered, as in our version : *The well was called.* Thus also,
 Gen. xi. 9. *The Lord scattered them abroad from thence.—*
And he called the name of it Babel ; not the Lord, which is
 the nominative immediately preceding, but as we render it :
Therefore is the name of it called Babel. There are many
 other places I could cite to the same purpose.

this

David
over Ju-
dah 29, all
Israel 22.

this omission in *Samuel*, if such, would be rectified by them. A candid critick will make some allowances, both for defects and redundancies in books of that great antiquity, which the Old Testament books confessedly are; and where several of those books treat of the same affairs, will have the good sense, as far as he can, to supply what is defective in one, by what appears compleat in the other. If there needs a supplement in *Kings* it is actually found in *Chronicles*, and therefore should be inserted from thence. This would certainly be, in like instances, the case in other books, and it is injustice not to apply the same fair rules of criticism, to remove the difficulties that may occur in the writings of the Old Testament.

But there is another way of rendering and understanding this passage, viz. *For he moved David*, or, *David was moved against them*, not, as in our version, *To say*, but, *לאמר*, dicendo, *by saying*: Go number *Israel* and *Judah*; which last words will then be, not *David's* to his officers, which follow in the next verse, but his, who counselled *David* to this action. And thus *David's* numbering the people will be, neither by the instigation of God, or *Satan*, as that word means the *Devil*. It is certain, that God never instigated and said to *David*: Go, number the people. For if God had commanded this, *David's* heart would never have smote him for it, nor would he have acknowledged to God: *I have sinned greatly in that I have done*. Nor would *Joab* have remonstrated against it, nor have represented it to the king, as what would be a cause of trespass to *Israel*, if he had known that *David* had received such an order from God. Every circumstance in this account proves, that there was no hand or direction of God in this affair.

And

And if the Devil had bid him do it, I suppose he ^{David} might have seen the cloven foot, and would scarce ^{over Ju-} have followed the measure for the sake of the ad- ^{dah 29, all} viser. And yet somebody actually said to him: ^{Israel 22.} *Go number the people*; and this person seems to have been one of his courtiers, or attendants; who, to give *David* an higher notion of his grandeur, and of the number and strength of his forces, put it into his head, and persuaded him to take the account of them; who, in *Chronicles*, is therefore called *Satan**, or an *adversary*, either designedly or consequentially, both to *David* and his people. And this will exactly agree with what the author of the book of *Chronicles* says: *An adversary stood up against Israel, and provoked, or as the word is rendered in Samuel, moved him against them.* Thus Mr. *Le Clerc* understands this passage, and I think the expressions made use of seem to countenance and warrant the explanation.

But 'tis said §, that *David's* numbering the people is oddly enough imputed to him as a great sin in him to require; for he was but a passive instrument in the affair. But who doth not know, that

* The word שָׂטָן *Satan*, properly signifies an *adversary*, whether to a bad cause, or a good one. In the former sense it is used, Numb. xxii. 22, 23, where the angel of the Lord is said to stand in the way לְשָׂטָן, as an *adversary*, a *Satan* to *Balaam*. In a bad sense it is used, 2 Sam. xix. 22. where *David* calls the sons of *Zeruiah* his *Satan*, or *adversary*. And thus in the place before us: *An adversary* to the peace of *David* and *Israel*, stood up and excited him to number the people; יָסָה excited him by his persuasion and advice; actually saying to him: Go number, &c. Thus *Jezabel* הַסֵּתָה, stirred up her husband *Ahab* to work wickedness; was continually soliciting and urging him to it; 1 Kings xxi. 25. See also Job ii. 3. Deut. xiii. 6.

§ Hist. p. 77.

a man

David ..
over Ju-
dah 29, all
Israel 22.

a man may be hanged for a crime, to which his indictment says : *He was moved by the Devil* ; and because the Devil moved him, is he therefore *a passive instrument*, and free from guilt ? Or doth the being persuaded or moved by another to do a bad action, render the person so moved a passive instrument, or would it excuse him, in a court of justice, from the punishment due to his crimes ?

It is farther objected, that David *was but the instrument of a purpose, confessedly over-ruled to the execution of that purpose by supernatural influence, and that to punish one in such circumstances, would be just as if we should convict a knife or pistol, and discharge the criminal*. If David was the mere instrument of a purpose, and over-ruled by supernatural influence to execute it, the similitude may be allowed. But who ever confessed that David was over-ruled to do it by supernatural power ? David himself did not, but confesses directly the contrary. *David's heart smote him*, and he said unto God : *Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered ? Am not I the person who alone is accountable for it ? Even I it is that have sinned greatly, and done evil indeed, and very foolishly*. David knew it was his own act, and that, who ever advised or instigated him to it, the blame was his own, and his punishment deserved. A confession that would have been absurd and false, if he knew that the influence he acted under, was really supernatural, or such as he could not resist, or over-rule. But as David did not know this, it is impossible any one else should know it. There is nothing in the history to support the assertion. If it was really *Satan* that moved him, he moved him no otherwise than as he doth all other men to that which is wrong ; not by influences which he could not resist, but by those

undue passions and affections which he might David
and ought to have resisted. But if the measure over Ju-
was suggested by one of his own counsellors, as dah29, all
really seems to be the case, it was his duty to Israel 22.
have over-ruled it, and hearkened to the better
advice of *Joab*, who told him of the danger of
it, and would fain have dissuaded him from ex-
ecuting it. The truth is, as I apprehend, that
David's prosperity had too much elated him, and
that being advised by some rash imprudent cour-
tiers to take the number of his people, that he
might better know his strength, and be fully ac-
quainted with the power and grandeur of his
kingdom, his vanity, in this respect, got the
better of his duty; on which, God was pleased
to check the rising presumption of his heart, by
letting him see how vain his dependence on his
forces were, and to punish him and them for their
violation of a law, which he had ordered to be
observed under the severest penalty. For, a-
mongst other commands that were given by God
to *Moses*, this was one*: *When thou takest the sum
of the children of Israel, after their number, then
shall they give every man a ransom for his life; un-
to the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there
be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest
them. This shall they give; every one that passeth
amongst them that are numbered, half a shekel shall
be the offering of the Lord; every one that passeth
amongst them that are numbered, from twenty years
old, and above, shall give this offering to the Lord.
David†, either not thinking of this command, or
thinking himself, as king of Israel exempt from
it, ordered the people to be numbered, without
exacting the ransom from each of them. This*

* Exod. xxx. 12, 13.

† Των Μωυσιως ἐπιταλων ἐκλαδομεῖος. Joseph. Ant. l. vii.
c. 13. §. 1.

David was one of the highest stretches of authority, and
 over Ju- claiming a despotick arbitrary power over the
 dah 29, all people, as seems plain from *Joab's* words to him :
 Israel 22. *Are they not all my Lord's servants?* Why then this
 badge of slavery, to subject them to a cense con-
 trary to the law of *Moses*? It was indeed § assum-
 ing

§ The end of the census, or numbering the people, was to know how many were fit to bear arms, and what sums of money could be collected respectively amongst them. *Servius Tullus* was the first who instituted this census at *Rome* by his own authority, that by knowing the number and estates of the citizens, he might be always able the more easily to recruit his forces, and to tax every one according to his abilities. *Liv. l. 1. c. 42.* To this purpose he commanded all the *Romans* to enter their names in certain tables prepared for the purpose, and the value of what they were worth in money, obliging them by oath to give an exact and true account of both. They were also obliged to write the names of their parents, their respective ages, the names of their wives and children, the cities and villages where they lived, and ordained, that whoever was not thus censured, should be stripped of his fortune, beaten with rods, and sold for a slave. *Dion. Hal. Antiq. l. 4. 15.* Every one sees, that this is one of the highest acts of authority, and claiming the supream, even an arbitrary power over the people. This power, after *Tarquinius* resided in the consuls, and in the year of *Rome* 310, because the consuls were too much engaged to take a proper care of the affair, two persons were appointed to manage this particular business, under the name of *Censors*. *Liv. l. 4. c. 8.* the authority of whom gradually increased to such a height, as that they had the government of the morals and discipline of the *Roman* people; the senate, the *Roman* knights, and all points of honour and infamy were under their jurisdiction; all publick and private courts and buildings, and the revenues of the *Roman* people, were subject to their will and pleasure. *Liv. ibid. Censoris officium erat omnia patrimonii, dignitatis ætatis, artium, officiorumque discrimina in tabulas referre. L. Flor. l. 1. c. 6. Censores populi ævitates, soboles, familias, pecuniasque censento. Cicer. de Leg. l. 3. c. 3.* This high power was lodged in *Augustus*, who made this census three times, and was one of the principal circumstances that contributed to render him absolute Lord over the *Roman* empire. *Sueton. vit. August. c. 27. §. 8.* But in the *Jewish* kingdom absolute power was

ing a prerogative that God reserved to himself, David and a violation of one of the standing laws of the kingdom, for the capitation tax that God had appointed to be taken, whenever they were numbered, was ordered to be paid for the service of the tabernacle, as a memorial, that God was their supream governor and king. But God, to support the dignity of his own constitution; and to put *David* in mind, that tho' king, he was still to limit the exercise of his power by the precepts of the law, gives him by the prophet the option of three punishments, of which *David* chose the plague; recollecting probably, at last, that this was the very punishment threatened by God to the violation of this statute, concerning the numbering the people; as well as for the reason he himself alledges: *Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great.*

It is evident from the history, that this action of *David* was looked upon as a very wrong step, even by *Joab*; who remonstrated against it, as apprehensive of the bad consequences that might attend it; for he says†: *The Lord make his people an hundred times so many more as they be. But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?* And therefore

was vested only in God himself, and therefore he ordered that whenever the people were censured, or numbered, every man numbered should pay half a shekel as a tribute to him; in acknowledgment of his supream dominion and authority over them. *David* therefore, in numbering the people, without ordering them to pay the tribute, invaded the rights of the supream king of *Israel*, and therefore he, for his presumption, and they for submitting to it, were guilty of *læse majestatis*, and justly punished upon account of it.

† 1 Chron xxi. 3. 6.

David
over Ju-
dah 36, all
Israel 29.

Joab counted not *Levi* and *Benjamin*, because the king's word was abominable to him. Probably we do not understand all the circumstances of this affair; but *Joab's* censure of it, who was no scrupulous man, shews that *David's* conduct in it was extremely imprudent, and might subject his people to very great inconveniencies.

But is it not strange, that because *David* sinned in numbering the people, therefore the people should be punished; since of the three punishments propounded to *David* for his choice, one of them must necessarily fall upon his subjects? Possibly this difficulty may be eased, when I put my reader in mind, that kings are no otherwise to be punished in their regal capacities, nor oftentimes to be brought to correct the errors of their administration, but by publick calamities; by famine, pestilence, foreign wars, domestick convulsions, or some other like distresses that affect their people. This *David* thought a punishment; and if it be right at all for God to animadvert on the conduct of princes, or to shew his displeasure against them for the publick errors of their administration, it must be right and fit for him to afflict their people; and indeed this is what continually happens in the common course of providence, and the observation that,

Quicquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi,

is an old and a true one. And if this be a difficulty, it affects natural religion as well as revealed, and the same considerations that will obviate the difficulty in one case, will solve it also in the other. As to the thing itself, that kings are no otherwise to be punished in their regal capacities, but by publick calamities which affect their people, it is, I apprehend, so self evident

and

and certain, as that it can need no proof. Whe- David
 ther princes profit more or less, or nothing, by over ju-
 the misfortunes of their subjects, is nothing to this dah 36, all
 argument. Some bad kings may not profit by it. Israel 29.
 All good kings will. The people's welfare how-
 ever is necessary to the prince's prosperity, and
 secures the principal blessings of his reign, which
 can never be enjoyed without it. On the other
 hand, kings must be affected with, and deeply
 share in the misfortunes of their people; because
 a plague, or a famine, or an hostile invasion, or
 any national calamity, tends to destroy the peace
 of government, or to subvert the foundations of
 it, lessens the revenues of princes, the number
 of their subjects, the profits of labour and in-
 dustry, and interrupts the enjoyment of these ad-
 vantages and pleasures, which regal power and
 plenty can otherwise secure to the possessors of
 them. *David* was most sensibly affected with his
 people's sufferings under that pestilence which
 his imprudence and their neglect had brought
 upon them. How tenderly, how affectionately
 doth he plead with God in their behalf! *Even I*
it is that have sinned. But as for these sheep, what
have they done! What a noble instance of publick
 spirit, and generous concern for the safety of his
 people, doth that moving and pathetick expostu-
 lation manifest, which he made when he saw the
 angel of the Lord standing between heaven and
 earth, with a drawn sword in his hand, stretched
 out over *Jerusalem*, and fell down with his elders,
 all cloathed in sackcloth, upon their faces, and
 thus affectionately interceded for them; *Let thine*
hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and
on my father's house, but not on thy people, that they
should be plagued. Here is the real language and
 spirit of a genuine ποιμην λαων, a true shepherd of the
 people,

David
over Ju-
dah 36, all
Israel 29.



people, devoting himself and family as a sacrifice to God for the salvation of his subjects.

Besides, in this case, the people were themselves very culpable; for the command was absolute: *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul.* And therefore, as they knew, or might have known, that, upon being numbered, they were to pay the prescribed ransom, which yet they neglected or refused to do; as partners in the offence, they justly shared in the penalty inflicted. It is allowed, that the tax was not at this time demanded by *David*; and this was his sin, in setting aside a positive command of God, to gratify his own vanity and pride. The demanding this tax by his own authority might have created a national disturbance, and therefore should have prevented him from numbering his people. But they submitted to be numbered, and were therefore bound to pay the tax, whether *David* demanded it of them or not, for the law did not exempt them from the payment, if he who numbered them did not demand it. They were to pay it as a ransom for their lives, and to exempt themselves from the plague; and were therefore punished with a plague for their neglect and disobedience.

David indeed takes the guilt upon himself, and declares his people innocent of it: *As for these sheep, what have they done?*

*Quid meruere Argi? Me, me, divum optime, solum
Objecisse caput fatis præstabit.*

——— *Satis est. Merui. Ne parcere velles.*

Stat. Theb. 1.

And it is true, that the order to number the people was *David's*, of which his people were wholly
inno-

innocent. But they should have remonstrated a- David
gainst the thing, or voluntarily paid the capita- over Ju-
tion tax required of them; and as they did nei- dah 36, all
ther, *David* was, as *Jacob* foretold him, a caue Israel 29.
of trespass to *Israel*, and they could not plead
innocence, as a reason for their exemption from
punishment. And even supposing they were in-
tirely free from all blame in this affair, were they
so intirely free from all other transgressions, as
that it was injustice in God to visit them by a
pestilence? If not, God did them no injustice by
sending that pestilence; and therefore not by
sending it at that time, and as an immediate pu-
nishment of *David's* sin †. God, by virtue of
his supreme authority over mankind, may resume
life whenever he pleases. If there be no sin, the
resumption of life will be no punishment; if
there be, the resumption of it will not be unjust,
tho' the immediate reason of that resumption may
be for the punishment of another; especially, as
all such instances have a real tendency to promote
the publick good, and to preserve alive, in the
minds both of princes and people, that reve-
rence for deity, without which neither publick
nor private virtue can subsist, nor the prosperity
of kingdoms ever be secured and established
upon solid and lasting foundations.

Upon this solemn humiliation of *David*, and
intercession with God for his people, the prophet
Gad was sent to him the same day, with an order
that he should rear up an altar unto the Lord,

† *Deus quidem ob Davidis peccatum, populum pestilentia con-*
fecit; et quidem, ut David cenjet, innocentem. Sed Deus in vi-
tam ipsorum jus habet plenissimum. Interim, hæc pœna erat non
populi, sed Davidit. Nam ut ait scriptor Christianus: Acer-
bissimum est delinquentibus regibus supplicium, id quod populis in-
figitur. Grot. de J. B. et P. l. ii. c. 21. Sect. 17.

David in the threshing floor of *Arauna* the *Jebusite*, the hill where *Solomon's* temple was afterwards built. over Ju- dah 36, all Israel 29. *David* accordingly purchased the ground, built an altar unto the Lord, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, whereby the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague, which had raged from *Dan* to *Beersheba*, was stayed from *Israel*, the city of *Jerusalem* being mercifully spared, and exempted from this dreadful calamity. After this, *David* encouraged by the gracious token God had given him of his acceptance at this threshing floor of *Arauna*, by the fire from heaven that consumed his burnt offering, continued to offer upon the altar he had erected in this place; and publickly declared: * *This is the house of the Lord God, this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel*; hereby consecrating this place for the erection of the temple, and to be the seat and center of the publick worship for all the tribes of *Israel*.

On the whole, if they who object, credit the history of the Old Testament in this part of it, and think it true, that one of these three plagues was offered to *David*, as the punishment of his offence; that he chose the pestilence, that it came accordingly, and was removed upon *David's* intercession; they are as much concerned to account for the difficulties of the affair, as I or any other person can be. If they do not believe this part of the history, as the sacred writings represent it, let them give us the account of it as it stands in their own imagination; and tell us, whether there was any plague at all, how, and why it came, and how it went and disappeared so all of a sudden. In their account, whatever it be, *David* will stand certainly clear of every imputation;

* 1 Chron. xxii. 1.

and, according to the scripture narration, he will be an offender, but only against the statute law of the kingdom, as usurping an authority and dispensing power that did not belong to him, but not against any law of God, of original, intrinsic, and immutable obligation. as far as we can judge by the short and imperfect account that is left us of this transaction; and so may still be *the man after God's own heart*.

C H A P. X.

Of David and the Shunamite.

DAVID being now grown into years, in his seventieth year, or ready to enter on it, experienced a great decay in his natural vigour and warmth, insomuch that tho' he was well covered with cloaths, he could get no heat. His servants took what they thought the most effectual method to relieve him. What that was, no one is ignorant of. The fault that some persons find in this account is, not with *David*, but his physicians; for, tho' 'tis allowed, that *the application of a young woman to an old man may be a proper remedy to impart some juvenile heat to him*, yet 'tis thought difficult to conceive, why beauty should be a necessary quality in the medicine. Whether it be a necessary quality or not, I suppose the medicine is never the worse, and doth not loose any part of its calefactory quality, for the beauty of it. It was a remedy for a king.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

'Tis thought possible that David might direct the delicacy of the choice. It is possible, but the history doth not say it, but seems plainly to insinuate the contrary; and Mr. B. says, that when it came into their heads to seek for a young girl to nurse him, and lie with him, he suffered them

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel³³.

to bring him for that purpose the most beautiful maiden that could be found. So that *David* was only passive in the affair. If it was directed by the physicians, we are told, *it indicated a very insufficient knowledge of the animal œconomy*. I am of a contrary opinion, and think that *David's* physicians judged extremely right of the animal œconomy, for reasons so obvious, as that they need not be particularly mentioned. They plainly seem to have known what they were about; and that the effect of the prescription was very gentle and safe, appears from what is inserted, which indeed there is no reason to controvert: *That the king knew her not*.

But Mr. *B.* finds fault with *David* himself, and not with his physicians, and asks: Can this be said to be the action of a very chaste man? Will a man who is filled with the ideas of purity, and perfectly resolved to do what decency and strict morality require of him, ever consent to these remedies? But whoever pretended that *David* was a very chaste man, as Chastity implies the confining one's self to a single wife? It was a chastity which the law that *David* lived under did not oblige him to; and therefore it is no wonder that *David's* mind was not filled with these ideas of purity and chastity that *B.* speaks of. And therefore, what *David* resolved to do, *viz.* to admit the beautiful maiden they brought to him, might be perfectly reconcileable with the decency of those times, and the strictest morality which was then thought necessary to be practised. Mr. *B.* farther asks: Can a man consent to such remedies, unless he prefers the instincts of nature, and the interests of the flesh, before those of God's spirit? If God's spirit had never taught *David* the unlawfulness of such remedies, and *David* in his conscience did not think them unlawful, then

then he might follow the instincts of nature, and David the interests of the flesh, in this instance, without preferring them to those of God's spirit. Mr. B. should have proved, that *David* had the instructions of God's spirit, teaching him the unlawfulness of such a remedy, before he had charged him with preferring the interests of the flesh to those of God's spirit.

over Ju-
dah 40, all
Ira. 33.

C H A P. XI.

Adonijah's rebellion, and Solomon appointed king.

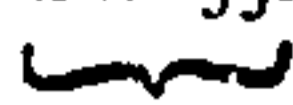
SOON after the introduction of *Abishag* to *David*, happened the usurpation of *Adonijah*, the son of *Haggith*, the king's eldest son then living, who exalted himself, saying: *I will be king*, without the knowledge and consent of his father *David*, or the principal persons of his court. This treasonable conspiracy he had concerted with *Joab* and *Abiathar*, who supported his pretensions by their advice and interest. As he was the eldest son, he had persuaded all his brethren into his measures, and seduced the servants of *David*, who were of the tribe of *Judah*, to join with him in his defection. It was unquestionably known in *David's* family, and to *Adonijah* himself, that *David* intended the succession to his crown for *Solomon*. This he had solemnly promised to *Bathsheba*, and to prevent this appointment, if possible, *Adonijah* resolved to seize the crown before hand, tho' contrary to his father's will; and therefore having laid his plan, he appointed a feast, got together his friends, and declared himself king, his followers crying out: *God save king Adonijah*.

Zadok the priest, *Benaiah* the general, *Nathan* the prophet, and some other great men, were
not

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

not with *Adonijah*, i. e. not of his party, but firmly in the interest of *Solomon*, and therefore when *Adonijah* made his inauguration feast, he invited not one of these persons, nor his brother *Solomon* in whose interest they were. With this conspiracy and usurpation *Nathan* first acquaints *Bathsheba*, and she the king, whose account *Nathan* himself confirmed, being introduced to the king, before she had quite finished her relation, according to the agreement previously made between them for this purpose. *David* recollecting on this occasion his vigour and resolution, orders *Solomon* to be immediately proclaimed king; he was anointed as such by *Zadok* the priest, and the whole ground rent as it were by the joyful acclamations of the people: *God save king Solomon*.

It is evident from this short account, that *Nathan*, and the other great personages with him, were never of *Adonijah*'s party, but known to be in the interest of *Solomon*, and for this reason were not invited to *Adonijah*'s inauguration feast, which they knew to be a treasonable one; for what can be an higher degree of treason, than the proclaiming a son a king during the king his father's life time, without his knowledge, and contrary to his consent? Loyalty therefore and affection to the king, and their desire to have the succession to the crown settled by his appointment and order, especially as *Zadok* and *Nathan* could not but know, that *David* acted under a divine direction in this important affair, were the great motives on which they acted, in their endeavours to prevent *Adonijah*'s usurpation, the deposition of the good old king, and the destruction of *Solomon* and *Bathsheba*, which would have certainly followed the establishment of *Adonijah* on the throne.

In opposition to this it hath been asserted, that David *what ruined* Adonijah, when he treasonably usurped ^{over Ju-} the kingdom in his father's life-time, saying: *I* ^{dah 40, all} *will be king*, without his knowledge and concur- ^{Israel 33.}  *rence, was his not inviting Nathan † the prophet; that it was there the grudge began, and the exclusion from this merry bout caused the prophet's loyalty to exert itself, which might probably have been suppressed by a due share of Adonijah's good cheer. In proof of this 'tis said, we shall find a remark §, that Nathan was not called to the feast, and that the very next verse || begins: WHEREFORE Nathan spake to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, &c. But, in the Hebrew text, there is no such word as wherefore; nothing but a prefix, that signifies plain, AND. Happy for honest Nathan, that the whole fabrick of this charge tumbles at once to the ground.*

But supposing *wherefore* had been in the text, and it should be allowed to render the prefix by this word, what will be the inference? What, that the cause of *Adonijah's* ruin was his not inviting *Nathan* to the feast; and that he spake to *Bathsheba*, merely because of his exclusion from the merry bout? By no means. For the text says, not only that *Nathan* was not invited, but that *Nathan, Benaiah, the mighty men, and Solomon, his brother, he called not*; and the next verse begins: *And, or, Wherefore, Nathan spake to Bathsheba, i. e. because neither he, nor any of the others, were invited: And therefore, according to the text, Nathan's not being invited was no more the cause of Adonijah's ruin, than the not inviting Benaiah, the mighty men, and even Solomon himself, who might probably, as well as Nathan, if this reasoning be good, have*

† 1 Kings i. 5, &c. § Ibid. || Ibid. ver. 11.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.



suppressed his loyalty to his father, and fallen in with *Adonijah*, to the exclusion of himself from the throne, had *Adonijah* invited him to partake of his fatted sheep and oxen. If we allow the prefix *wherefore* to be rendered, *wherefore*, it must refer to the whole preceding paragraph; *Adonijah's* setting up for king, his being joined by *Joab* and *Abiathar*, his making a feast to get himself proclaimed, and his excluding from it all who would have opposed him; as appears from the reason given, why *Nathan* spake to *Bathsheba*, which was what affected *Benaiah*, *Zadok*, and the mighty men, as well as *Nathan*; and especially *Bathsheba* and *Solomon*; for *Nathan* said to her*: *Let me give thee counsel, that thou mayst save thy own life, and the life of thy son Solomon*; who would have been an immediate sacrifice, had *Adonijah* succeeded in his treason, that he might have rid himself of a dangerous rival to the throne; which *Bathsheba* herself foresaw, when she told the king†: *It shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be accounted offenders.*

This will farther appear from what *Bathsheba* says to *David*‡: *Adonijah hath slain oxen, and called all the sons of the king, but Solomon thy servant hath been not called.* Now if what hath been given as the reason of *Nathan's* loyalty exerting itself, viz. his exclusion from *Adonijah's* feast, be just, by the same rule of interpretation, *Bathsheba* and *Solomon* were as liquorish as the prophet; and her grudge also against *Adonijah* began, not because he did not call *Nathan*, but because he did not invite *Solomon* to the feast; and his exclusion from the merry bout caused her loyalty to exert itself, which might probably, upon this

* 1 Kings i. 12. † Ibid. ver. 21. ‡ Ibid. ver. 19.

scheme,

scheme, have been suppressed by a share of *David* *Adonijah's* good cheer. So that *Bathsheba* actually over Ju- clears the prophet from the charge that hath been dah. 40, all so absurdly advanced against him. *Israel 33.*

In like manner also *Nathan* speaks to the king†. *He is gone down, and hath slain oxen, &c. and behold they eat and drink before him, and say: God save king Adonijah.* Who doth not see, that the feast here is only mentioned upon account of the treasonable affairs which were there transacted, at which *Joab*, *Abiathar*, and their faction proclaimed *Adonijah* king, without the knowledge of *David* and his principal ministers; to defeat his oath, and set aside the succession of *Solomon* to the throne? And when he farther complains, *but me, even me, even me, thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called;* he could mean nothing more, than that *Adonijah* had not acquainted them with his purpose, taken them into his counsels, asked their consent, nor invited them to his inauguration feast, that they might not oppose his measures, nor take the proper steps to frustrate them. That this is the proper meaning appears not only from the nature of the whole transaction, but from what the prophet immediately adds: *Is this thing done by my Lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it to thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?* i. e. Is *Adonijah's* feast, his proclaiming himself king, and our exclusion from all share in this great transaction, by the king's consent and order?

But, as tho' all these things had been of no importance to the prophet, and he had no sense of duty to his prince, no principles of conscience to govern him, no concern for *Solomon's* and *Bath-*

† 1 Kings 1. 25, 26, 27.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

Sheba's safety, nor regard for his own preservation, we are told, that when Nathan acquainted David with Adonijah's conduct, the liquorish prophet could not forget his loss of the banquet; but it being foremost in his mind, he complains to the king of it, in an earnest manner: But me, even me, thy servant——hath he not called; which spoke the cause of his officious loyalty pretty plain. Officious loyalty, to tell the king of his son's usurping the throne, and of Joab's and Abiathar's concurrence with him in the treason! How admirable are these sentiments of loyalty! But did not Nathan as earnestly complain too, in the same breath, to the king, tho' this circumstance hath been suppressed, that Adonijah had not called Zadok, and Benaiah, and Solomon; and thereby, good man, seem to take it in equal dudgeon, that they also had no share in the good cheer? But the loss of the banquet was foremost in his mind. But that doth not seem true, because it was not foremost in his mouth; for he first tells the king of Adonijah's usurpation, and that Joab and Abiathar were accomplices in his treason, and then mentions his and the other persons not being invited; not as complaining of their being excluded from the feast, but with a becoming indignation at the feast itself, and that such transactions should be carried on at it, as made it necessary that the king's most faithful servants, and principal ministers of state, and even the prophet of the Lord; that very prophet by whom God promised David, that he would establish his house and kingdom, and raise him a son that should build an house for his name, should be excluded from it, and the king himself be kept wholly ignorant of the intention of it. The loss therefore of*

* P. 81.

the banquet could not be the cause of the prophet's loyalty, which was long before this too well known to *Adonijah* and his party. Yea, it was so far from this, as that the history plainly intimates to us, his loyalty was the real cause of his being excluded from the banquet. For the connection of the history is this †: That *Joab* and *Abiathar* following *Adonijah*, helped him, but *Zadok*, and *Benaiah*, and *Nathan*—were not with *Adonijah*, i. e. did not help, favour, and join him; that *Adonijah* called all his brethren, the king's sons, and all the men of *Judah*, who were the king's servants, to his feast; but that *Nathan* the prophet, and *Benaiah*, and *Solomon*, he invited not; viz. because he knew they were not with him, and out of loyalty to his father would oppose his usurpation.

It is said however, that *the probability of Nathan's being corrupted was not surely less than that of David's sons*. But there is no probability against facts. They actually were corrupted, *Nathan* was not; and they were not corrupted by being invited to the feast, but invited to the feast because previously corrupted. And therefore *Nathan's* not being invited to the feast, was a certain evidence that *Adonijah* knew him incapable of corruption, and refused to invite him on that very account. Besides, there was much more probability that the king's sons should be corrupted, and drawn into the scheme of making their eldest brother king, than that *Nathan* should be corrupted. For there is no doubt, but that as they knew that *Solomon*, the youngest of them all, was designed by their father to succeed him, they bare him an ill will, and envied him for being thus preferred before them; and because they

† 1 Kings i. 7—10.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

were every one of them excluded from the succession in favour of him. It was natural therefore they should all fall in with *Adonijah* the eldest, because by siding with him, they were asserting their own right of succession, each in his turn, as circumstances and accidents might happen in their favour. But there was nothing to induce *Nathan* to forfeit his allegiance to *David*, especially as his own connections with *Bathsheba* and *Solomon* had rendered him already obnoxious to *Adonijah*, and for which he must have fallen, with *Bathsheba* and *Solomon*, a sacrifice to that prince, had his ambition and usurpation proved successful.

This is the real account of *Nathan's* conduct, founded on motives of duty to the king, regard for his honour † and oath, and the peaceable settlement of the crown after his decease; and had the motive to his loyalty been what it hath been represented to be, his being excluded from *Adonijah's* good cheer, and had he complained of this exclusion to the king, it would have been complaining of himself for not having joined in the treason and rebellion with *Adonijah* and his accomplices, and confessing that his information now was not owing to his loyalty, but to disappointment and resentment. For *Adonijah's* feast was an open rebellion against his father and king, where all who attended and favoured him, forfeited their lives for being principals in the guilt with him.

David having thus exalted *Solomon* to his throne, considering with himself that he was very young and tender, sent for him, and gave him in charge to build an house for the Lord God, telling him, that he himself had intended it, but that as he

† 1 Kings i. 17.

had made great wars, and shed much blood in David them, God would not permit him to carry his design into execution; but withal promised him, ^{over Judah, 40, all Israel 33.} that a son should be born to him, under whose reign he would give peace and quietness to *Israel*, and that he should build an house to his name. He then exhorts him to undertake the work, prays that God would give him wisdom and understanding, and assures him he should prosper if he kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord by *Moses*. He then acquaints him with the preparations of gold, silver, materials, and workmen, of all sorts, that he had already made towards the edifice, and commanded all the princes of the people to assist him in erecting it, as they were now in a state of great prosperity and perfect peace. He then divided the *Levites* and the sons of *Aaron* into their several orders and stations, and appointed to each of them their distinct offices and services, in every thing relating to the temple, and the solemn worship to be performed in it. Some time after this, *David* assembled all the princes of *Israel*, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies, that ministered to him by course, with the officers and mighty men unto *Jerusalem*, and standing upon his feet, he made the following speech to them. “Hear
 “ye, my brethren and my people: I had determined in my own mind to have built an house,
 “where the ark of the covenant of the Lord
 “might perpetually abide, and for the footstool
 “of the throne of our God, and have made great
 “preparations for erecting this building. But
 “from this I was prevented by the order of God,
 “who, by his prophet, said to me, thou shalt
 “not build an house for my name, because thou
 “hast been engaged in many wars, and thereby

David
over Ju-
dah & all
Israel 33.

“ hast shed much blood. However the Lord
“ God of *Israel* chose me, before all the house
“ of my father, to be king over *Israel* for ever ;
“ for he hath chosen in *Judah* the ruler, and in
“ the house of *Judah*, the house of my father,
“ and among the sons of my father, he took plea-
“ sure in me to make me reign over all *Israel* ;
“ and from all my sons, for the Lord hath given
“ me many sons, he hath chosen *Solomon* my son
“ to sit upon the throne of the Lord over all *Is-
“ rael*. And he said unto me, *Solomon* thy son,
“ he shall build my house, and my courts, for I
“ have chosen him to be my son, and I will be
“ to him a father. And I will establish his king-
“ dom for ever, if he firmly bind himself to
“ do my commandments and judgments, as they
“ are observed at this day. Now therefore, in
“ the presence of all *Israel*, the congregation
“ of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God,
“ I beseech you, observe and diligently follow all
“ the commands of the Lord your God, that you
“ may inherit this good land, and leave it for an
“ inheritance to your children after you for ever.
“ And thou, *Solomon* my son, acknowledge thou
“ the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a
“ perfect heart, and with a willing mind ; for
“ the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth
“ every imagination of the thoughts. If thou
“ diligently seek him, he will be found of thee,
“ and if thou forsake him, he will reject thee
“ for ever. Observe now, that the Lord hath
“ chosen thee to build an house for a sanctuary.
“ Be resolute and perform it.”

No one who reads over this speech of *David's*
before this grand assembly, but must admire the
prudence and piety that appear in it. He was
now grown old, he had advanced *Solomon* to the
throne,

throne, who was young and unexperienced, had David elder brethren that might envy his advancement, and endeavour to disturb the settlement that was made in his favour, and was appointed to build the temple of the Lord; a work of immense expence, and that would require prodigious labour. To secure the affection and fidelity of all the principal persons thus assembled, he puts them in mind that he chose the tribe of *Judah* before all the others, as the tribe in which the regal power should be established, his father's house before all the other families of that tribe, himself before all his brethren to be king of *Israel*, and *Solomon* preferable to all his other sons to succeed him in the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over *Israel*, and that he had commanded him to build his house, and the courts belonging to it, promising to establish his kingdom, if he continued faithful and diligent in keeping his commandments. This would have argued the greatest possible imprudence and folly, had not the assembly well known, that the divine appointment *David* appealed to was real; but on the supposition that it was so, nothing could be a more prudent step than this to reconcile the affections of the people to *Solomon's* interest, and secure him in the peaceable possession of the throne after him. And his solemn exhortation to the states of his kingdom, and his son, to keep all the commandments of God, was a noble proof of his real piety, and his concern for the publick welfare; as he knew this was the only method by which the national prosperity could be secured.

Having said this, by divine inspiration, he gave *Solomon* patterns*, draughts, or models, of all the

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 11---13.

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel 33.

porches and buildings belonging to the temple, the order of the courses he had fixed for the priests and *Levites*, an account of the gold and silver he had provided for all the instruments and vessels that were to be made use of in the solemnities of the temple service; the candlesticks and lamps, the table of shew-bread, the altar of incense, and the cherubim that covered with their wings the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And then addressing himself to *Solomon*, said: “All these things the Lord made me to understand by description, by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern;” or, as I should rather render the words; the pattern of all these works. “Be strong, and of good courage, and do it. Be not afraid nor dismayed; for the Lord my God is with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord. And behold the course of the priests and *Levites* shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God, and there shall be with thee, for all manner of workmanship, every willing skilful man for any manner of service. All the princes also, and all the people, will be wholly at thy commandment.”

But *David* had yet a farther view in convening this assembly of the states of his kingdom, and that was yet more effectually to secure their assistance to his son and successor, in carrying on and compleating the building of the temple, by persuading them to a liberal contribution towards this important service. And therefore he thus farther addressed them.

“*Solomon* †, my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is young and tender, and the work is

† 1 Chron. xxix. 1, &c.

“ great

“ great, for the palace is not for man, but for ^{David}
 “ the Lord God. I have therefore, with the ^{over Ju-}
 “ utmost zeal and power, prepared gold and ^{dah40, all}
 “ silver, and brass, and wood, for all things ^{Israel 33.}
 “ that are to be made out of these several
 “ materials, and all manner of precious stones,
 “ and marble stones in abundance. Besides, as
 “ I have set my affection towards the house of
 “ my God, I have gold and silver that is my pe-
 “ culiar property, which I will give for the house
 “ of my God, above all that I have otherwise
 “ prepared for the house of the sanctuary; the
 “ gold for things of gold, and the silver for
 “ things of silver, and for all manner of work to
 “ be made by the hands of the artificers. And
 “ who now will willingly offer with a full hand
 “ this day unto the Lord ?”

This truly royal munificence of *David* inspired a noble generosity into the whole assembly, and each ambitious to imitate the glorious liberality of their prince, willingly made their offering to the same sacred service, rejoicing to contribute their share, and doing it with a perfect heart, out of an unfeigned affection to the God of *Israel*, and a fervent desire to erect a temple to his name and honour. Their contribution amounted to five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand of brass, an hundred thousand of iron, besides precious stones, that were paid into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

David's heart was filled with pleasure when he saw how willingly and bountifully the assembly contributed towards carrying on the service he had recommended to them, and, in the fulness of his joy, he thus gloriously addressed himself in thanksgivings to his God.

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel³³.

“ Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, God of *Israel*,
 “ our Father, for ever and for ever. To thee
 “ belong greatness, power, glory, victory, and
 “ majesty. For all that is in the heaven and in
 “ the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O
 “ Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head over
 “ all. Riches and honour are from thy presence,
 “ for thou rulest over all, and in thy hand and
 “ disposal is power and might ; in thy hand to
 “ make great, and strengthen every one thou
 “ pleatest. And now, O our God, we make
 “ our acknowledgments to thee, and praise thy
 “ glorious name. But who am I, and what is
 “ my people, that we should be able willingly
 “ to offer, as we have now done ? But all things
 “ are from thee, and of what we have received
 “ from thy hand, we have given unto thee. For
 “ we are strangers before thee and sojourners, as
 “ all our fathers were. As a shadow are our
 “ days on earth, and there is no hope of long
 “ continuance here. All this store therefore, O
 “ Jehovah our God, which we have provided to
 “ build an house to the name of thy holiness, is
 “ from thy hand ; for thine are all things. But
 “ I know, O my God, that thou searchest the
 “ heart, and that thou approvest every instance
 “ of integrity. As for me, in the uprightness
 “ of my heart, I have freely offered up all these
 “ things ; and I have also seen with joy, that thy
 “ people who are present here, have offered freely
 “ and liberally to thee. O Jehovah, thou God
 “ of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Israel*, our fathers, let
 “ this be thy care, perpetually to form the
 “ thoughts of the hearts of thy people, so as to
 “ prepare their hearts towards thyself. And to
 “ *Solomon*, my son, give thou a perfect heart,
 “ that he may observe thy precepts, thy testimo-
 “ nies,

“ nies, and thy statutes; and that he may do
 “ every thing and build the palace, towards
 “ which I have made the necessary prepara-
 “ tions.”

David
 over Ju-
 dah 40, all
 Israel 33.

When the king had thus finished his address to Jehovah, the God of *Israel*, he ordered the whole assembly publickly to bless the God of their fathers. They immediately offered him their solemn praises, and, in token of their acknowledging him as their God, bowed themselves down before him, and then made their obeisance and did homage to the king. This done, they offered their sacrifices, feasted on them with great joy before the Lord, confirmed *David's* choice of *Solomon*, to succeed him, and anointed him the second time as king over *Israel*.

I confess I never read this transaction without surprise and pleasure. The address to the Almighty is with great dignity and propriety. The sentiments of the Deity expressed in it, are rational and sublime. He acknowledges God as infinitely great and powerful, as encompassed with glory, as the author of victory, as cloathed with majesty, as the great proprietor of heaven and earth, as universal sovereign, supreme in dominion, the great source of riches and honour, having the kingdoms of the earth in his disposal, and as distributing greatness, and power, and prosperity, to whomsoever he pleases; as the searcher of the heart, as approving integrity, and more pleased with the right disposition of the giver, than the offering he presents. And having owned that his own and his people's prosperity were owing to his goodness, and solemnly prayed they might constantly adhere to their God, and his son be a pattern to them of religious subjection and obedience, he excites them to a publick and general adoration of God, and thus accomplished the

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

great scheme he had at heart, the peaceable succession of *Solomon* his son to his throne and kingdom. It is scarce possible to conceive of any solemnity more truly grand and royal than this; a solemnity heightened by religion, honoured by the presence of a powerful prince and the states of his kingdom, increased by the magnificence and plenty of the entertainment, brightened by the joy and gladness of the whole assembly, and that concluded by such a settlement of the government, as produced an almost forty years of uninterrupted prosperity and peace. Upon this occasion *David* penned the following admirable ode.

PSALM LXXII.

Ver. 1. O God, give the knowledge of thy laws to the king,

And the love of that righteousness in which thou delightest, to the king's son.

2. Let him judge thy people in righteousness, And thy poor according to justice.

3. Let the mountains and hills produce the plenteous fruits of peace:

Ver. 1. I do not apprehend, with the generality of interpreters, that by *the king*, and *the king's son*, David means himself and his son, but *Solomon* only, to whom both the titles agree, as he was *David's* son, and anointed by him king during his life time; and as the first part of the psalm is precatory, I have rendered the verbs generally in that form, except where the sense and connection seemed to require a different translation.

2. בצדקה. *Propter justitiam*, because of righteousness, or the general prevalence of it, during *Solomon's* reign. The preposition is frequently used in this sense. *Nold.*

3. שלום. *Peace*; here used for that prosperity, ease, and plenty, which is the effect of peace, when the mountains and hills are cultivated and tilled, and so made capable of producing an abundance of grain, tho' naturally full of stones and barren.

4. Thro'

4. Thro' the prevalence of righteousness in the land,
 Let him judge with equity the poor of the people:
 Let him save the children of the needy,
 And crush him that oppressed them.

David
 over Ju-
 dah & O, all
 Israel 33.

5. Let both high and low equally reverence
 him, throughout all generations,
 Whilst the sun and moon shall endure.

6. Let his government be gentle and refreshing,
 As the rain that descends on the mown grafs,
 And as the plentiful showers that sweep thro'
 the earth.

7. Let

6. על גן. Upon the mowen grafs. The verb גן properly signifies, *secuit, refecuit, to cut, or, cut down*. Hence it signifies a *fleece* of wooll, Deut. xviii. 4. and is applied to the cutting of the grafs; and the substantive here used signifies mowen grafs, or a field of grafs, after it is mowen down.

Ibid. כרביבים. Interpreters differ as to the meaning of this word. *Schmidius* renders it *guttae, drops*. *Le Clerc*, by *tenuis pluviae*, small thin rains or showers. But this sense doth not seem to agree with the certain meaning of the root רבב from whence it comes, which includes the idea of *large* and *great*, copious and abundant. And רביב is certainly used of showers in general, without any regard to the smallness of the drops. Jer. iii. 3.---14. 22. Yea, it seems to denote a large and soaking shower. Ps. lxxv. 10. *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou makest it soft, or, as the word signifies, thou dissolvest it with showers*. So also here, larger showers are more refreshing to fields lately mown, than small and drizzling ones.

Ibid. זרזק. The word is only found in this place, and no wonder interpreters differ about the meaning of it. *Cocceius* renders it *impregnatio, maceratio*, rains that impregnate, macerate, or dissolve the earth. *Le Clerc* renders it by *fissurae terrae*, the fissures, or the chinks in the ground; because, as he says, *melius aihil occurrebat*. The 70th by *καζυσαι, stilantes, dropping*. The word is certainly a compound of two, and as the learned Mr. *Schultens* thinks of זרזק *sparsit, to scutter*, and זק which in the *Arabick* language signifies, *traxit per terram caudam, vel syrma vestimenti*, he drew along
 the

David
over Ju-
dah 29, all
Israel 22.

7. Let the righteous be exalted and grow prosperous in his days,
And let there be an established peace till the moon shall be no more.

8. Let his dominion reach from sea to sea,
And from the river *Euphrates* to the ends of the earth.

9. Let the inhabitants of the deserts bow down in his presence,
And his enemies be reduced to the lowest degree of humiliation,
So as to lick the dust before him.

10. Let the kings of *Tarshish* and the deserts, bring him presents,
The kings of *Sheba* and *Seba* offer gifts to him as his tributaries.

11. Yea let all kings fall prostrate before him,
Let all the nations serve him.

12. For he will deliver the poor from oppression when he cries out to him for assistance,
And the afflicted when there is none to help him.

the ground the tail, or trail of a garment; which, by a very natural figure is applied to showers, that spread themselves over, and sweep along the ground. I have therefore rendered the two words, by *large sweeping showers*.

8. *From sea to sea*. This may mean from the *Sinus Arabicus* to the *Mediterranean* sea, or, may relate more generally to the extent of his power by sea. 1 Kin. 26---28. His fleets sailed from *Exion-Geber* on the coast of the *Red Sea* to *Ophir*, or *India*, from whence he fetched large quantities of gold, and other things the peculiar produce of that country. The meaning of the prayer will then be, that God would prosper him in all his naval affairs, and make the most distant countries contribute to his riches and grandeur. See ver. 10. where the kings of the *Indian* and *Tarshish* isles, are mentioned as presenting him with gifts.

Ibid. *From the river to the ends of the earth*. The river properly means the *Euphrates*, which was the boundary of the promised land to the east side, and the ends of the earth denote the whole tract of country along the *Mediterranean* sea.

13. He

13. He will have compassion upon the wretched
and needy,
And save the lives of the needy.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

14. He will redeem their lives from the at-
tempts of perfidy and violence,
And will no more suffer their blood to be unjustly
shed than that of the greatest of his subjects.

15. Let him long live, and let the gold of
Sheba be presented unto him:
Let every one pray for him continually,
And every day supplicate blessings upon him.

16. Let there be but an handful of corn thrown
on the land upon the top of the mountains,
Yet

צִיָּה. The word is derived from a root which signifies *aridus fuit*, he was dry or thirsty, and is applied to barren grounds, or deserts, parched up for want of springs and rains; and means here, and in the next verse, the inhabitants of those desert countries, and particularly the people and kings of *Arabia Deserta*. The kings of *Arabia* are expressly said to bring gifts, or pay tribute to *Solomon*. 1 Kin. x. 15. *Sheba* and *Seba* are also countries of *Arabia*, and the queen of *Sheba* brought him the most valuable presents.

14. *Precious shall be their blood in his sight*. i. e. He shall look upon the life of the poor, to be as really valuable as those of others, and will not suffer their blood to be shed with impunity.

16. *There shall be an handful of corn*. Let there be, or tho' there be, but an handful of corn thrown into the ground on the top of the mountains, in stony barren ground, it shall produce an abundant increase. פֶּסֶת בָּר. *Le Clerc* renders it *copia frumenti*, plenty of corn, and derives it from the *Chaldee* פָּסַת which signifies *expandit*, *diffudit se*. It stretched and spread itself abroad. *Schmadius*, on the contrary, by *exiguum tritici*, a small quantity of corn. The ancients here give us but very little assistance. But the more probable, or certain meaning, is, a very small quantity, or handful of corn. For the root פָּסַת, from whence the word comes, signifies, *defecit*, *expiravit*. See Ps. xii. 2. פָּסוּ שְׂתוּגִים *expirarunt*, *penitus terra defecerunt fideles*. The faithful almost utterly fail from amongst men. Hence פָּס יָדָה *expirations*,

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

Yet the produce of it shall arise with such plenty
and strength,

As that it shall wave as the cedars of *Lebanon*,

And the inhabitants of the city shall flourish and
increase as the grass upon the ground.

17. Let his name continue for ever and ever
in honour,

Let his name be perpetuated by a numerous
posterity whilst the sun shall last.

18. Let men be blessed in him,

And let all the nations proclaim him blessed.

19. Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of *Israel*,
Whose wond'rous works surpass those of all cre-
ated beings.

And let his glorious name be for ever celebrated,
And let the whole earth be filled with his glory;
Acknowledge his supreme Majesty and adore it.
Amen, and Amen.

David having settled this great affair of *Solo-
mon's* succession to his throne, but a little before
his death sends for him, and gave him a particu-
lar charge, in reference to two state criminals,
Joab and *Shimei*. That to *Joab* is in these words.

extremities manus, the extream ends of the finger. And thus
in the text before us, the פֶּסֶת בֶּרֶךְ may either be, the
smallest remains of corn, or a small handful that one may
take up with the tops of the fingers. *Vid. Schult.* in Prov.
xxvi. 20. Even such an handful of corn, thrown upon the
tops of the mountains, should arise in such a large and plen-
tiful increase, as that its waving and rustling on the hills
should resemble the shaking and noise made by the ce-
dars on *Mount Lebanon*. It is a strong figure, but well de-
notes the great increase and strength of the standing corn.

16. *The inhabitants of the city shall flourish.* יִצְיִצוּ מֵעִיר.
Literally. *They shall flourish from the city.* i. e. the men who
inhabit it, as the grass in the ground. Such elipses are
common in the oriental languages.

17. *His name shall be perpetuated by a numerous posterity.*
יָיִן שְׁמוֹ. *Scholeset nomen ejus.* His name shall be propa-
gated by a numerous posterity. *Vid. Schult.* in Prov. xxix. 21.
† *Thou*

† *Thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah David did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was upon his loins, and in his shoes that were upon his feet; i. e. treacherously, and under pretence of peace and friendship, besprinkled his girdle and wet his shoes with the blood of these two generals, as tho' he had slain them in battle. But do thou according to thy wisdom, and let not his boar head go down to the grave in peace.* Here are three murthers *David* mentions to *Solomon* as the ground of this charge, not to let him die a natural death. The one intimated. *Thou knowest what he did to me*, viz. when he cruelly stabbed *Absalom*, contrary to my immediate orders; the two others expressly mentioned; thole of *Abner* and *Amasa*; on these accounts he advises him to put him to death; and I allow *David's* dying advice, or rather order, in this instance, to be peremptory and absolute; and, if I understand any thing of justice and equity, it was an order worthy of a good king; and fit to be given in the last moments of his life. The reader will remember, that the facts are these. Upon *Abner's* reconciliation with *David*, and bringing over the people to his interest, *Joab* out of revenge for his brother *Asabel's* death, whom *Abner*, forced to it by *Asabel's* rashness, had unwillingly slain, and probably envying him the glory of settling *David* on the throne of *Israel*, and afraid of his being placed at the head of the *Hebrew* army, as the reward of so signal a service, under the pretence of a friendly salutation, in the most base and cowardly manner,

† 1 Kin. ii. 5, 6.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

stabbed him unexpectedly to the heart. *David* highly resented this murder, followed *Abner's* corps to the grave, and to shew what part he would have acted immediately, had it been in his power, says †: *I am this day weak, tho' anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too hard for me. The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.* After the rebellion under *Abshalom* was ended, *David* thought this a proper opportunity to shew his displeasure to *Joab*; and as he imagined it would be an acceptable thing to the people of *Israel*, who were now zealous to restore the king to his throne, he ordered it to be signified to *Amasa*, who had been their general in the rebellion, that he would constitute him captain-general of his armies in the room of *Joab*, and actually appointed him, as such, to assemble the forces of *Judah*, and suppress the new insurrection under *Sheba*. As *Amasa* was returning with his troops, *Joab* meets him, and with a compliment and a kiss, thrust his sword through his body, and laid him at a single blow dead at his feet; and immediately usurped the command of the army, quelled the insurrection, and returned to *Jerusalem*.

And now, reader, let me appeal to thy conscience. Were not these two execrable murders deserving of punishment? Was the cowardly base assassin worthy to live? If he was too powerful a subject for *David* to bring to justice, did not *David* do well, and act like a righteous prince, to give it in charge to his successor, to punish, as soon as ever he had power, such a villain according to his desert?

Mr. *Bayle's* judgment is, that *David* well knew that *Joab* deserved death, and that the suffering

† 2 Sam. iii. 39.

the assassinations, with which that man's hands David were polluted, to go unpunished, was a flagrant over Ju-
injury done to the laws and to justice. With dah⁴⁰, all
what truth then can it be said, that David *deli-* Israel 33.
vered two murders in charge to his son Solomon ;
one of them to be executed on his old faithful general,
Joab ? Was it charging Solomon to murder a
man, to order him to put to death a criminal,
for having basely committed two most execra-
ble murders ? Or is the doing justice on mur-
derers and assassins committing murder ? Or is
the representation just, that this order, viz. to mur-
der Joab, was afterwards fulfilled in the basest man-
ner by the administrator to this pious testament ?

Judge, reader, and be thyself a witness to the manner of *Joab's* execution, which is thus stigmatized with the epithet of *basest*. *Solomon*, in obedience to his father's directions, gives orders to *Benaiab* to put *Joab* to death in these words * : *Fall on him, that thou mayst take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father ; and the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men, more righteous and better than himself, and slew them with the sword, my father David knowing nothing thereof.* *Solomon* was now king, firmly fixed on the throne, and had it in his power to execute justice on the greatest offenders ; and remembering, I doubt not, how *Saul's* house was punished for the innocent blood of the *Gibeonites* which he spilt, he was willing to secure himself and family from a like vengeance. He would have been in some measure chargeable with *Joab's* guilt, had he refused to punish it when it was in his power ; and especially, as he had it in charge from his father to execute the vengeance on him that his crime

* 1 Kings, ii. 31, 32.

deserved.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

deserved. But where shall we here fix the character of *basest*? What, on *Solomon's* command to *take away the guilt of innocent blood from himself and his father's house*; or on his ordering the execution of the man that shed it; the man that *slaw two men, more righteous and better than himself*; or on *God's* returning *his own blood upon his head*; or, on his ordering *Joab* to be slain at the horns of the altar, and not permitting even the altar of God himself to be an asylum for † for murderers; or, on his appointing *Benaiah*, the captain of his host, to execute justice on his treacherous assassin? This was the manner in which *Solomon* performed his father's orders, in an open publick manner, appealing to God for the reasons of his conduct, and by an hand too honourable for the wretch that fell by it. And is this, what it hath been termed, putting a man to death in *the basest manner*? Is not this condemning, as a piece of villainy, a most exemplary instance of royal justice, and exhibited in such a manner, as shewed a regard to religion, conscience, honour, and the prosperity of his government and people?

But in order to shew *David's* ingratitude to *Joab*, in ordering *Solomon* to punish him for the murder of *Abner*, it hath been urged ‡ that it appears, that *Joab*, uniting his revenge with the dead, acted basely for *David's* service. Supposing it. Doth it follow, that *David's* ordering the execution of a base and treacherous assassin was baseness and ingratitude, because the assassination was intended for his service? I do not understand this morality. I should rather raise a panegyrick upon a prince, who should order a treacherous assassin to execution, notwithstanding the pretence of the assassin's intending to serve him by the

† Sueton. Aug. c. 17. 190.

‡ Hist. p. 95.

villainy,

villainy; than on one, who should protect a villain from the punishment of treachery and murder, because he intended to serve, or actually served him by these notorious crimes.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

But the supposition itself, that *Joab* murdered *Abner* for *David*'s service is without any foundation, and contradicted by the whole history of that affair. For this asserts once and again, that *Joab* murdered *Abner* in revenge for his brother, *Asahel*'s death. And as to his expostulating with *David* on the imprudence of trusting *Abner*, saying: He came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out, and thy coming in, and all that thou dost; *David* had all the reason in the world to look on this charge against *Abner* as a mere calumny. For *Abner*, before ever he had waited on *David*, had brought the elders of *Israel* to a resolution to accept of *David* for their king, and he came to him to inform him of this transaction. *Abner* went also to speak in the ears of *David* all that seemed good to *Israel*, and that seemed good to the whole house of *Benjamin*; i. e. all that had been agreed on between *Abner* and the tribes in reference to *David*. So that *Joab*'s charge of treachery against *Abner* was contrary to the strongest evidence of his integrity, and only a pretence to colour over that murder of him which he intended. *Joab* knew very well the intention of *Abner*'s interview with *David*; for he was informed that he had been with the king, and that he had sent him away in peace; and he expostulated with the king for thus dismissing him, that he came only to deceive him. And therefore his murdering *Abner* could be with no intention to serve *David*, but to execute his own revenge and serve himself; for no transaction could have been at that time more directly contrary to *David*'s interest, as the tribes would na-

David
over Ju-
dah 46, all
Israel 33.

turally resent so cruel a breach of faith, as the treacherous assassination of their own general and ambassadör to *David*, sent by them to fix the terms on which they would receive him for their king; and it was a thousand to one, that, in their fury, they had not broke off all treaty with him, and, with their united forces, opposed his accession to the throne of *Israel*. What prevented this was, *David*'s so solemnly and publicly clearing himself of having any hand in the murder, and shewing, to the fullest satisfaction of the people, that it was wholly the contrivance of *Joab*, and perpetrated by him without his privacy and consent.

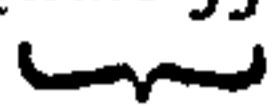
Had *Abner* lived to have finished this great revolution in favour of *David*, and actually settled him on the throne of *Israel*, *Abner* ought in justice to have continued in the command of the army. This *Joab* could not be ignorant of, and therefore, uniting his revenge with his ambition, he assassinated *Abner*, to free himself from a rival in power and his prince's favour, and secure himself in the chief command. He acted just the same infamous part afterwards, when he assassinated *Amasa*, because *David* had promised him to make him general of the army in *Joab*'s room; and this strengthens the probability, or rather renders it certain, that he murdered *Abner*, not only out of revenge for his brother's death, but also from the same cause of jealousy, envy, and ambition. And indeed *Josephus* will not so much as allow, that even the revenging *Asabel*'s death was any thing more than a pretence for *Joab*'s murdering *Abner*, but says, that the true cause was, his being afraid of losing the generalship, the favour of his master, and being succeeded by *Abner* in both.

It is farther objected, that *Joab* was really ill David used in the affair of *Amasa*. But to me it ap- over Ju-
 pears, that he was used no otherwise than he de dah40, all
 served. 'Tis true he gained the victory over the Israel 33.
 rebels; but the merit of this victory he destroyed
 by a base and infamous murder, contrary to the
 express command of his sovereign. For *David*
 charged *Joab* and *Abishai*, and all his officers,
 before the engagement: *Deal gently, for my sake,*
with the young man, even with Absalom. Had *Joab*
 cut him off in the heat of the battle, he would
 have had somewhat to have alledged in his de-
 fence. But nothing could argue greater insolence
 and contempt of the king's order than *Joab's*
 conduct on this occasion. For when one of the
 army informed him he saw *Absalom* hanging by
 the hair in a tree, *Joab* replies: *Why didst thou*
not smite him there to the ground, and I would
have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle?
 The soldier answered him with a noble spirit of
 loyalty: *Though I should receive a thousand shekels*
of silver, I would not put forth my hand against
the king's son; for, in our hearing, the king
charged thee and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, Be-
ware that none touch the young man Absalom;
otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against
my own life, and thou thyself wouldst have set
thyself against me. But what doth the loyal *Joab*
 do after this warning? He said: *I may not tarry*
thus with thee. Tell me no more of the king's
 orders. I have something else to do; and imme-
 diately he took three darts in his hand, and thrust
 them through the body of *Absalom*, whilst he was
 hanging alive in the midst of the oak. Could
 there be a greater insult offered to the king than
 this? Or, a more treasonable violation of his or-
 ders? Or, a more deliberated and aggravated
 murder committed? Would any prince have en-
 dured

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

dured this? Or, ought he to have pardoned even a victorious general, after such an audacious cruel instance of disobedience?

But not content with this, he carries his insolence to the king farther, and keeps no measures of decency with him. For, upon *David's* mourning over his rebel son, *Joab* imperiously reproaches him: *Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and daughters and wives; in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well; and then, to compleat his audacious insolence, threatens with an oath to dethrone him, if he did not do as he ordered him. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably to thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there shall not tarry one with thee this night; I will cause the whole army to revolt from thee before morning; and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth untill now.* I appeal to all men, that know what duty or decency mean, whether *Joab*, after such a behaviour to his sovereign, was fit to be continued general of the forces; and, whatever might be his merits in other respects, whether any prince, who consulted his own honour and safety, would not take the first opportunity to humble and break him? The opportunity came. *Amasa*, the general of the rebel army, brought *Jerusalem* and *Judah* back to their allegiance, and, according to *David's* promise, was constituted captain-general in the room of *Joab*. In defiance of this appointment, *Joab*, to get rid of his rival,

rival, like a coward and poltroon, under pretence ^{David} of peace, and a friendly salutation, ripped open ^{over Ju-} *Amasa's* belly, and shed out his bowels upon the ^{dah⁴⁰, all} ground. But 'tis said, to extenuate *Joab's* guilt, ^{Israel 33.}  that *he* confined his resentment to his rival.

What then? Is a cowardly murder to be pardoned, because committed on a rival? Do not the laws of God and man call for an exemplary punishment of such an atrocious offender? Are not such treacherous cruelties, tho' practised towards a rival, offences of a publick nature, a breach of that allegiance which men owe to their princes, and a capital violation of the sacred laws of government? *David*, it is plain, thought so; and tho' *Joab* was too powerful a subject for him to call to an immediate account, yet to shew that he had never forgiven it, he orders *Solomon*, agreeable to all the rules of honour and justice, to punish him as he deserved for his numerous treasons and murders.

But we are told, that * *it will avail nothing to plead the private faults of the man. We are now to consider him as relative to David in his publick capacity, as his old faithful general, who powerfully assisted him on all occasions, and who adhered to him in all his extremities; in which light we must loath the master, who died meditating black ingratitude against so faithful, so useful a servant.* I would ask: If *David* had had power, and had ordered the execution of *Joab*, immediately upon the assassination of *Abner*, or of *Amasa*, whether his master *David* ought to have been loathed on that account, because *Joab* had been an old faithful servant? If it should be said, that he ought to have been loathed for it, the doctrine advanced is this: That whatever person hath been an old faithful

* P. 87.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

servant, or general, to any prince, and power-fully assisted him upon all occasions; and murders, presuming on his own power, and past services, thro' malice, revenge, or ambition, by a secret stab, and under the pretence of friendship, one or two of the principal officers of the kingdom; the prince, whom he serves, becomes an object of loathing and abhorrence, and is guilty of black ingratitude, if he resolves on his death, and actually executes him, as such a base and treacherous assassination deserves. No man, I believe will coolly assert this. If 'tis said, that *David* ought not to have been loathed, but commended, if he had then ordered his execution; I think it can't be true, that because *Joab* had been an old faithful general, &c. we ought to loath *David* for ingratitude, for meditating *Joab's* punishment whilst he lived, and expressly ordering it just before his death; for whatever it was just for him to do, it was just for him to order to be done; inasmuch as he really did himself what *Solomon* did by his order; and because an act, that is just to day, cannot become unjust merely by being deferred till to-morrow, or the most convenient opportunity of performing it.

But 'tis said: that *it will avail nothing to plead the private faults of Joab*. What, were the murder of *Abner*, who had just brought over the eleven tribes to submit to *David*, and the assassination of *Amasa*, appointed general of the national forces, at the head of his troops, *private faults*? High treason, murder, and felony, private faults! What then can be publick ones, and what faults can be aggravated with any more heinous circumstances than these?

But it avails nothing, it seems, to plead these private faults in vindication of *David's* ordering him

him to be put to death by his successor; because David
 † we are to consider him as relative to David in his over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.
 publick capacity. Very right: David in his publick capacity was king of *Israel*, and *Joab* in his publick capacity stood related to him as his general, and assisted him, and adhered to him in all extremities. *David* therefore, in his publick capacity, was obliged, by the laws of God and man, to punish assassinations and murders; and *Joab*, in his publick capacity, as general, was an assassin and murderer; and therefore *David*, in his publick capacity, as king, was obliged to punish *Joab* with death, in his publick capacity, as general, assassin, and murderer. If *Joab* had been his faithful general, and frequently assisted *David* in his extremities, private obligations are in their nature, inferior, and ought to give way to publick ones; and the yielding up such an offender to publick justice, when personal obligations might have been pleaded by the prince in his favour, was a nobler sacrifice in its nature, and renders *David's* merits, as a prince, the more illustrious, and himself more worthy the character of *the man after God's own heart*. And this Mr. B. thinks *David* ought to have done sooner, and says, that notwithstanding *Joab* deserved death, yet that he kept his places; he was brave, he served the king his master faithfully, and to good purpose, and dangerous discontents might be apprehended if he attempted to punish him. These were the political reasons which made the law give place to utility. But when *David* had no farther use for that general, he gave orders that he should be put to death. So that Mr. B. blames *David*, not for ordering *Joab* to be put to death at last; but for deferring

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel ³³.

to do it so long, thro' reasons of policy, and ordering it only when those reasons of policy subsisted no longer. I would here just observe, that what Mr. B. calls political reasons, were really reasons of necessity. For *Joab* was too powerful a subject for *David* to bring to justice. He attempted it twice, by turning him out from being general. But he restored himself to his command by murder and treason, in spite of *David*, who seized the very first opportunity, after *Joab's* power was broken, of ordering his execution.

It should be added also on this head, that whatever *Joab's* past services were to *David*, and however faithful he had formerly been to him, yet he had now been engaged in a treasonable conspiracy against him, to set aside the intended succession to the crown, and had actually proclaimed *Adonijah* king of *Israel* during his father's life; altogether without, and even contrary to his consent. And it is allowed*, that *David* had on this account *justifiable cause for chagrine*. And it is certain, that *Joab's* treason, in endeavouring to depose the good old king, and advance an ambitious youth into his throne, was just reason for chagrine. And therefore as *Joab* added rebellion to murder, *David* did justly, in his last moments; to order his execution by his son and successor; and he would neither have been a wise or a righteous prince, had he forgotten or refused to do it. When 'tis said†, that *Joab had not appeared against him in actual hostility*, and that his defection may admit of being interpreted into a patronization of that particular plan for the succession, rather than into a rebellion against *David*, it is in part not true in fact. To proclaim any person king, in opposition to the reigning king,

* P. 87.

† Ibid.

is an overt act of rebellion, and therefore of real hostility. This *Joab* did, and had not the design been seasonably prevented, by the loyalty and prudence of *Nathan*, farther hostilities must have been immediately committed; *David* himself at least confined, and *Solomon*, his intended successor, actually put to death. David over Judah 40, all Israel 33.

The plan for the succession, concerted by *Joab*, in favour of *Adonijah*, was, in every view of it, a treasonable one. It was a plan formed without the consent of the nation, without the knowledge of *David*, and the appointment of God. *David* had, a considerable while before this, solemnly sworn to *Bathsheba*, that *Solomon* her son should reign after him, and sit upon his throne in his stead; and tells all the nobles and officers of his kingdom, that as the Lord God of *Israel* had chosen him, amongst the sons of his father, to be king over all *Israel*, so, of all his sons, God had chosen *Solomon* to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over all *Israel*. To patronise therefore any other plan of succession, and actually to take measures to execute that plan, was breaking out into open rebellion; and the favourers, abettors, patrons, and aiders, in such a plan, were traitors to their king and country, and in all nations would have been punished as such; and should it be pleaded in excuse of such persons, that their defection to patronise such a plan of succession, was not a rebellion, it would be treated with the contempt it deserved; and as a defection from a prince is a revolt from him, and a revolt a rebellion, they would probably be told, that they should have the choice of being hanged for a defection, or rebellion, just as they pleased.

I shall only take notice farther, on this head, that *David*, in his lamentation for *Abner*, had
* de-

David
over Ju-
dah, & all
Israel, 3.

* declared the *Lord to be the rewarder of evil doers*; by this expression referring the punishment of *Joab* to the Lord. And the inference that hath been made from hence is, *that David having enjoyed the benefit of Joab's services thro' his life, he having been his right hand all along, gratitude, after such an attachment, ought to have influenced David to have left him to the justice of God, and not have bequeathed him death, as a legacy for his long friendship.* But David did not bequeath him death for his friendship, but for his repeated treasons and murders; which no just principle of gratitude will ever shelter; since no services, publick or private, can be a compensation for these impious violations of the laws of God and man, and ought not to hinder the progress of justice in the execution of such notorious offenders; and were kings and princes to act according to this notion of gratitude, the peace, order, and safety of society, could not possibly be maintained. Besides, as *David* declared the Lord to be the rewarder of evil doers, so he really left it to the providence of God to reward *Joab*, by not punishing him himself, but by waiting for the proper opportunity to give him his reward, when it could be done consistently with his own safety, and the peace of his kingdom. *Joab's* defection or rebellion in favour of *Adonijah*, and *Solomon's* establishment on the throne, furnished this opportunity, and the providence of God, by these means, brought on him the punishment he had long deserved. Let *Solomon* explain his father's meaning in the very order he gives for *Joab's* execution. The king said to Benaiah †: *Fall upon him—that thou*

* Let. p. 96, 97.

† 1 King ii. 31, 32.

mayest take away the innocent blood which Joab David shed, from me and the house of my father, and the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who <sup>over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.</sup> *fell upon two men more righteous and better than himself, and slew them with the sword.* David therefore left *Joab* to the justice of God, and God executed justice on him by *Solomon's* order; and the hand of providence was very remarkable in this transaction; in that, had *Joab's* treason, in patronising *Adonijah's* usurpation, succeeded, *Joab* would have escaped with impunity; for *Adonijah*, no doubt, out of gratitude to *Joab*, would have forgiven him his murders, for the sake of his services. *David's* meaning therefore, in declaring, that *the Lord would reward the evil doers*, could be no other than that in which *Solomon* understood it: That tho' *Joab* was too powerful for him, at that time, to punish, yet that God would not suffer him finally to escape; but that, sooner or later, in the course of his providence, he would bring the punishment on him which he so richly deserved. And this *Joab* experienced, since the very measures he took in the close of *David's* reign, to secure himself from it, fixed his doom, and proved his destruction.

David's conduct therefore, in this † instance, is no proof that *his repentance for his sins was not sincere*, nor any argument that *he had not forgiven his enemies*, as far as he ought to do it, and did not die in charity with all mankind, as far as that charity ought to be extended. If a prince's charity influences him, living or dying, to pardon repeated offences, inconsistent with the publick safety and peace; such as assassinations and treasons, it is folly and weakness, and not virtuous charity; it is cruelty to his people, instead

† P. 86.

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel³³.

of real generosity and goodness. *David* had not this charity, and it heightens his character that he had not. His last charge to *Solomon* shews his inviolable regard to justice, by positively ordering the execution of a murderer, who was too powerful for himself to punish; and the order was executed by *Solomon*, in a manner worthy a wise, a just, and a great prince; or, *worthy the son of such a father*.

C H A P. XII.

David's charge in relation to Shimei vindicated.

AFTER this charge to *Solomon*, to execute the due punishment on *Joab*, for his numerous and aggravated crimes, *David* gives him another, relative to *Shimei* the *Benjamite*, who, as hath been already observed, when the king was in his flight from *Jerusalem*, to prevent his falling into *Absalom's* hands, met him, railed at, and cursed *David* in his journey; and as he went on, had the farther insolence to pelt him with stones, and dust him with dust, crying out to the king §: *Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Be-lial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.* This, as Mr. B. says, is a small specimen of the abuses to which *David* was exposed among the friends of *Saul*; they accused him of being *a man of blood*, and looked on the rebellion of *Absalom* as a just punishment for the mischiefs which they said *David* had done to *Saul* and his whole family. But surely an abuse and insult of a more atro-

§ 2 Sam. xvi. 5.—9.

cious and insolent nature was never offered to a David prince; an insult the viler, as it had no foundation in reality or truth to support it. He twice ^{over Judah 40, all Israel 33.} styles *him a bloody man*; and tells him, that because *he had reigned in the stead of Saul, the Lord had returned on him all the blood of the house of Saul*. The reader will observe, that this transaction was before the affair of the Gibeonites; and therefore this circumstance could not enter into Shimei's thoughts, nor be any reason for his charging David with being a bloody man, and having the blood of Saul's house returned on him. Now, in what other respect could David be guilty of the blood of Saul's house? Saul's three eldest sons were slain with him in a battle with the Philistines, in which David was not present. The only remaining son that Saul had was Ishbosheth, whom Abner made king in Saul's room, in opposition to David, who was raised to the throne by the house of Judah. Ishbosheth was killed by two of his captains, whom David put to death for that treason and murder; and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the only remaining one, was restored to his patrimony, and, in all things, treated as one of David's own sons; and Saul's line by him, the eldest branch, continued down through many generations. The charge therefore that David was a bloody man, because the blood of the house of Saul was upon him, was a scandal and a lie, and uttered in the madness of the passion and malice of a man, who, being of Saul's house and family, was enraged to see that family rejected from the throne, and David advanced to it in their stead.

Mr. B. himself acknowledges, that the friends of Saul carried things too far in these reproaches against David. And yet, as tho' he had made too large a concession in his favour, he doth, in a manner, retract it, by adding: *It is true, that, by*
the

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

*the testimony of God himself, David was a man of blood, for which reason God would not permit him to build the temple. But, by Mr. Bayle's good leave, David was not a man of blood, by any testimony of God himself; nor doth either of the places he cites in proof of it, prove any such thing. The expression which Shimei made use of to revile David was, אִישׁ דָּמִים אַתָּה. Thou art a man of blood; an expression always used, I think, in a bad sense, to denote a cruel bloody man. But God never gave this character to David. What God said of him was, that he had been * a man of wars, וְדָמִים שָׁפַכְתָּ and hast shed blood †; or, as it is elsewhere expressed: Thou hast shed much blood, and hast made great wars. Now the shedding of blood implies nothing criminal, except it be shed חִנָּם sine causa, without reason or cause; innocent blood ‡; as our version renders; and this very expression is used, in the same verse, in the criminal and in the good sense, to denote murder, and the justly putting the murderer to death §. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. If then David's wars were just and necessary, the blood he shed in them was not his crime; and 'tis evident, that when David told his son, and afterwards all the princes and officers of his kingdom, that the reason why God would not permit him to build his house, was, because he had shed much blood in his wars; he did not mention it to them as a reproach, or any crime imputed to him by God. Indeed this could not be the case, because, immediately after God had assigned this reason why he would not permit him to do it, yet, without in the least blaming him, he graciously gave him a proof of his peculiar favour, by assuring him, that his son should build his house, should long enjoy prosperity and peace,*

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 3. † Ibid. xxiii. 8. ‡ 1 Kings ii. 31.
§ Gen. ix. 6.

and that the throne of his kingdom over *Israel* David should be established for ever. over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

Mr. B. urges it as a farther reason of *David's* being a bloody man, or else he introduces it for no purpose at all; that, *that to appease the Gibeonites, he delivered up to them two sons, and five grandsons of Saul, who were all seven hanged.* Had Mr. B. told, as he ought to have done, the reason of *David's* delivering them up, it would have been no proof of his delighting in blood. He did it not by choice, but by necessity, and a divine order. See p. 380.

As therefore God never charged *David* with being a man of blood, this charge, as thrown on him by *Shimei*, was false and injurious; and the observation, that † *here an opportunity may be taken to introduce a circumstance, which is so far material, as it serves to shew, that the sanctity of David was not quite so universally assented to, as may be imagined, whilst he was living, and his actions not only fresh in memory, but more perfectly known, than was prudent to transmit to these distant ages,* is quite groundless and injudicious. For how doth the being reviled and cursed by one interested and disappointed person, and charged with crimes for which there is no foundation, but many strong concurring circumstances to shew the falshood of the charge; how doth this, I say, serve to prove, that *David's sanctity was not so universally assented to, as may be imagined?* It is no proof that *Shimei* himself believed the truth of his own reproaches; nothing being more common than for men, in the extravagance and fury of passion, to vent many things, which they well know, they have not any foundation for affirming: Much less doth it serve to shew that *David* deserved these reproaches; and, least of all, that others believed them just, and had as bad an opinion of him, as *Shimei* who reviled him.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

him. If this be argument, then I will, to the fullest conviction, demonstrate, that *David's* sanctity was, while he lived, thought as great as any body imagines. For, in the first place, *Jonathan* tells *Saul** : *He hath not sinned against thee, his works have been to thee ward very good.* In the next place †, *Saul*, his professed enemy, acknowledges *David's* innocence, and that he was *a more righteous man than himself*, and that in persecuting him, *he had played the fool, and erred exceedingly.* Nay, *Shimei* himself, upon whose railing against *David*, this notable observation I am remarking upon, is grounded, retracts all he had said, owns himself a slanderer and a liar, and begs pardon for his abusive impudence ‡. *Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, nor remember what thy servant did perversely; for thy servant doth know that I have sinned.* From hence I argue : If *Shimei's* reproaching *David* shews his sanctity was not quite so universally assented to, as may be imagined, while he was living, therefore, *a fortiori*, *Jonathan's*, and *Saul's*, and *Shimei's* testimony, to *David's* innocence and righteousness, serves to shew, that the sanctity of *David* was really as universally assented to, as hath been imagined, whilst he was living, and all his actions fresh in memory. I must beg leave also to add, that as *Shimei* owned himself to be a lying, slanderous, iniquitous varlet, and that the charge of *David's* being *a man of blood, and guilty of the blood of Saul's house*, was an iniquitous, perverse calumny; that charge destroys its own credit and truth; and instead of serving to shew, that *David's* sanctity was not quite so universally assented to, as may be imagined, while he was yet living, serves rather to shew that it was. For, as there are several unquestionable evidences to his integrity and virtue, of persons that knew him well,

* 1 Sam. xix. 4. † Ibid. xxvi. 21. ‡ 2 Sam. xix. 19, 20.
and

and were his contemporaries ; as friends and ene- David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.
mies have given their united testimony in his fa-
vour, and there is but one evidence to the con-
trary, and that a lying one, upon record, who
retracted his own charge publicly, and begged
pardon for the falshood of it ; the sanctity of *Da-
vid's* character, in the opinion of the publick,
whilst he lived, stands unimpeached ; and *Shimei's*
infamous calumny against him, refuted and fal-
sified by himself, can never, with justice, be pres-
sed into the service against *David* to defame his
reputation.

As to the suspicion here thrown in †, that *Da-
vid's actions, when fresh in memory, and perfectly
known, were worse than have been represented, or
was prudent to transmit to these distant ages ;* surely
this must have been a very unreasonable one, if
the actions that have been transmitted to these
ages are such, as justify the charges brought
against *David*, and the splendid character given
him, of *usurper, ingrateful, perfidious, perjured,*
whose conscience was his slave and his drudge, a ty-
rant, a *NERO* ; in a word, a monster and a de-
vil. Can he be painted in worse colours than
these ? Or do the enemies of *David* suspect the
representations they have made of the actions re-
corded, as injurious and false, and want farther
materials to bespatter one of the greatest and best
of princes ? But they needed no farther memoirs
to assist them. For, in spite of *Shimei*, and tho'
he had retracted all his curses and calumnies, yet
the world is told, after reciting *Shimei's* blasphe-
mies ‡: *This is pathetic, and truly characteristick
of the tyrant,* to whom the speech was addressed.
But *David's* real character was quite the reverse

† P. 62.

‡ P. 63.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

of a tyrant. He never oppressed his subjects; but when he reigned over Israel §, *executed justice and judgment amongst all his people*; and, perhaps, there never was a prince of greater humanity and clemency, or that gave more shining and disinterested proofs of it, than *David*, tho' he hath been characterised as the vilest of men, and the worst of tyrants.

Shimei himself was one illustrious proof of this. For when *David's* officers would have effectually silenced his reproaches, by putting *the brawler* to death, as he really deserved, what saith this *Nero* of the *Hebrews*? See, reader, the lineaments of his blood thirsty disposition, in his reply to *Abishai* ||: *Let him curse. For if the Lord hath said unto him, curse David, who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? Behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life. How much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse, if the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.* In this grievous calamity, *David* could not but see the hand of God, it was now falling heavy on him for his great sin in the affair of *Uriah*, and therefore ascribes the curses of *Shimei* to his immediate permission, and, in some measure, even to his appointment; as he was now reduced to that low condition, thro' the effect of his displeasure, as that this wretch dared to pour out these undeserved calumnies against him. This shews the moderation and great command of his temper, who would deny himself the vengeance due to such an outrageous insult on his person and character. Oh! how perfect a

§ 1 Chron. xviii. 14.

|| 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11, 12.

picture doth this exhibit to us of a *Nero*, and David who can help discerning and admiring the happy resemblance? David over Judah 40, all Israel 33

But it was not, it seems, piety, or humanity and goodness of heart in *David*, but policy and prudence that prompted him to preserve *Shimei's* life. For so we are told †: *Some of his retinue were at the point of silencing this brawler with the ultima ratio regum; but David prevented it; wisely considering this was not a season for proceeding to extremities.* Why, what was there in the season to prevent *David* from punishing a treasonable reviler and brawler as he deserved? What would *David's* cause and interest have suffered by permitting a single person to be put to death, for a crime that made him worthy of it? There is but one possible inconveniency that would have attended it, and that is; there would have been wanting one noble instance of his generous disposition, and the government of his passions; which is now recorded, to do honour to his memory, and heighten the glory of his truly illustrious character.

But supposing that *this was not a season for proceeding to extremities*, yet when *David* recovered his throne, and had *Shimei* fully in his power, this surely was a season for *David's* coming to any just extremities that he pleased, and he did not want very powerful advisers to make use of them; for *Abishai* said to him †: *Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he hath cursed the Lord's anointed?* And is there any one man in the world, that would not have applauded *David's* justice, in ordering to execution a wretch that had cursed and pelted him with stones in

† P. 63.

† 1 Sam. xix. 21.

David
over Ju-
dah, 40, all
Israel 33.

his adversity? It is true, *Shimei* owned his fault, and, as it is expressed ||, *reflecting on David's vindictive temper, came to make his submission, and petition forgiveness.* This persuasion, one would think, would certainly have kept *Shimei* from ever coming near him, and forced him to seek his safety by flight. I should rather have imagined, that, reflecting on *David's* merciful and forgiving temper, and the experience he had lately of it, in *David's* not permitting his officers to cut him off, when he was actually cursing and stoning him, he made his submission, and petitioned for mercy. If *David* had been the vindictive *Nero*, which he hath been represented to be, *Shimei's* owning his fault would not have been his security, and he would have paid dearly for the scurrility of his abusive tongue; especially as he was one of *Saul's* family, whom, 'tis said *, *least they should hereafter prove thorns in his side, he concluded it expedient to cut off.* But notwithstanding this expediency, *David* accepted his acknowledgments †, and told him with an oath: *Thou shalt not die.*

But what shall we think, 'tis said, *when we see this Nero of the Hebrews die in a manner uniform and consistent with the whole course of his life? What will be our reflections, when we find him, with his last accents, delivering two murders in charge to his son Solomon? One against Joab, the other against Shimei, which we are now to consider.* The charge that *David* gave to *Solomon* concerning him runs thus ‡: *And behold thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but I swore to him by*

|| P. 71. * P. 73. † P. 31. ‡ 1 Kings ii. 1, 9.

the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoer head bring thou down to the grave with blood. This is the ground of the accusation brought against || *David*; that when he lay on his death bed, where all mankind resign their resentments and animosities, his latest breath was employed in dictating this posthumous murder to his son Solomon.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

My reader will not forget who *Shimei* was; of the house and family of *Saul*; that he was a person of great power and influence in the tribe of *Benjamin*, of whom he had a thousand in his train, when he made his submission to *David* upon his restoration; and that the manner in which he accosted *David*, when fleeing from *Jerusalem*, discovered the inward rancour of his heart, and his readiness to join in any measures to distress and disturb his government, and cause the crown to revert to the house of *Saul*. Therefore *David* puts *Solomon* in mind, that *Shimei* cursed him with a grievous curse, in the day that he went down to *Mahanaim*; that he was an implacable enemy to his person and family, one who was not to be trusted, and would not fail to shew his hatred upon any proper occasion.

It appears farther by the expression: *Behold thou hast with thee Shimei*; that he was now in *Jerusalem*; and that therefore *David* thought this a proper opportunity of confining him, that he might not spread disaffection to *Solomon's* government, amongst those of his own tribe, or of any of the other tribes of *Israel*; a precaution the more necessary in the infancy of *Solomon's*

|| P. 92, 93.

H h 3

reign,

David
over Ju-
dah 4c, all
Israel 33.

reign, and as some of his brethren were inclined to dispute with him the succession to the crown; and therefore *David* said: *But now do not thou hold him guiltless* †; i. e. tho' I forgave him, and swore to him that he should not die, do not thou let him go off, do not leave him at liberty, nor treat him as an innocent man, that is reconciled to my family, and thy succession in the throne of *Israel*. He is *Shimei* still, and wants nothing but a fair opportunity to declare it. He is now with thee. Hold him fast, keep him continually under thine eye to prevent his doing any mischief; and if thou findest him guilty of any male practices, *his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood*; cut him off as an old offender, and dangerous enemy, to secure thy own peace, and the safety of thy government*.

Farther, *David's* telling *Solomon* that *he swore to Shimei by the Lord, that he would not put him to death* for his outrage and treason, is a demonstrative proof, that he did not advise *Solomon* to put him to death for the crime that he himself had solemnly forgiven him. For can any one imagine, that *David* should tell *Solomon*, that he

† וְאַל תְּנַקְדֵּהוּ. *Ne sinas eum liberum abire*, as *Cocceius* renders the words. Don't let him escape thee.

* In this sense *Josephus* understands the words: He then, says he, obtained a promise of security from me; but do thou, ἐπιζητήσας αἰτίαν εὐλογον ἀμύναι. A. I. l. 7. c. 15. §. 1. *When thou canst find any just cause, punish him*. The reader will not be displeased to see the learned *Houbigant's* judgment on this affair. *Intelligitur ex ipso facto Solomonis, quale fuerat Davidis mandatum; atque id mandatum tale est. Et si ego Semei reo peperci, tu tamen eidem, si adhuc reus erit, non parces. Expectavit Solomon donec Semei reus esset, ut eum morte plecteret; quo significatur servasse Davidem juramenti sui religionem, neque Solomoni filio imperasse, ut in Semei animadverteret pro sceleribus iisdem, quæ David Semei condonorat.* In loc. not. 9.

had

had sworn by the Lord not to put *Shimei* to death, David and, in the same breath, order him, in defiance ^{over Ju-} of the oath, to be put to death by *Solomon*? Com- ^{dah 40, all} mon decency and prudence would have made ^{Israel 33.} him conceal the circumstance of the oath, unless he intended to brand himself publicly for the grossest perfidy and perjury; or, what is the real truth, to prevent *Solomon* from putting *Shimei* to death, in resentment for a crime for which he had solemnly sworn he would never execute him; and therefore it may be allowed Mr. B. that strictly speaking, a man, who promises his enemy his life, doth not acquit himself of that promise, when he orders him to be put to death by his will. But this doth not affect *David's* integrity, who either never promised him absolutely his life, or never gave any positive orders by his will to execute him.

I add therefore, that the words themselves, when rightly rendered, imply no such order. The common rendering of them is: *His hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.* But it is a better interpretation, and supported by parallel passages, if we render them, *Bring down his grey hairs to the grave ‡ for blood*, or for being guilty of it. *Shimei* was a man in blood, intentionally of murdering the king, and who actually attempted it by stoning him; and, on that account, deserved to be put to death. Now, tho' *David*

‡ A man is said to be בדם in blood, when he hath been guilty of murder, or wrongfully shedding the blood of another. Thus *Joab* smote *Abner*, and he died בדם propter sanguinem, or as we render it, for shedding the blood of *Asahel* his brother. 2 Sam. iii. 27. Thus also עשק בדם is a man oppressed with blood, i. e. for having shed blood; or, as our version hath it, much to the same purpose, who doth violence to the blood of another; viz. by shedding it.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

could not order *Solomon* to put him to death for this attempt, because he had forgiven him, yet he might justly urge it, as a reason why *Solomon* should keep a constant strict guard over him, in order to prevent him from any seditious practices, or put him to death, if he found him guilty of any.

The authors of the critical remarks || give another turn to the words, which may be justified also by many other places of like nature. They would have the middle words put into a parenthesis, and the negative particle *A L* repeated in the last clause from the first; thus: *Now therefore do not hold him guiltless (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do for him) but do not bring down his hoary head with blood.* I would propose a little alteration in the reading of the prefix *vaw*. *Do not hold him guiltless (for thou art a wise man) nor ‡ bring down his hoary head with blood.* According to this translation, *David's* direction to *Solomon* will be: That he should not put *Shimei* to death for having cursed him, because he had forgiven him upon oath; but, at the same time, should not hold him guiltless; leaving it to *Solomon's* wisdom to inflict a proper punishment on him, provided it was not a capital one.

It *David* had intended that *Solomon* should immediately put him to death, there would be no sense nor reason in what *David* adds: *Thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do to him*; which is evidently the same thing as saying: I give thee no particular directions about

|| Gen. Dict. Art. David. v. iv. p. 537.

‡ Thus we render the prefix, Isai. xlii. *My glory will I not give to another, וְתִהְיֶה לִי neither my praise to graven images.* See many other places in *Noldius*.

him,

him, only observe him. Thou art a wise man, David and knowest how to manage him, and to thy prudence and care I intirely leave him. This is the natural proper meaning of the expression, which cannot be construed into any other sense, without doing violence to the words. Now, to what purpose was it to tell *Solomon*, that he knew how to behave to *Shimei*, if *David's* command was immediately to cut him off, and *Solomon* understood him in this sense? The thing is absurd in its nature, and there can be no meaning in a charge of this kind, viz. giving any man an absolute order to put another to death for a crime, and, in the same breath, leaving him intirely to the management of his own wisdom and prudence, to put him to death or not. If he gave a positive order for his death, he did not leave him to *Solomon's* wisdom; and if he left him to *Solomon's* wisdom, as he certainly did, he did not give him any positive order for his death.

'Tis certain that *Solomon* did not understand his father in this sense, of putting *Shimei* to death for his treason at *Mizbanaim*; but only that he should have a watchful eye over him, and prevent him from all seditious practices for the future. For what doth *Solomon* do after his father's death? What, instantly put *Shimei* to death? No, but as a wise man, who knew what he ought to do to him, orders him to build an house for himself at *Jerusalem*; where he confines him, that he might be perpetually under his inspection, and bound him by an oath never to go farther out of it than to the brook *Kidron*; telling him, that whenever he passed it, he should surely die.

This is farther evident from the different manner in which *Solomon* treated *Joab* and *Shimei*. *Joab* he immediately, on his accession, put to death, because

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

cause *David* could be understood in no other sense, in the charge he gave concerning him, but absolutely to cut him off; for he gives no intimation that he had pardoned him, or that he left it to his son's prudence to do with him as he should think proper; but says peremptorily, after recounting the two murders he had committed: *Do thou according to thy wisdom. Do justice on him, and thereby shew thyself a wise man, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.* Now if the charge had been the same in reference to *Shimei* as it was to *Joab*, what should have prevented *Solomon* from immediately executing *Shimei* as well as *Joab*? *Solomon* had much less to apprehend from executing *Shimei*, than *Joab*. *Joab* had an interest in the army, and had *David's* sons, and the high priest of his party, which *Shimei* could not have, as he was a powerful man of the house of *Saul*: A circumstance this however, enough to incline a jealous prince to get rid of him if he fairly could do it. And if *Solomon* had *David's* positive order to do it, the regard to his father's command, and the rules of policy, would have engaged him to have immediately executed him. But this *Solomon*, in his wisdom, knew he could not do; for *David* told him that he had pardoned *Shimei* to prevent his execution, because his offence was personal, and *David* had a right to forgive it. But he had never pardoned *Joab*, nor in justice could do it; because he was guilty of death for repeated murders, by the laws of God and man. *Solomon* therefore acted wisely and justly in putting *Joab* to death, and shewed his prudence in reference to *Shimei*, by sparing him; but honourably confining him, that he might have the proper security for his future good behaviour. But to this it is objected, that
the

the executing *Joab* and sparing *Shimei*, was owing to a different cause from what I have now assigned. For *Joab*, by joining the party of *Adonijah*, had furnished the pretence for putting him to death, which *Shimei* doth not appear to have done. *Joab* therefore was assassinated, and *Shimei* watched. But this contradicts the history; for *David*, in his order to put *Joab* to death, mentions not one word about his being of *Adonijah*'s party, but orders him to be cut off expressly for the treacherous assassination of *Abner* and *Amasa*. And when *Solomon* ordered his execution, not a word of *Adonijah*; but *take away the innocent blood which Joab shed from me, and from the house of my father*. So that, as the cause of *Joab*'s execution was not his being of *Adonijah*'s party, so the cause of *Shimei*'s being spared, cannot be said to be, because he was not of *Adonijah*'s party. The true reason of their treatment, was the different nature of their crimes, and the difference of the order relating to them. And as *Joab* was put to death, for repeated murders, by the express order of the king, 'tis with great injustice, that his death is censured as *an assassination*; especially as he was executed in the same manner as state criminals at that time generally were.

Besides, if, as hath been asserted, *David* had, *without any condition, and by a positive injunction*, ordered *Shimei* to be put to death, then his joining, or not joining *Adonijah*, had been a circumstance of no weight; for, whether the one, or the other, *Solomon* ought not to have ordered him to be watched, but instantly to have put him to death, as he did *Joab*. And if, because he was not of *Adonijah*'s party, *Solomon* spared him, and ordered him only to be watched, then *Solomon* did not think his father's order to be an order to cut him

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

him off, but only to have a watchful eye over him. For *David* knew *Shimei*'s circumstances as well as *Solomon*, and *Solomon*'s conduct to *Shimei* is an abundant explication of the nature of his father's command, and how he himself understood it. This is the sentiment of *F. Houbigant*, who doth not so much as give a single intimation that *Shimei* was watched, and not put to death because he was not of *Adonijah*'s party; but absolutely denies that *David* gave any order at all to *Solomon* to put him to death for the crimes for which he had pardoned him, but only to watch his conduct, till he should render himself guilty by some fresh transgression.

And when, upon breaking his oath, he was sent for by *Solomon*, the king reproached him for his perjury, for acting contrary to the condition of life, which he himself acknowledged to be just and equitable, and for the wickedness that his heart was privy to in his conduct to his father *David*; the mercy that had been shewn him, in the pardon of that offence, aggravating his fresh crime in violating his oath, and in transgressing the king's command; a crime that shewed he was of a restless spirit, and incapable of being restrained within due bounds by the most solemn oaths, or any sense of interest, gratitude, or duty, whatsoever. *Solomon* adds: *The Lord shall return thy wickedness on thine own head, and king Solomon shall be blessed; and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever*; plainly intimating, that *Solomon* now cut him off, as an act of prudence and justice, because he knew him to be a turbulent implacable enemy to his person and government, and saw it necessary for establishing the throne of *David* before the Lord.

I would farther add, that *Shimei* himself, sensible of *Solomon*'s great kindness to him, approves the

the sentence pronounced on him, and therefore David the charge that *David* gave him, promising him ^{over Ju-} upon oath obedience to the condition, on which ^{dah⁴⁰, all} his life was afterwards to depend. *The sentence is* ^{Israel 33.} *good. As my Lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.* It doth not appear that *Solomon* mentioned one word about *Shimei*'s cursing *David*, when he ordered him to confine himself to *Jerusalem*, and that therefore this was not the immediate reason why he confined him, but as his father had forewarned him, because he thought it would be a dangerous thing to suffer a person of *Shimei*'s family, tribe, interest, and known rancour, to his crown and government, to be intirely at liberty. And, upon this supposition, *Shimei* could not but own the justice of the sentence, and *Solomon*'s lenity in pronouncing it. But if *Shimei* had any apprehension that *David* had violated his oath of safety to him by the charge he gave *Solomon* concerning him, or that *Solomon* had broken it, by making his life depend on a new condition, which his father had never obliged him to come under: Why did he not plead *David*'s oath and promise, and that had no condition annexed to it when he appeared before *Solomon*; that the annexing a new condition to it was actually reversing it, and therefore a breach of oath in *David*, if he directed it, or in *Solomon*, if it was his order only, and not *David*'s? And tho' *David*, being dead, *Shimei* could not reproach him to his face, yet he might have reproached him, and *Solomon* himself to his own face, for this breach of oath, if there had been any. But *Shimei* urges nothing of all this in favour of himself, and, instead of reproaching *David* or *Solomon*, acknowledges the king's moderation, and says: *The sentence is good.* 'Tis most
just

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

just and merciful. *As my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.* Shimei therefore knew, either that he had an absolute pardon from *David*, or that he had forfeited that pardon, or that, whatever was the purport of *David's* oath to him, no injustice had been done him, either by *David's* charge to *Solomon*, or by *Solomon's* executing it. The adversaries of *David* may chuse which they please. *David's* honour, and *Solomon's* justice will be abundantly vindicated.

Let me beg the candid reader's attention to another remark: That tho' it hath been positively affirmed, that *David* *guarantied* *Shimei's* *pardon with a solemn oath*, yet this is by no means certain from the history. For let it be observed, that after *Shimei's* confession of his fault, *Abishai* said to *David*: *Shall not Shimei be put to death, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?* meaning, be put to death instantly, as appears by *David's* answer: *Shall there be any man put to death this day in Israel? Do I not know that I am this day king over Israel? Therefore the king said to Shimei: Thou shalt not die; and the king swore to him, viz. that he should not then, or that day, or at that time, be put to the sword.* And it is observable, that the *Arabick* version expressly mentions this circumstance: *Thou shalt not die אלוים this day.* This was certainly all that the king declared to *Abishai*, that, as he was that day restored to the exercise of his regal power, no man should that day be put to death; and therefore he swore to *Shimei*, that he should not then die. So again, in *David's* direction to *Solomon* about *Shimei*, the same version hath the same word: *I swear to him by God: I will not put thee to the sword אלוים this day.* Thus also *Josephus* understands the words. He assured † him, says he,

† Πισεις ελαβεν ως μηδεν αυτον Παθειν ΤΟΤΕ. Ant. l. 7. c. 15. §. 1.

that

that he should suffer nothing at that time. And David indeed nothing farther can be certainly collected <sup>over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.</sup> from the words, as they stand connected, but that *David* reprieved *Shimei* from immediate execution, and left him at liberty to call him to an account, at any other time, for the outrage and treason that he had been guilty of. To this it is objected §, that *probity is greatly wounded by such excuses*. By what excuses? What, by excusing *David* from breaking a promise that he never made; or, for putting a criminal to death whom he only reprieved, but never pardoned? The question is, whether *David* guaranteed *Shimei's* pardon with a solemn oath? Or, swore that he should never be put to death for cursing and stoning him? The history makes it somewhat probable, that *David* never swore this, but only that he should not be put to death at that time, as *Joab* and *Abishai* thought reasonable. If this was all that *David* promised, *David* broke no oath in afterwards ordering him, for just reasons of state, for execution; and probity is not at all wounded by thus excusing *David*, because it is an excuse founded in truth. Instances enough may be produced, even in our own nation, of offenders being brought to justice, after a very considerable reprieve, perfectly consistent with the probity and equity of government.

And how is this inconsistent with piety, or the advice unworthy a just and religious prince on his death bed? 'Tis true, the forgiveness of enemies is a duty, provided they cease to become our enemies; but no man is obliged, by any law that I know of, so to forgive an enemy, continuing such, as not to take the proper methods to guard

§ Let. p. 92.

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel³³.

against the effects of his enmity, and bring him to justice, if no other method will prove effectual. Much less is a prince obliged so to forgive an implacable enemy to his crown and government, and one who is likely to disturb the settlement of the crown in his successor, as not to order his successor to be upon his guard against him, and punish him, when guilty, according to his demerits. Such a caution and order is what he owes to his people; and he may die, as a private person, in charity with all mankind, and forgive every private injury against himself; and yet, as a prince, advise what is necessary to the publick good, and even the execution of particular persons, if, by abusing the lenity of government, and the respite they once obtained, they should become guilty of new and capital offences. *David* may therefore still be, *the man after God's own heart*. I shall only add, that it is a very uncharitable and groundless supposition of Mr. B. that *David* only let him live, first to gain the glory of being a merciful prince, and afterwards, on his death bed, charged his son to put him to death, to avoid being reproached to his face of having broke his word. But surely *David's* resolution, that no man in *Israel* should be put to death who had been concerned in the rebellion, and the moderation and lenity of his whole reign over his people, were much nobler evidences of his being a merciful prince, than his sparing *Shimei*, whose execution, had it been immediately ordered, all the world would have commended, as an exemplary act of justice, without the least impeachment of his goodness and mercy. Besides, if *David* was so false and unprincipled a wretch, as this supposes him, I cannot but think he would have little regarded such reproaches,

if

if he had had an inclination, in his life time, David out of revenge to have put him to death; and ^{over Ju-} if he was so cautious of these reproaches. whilst he ^{dah 40, all} lived, I can scarce think he would have given an ^{Israel 33.} order that should have blasted the glory of that character, and eternally stained his memory with the complicated guilt of hypocrisy, perfidy, and cruelty, and subjected his memory to them after death. Besides, whose reproaches would he have been afraid of? What *Shimei's*? Surely he might have put him to death by the hands of his officers, without ever permitting *Shimei* to reproach him to his face; and I presume few of his courtiers would have cared, or dared, thus to reproach him. The truth of the case is: The charge concerning *Shimei* could not be given till *David* had established *Solomon* on his throne. It concerned *Solomon* only, and he gave him the caution, because necessary to the peace and security of his future reign; and it was of such a nature, as to deserve no reproach while he lived, and to expose him to no just reproach after his death. And if Mr. B. cannot prove, that *David* died immediately after this charge to *Solomon* concerning *Shimei*, he might have lived long enough to be reproached for it to his face; and therefore it could not be to avoid this reproach, that he gave this charge to *Solomon* towards the conclusion of his life. I cannot help therefore thinking, that the same reasons that led him to spare *Shimei*, when he cursed and stoned him, in his retreat from *Jerusalem*, induced him to spare him upon his return to it; viz. as Mr. B. himself expresses it: *His acknowledging and adoring the hand of God, in the reproaches with which that furious Benjamite loaded him; and that as God had done, what he scarce allowed himself to hope for, looked upon his affliction; and requited him with good for Shimei's cursing, he was resolved, in imitation of*

David
over Ju-
dah⁴⁰, all
Israel³³.

his God, to requite *Shimei* with good, and to bless the man who had *reviled, cursed, and despitefully used him*.

But it is time to take a review of the foregoing observations.—A shepherd youth, *David*, the youngest son of *Jesse*, was chosen of God to be king of *Israel*, and at his command anointed to this dignity by the hands of *Samuel*, a venerable prophet, in the room of *Saul*; who had been rejected for his disobedience to the divine orders, in feloniously seizing to his own use, the prey of an enemy, which God, the supreme king of *Israel*, had devoted to destruction.—He is introduced to court as a man expert in musick, a mighty valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, a comely person, and one favoured of the Lord.—By his skill in musick he relieved *Saul* under a melancholy indisposition that had seized him, was highly beloved by his royal master, and made one of his guards.—In a war with the *Philistines* he accepted the challenge of a gigantick champion, who defied the armies of *Israel*, and being skilful at the sling, he slew him with a stone, returned safely with his head, and thus secured to his prince an easy victory over his country's enemies.—The reputation he gained, by this glorious action, raised an incurable jealousy and resentment against him, in the mind of the king his master; who, after two unsuccessful attempts to murder him, married him to his younger daughter, that she might be a snare to him, and that he might cause him to fall by the hands of the *Philistines*; sending him upon an expedition against them, to bring in an hundred of their foreskins, in which he hoped he would have met with his own destruction.—In this exalted station, and amidst the dangers that encompassed him, he behaved with singular prudence, so that he was in high esteem both in the court

court and camp.—The modesty and prudence of his behaviour, and his approved courage and resolution, gained him the confidence and friendship of *Jonathan*, the king's eldest son, who loved him as his own soul, became his advocate with his father, and obtained from him a promise, confirmed by an oath, that he would no more attempt to destroy him.—But his jealousy returned by a fresh victory *David* gained over the *Philistines*; who, finding the king was determined to have his life, retired from court, and was dismissed in peace by *Jonathan*, after a solemn renewal of their friendship, to provide for his own safety.—In this state of banishment, there resorted to him companies of men, who were uneasy in their circumstances, oppressed by their creditors, or discontented with *Saul's* tyrannical government, to the number of six hundred men, to protect him from the violence of his unreasonable persecutor; whom he kept in the most excellent order, exercised in the most friendly services, and by whose valour he gained signal advantages for his country; but never employed them in opposition to, or rebellion against the king, or in a single instance to distress or subvert his government.—Such was the veneration he paid him, and so sacred the regard he had for his life, such the generosity of his temper, that though it was thrice in his power to have cut him off, he gloriously spared him, and was absolutely determined never to destroy him, whom God had constituted the king of *Israel*.—His friendship with *Jonathan*, the king's son, was a friendship of strict honour, whom he never seduced from his allegiance and filial duty; in him *Jonathan* had so firm a confidence, that as he knew he would be king, he promised himself he should be the next person in dignity and authority under him; and with his friend *David* covenanted by oath, that he

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

would not cut off his kindness from his house, for ever.—Being provoked by a churlish farmer, who evil treated and abused his messengers, he, in the warmth of his temper, swore he would destroy him and his family; but was immediately pacified by the address and prudence of a wife, of whom the wretch was unworthy; her he sent in peace and honour to her family, and blessed for her advice, and keeping him from avenging himself with his own hand.—Being forced to banish himself into an enemy's country, he was faithful to the prince who protected him; and, at the same time, mindful of the interest of his own nation, he cut off many of those, who had harraised and plundered his fellow subjects.—When pressed by the king, into whose dominions he retired, to join in a war against his own country, and father-in-law, he prudently gave him such an answer as his situation required; neither promising the aid demanded of him, nor tying up his hands from serving his own prince, and the army that fought under him; only assuring him in general, that he had never done any thing that could give him just reason to think he would refuse to assist him against his enemies.—Upon the death of *Saul*, he cut off the *Amalekite* who came to make a merit of having slain him; and by the immediate direction of God, who had promised him the succession, went up to *Hebron*, where, on a free election, he was anointed king over the house of *Judah*; and after about a seven years contest, he was unanimously chosen king by all the tribes of Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel, upon the death of *Ishbosheth*, who was treacherously murdered by two of his own captains; whom *David* justly cut off for their perfidy, treason, and parricide.

As king of *Israel*, he administered justice and judgment to all his people, was a prince of courage,

rage, and great military prudence and conduct; David had frequent wars with the neighbouring nations, ^{over Ju-} to which he was generally forced by their invad- ^{dah 40, all} ing his dominions, and plundering his subjects; ^{Israel 33.} against them he never lost a battle; he never besieged a city without taking it, nor, as for any thing that can be proved, used any severities against those he conquered, beyond what the law of arms allowed, his own safety required, or the cruelties of his enemies rendered just, by way of retaliation; enriching his people by the spoils he took, and providing large stores of every thing necessary for the magnificent temple he intended to erect, in honour of the God of *Israel*.—Having rescued *Jerusalem* out of the hands of the *Jebusites*, he made it the capital of his kingdom, and the place of his residence; and being willing to honour it with the presence of the ark of God, he brought it to *Jerusalem* in triumph, and divesting himself of his royal robes, out of reverence to God, he cloathed himself in the habit of his ministers, and with them expressed his joy by dancing and musick; contemned only by one haughty woman; whom, as a just punishment of her insolence, he seems ever to have separated from his bed.—Tho' his crimes were heinous, and highly aggravated, in the affair of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, he patiently endured reproof, humbly submitted to the punishment appointed him, attoned for his sins, as far as he could, by a sincere repentance, and obtained mercy and forgiveness from God, tho' not without some severe marks of his displeasure, for the grievous offences he had been guilty of.—A rebellion is raised against him by his son *Absalom*, whose life he commanded the general to spare.—When forced by it to depart from *Jerusalem*, he prevented the just punishment of a wretch who cursed and stoned him.—When restored to his throne, he spared him upon his sub-

David submission, and would not permit a single man
 over Ju- to be put to death in *Israel*, upon account of it.
 dah 40, all —He, with a noble confidence, made the com-
 Israel 33. mander of the rebel forces general of his own
 army, in the room of *Joab*, whom he intended
 to call to an account for murder and treason.—
 After this, when obliged, by the command of
 God, to give up some of *Saul's* family to justice,
 for the murder of the *Gibeonites*, he spared *Me-
 phibosheth*, *Micah*, and his family, the male de-
 scendants of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, who alone could
 have any pretence to dispute the crown with him,
 and surrendered only *Saul's* bastard children, and
 those of his daughter by *Adriel*, who had no right
 or possible claim to the throne, and could never
 give him any uneasiness in the possession of it;
 and thus shewed his inviolable regard for his
 oaths, his tenderness to *Saul*, and the warmth of
 his gratitude and friendship to *Jonathan*.—In the
 close of his life, and in the near prospect of death,
 to demonstrate his love of justice, he charges *So-
 lemon* to punish with death *Joab*, for the base
 murder of two great men, whom he assassinated
 under the pretence of peace and friendship; and
 to manifest his care of his successor's safety, and
 prevent any disturbances in the beginning of his
 government, he charges him to have an eye on
 the conduct of an old turbulent rebel, and, ex-
 cept cutting him off, to deal with him according
 to his prudence, and not to spare him if he found
 any thing in him worthy of death.—And as if
 one thing more was wanting to compleat the ca-
 talogue of his noble actions, he professed the
 greatest regard for every appearance of virtue and
 holiness, and gave the most shining and indispu-
 table proofs of an undissembled reverence for,
 and sincere piety to God; ever obeying the di-
 rection of his prophets, worshipping him alone
 throughout the whole of his life, and making
 the

the wisest settlement to perpetuate the worship of the same God, throughout all succeeding generations.

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

And as to his psalms, they breathe the genuine disposition of piety; they are wrote with a true spirit of poetry; the sentiments to be found in them are often the most grand and sublime, which have nothing in pagan poetry to exceed, or equal them; and which, had they been wrote on any other subjects but those of religion, would have been regarded as the proofs of a most excellent genius; and his admirers would have wondered at the calmness and sedateness of his temper, who, amidst the multiplicity of his affairs, the variety of the persecutions he suffered, the imminent dangers that surrounded him, and the numerous wars he was engaged in, could find any leisure hours, or tranquil dispositions, for the polite and delicate entertainments of poetry and musick.

These, Christians, are the out-lines of a *Jewish* prince, whom you justly extol as *a man after God's own heart*; whom God himself called to be king over *Israel*, who faithfully answered the purposes for which God raised him; in whose family he established the throne; with whom he made an everlasting covenant; and who was the great progenitor of the *Messiah* himself, who now reigns over all, and *shall reign till all his enemies are put under his feet*.

THE CONCLUSION.

Let *David's* history, as it lies in the Bible, be examined with the same freedom and rules of sound criticism, which are used in *Tacitus*, *Rollin*, and *Rapin*, and I desire no more; but will think of, and treat *David* as that history, fairly and candidly interpreted, represents him to be. What I object against, is putting forced constructions on particular passages; invidious insinuations, where there is nothing in the history to support them; improbable suggestions to eke out

David
over Ju-
dah 40, all
Israel 33.

facts, or supply the place of them; false assertions contrary to the truth of history, to furnish matter for calumny and reviling; in a word, all methods contrary to truth and honour, and inconsistent with the rules of humanity, candour, and justice. I am for truth wherever I can find it; I will blame whatever I think blame worthy; I will give up characters that I think indefensible, however venerable soever custom, party, prejudice, mistake, superstition, and bigotry, may have made them; will defend what I think to be right, and vindicate abused innocence, as far as I can, against those who wickedly defame it. In this view I would appear to the world as a writer, and desire no regard to be paid me, as an author, any farther than I answer this character

I would now close this history with the character given of *David* by * *Josephus*. “He was,” says *Josephus*, “a most excellent person, and possessed every virtue that became a king, and one who had the welfare of so many nations committed to him. He was superior to all others in valour, and in all his wars on behalf of his subjects, he himself rushed into dangers, and by undergoing all the difficulties of warfare, encouraged his soldiers to noble actions, rather than commanded them as a sovereign. He had an excellent faculty of considering and discerning how to provide for future events, and managing those that were actually present. He was sober, mild, kind to those in distress, just, and humane. As to those things, which kings may claim as their peculiar prerogatives, he offended in no one instance, by the abuse of the greatness of his power, but in the affair of the wife of *Uriah*.” And let me add, that he may be justly numbered with the greatest and best princes that ever honoured a throne and blest a nation.

* L. 9. c. 15. *Josephus*
P. I. N. I. S.