A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF DAVID:

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.

Πριν αν αμφοιν μυθον ακουσης, ουκ αν δικασαις. Aristoph.

——— *Nihil est, Antipho,*
Quin male narrando possit depravarier. TERR. Phorm. iv. 4. 17.

Ambitionem scriptoris facile adverseris. Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur. —— Sed incorruptam fidem professis, nec amore quisquam, et sine odio dicendus est. TACIT. Hist. l. 1. *Init.*

In TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE hiſtory of king *David* is given in ſcripture with great ſimplicity and impartiality, and from it he appears, to thoſe who fairly ballance his many virtues and excellent qualities againſt his faults, to have been a great and good man. All who have given us the character of this prince have not been thus candid. Mr. *Bayle*, and others who have followed him, have, in many inſtances, not only aggravated his real faults, but imputed to him crimes of which he was not guilty; and not only ſlighted his virtues, but by ill-natured hints and ſuſpicions, for which there is no foundation in the hiſtory of this prince, endeavoured to make his virtues appear crimes. The author's deſign in the following hiſtory, is by a full and impartial repreſentation, to do juſtice to an injured character; and to confute the falſhoods, and expoſe the miſrepreſentations, which have been employed to make an excellent prince,

and a man of real and great virtue and piety, appear a base hypocrite, and a *Nero* for cruelty and tyranny.

Mr. *Bayle*, tho' he treats with great freedom some of *David*'s actions, yet doth not descend to reviling and scandal. He speaks of him at least with a shew of respect, allows him to be one of the greatest men that ever lived, abstracted from the consideration of his being a prophet, as well as a king § after God's own heart; he speaks of the piety of *David* with admiration, and though he censures many of the transactions of his life, yet, in his way, apologises for them, by ascribing them ‡ to a fatality, to which human nature itself is liable; the being alternatively subject to the force of passion, and the influence of grace. I will not pretend to answer for Mr. *Bayle*'s real sentiments on this head; his remarks on *David*'s history shew, that he had no high opinion of his virtue, tho' his censures have little foundation of real fact to support them. But still they are not made in that offensive outrageous manner, that another historian uses; he † apologises for himself in the very blame he throws on *David*; he allows that some excuse arises from the circumstances of the times, and the

§ David, *Roy des Juifs, a ete un des plus grans hommes au monde, quand meme on ne le considereroit pas comme un Roi prophete, qui etoit selon le cœur de Dieu.——La piete de* David *est si ecclatante dans ses Pseaumes, et dans plusieurs de ses actions, qu' on ne la sauroit assez admirer.*

‡ See note 1. p, 967. in the article of *David*.

† See Note D.

imper-

imperfection of their knowledge in comparison of ours; and had more sense and good breeding than to represent *David* as the most profligate hypocrite, and then to revile the whole christian world for their impudence and impiety, in thinking honourably of him as a prophet, and a man after God's own heart.

The enquiry into *David*'s character I am willing should be strict and impartial; and allow that if it be in the main good, *a scrutiny* ‡ *into it will be so far from sullying his fame, that it will reflect a superior lustre after such examination*; and if it be, in the great lines of it, a bad and an infamous one, every sensible person will be glad to be undeceived; at the same time that it will give a good man pain, to be forced to entertain a bad opinion of one, whom he before thought to be a man of virtue and piety, and a favourite of providence; and 'tis the last office of life that I would be engaged in, to lessen the real merit of the living, or ransack my invention to asperse the memories of the dead. Faults every man hath. Charity will cover many, and equity requires that we should admit the real alleviations of others; and that, in doubtful cases, we should always incline to the more favourable side, and never condemn, as direct intended wickedness, what is capable of a fairer and more humane interpretation.

‡ See Note D.

The hiſtory of *David*, in many of the tranſactions of his life, is very ſhort, and extreamly imperfect. Facts are oftentimes but barely mentioned, without the cauſes of them, or circumſtances attending them; in all which caſes it muſt be difficult to paſs the proper judgment on them; and here, I think, the hiſtorian ſhould equally refrain from much encomium and invective.

Allowances alſo ſhould be made for the different circumſtances of times and nations, their particular conſtitutions and forms of government, the uſual conduct of princes and kingdoms to each other, in times of peace and war, or the laws of nations, as then authoriſed by the general conſent or practice; the nature of their treaties and compacts with each other, and other things of like kind; which when conſidered and applied to particular tranſactions, will give a very different view of them, from what they will appear in, if we judge of them only by the ſtate of things in our own times, in which almoſt all nations have their peculiar eſtabliſhments, their governments fixed upon certain fundamental laws, and the rights of each defined and limited by ſpecial and mutual treaties. The want of attending to which muſt neceſſarily lead men into very great miſtakes, and hath occaſioned many injurious reflections on the conduct and character of *David*.

The perpetual wars between the *Hebrews* and the neighbouring nations, the *Ammonites*,

Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, Philiſtines, and others, who reciprocally invaded one another, may ſeem ſtrange to thoſe who are ignorant of the circumſtances of thoſe people. But it ſhould be conſidered, that they were mortal enemies to the *Jewiſh* nation, had all in their turns exerciſed the moſt cruel tyranny over them, were perpetually endeavouring to harraſs and enſlave them, and never quiet, whilſt they had power to moleſt and invade them. This perpetually kept up the jealouſy and hatred of the *Hebrews* towards them, made them greedily ſeize on every opportunity to retaliate their cruelties, often put them to the neceſſity, for ſelf-defence, of exerciſing great ſeverities towards them, that by getting rid of their implacable enemies, they might enjoy their poſſeſſions without fear and moleſtation. Nor doth there appear the leaſt trace of any ſolemn treaties of peace between them, but living in a kind of ſtate of nature with each other, they made no ſcruple to execute their revenge, whenever they had opportunity and power. This was quite a different ſituation of things from what is now to be ſeen in theſe parts of the world; where ſolemn leagues and treaties tie up the hands of ſtates and governments, and cannot be violated without the moſt criminal breach of the publick faith and honour; a crime, that, as to any thing that appears to the contrary, can never be charged on *David,* in any one of the wars that he made; even in thoſe in which he was

the aggressor; in which he engaged to retaliate former injuries, to prevent the hostile invasion of his enemies, and to secure to his subjects the blessings of continued prosperity and peace.

The considerations I have offered in the following sheets, in vindication of *David*'s conduct in this respect, I must leave to the judgment and candor of the world. I have offered nothing but what I think I can support. I have made no forced criticisms contrary to the nature and genius of the original language. Impartial men will candidly consider circumstances and times, and be governed, not by reproachful invectives, which prove nothing but the bad heart, and ill-nature of those who use them; but by the appearances of truth, and the probability of things.

The writings of the Old Testament are the only genuine books from which we can form our sentiments of *David*'s character and conduct. In reporting the actions of his life, there appears the most perfect impartiality, as they have recounted his crimes, and been very sparing in the encomiums they have given him. Let these be examined with freedom. Not the most rigid severity, if fair and honest, in such examination, can displease me. But let not little, undisciplined, unfledged, ignorant sciolists, enter into these matters, which are really above them; who, by pretending to criticize, and ex-

explain, and alter the ſenſe of ancient paſſages, do but betray their own vanity and folly; and who, though they throw the charge of bigotry upon others, for not renouncing all the venerable principles of revelation, are themſelves the weakeſt and moſt credulous bigots, they know not why nor wherefore, to all the abſurdities of the moſt irrational infidelity. The objections of ſober men deſerve conſideration, and no decency towards them can be too great in the anſwers that are given to them; and let the actions of *David* be fairly ſcrutinized, as they are recorded by the biblical writers, and allowances be made, as in equity they ought to be made, for the times and circumſtances, the manners and cuſtoms, private and publick, of the age he lived in; and I am in hopes he will yet appear to ſuch, to be a great and good man; and that though we are not to ſuppoſe that *the heighth of purity is intended*, yet that the chriſtian world, without being aſhamed of it, or afraid of the charge of impiety to the majeſty of heaven, will continue to regard and honour him, in the genuine ſenſe of the expreſſion, as THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

A D-

Advertiſement by the EDITOR.

THE death of Dr. CHANDLER having prevented his publiſhing this work himſelf, it is proper to inform the world, that the whole, excepting the five laſt ſheets, was printed in his life-time, and that theſe were prepared by him for the preſs. In this work the Doctor omitting every thing of perſonal controverſy, hath applied himſelf to ſettle the chronology of the chief events of the reign of king *David*, to vindicate the character of this prince, and the ſcripture account of the diſpenſations of divine providence towards him, againſt the unjuſt aſperſions and unreaſonable cavils of Mr. *Bayle* and others, and to throw light on the *Pſalms* which relate to the character, actions, and circumſtances of this prince. His illuſtration of the 68th Pſalm, not to mention others, is a ſtriking proof of his uncommon genius and learning, as a ſcripture critic. And 'tis preſumed the whole will be read with pleaſure and improvement by impartial inquirers after truth; and yield great and rational ſatisfaction to the friends of revelation and genuine piety.

THE

CONTENTS.

VOL. I. BOOK I.

THE introduction, containing a summary view of the state of the Jews *to the time of* Samuel. p. 1—12

CHAP. I.

The rise of monarchy among the Jews. p. 12—24.

CHAP. II.

The election and consecration of Saul, *the first king of* Israel. p. 24—36

CHAP. III.

Saul's *bad conduct upon the invasion of the* Philistines. p. 37—48

CHAP. IV.

Saul's *disobedience to the divine order, in the case of the* Amalekites. p. 49—60

CHAP.

BOOK II.

FROM the election of David *to be king, to his settlement on the throne over all* Israel. *Introduction.* p. 61—63

CHAP. I.

David's *first introduction to* Saul. p. 64—66

CHAP. II.

The victory of David *over* Goliah. p. 66—74

CHAP. III.

The rise of Saul's *enmity to* David. p. 75—77

CHAP. IV.

David's *marriage with* Saul's *daughter* p. 77—83

CHAP. V.

Jonathan *and* David *commence friends.——Psalm* lix. *explained.* p. 83—89

CHAP. VI.

David's *flight to* Ramah, *and wonderful escape from thence* p. 90—99

CHAP. VII.

David's *flight to* Achish, *and escape from him to* Adullam.——*Psalm* lvi. *and* xxxiv. *explained.* p. 99—120

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The charge of rebellion against David *considered.*——*Psalm* lxiii. *explained.* p. 121—133

CHAP. IX.

The massacre of the priests by Saul.——*Psalm* liii. *explained.* p. 134—143

CHAP. X.

David's *bravery in saving* Keilah *from the* Philistines. p. 143—146

CHAP. XI.

David *delivered from* Saul *in the wilderness of* Ziph.——*Psalm* liv. *explained.* p. 146—155

CHAP. XII.

David's *generosity to* Saul *at the cave of* Engedi.——*Ps.* lvii. *and* cxliii. *explained.* p. 155—179

CHAP. XIII.

Of David, Nabal, *and* Abigail. p. 179—194

CHAP. XIV.

David's *great moderation in saving* Saul's *life a second time.* p. 194—212

CHAP. XV.

David's *retreat to* Gath *and* Ziglag. p. 212—233

CHAP. XVI.

Saul's *consultation with the witch of* Endor. p. 234.—260

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

David's *dismission from the camp of the* Philistines. p. 261—266

CHAP. XVIII.

David's *conduct on his return to* Ziglag. p. 266—277

CHAP. XIX.

David's *return from banishment, and his behaviour on the death of* Saul *and* Jonathan. p. 277—84

CHAP. XX.

David's *advancement to be king over* Judah. p. 284—96

CHAP. XXI.

War between David *and* Ishbosheth. p. 296—302

CHAP. XXII.

Abner's *reconciliation with* David. p. 302—10

CHAP. XXIII.

The murther of Abner *by* Joab, *and* David's *resentment of it.* p. 310—16

CHAP. XXIV.

Ishbosheth's *death, and* David's *treatment of his murtherers.* p. 316—21

CHAP. XXV.

David's *character*, as a man after God's own heart, *explained.* p. 321—30

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

In FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK I.

The INTRODUCTION.

THE original government which obtained amongst the *Hebrews*, was, according to the account of the Old Testament writers, a THEOCRACY, * or Monarchy, over which *Jehovah*

* Ο δ' ημετερος νομοθετης—θεοκρατιαν απεδειξε το πολιτευμα. Joseph. *cont.* Apion. l. 2. p. 482. One of the principal reasons of the erection and establishment of the *Hebrew Theocracy*, or God's taking the *Hebrews* for a peculiar nation and kingdom to himself, was to separate them from the idolatries, impieties, and vices, that had spread themselves almost among all the na-

 tions

hovah himself presided, as supreme governor and king; confirmed and established by a solemn compact

tions of the earth, and to establish amongst them such a body of laws, and such a compleat ritual of worship, as was very wisely suited to the circumstances of the times when it was given, and the temper of the people who received it, and was a very strong guard against the superstitions and abominations of the nations around them, and in its nature adapted to preserve the worship of the true God uncorrupted, and secure the public virtue and happiness. What *Ezekiel* represents God as saying, c. 20, v. 25. *Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live*; hath been much misunderstood, and misrepresented *. In the 21st verse God is introduced as saying, that *he gave them statutes and judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live by them.* They were therefore *good ones.* But they had been *scattered amongst the heathens, and destroyed through the countries*, because, as God complains, they had *not executed my judgments, but despised my sabbaths. Wherefore*, viz. because of their disobedience, *even I gave them statutes which were not good*, i. e. did not eventually prove of that advantage and benefit to them, which they otherwise would have done; *and judgments*, as it should be rendered, *which they will not live by*, i. e by a due observance of which they will not secure their own prosperity and safety. The whole context shews, that the words are to be understood in this sense, and to explain them in any other is to pervert and abuse them. See *Rom.* vii. 10.

This theocracy is the most ancient, and the only one that we can have any distinct knowledge of; for tho' probably almost all the nations antecedent to God's taking the *Hebrews* to be his peculiar people, acknowledged some Deity, who was their peculiar patron and protector; this did not constitute a proper theocracy, in the same sense, in which the jewish government was a theocracy, as immediately subject, in all the great affairs of state, to the direction and order of God; who not only exercised a general providence over them, and interposed in particular circumstances for their welfare, but was himself consulted on every important occasion, and without whose leave nothing of consequence was to be transacted, either in civil or religious affairs.

Had the *Hebrew* nation known how to value their own happiness, they would have steadily adhered to that excellent constitution under which they were brought; which was established,

* *Traité sur la Tolerance*, p. 133. *Dictionaire Philosophique*, p. 184.

compact between God and that people. For when God ordered *Moses* to tell the children of *Israel*: * *If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*; the people unanimously answered: *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* And when they demanded a king to govern them, like the rest of the nations, God says to *Samuel*: † *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected*

blished amongst them with an intent to separate them hereby from all foreign and idolatrous nations, because this was the only possible means by which they could be effectually preserved from entering into those enormous impieties, impurities, and other crimes, for which God condemned the *Canaanites* and other nations to an utter excision. Thus God forewarned them: *Thou shalt not make marriages with them, nor take his daughter to thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other Gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.* Deut. vii. 3, 4.

The intention therefore of God, in separating them from the idolatrous nations, was both wise and merciful. It was necessary in a civil, religious, and moral view. The introduction of idolatry would be a direct subversion of their constitution; which was founded upon this article, that JEHOVAH *was their only God and King*; it would have corrupted or abolished all the forms of worship, the ritual of which was so compleat and perfect, as that they were forbid *to add any thing to the word which he had commanded them, or to diminish ought from it, that they might keep the commandments of the Lord their God.* Deut. iv. 2. and it was sure to be attended with the very worst corruption of manners; into which the *Hebrews* constantly fell when they forsook their God, and worshiped the idols of their neighbouring nations. And as their encouragement to obedience, God tells them: *Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.* Deut. vii. 9. And on the contrary, every threatning that he uttered was levelled only against apostacy from them, and an obstinate continuance in those crimes, which strike at the foundation of all civil government, and cannot be encouraged and tolerated with impunity under the divine.

* Exod. xix. 5.—8. † 1 Sam. viii, 7.

me, that I should not reign over them; and accordingly *Samuel* says to the people: * *You have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities.* And again, ye said unto me: † *Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when* Jehovah, *your God, was your king. David* himself, upon the advancement of *Solomon* to the throne ‡, says to all the different states of his people: *He hath chosen* Solomon *my son, to sit upon* the throne of the kingdom *of* Jehovah *over* Israel. And when *Solomon* was a second time inaugurated, the historian observes: ‖ *Then* Solomon *sat on* the throne of JEHOVAH, *as king, instead of* David *his father.*

It is farther certain, that God acted as sovereign and king over the *Hebrew* nation; for he formed their polity, and gave them their laws; he judged them, and determined their controversies; either immediately by himself, or his ministers ordinary or extraordinary; or by the direction of lots. He gave them the orders and rules of war, led their armies, and fought their battles; upon which account *Josephus* stiles him *their* § *general*, and *their* * *imperial captain*, or leader. And in the scriptures, he is called, *the Lord* † *of host, the God of*

* 1 Sam. x. 19. † Ibid. xii. 12. ‡ 1 Chron. xxviii. 5. ‖ Ibid. xxix. 23. § Ηγεμονα Ant. l. iv. c. xviii. sec. 2. * Στρατηγον αυτοκρατορα, sec. xli. † 1 Kings xvii. 45.

† A modern enthusiastical writer, who is a greater dealer in, and an admirer of himself for anecdotes, tells us, in his *origin of despotism*, p. 241. that *the title of* the God of Battle, *which the God of the Hebrews so often gives himself, made him for a long time suspect him to be no more than the god of the* Scythians, viz. *pitiless* Mars; adding: *The truth of my conjecture hath been since proved by an extraordinary tradition.* Hæstieus *of* Miletus, *an antient historian of the* Phœnician *antiquities, relates, that after the deluge, the priests,* who *had taken refuge in the mountains,* brought back *with them to* the senate, *the sacred worship of the God* Enyalius. 'Tis plain, this writer never saw the passage

of the armies of Israel; in token of whose immediate presence with them, the ark of the covenant frequently

passage itself in the original, or did not understand it, or hath greatly misrepresented it. As *Josephus* hath it, *Ant.* l. i. c. iv. §. iii. and *Eusebius* from him, *Præp Evan.* l. ix c. xv. it stands thus: Των δ' ιερεων τυς διασωθεντας, τα τυ Ενυαλιυ Διος ιερωματα λαβοντας, εις Σεννααρ της Βαβυλωνιας ελθειν. But those of the priests, who were saved, took the things that were sacred *to Jupiter Enyalius*, and came into *Sennaar* in *Babylonia*. These words therefore can never belong to *Mars*, because they are expresly spoken of *Jupiter*, and not of *Mars*; both these deities being called *Enyalius*, and the antient coins representing *Jupiter*, as well as *Mars*, with the titles of *Ultor*, *Victor*, and *Propugnator*. See *Selden*, de D. *Syr.* p. 334. If therefore his criticisms on *Enyalius* prove any thing, this passage of *Hæstiens* proves, that *Jupiter* was *the death dealing god*, and not *Mars*. But then this will destroy another part of his criticism, *viz.* that *Mars occupies the third rank in the genealogy of the first seven patriarchs*, i. e. the third man from *Adam* represents *Mars*, and is called אנש *Enos*, i. e. as he interprets it, *mortal thing*. But, to say nothing about the proof how *Enos* comes to represent *Mars*, *Enos* never signifies *a mortal thing*, as that means a thing destructive to others, or *dealing destruction*; but what is weak and frail, and subject to misery and death itself, and therefore can never be a description of *Mars*, who was βροτολοιγος, μιαιφονος, λαιλαπι ισος, as *Homer* describes him. Nor is *Enyalius* compounded from *Enos* and *Lylus*, a *Phœnician* expression, signifying, *the death dealing God*. For *Lylus* is no *Phœnician* word at all, and therefore cannot have the meaning assigned to it; and *Enyalius* may be derived, as for any thing that yet appears, from the *Greek* language, without having any recourse to the *Phœnician*. See *Eustath.* in *Hom. Iliad.* E. pag. 524. edit, *Rom.*

It may be farther observed, that the God of the *Hebrews* is never called *the God of battle* in the scriptures; and his title of *the Lord of hosts*, so frequently given to him, is ascribed to him as *the founder of all things*, Jer. li. 19. *Great in council, and mighty in working, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give to every one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his doing*, Jer. xxxii. 18, 19. Who *gave the Sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar*, Jer. xxxi. 35. In a word, as *the former of all things*, Jer. x. 16. *the God of the whole earth*, Isai. liv. 5. and the universal lord and governor of the creation;

frequently accompanied them in their expeditions, In a word, God exercised all the essential rights and prerogatives of royalty, and to say all at once, Jehovah was *their judge, their lawgiver, and their king* *.

Moses, under whose conduct God brought them out of *Egypt*, was employed as mediator between him and them; who gave them their laws, as they were immediatly dictated by God, chose able men, by his order, out of the whole body of the people, as their ordinary judges, and settled amongst them the whole ceremonial of their religion, according

and not because he presided over armies and battles, as *Mars* was represented to do, as his peculiar province; but as doing *what he pleases in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth*, and disposing of all events according to his infinite wisdom and goodness; a character which, I suppose, belongs to *the one only living and true God.* The *Hebrew* writings acknowledge no lord of hosts but the great Creator and Lord of all things, and who as such, fought the battles of his people, *i. e.* by his providence disposed the victory in their favour.

And tho' this writer affirms, ibid. that *according to the* Hebrew *doctors and foretellers of futurity, their god was nothing more than a severe, cruel, pitiless, jealous, and vindictive monarch*; this cannot be true; because these very doctors and foretellers of futurity do represent him, *as merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy*, Ps. ciii. 8. as *waiting that he may have mercy upon and be gracious to his people*, Isai. xxx. 18. as assuring *the wicked and unrighteous, that if they forsake their unrighteous ways and thoughts, and return unto God, he will have mercy on them, and abundantly pardon, because as the heavens are higher than the earth, so his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts*, Isai. lv. 7, 8, 9. *i. e.* more compassionate and kind than men can conceive, or ever discover themselves to be by their actions In a word, all the prophetic writings give the noblest representations of the mercy and goodness of God, declare him to be ever reconcileable to repentance and reformation, and to be the hater and punisher of nothing but incurable impiety, wickedness, and vice. A thousand passages might be produced in proof of this, and no man, that reads their writings with care and candor, can ever doubt of the truth of it.

* Isai. xxxiii 22.

to

to his direction; with a solemn assurance from him of all kinds of blessings, * *if they observed his commandments, and did them*; but that if they *would not observe to do all the words of the law* †, which he gave them, *he would make their plagues wonderful*; assurances, which the whole history of this people abundantly verify.

On these accounts, the sacred history represents *Moses* as receiving many directions immediately from God, and the almost constant form of speech made use of, on these occasions, is: *the Lord said unto* Moses; an expression that means, that God really spake to him; and was not merely *the national phrase of a bigotted people*, which had nothing of the signification, which the words evidently appeared to convey; for as the son of *Sirach* expresses it: ‡ *He made him to hear his voice, and gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach* Jacob *his covenants, and* Israel *his judgments.* And in this sense, *Moses* himself intended to be understood; for he tells the people: § *I have taught you statutes and judgements, even as* Jehovah *my God commanded me. He declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments, which he wrote upon two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments.* And the people themselves took the phrase in the same meaning; for they answered: *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.*

Whilst *Moses* lived, he seems to have been the person whom God only, or principally, employed in delivering his commands to the people; but he constituted the high priest to be the standing officer, in after times, by whom he intended

* Deut. xxviii. 1. &c. † Ibid. ver. 58. ‡ Ecclesi. xlv. 5. § Deut. iv. 5, 13, 14.

to make known his will, in all the great affairs of government and ſtate, *according to the judgment of* URIM. For thus God ſaid to *Moſes*, in reference to *Joſhua:* ‡ *He ſhall ſtand before* Eleazer *the prieſt, who ſhall aſk counſel for him, after the judgment of* Urim, *before the Lord. At his word they ſhall go out, and at his word they ſhall come in, both he and all the children of* Iſrael *with him, even all the congregation.*

I mention this to ſhew, that the high prieſt, when cloathed with *the ephod*, and the breaſt plate of *Urim* and *Thummim*, was an officer of ſtate, to be applied to, only upon public and important affairs by their kings and princes; ſuch as related to war, and peace, and religion, and therefore ſuch as reſpected the whole body of the people; for whom he conſulted God, and by whom God gave to them ſuitable anſwers, according to the exigencies, on account of which they enquired of him. And this was abſolutly neceſſary in this conſtitution, that as the ſupream government, in church and ſtate, was veſted in, and exerciſed immediately by God, the nation ſhould have conſtant recourſe to him, for his direction in all their great concerns, relative to the public welfare and ſafety.

This judgment and determination was called *the judgment*, or determination, *of Urim and Thummin*, i. e. of LIGHTS AND PERFECTIONS; *i. e.* perfectly clear, preciſe and full; the plural number being frequently uſed, in the oriental languages, to denote the excellency and perfection of any thing. And ſuch in fact * were all the deter-

‡ Numb. xxvii. 21.

* The anſwers given to thoſe who inquired of God by the high prieſt, cloathed in his ephod, ſeem to me very clearly to have been given by word of mouth, or the prieſts ſpeaking with a clear

determinations of this oracle, as recorded in the Old Teſtament hiſtory; and God gave his anſwers in this manner, for the moſt part, during the continuance of the proper *theocracy*, 'till the eſtabliſhment of the regal power in the family of *David*; when all the affairs of ſtate devolving directly on the kings his ſucceſſors, the judgment of *Urim* and *Thummim* ceaſed. God was now no longer the immediate king of *Iſrael*, and his immediate interpoſal by the high prieſt, as his prime miniſter, in the general affairs of the kingdom, was therefore withdrawn, as being no longer neceſſary; the high prieſts themſelves being after this ſubject to the reigning kings. For though *the theocratic government* did not abſolutely ceaſe, till the captivity under *Nebuchadnezzar*, yet we read little or nothing more of conſulting God in this manner, under the kings; God employing the prophets only, during their times, to make known his will to his people, on every occaſion; either to direct them

a clear and audible voice, what he was ordered by God to declare. This I apprehend appears from all the oracular reſponſes that are recorded in the Old Teſtament. *At his*, the high prieſt's, *word ſhall they go out, and at his word ſhall they come in*, as in the place before cited. And the word that was ſpoken was never ambiguous, dark and myſterious, like the oraculous anſwers given by the heathen prieſts; but explicit, and ſuch as could never be miſtaken, or miſguide thoſe who received it. Thus, when the children of *Iſrael* inquired of the Lord, *Jud.* xx. 28. *Shall I go up again to battle——or ſhall I ceaſe?* The Lord ſaid, *Go up, for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.* And in all the oraculous reſponſes given to *David*, they are all pronounced with an audible voice, abſolutely ſatisfied his inquiries, never left him at a loſs how to interpret them, or how to govern himſelf in conſequence of them. Nor is there one inſtance to be found, in which the oracular anſwer was fallacious, or in which the event did not correſpond to the prediction or promiſe. See 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 2, 4.—30, 8.—2 *Sam.* ii 1—5, 19, 23. Thoſe who are deſirous to ſee the various opinions of learned men upon this ſubject, may conſult *Spencer. de Urim & Thummim. Braunius de Veſtit.* l. 2. c. 20. and others.

in

in those public emergencies of state, for their conduct in which their princes consulted him; or to reprove them for their Crimes, and exhort them to repentance and obedience; or to foretel those future events, that were to take place in the successive periods of time. This *theocracy*, and this judgment of *Urim* and *Thummim*, continued for above four hundred years in full force, which was unquestionably the happiest period of this people.

Joshua, who was appointed the successor of *Moses*, by the immediate command of God, conquered the *Canaanites*, and divided their cities and lands among the twelve tribes, under his conduct, and according to the express orders he received from him. After his decease God governed them by judges, who were persons raised up by him upon extraordinary occasions, to fight their battles, and deliver them from the oppressions of the neighbouring princes and nations, who enslaved them by God's permission, as the punishment of their frequent relapses into idolatry. The last of these judges was *Samuel*, devoted by his parents to the peculiar service of the God of *Israel*, from his birth. He was early honoured with the prophetic spirit *, and as he ministered unto the Lord, under the direction of *Eli* the high priest, he had a vision, in which God confirmed the judgment, that had been pronounced by a former prophet, against the house of *Eli*, for the impieties of his sons, *who made themselves vile, and he restrained them not* †; a prophecy, that was soon after fulfilled in one part of it ‡, the death of *Hophni* and *Phineas*, the two sons of *Eli*, in the same day; as a sign that the whole of it should be accomplished in its proper season;

* Sam. iii. 1. † Ib. iii. 13. ‡ Ib. iv. 17.

so

so that it was observed § of him, from a youth, that *the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground*, and known, *from* Dan *even to* Beersheba, *that* Samuel *was established to be a prophet of the Lord*; so well known, that even *Saul*'s servant says to his master, that *he was a man of God, an honourable man, and that all he says surely comes to pass* *.

Some time after *Eli*'s death, *Samuel* began to judge the people of *Israel*; and having, agreeably to his office, persuaded them to return to the Lord, he obtained, by sacrifice and prayer, a miraculous victory over the *Philistines*, who came to attack the *Hebrews* at *Mispeh*; their whole army being dispersed by an extraordinary storm of thunder and lightning. The sacred historian adds, that the *Philistines were subdued, so that they came no more into the coast of* Israel, *that the hand of the Lord was against the* Philistines *all the days of* Samuel, and that *the cities*, which the *Philistines* had taken from *Israel, were restored to them, with all the coasts and territories depending on them* ‡: So happy were the effects of this excellent person's administration and government! And as he thus delivered them from their foreign enemies, he administred to them justice at home, with the utmost equity and impartiality; going his yearly circuits to *Bethel*, and *Gilgal*, and *Mispeh*; in all which places he judged *Isreal*; hearing their causes, and determining their differences; returning back to *Ramah*, where he statedly resided, and where the people applied to him for his continual advice and direction. And after his decease, his funeral was solemnized by the mournful attendance of the nation in general †.

§ 1 Sam. iii. 20, 21. * Ib. ix. 6. ‡ 1 Sam. vii. 13, 14. † 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

Samuel's

Samuel's conduct and character were therefore highly respectable. He was venerable as a prophet of God, and worthy of honour as a righteous and uncorrupt judge, for the faithful admonitions that he gave his people, and for a long series of peace and prosperity, that he procured them, whilst he presided over, and governed them. He is spoken of with the highest respect in those writings which are esteemed sacred by *Jews* and *Christians*; and his name and memory should be treated, at least, with decency and candor. Jealousy and suspicion should never be allowed to impeach his integrity, or impute charges to him, contrary to the whole tenour of his behaviour and government.

CHAP. I.

The rise of monarchy among the Jews.

IN the decline of this venerable prophet's life and administration, to ease himself of the burthen of public affairs, he made his two sons judges under him in *Beersheba*, who degenerated from their father's piety and virtue; or as the historian expresses it: *His sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted justice.* A conduct so criminal could not but occasion great uneasiness, and excite a just resentment in the people against their oppressors. And what added to their grievances was, that as they were unjustly treated by these two judges at home, so they were threatened by a powerful invasion from abroad, by *Nahash* king of the *Ammonites*, who had actually entered the *Hebrew* territories, before even the elders had applied themselves to *Samuel* for a king to reign over them. This is expressly

expressly asserted by the prophet himself, before the whole body of the people, assembled together at *Gilgal* §. *When ye saw that* Nahash, *the king of the children of* Ammon *came against you, ye said unto me: Nay, but a king shall reign over us.* In this extremity, being destitute of any proper person to head their armies, *Samuel* being grown old and infirm, and his sons corrupt, and without courage and resolution; so as that little confidence could be placed in them, or assistance expected from them; instead of applying themselves to God, who had so often wonderfully appeared for them, and was their proper king and governor; the elders of *Israel* gathered themselves together, and came to *Samuel* at *Ramah*, and said, in an otherwise respectful, but peremptory manner *: *Now make us a king, to judge us like all the nations; for a king shall reign over us.*

Upon this extraordinary emergence, the prophet, neither refusing, nor granting immediately their request †, *prayed unto the Lord* for his direction, what answer he should make to the people, and how he was to act upon so important an occasion. Accordingly, the Lord said unto *Samuel*: *Hearken unto the voice of the people, in all that they say unto thee*: Let them have their own will, and take the consequences of it; and be not concerned for their disrespect and ingratitude to thyself, for they have treated thee just as they have done me, in their whole conduct, ever since I brought them out of the land of *Egypt*; as from that time to the present day they have forsaken me, and served other Gods. However, let them have what they demand; but first publicly protest against this change in the form of their government, and then lay before them the nature of that kingly

§ 1 Sam. xii. 12. * Ib. viii. 5. † Ib. viii. 6—9.

government

government they are so eagerly bent on, and the manner in which their future monarchs will reign over them.

* In obedience to these divine directions, *Samuel* assembled the people, and told them the answer he had received from God; how he was displeased with their demand, but still left them to their choice, if after being informed how their kings would govern them, they thought fit to persist in it. And he made this representation to them in so strong and lively a manner, as one would have thought should have effectually prevailed with them to have desisted from their purpose, and earnestly requested the continuance of the divine protection and government.

He tells them, their king would † take their sons from them, and employ them in his own service, to drive his chariots, or be the grooms of his stables, or his running footmen; that he would force them into his wars, make them with, or without their consent, officers in his armies, and send them upon any expedition he should think proper; and force others of them to plow and sow his grounds, and reap his harvests, and others to make all sorts of warlike weapons, and chariots for battle. That he would oblige them to send their daughters for the necessary and servile employments of his house and family, to be his confectioners, cooks, and bakers; that the better to support his extraordinary expences, he would seize upon their lands, their vineyards, and olive yards, and give even the best of them to his officers and servants; and as to those he left in their possession, would take the tenth of their produce for the maintenance of his eunuchs and attendants; that he would put their men servants,

* 1 Sam. viii. 10—18. † Ib. viii. 11—18.

and

and maid ſervants, their goodlieſt youth, and their aſſes, to the moſt ſervile and laborious employments; and finally, that he would take the tenth of their ſheep, and inſtead of the preſent liberty they now enjoyed, they ſhould be reduced to a ſtate of the moſt abject ſervitude; that the time would come, when they would bitterly repent of the choice they now demanded; and that when under the ſeverity of their oppreſſion, by the king that ſhould reign over them, they ſhould cry unto the Lord to deliver them from the heavy yoke of regal power, they ſhould cry in vain, and the yoke they had put on their own necks ſhould be ſo rivetted, as never to be ſhaken off. God was pleaſed in this manner to warn his people of the raſhneſs of the reſolution they had taken, and againſt a change of government, that he knew would prove fatal to their liberties, as it did in fact, and which finally proved one of the principal cauſes of the utter deſtruction of the whole nation.

However, this faithful repreſentation of the prophet from God, had no other effect on the elders, but to make them in a more peremptory manner inſiſt on their demand; for * *they refuſed to obey the voice of* Samuel, and ſaid: *Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we alſo may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.* And this anſwer of the people *Samuel* returned to the Lord; who again commanded him †: *Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.* After this *Samuel* diſmiſſed the elders to their reſpective cities, with an aſſurance, that God would gratify their requeſt, and ſoon provide a king to govern them, and to prepare the people for aſſembling together in a

* 1 Sam. viii. 19, 20. † Ib. v. 22.

body,

body, to recognize and elect the king, whom God ſhould appoint to rule over them.

The reader will obſerve on this part of the hiſtory, that this demand, of ſo eſſential an alteration in the *Hebrew* government, was not owing merely to the male adminiſtration of *Samuel*'s ſons, and the people's being exaſperated at the oppreſſions they laboured under by their corrupt practices; of which the ſcripture hiſtory ſays not a ſingle ſyllable. For it was not the people in a body, who applied to *Samuel*, but only the elders of *Iſrael*; thoſe of the greateſt reputation and higheſt rank in the ſeveral tribes. Nor is there the leaſt intimation, that *they roſe in a tumultous manner*, and applied to *Samuel* for redreſs. The contrary to this is the real truth. They addreſſed themſelves to him in a very reſpectful, peaceable manner, and mentioned his ſons with the greateſt tenderneſs and decency, and in ſuch a manner, as carried in it a full acknowledgment of the prophet's own integrity and honour; demanding indeed peremptorily a king, but ſhewing the higheſt deference to him, by leaving to him the management of that important affair; for they ſaid to him: *Give us a king to judge us*. And tho' ſuch, as had been aggrieved by the partial and unjuſt determination of *Samuel*'s ſons, could not but be diſpleaſed with them, yet this could be no reaſon in itſelf for demanding an alteration in the form of government; as corrupt judges may be under any form, and were much more likely to be under the government of kings, than under the *theocracy*, or immediate conduct and authority of God. And it deſerves to be remarked, that almoſt all thoſe judges, whom God raiſed up to them in an extraordinary manner, and on particular occaſions, were perſons, not only eminent for their valour and ſucceſs, but for their probity

and

and integrity in judging the people, and administering the public affairs of the nation.

There were in reality several causes that conspired at this juncture to induce them to make this demand of a king. The invasion of *Nahash* the *Ammonitish* king, which was the immediate one; the age and infirmities of *Samuel*, who wanted that vigour that was necessary to oppose so powerful an enemy; the well known character of his sons, to whom the people would not chuse to submit, and who seem to have been utterly unfit for all military affairs; the greatness of their danger, whilst destitute of any proper person to head, and lead forth their armies; the immediate necessity, as they thought, of such a provision for the public safety; their concern to provide against all such emergencies of state for the future; and what seems to have been the principal reason, their desire to become like the several nations by whom they were encompassed: All these things concurred to bring about this mighty revolution, and to establish monarchy and despotism in the *Hebrew* nation.

If we survey the state of this people, from their coming out of *Egypt* under *Moses*, to the period now before us, during which season the *theocracy* subsisted in full force; we may well pronounce them the freest and happiest people in the world; and their prosperity was never disturbed, but as the punishment of their own crimes and follies. For these indeed they often smarted, and when no other methods could recover them, they were delivered up by God into the hands of the neighbouring nations, who all of them, in their turns, exercised the most tyrannical and oppressive government over them. And yet such was the lenity and goodness of the divine administration, that they no sooner returned to their allegiance and duty, than God raised them up extraordinary

persons to deliver them from the power of their oppressors, and to establish them in the full possession of liberty and peace. *When* ‡ *the Lord raised them up judges, the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies, all the days of the judge.* Even under the government of *Samuel* himself, when the *Philistines* gathered themselves together against them at *Mispeh*, upon his crying to the Lord for *Israel*, and their putting away their strange Gods; God thundered with a great thunder upon the *Philistines*, and discomfited them, so that they were § smitten before *Israel*, and so severely handled, as that they came no more into the coasts of *Israel* all the days of *Samuel.*

Had this people known how to have rightly valued the blessings of liberty, and the happiness they enjoyed under the government of God, 'tis impossible they could ever have wished for an alteration, or subjected themselves and their posterity to kingly power. The freedom they enjoyed was the most perfect in its kind, restrained only by those wise and good laws which God had given them; the observance of which was absolutely necessary to secure the public welfare; and 'tis remarkable, that during this period, in which there was no king in *Israel*, *every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* He had nothing to consult but his own reason, nor any thing to controul his actions, but the authority and will of God. The judges pretended to no kingly or sovereign power, and even refused it, when offered to them. Thus *Gideon*, when the *Israelites* said unto him: † *Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy sons son also*; said to them: *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you*: Jehovah *shall rule over you.* And tho'

‡ Jud. ii. 18. § 1 Sam. vii. 10—14, &c. † Jud. viii. 22, 23.

they

they judged the people, they exercised no other authority over them, but what the laws gave them, and no farther concerned themselves in the management of public affairs, than by delivering them from their enemies, and administering justice between man and man, without enriching themselves, or in the least oppressing the people. They levied no taxes to support their grandeur, amassed no estates for their families, pressed none by force into their service; every man was his own master; his children, his servants, his property, unmolested; all followed their own employments without hinderance or fear, and enjoyed the fruit of their labours without prohibition or interruption. Of this people well might it have been said: *Happy is that people that is in such a case! Yea happy is that people whose God is* Jehovah. Their rejecting *the Theocracy* introduced despotism and slavery.

It was therefore with the highest reason that *Samuel* was greatly displeased with this demand of the people to have a king over them ‡. He looked upon it as a very wrong and criminal conduct; or as the scripture expresses it, *it was* §

‡ 1 Sam: viii. 6.

§ וירע הדבר בעיני שמואל. The expression undoubtedly signifies the disapprobation of any thing as wrong and criminal in its nature, and the displeasure arising in consequence of it: Thus in the case of *Er*, the first-born of *Judah*, it is said *he was* רע *evil* or wicked *in the sight of the Lord. Therefore the Lord slew him.* Gen. xxxviii. 7. Thus Isai. lix. 15. *Truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*, or, *is accounted a madman*, וירע בעיניו *and it was evil in the Lord's eyes.* Thus Saul *was wroth*, וירע בעיניו הדבר הזה *and the thing was evil in his eyes.* He looked upon it as insolent or treasonable. Thus in the place before us. This demand of a king, in that authoritative peremptory manner in which they made it, *Nay, we will have a king over us*, without asking permission of God, *was evil in* Samuel's *eyes*, as it was renouncing the government of God, and casting off the allegiance they owed him, as the king of *Israel.*

evil in his eyes; becauſe, as he himſelf once and again declares to them, of the diſhonour done to God by their rejecting him, and their thus ſacrificing all their liberties at once, and ſubjecting themſelves and all their poſterity for ever, to all the miſeries of an arbitrary and deſpotic government. As to any other reaſons for this diſpleaſure of *Samuel* at the people's demanding a king, there is no mention made of them in the hiſtory. It is ſaid no where, that *he was diſpleaſed, not for that his ſons had tyrannized over the people, but that his chagrin was owing to the violent reſumption of the ſupream magiſtracy out of the hands of his family*; *or that this was the circumſtance for which he expreſſed the bitterest reſentment.*

It is true, that in the ſhort account which we have left us of this tranſaction, *Samuel* is no where expreſly ſaid to have taken notice of the corrupt practices of his ſons. And there was no need of it, as they were too well known to the people already, without their being any farther informed of them. And yet there is one circumſtance, that looks very much like ſuch an acknowledgment, and which ſhews, that he would not have ſcreened his own ſons from public juſtice, had the people demanded it. For after *Saul* had been inaugurated a ſecond time at *Gilgal*, *Samuel* publicly ſaid ‡: *Behold the king walketh before you, and I am old and grey headed*, and reſign the adminiſtration of public affairs to him. *And behold my ſons are with you*: i. e. You know their crimes, I leave them to your juſtice, and here publicly give them up into your hands. They are now reduced to the ſtate of private perſons, and accountable to the king for their paſt male-adminiſtration; tho' as to himſelf, he boldly defies them to bring any charge

‡ 1 Sam. xii. 2.

of

of corruption, oppreſſion, and violence againſt him.

When the people firſt preſented their demand of a king to the prophet, he ſeems to have been ſo ſtruck with ſurpriſe at the folly and wickedneſs of it, as that inſtead of expreſſing any reſentment againſt thoſe who made it, or reproaching them for their ingratitude and ſin, he gave them no anſwer at all; but immediately, as became his prophetic character, applied himſelf to God, and and prayed to him for direction in this critical ſituation †. *The thing was evil in the eyes of* Samuel, *and he prayed unto the Lord.* But in the repreſentation he made to them of what would be the nature of that kingly government, to which they were determined to ſubject themſelves, in his ſpeech to them at *Miſpeh* ‡, when they met together for the election of a king; and in that noble appeal to them at *Gilgal*, upon *Saul*'s confirmation in his kingdom; not one reproach did he give them for their ingratitude to himſelf, nor did one ſingle expreſſion fall from him, that diſcovered his chagrin or reſentment, upon account of the violent reſumption of the ſupreme magiſtracy out of his family's hands. And indeed any reſentment on this account would have been unreaſonable, becauſe the ſupream magiſtracy was never in their hands, and could, by no manner of right, be claimed by them.

The ſupreme magiſtracy was veſted in *Samuel* himſelf, and he made his two ſons judges under him in *Beerſheba*; which was indeed an honourable employment, but not peculiar to them; there being many of them ‖, in all the gates, throughout all the tribes of *Iſrael*. To inveſt them with the ſupreme magiſtracy was not in *Samuel*'s power, nor

† 1 Sam. viii. 6. ‡ 1 Sam. x. 17, &c. ‖ Deut. xvi. 18.

was it ever hereditary in the families of any of the judges whatsoever; and *Samuel*'s chagrin was so far from being owing to the violent resumption of the supreme magistracy out of the hands of his family, that, on the contrary, his neither exculpating his sons, nor promising the people redress, is one of the strongest proofs that his chagrin arose from more generous and public-spirited motives. Had it not been so, *Samuel* would certainly have tried some softening methods to appease the people, by making some apology for the conduct of his sons, and promising that he would take care of their better behaviour for the future. But of this he says not a word; and his silence in this respect, especially his offering his sons to the disposal of public justice, shews, that his displeasure towards the elders was not the effect of despairing ambition, and the disappointed desire of rendering the government hereditary in his family.

In reality, the demand of the people was insolent and treasonable; as it was a demand of the utter subversion of that constitution which God himself had established, as it was throwing off the immediate government of God, and as it expressed a desire of being like other nations; which of all things in the world they should have avoided, and which was the cause of their final ruin. Thus the Lord himself expresses it: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them* *. And this the prophet plainly tells them †: *Ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities, and ye have said unto him: Nay, but set a king over us.* And again: Ye said unto me ‡: *Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord*

* 1 Sam. viii. 7. † Ib. x. 19. ‡ Ib. xii: 12. 17.

your

your God was your king. And again: *Perceive, and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.* And as this demand was censured as wrong by God, and appeared so to the prophet, it seemed wrong also soon after to the people themselves; for they said to the prophet: *Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask us a king* *.

I do not indeed doubt, but that *Samuel* was displeased with their rejecting him in the manner they did, for the faults of his sons; which probably he had not been informed of, and would have been careful to redress; and it was in fact an ungrateful return for the long prosperity and peace they had enjoyed under his government, and the eminent services he had done them. But, however, such was the prophet's moderation and piety, that he doth not so much as make a single complaint on his own or family's account; but after faithfully telling them what the evil consequences of complying with their demands would be, and giving them an opportunity to change their minds, before it was too late; yields to their desire, and according to the order of God, *promises them a king*, as they were not to be prevailed on to retract their choice, by any regard either to their duty or interest.

——— *Tunc contra Deus:*
Quia noluistis vestrum ferre, inquit, bonum,
Malum perferte. Phæd. *Fab.* l. 1. *Fab.* ii.

And when he had made him king, and confirmed him in his kingdom, he immediately, like a man of God, exhorts them: *If ye will fear the Lord,*

* 1 Sam. xii. 19.

and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both you, and also the king that reigns over you after the Lord your God, be established; adding, with a calm, dispassionate, truly benevolent and public spirit: *As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way* †. What *cruel resentment*, reader, do these words betray! Oh how bitter the vengeance that he imprecates on the people, for their choice of a king in his stead to govern them, by teaching them their duty, and promising to pray for their prosperity!

CHAP. II.

The election and consecration of Saul, *the first king of the* Jews.

AFTER *Samuel* had received his orders from God to make the *Israelites* a king, he dismissed the people, till he should be farther directed by him, as to the proper method and opportunity of creating him. *Moses* ‡ had himself provided for the management of this great event, by ordering, that when hereafter *they should demand a king, they should in any wise set him king over them, whom* Jehovah *their God should chuse.* The right of electing therefore their first king was, by the constitution, in God himself. He made use of this right, fixt upon his man, and ordered the prophet to anoint him.

After this *Samuel* called the people together to *Mispeh*, and bid them present themselves before the Lord, by their tribes, and by their thousands, for the election of their king by lot. When the

† 1 Sam. xii. 14. 23. ‡ Deut. xvii. 14, 15.

tribes

tribes came near, the tribe of *Benjamin* was taken; when their families came up, that of *Matri* was taken; and of that family, *Saul* the ſon of *Kiſh*. When he appeared, *Samuel* ſaid to all the people: *See ye him, whom the Lord hath choſen, that there is none like him amongſt all the people*; for he was higher than any of them from his ſhoulders and upwards.

Ipſe inter primos præſtanti corpore Turnus
Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice ſupra eſt.
Virg. Æn. 7.

On this the people expreſſed their joy, gave a general ſhout, and ſaid: *God ſave the king*.

It appears from this account, that the election of *Saul* by lot, was carried on in the moſt public manner, and in the face of the whole congregation, to prevent all manner of colluſion and fraud, and with an impartiality that it was not poſſible for them to find any fault with. It had certainly all the appearance of the moſt impartial method of electing a king; and it was in reality ſo, for there could be no room for a foul and fraudulent management in this tranſaction. For as there muſt have been twelve lots for the twelve tribes, and as many lots as there were families in thoſe tribes, and then as many more as there were perſons in thoſe families; ſo the management of all theſe lots, in the midſt of ſo numerous an aſſembly, and where there were probably thouſands of perſons as cunning as *Samuel*, required exquiſite art and contrivance in him, by ſuch a procedure, to gain his point, and ſecure the election of his man; and it will be time enough to ſuſpect the prophet of *legerdemain*, when we are told, what the method was that he took to cheat the people, in the various lots that were apparently caſt on this occaſion;

occasion; or by what means he could deceive them, by apparently choosing the most impartial method of election by lot, and yet invisibly choosing some other method, that was not so impartial. It is certain the people suspected no deceit, and never complained that the prophet had imposed on them.

It is indeed absolutely necessary to support the charge of fraud and craft against *Samuel*, wholly to exclude God from all share in *Saul*'s nomination and election to be king. But yet 'till the possibility, or probability can be shewn, how such fraud could, in such circumstances, be carried on and compleated, by an artful management of such various lots, as must have been used on this occasion, so as to do apparently one thing, whilst he really, but invisibly or imperceptibly, did another; such a representation will gain but little credit with any person of real candor and good understanding.

'Tis true, that Samuel *pitched on his man, previous to the election, and anointed him king in private*; *i. e.* as the real history says, that the man was pitched on previously by *Samuel*, according to the order of that God, whose prophet he was. For thus we read, that *God had told* Samuel, *the day before* ever he knew, or had seen *Saul*, that *on the morrow he would send him a man out of the land of* Benjamin *, and that *he should anoint him to be captain over his people* Israel †; and that the moment *Samuel* saw him, *Jehovah* said to him: *This same shall reign over my people*; *and that* Samuel *said to* Saul: *Stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God* ‡. *Samuel*'s prudence therefore consisted, in acquiescing in the man for king, whom the God of *Israel* had fixed

* 1 Sam. ix. 15, 16. † Ib. ver. 17. ‡ Ib. ver. 27.

on,

on, and in privately anointing him according to his orders, becauſe he knew God could ſecure the election. But now where was *Samuel*'s prudence, if the management was his own, in pitching on a man for king, and privately anointing him for ſuch, when the election of that very man depended on the hazard of a lot, which it was abſolutely out of his power to diſpoſe of? He muſt have been an ideot, or madman, previouſly to chooſe and anoint privately his own man, and then leave the choice of him to a popular aſſembly by lot. Had he inſiſted on his prophetic authority, and nominated *Saul* king, by telling the people, that it was the will of the Lord, that they ſhould acquieſce in his nomination, without permitting them to come to any choice at all; there would have been ſome room for ſuſpicion as to his integrity in this affair, and that he had impoſed on them a king by his mere arbitrary pleaſure; whereas the previouſly fixing on the man, and privately anointing him, are the very circumſtances that demonſtrate there could be no colluſion in *Samuel*, but that the whole affair was from God; and that *Samuel* acted in it by his order; ſince none could have ſecured the public election of ſuch a perſon, but that God, who actually did determine the lot in his favour.

But doth not *the whole tenour of* Samuel'*s conduct manifeſt, that he intended to give them a king in name, but to have one ſubordinate to his own will?* I think not; becauſe his allowing the people a free ||, impartial, and open election by lot, is one demon-

|| Though *Saul* was certainly elected by God, and actually anointed by *Samuel*, previous to his being choſen by the people; yet the people, when they choſe their king, had no intention or view to confirm that previous election of *Saul*; for they knew nothing of *Saul*, or of the private tranſaction between *Samuel* and

demonstration, that he intended they should have a king to their own mind, and who should be subordinate to none, but that God, who was the supreme king of the nation, and by whose will the king they chose ought to be determined. Such a king *Samuel* did, I believe, intend to give them, if he could; and though it may be suggested, that this would be the same thing as giving them a king subordinate to his own will, it must be upon the supposition, that he was an impostor, who delivered no oracles from God, but gave his own imperious commands, as the dictates of God. But this is mere supposition, and not arguing; is much easier said than proved; and if what *Saul*'s servant said to him be true: *All that he saith cometh surely to pass* §; this will be such a proof of God's speaking by *Samuel*, as no one will ever be able to invalidate. *Samuel*'s whole conduct evidently shews, that he was never influenced by any personal views, but by a pure regard to the authority of God, and the liberties and welfare of his people; and as he apparently chose the most

and him. They came to the election absolutely unbiassed and undetermined who should be chosen, and in the election acted freely, as they consented to the method of choice by lot. So that there is no difficulty in the question: *If the election was overruled by God, how could it be a free and impartial election?* Because on whomsoever the lot fell, and by whatsoever invisible power it was directed, whether by chance, or by providence, the person so chosen was freely chosen by the people, because they freely agreed to this measure of electing him. Besides, was there any difficulty in this question, as there really is none; it should be remembered, that the reconciling the disposals of providence with the free agency of men, is a difficulty that affects natural religion as well as revealed; and when those, who declare themselves friends to natural religion, will clear up this important point, they will then see how to reconcile the free agency of the people, and the interposal of providence in the election of *Saul*.

§ 1 Sam. ix. 6.

impartial

impartial method of electing a king, *viz.* by lot; we may venture to affirm, that his whole conduct, in this transaction, was both really and apparently fair, open, and disinterested; and that he intended to give them a king, in effect, and not in name only, and without the least apparent or real intention of having him subordinate to his own will, or the will of any other, but to God alone.

If *Samuel* intended to have a king subordinate to own his will, I cannot imagine how it could, in any respect, fall out *opportunely for this purpose, that* Saul, *a raw country lad, having rambled about to seek his father's asses, which had strayed, and finding all search after them vain, should apply to* Samuel *as a prophet, with a fee * in his hand, to gain intelligence*

* The present, which *Saul* intended to make to *Samuel*, is not to be considered * *as the price of divination, but as an offering of respect to the chief magistrate in* Israel; it being the general custom of the East, not to approach the presence of princes and great men empty handed; who look upon themselves as affronted, and indeed defrauded, when this compliment is omitted: a custom that continues even to this day. Thus when *Saul* was elected king, the children of *Belial* said: *How shall this man save us?* And they despised him, and in token of their contempt *they brought him no present. Saul* was sensible of the affront, but held his peace. 1 *Sam.* x. 27. When *David* first waited on *Saul*, though by *Saul*'s own desire, *he carried with him a load of bread, a bottle of wine, and a kid.* 1 *Sam.* xvi. 20. *Ælian* tells us †, that it was one of the most sacred laws, that whenever the king appeared amongst the *Persians*, every person, according to his ability, brought him presents: Farmers, and such sort of people, cattle, sheep, corn, and wine; those of inferior circumstances, milk, dates, cheese, ripe fruits. Και ονομαζεται δωρα, ϗ δοκει τουτω. They are offered to him as presents, or gifts, and he accepts them as such. The learned authors of *the Universal History* also ‡, speaking of the *Persian* kings, tell us, that no body, of what rank soever, appeared before

* *Maund. Trav.* p. 26, 27. † *Var. Hist.* l. 1. c. 31. 32. ‡ *Ant. Hist.* vol. v. p. 139.

the

gence of his beasts. The thing itself, indeed, is not true, that *Saul* ever applied to *Samuel* at all, or offered him a fee, to gain intelligence of his beasts. For immediately upon *Saul*'s asking him, before he knew who he was †, *where the seer's house was*; Samuel prevented any farther questions, by telling him, he himself was the seer, by inviting *Saul* to dinner, and acquainting him, without fee, that his asses were found.

But supposing *Saul* had actually applied to *Samuel*, to gain intelligence of his asses, I do not see very clearly how this fell out so opportunely for *Samuel*'s purpose. For to me *Samuel* seems, by this account, to be as raw, as the raw country lad; who, intending to give the *Israelites* a king, subordinate to his own will, should pitch upon a raw young fellow, whom he had never known or seen before, and who, as for any thing he could tell, might, after his election prove, what he actually did prove, as obstinate and intractable as the asses he was rambling after. Can any one really think, that *Saul*'s being a raw country lad, was the circumstance that recommended him to *Samuel?* Or, that there was no other raw country lad, whom *Samuel* knew, that *Saul*'s coming, whom he knew not, should be so very opportune for his purpose? Or, was *Saul*'s rambling about for his asses the lucky incident, that determined *Samuel* in his favour? Or did the fee in his hand,

the king without a present, which custom prevails amongst the Orientals to this day. The reverend and learned Dr. *Pocock*, now lord bishop of *Ossory*, gives an account, in several places, of his Description of the East ||, of the presents he made to *Beys*, *Sardars*, *Sheiks*, &c. of *French* prunellas, glasses, *English* cutlery wares, and some other things; a gift being constantly expected, when any person waited on them.

† 1 Sam. ix. 18—20.

|| Vol. i. p. 124, 126, &c. &c.

the

the fourth part of a silver shekel, so blind the man, who was then the judge of *Israel*, as to induce him to conclude, that if he made him a king, he would be subordinate to his will? The truth is, that this same very opportune thing of a raw boy, to whom *Samuel* was before an utter stranger; who was ‡ *of a small tribe, and of the least* considerable *family in that tribe*; to be made king, in preference to all the princes, elders, commanders; all the wisest, richest, gravest men, in the whole congregation; was so wild, extravagant, and absurd a thing in every rational and political view, as could never have entered into the head of so knowing and experienced a man as *Samuel*, had he been left to consult his own judgment, and chuse a king according to his liking; especially, as the view of having a king subordinate to himself, had that been his view, might have been much better answered, by managing the election, had that been possible, so as to make it fall on one, with whose temper he had been thoroughly acquainted, and whom he had reason to conclude would be tractable, and intirely subservient to his will, from a long and intimate knowledge of and friendship with him.

Should it be thought to reflect any dishonour upon *Samuel*'s character, that though *a chief among the prophets, and one who had been a judge over* Israel, *he should be applied to for intelligence concerning lost cattle*; the answer is: That this instance is the only one in scripture of a prophet's being asked, or giving information in such sort of domestic affairs as this; they being employed in things of a much higher nature, and greater importance, than this at first view seems to be. And yet little as this affair may be thought, it was attended with

‡ 1 Sam. ix. 21.

con-

consequences, in which the whole *Hebrew* nation was concerned; and 'tis impossible to read this part of their history through, without plainly discerning the secret steps by which providence conducted this change of government in the *Jewish* republic.

The people demand a king, they accordingly apply to *Samuel*, as a known prophet of God, to make them a king. He by prayer seeks to God for direction, and is ordered by him to comply with the peoples demand. But who must be king? Who would ever have thought of an obscure man, in quest of a parcel of asses, for the first monarch in *Israel?* And yet the asses are lost, and *Saul* sent to search for them. *Saul* despairs of finding them, but his servant had heard, that in the town, to which they were near, there was *a very venerable man, a man of God, and that whatever he said surely came to pass*, and advises his master to go and ask his direction. As soon as ever they came into the city, the first man they met with was the prophet himself, to whom God had before hand revealed *Saul*'s coming, and given orders that he should anoint him captain over the people. *Saul* inquires, with a view to his asses, where the seer's house was. *Samuel* tells him, he himself was the seer, invites him to dinner, bids him not regard the asses that had been lost three days, for that they were found; adding*: *I will tell thee all that is in thine heart, and on whom is all the desire of* Israel? *Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?* Saul thought the prophet had mocked him. *Am I not*, said he, *a* Benjamite, *of the smallest of the tribes of* Israel, *and my family of the least of all the families of the tribe of* Benjamin? *And wherefore speakest thou so to me?* Samuel,

* 1 Sam. ix. 19, 20, 21.

however,

however, gives him the chief place, and the principal mess at table, anointed him with oil, kissed him, and said: *Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?* What must the man be, who doth not see the importance of the asses in this history, and that talks with contempt of a prophet and judge being applied to for intelligence concerning lost cattle; when the intended application gave *Saul* intelligence of a crown, and even the strayed asses led him to the possession of a kingdom? How doth this detract from the dignity of the prophet and judge, to give this intelligence concerning them, unasked, and without fee or reward, when it was to be one proof of what *Samuel* assured him, that the Lord had chosen him to be captain over his inheritance? Small as this circumstance may appear to be, it shews that providence can make the smallest accidents subservient to bring about the most considerable and important purposes; and in the whole account, there is such a mixture of the natural and marvellous, as that no man of taste can read it without pleasure and admiration.

Saul being thus established in the kingdom, by the appointment of God, and the free choice of the people, immediately exerted himself, and gave a remarkable proof of his courage and zeal for the safety of his people, by summoning them, under a severe penalty, to assist him in his resolution to deliver the inhabitants of *Jabesh Gilead*, from the invasion of *Nahash*, king of the *Ammonites*; who would not admit of their surrendering themselves to him, but on condition of their consenting † *to have all their right eyes put out, that he might lay it for a reproach upon all* Israel. When

† 1 Sam. xi. 2, 26.

Saul heard this, 'tis ſaid, *the ſpirit of the Lord came upon him*, viz. by exciting him to exert his kingly authority, and inſpiring him, tho' a raw ſoldier, and wholly unaccuſtomed to war, with a reſolution and bravery, worthy the new honour and dignity that was conferred on him. He commanded his forces, attacked the invader, beat his army, and delivered the city from the danger that threatened it, and *Iſrael* from the reproach he intended to fix on them; and on this account was ſolemnly confirmed in the kingdom at *Gilgal* *, at *Samuel*'s deſire, by the unanimous conſent of the people.

When *Samuel* had thus confirmed *Saul* in the kingdom, ſolemnly before the Lord in *Gilgal*, he ſaid to them: *And now, behold the king walketh before you.* You have a king for your governor and captain. *But I am grown old and grey headed.* You have thought me unfit for the government, and I now reſign it. *And behold my ſons are with you*, diveſted of all authority, and ſubject to your power. As I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day, as a prophet of the Lord, and as a judge over you, *behold here am I. Witneſs againſt me before the Lord, and before his anointed. Whoſe ox, or whoſe aſs have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppreſſed, or of whoſe hands have I received any bribe, that I ſhould ſeal up my eyes therewith? And I will reſtore it you.* The whole congregation immediately teſtified his innocency, and joined with him in the appeal to God and the king for the truth of it. He then reaſons with them concerning this great change in their conſtitution and government; puts them in mind, how the Lord brought them out of *Egypt*, and how frequently he had raiſed

* 1 Sam. xiii. 1.—14.

them

them up judges to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies; and yet, that when they were invaded by *Nahash*, king of the *Ammonites*, instead of imploring the assistance of the Lord, as their forefathers had done, they said: *A king shall reign over us, when* Jehovah *their God was their king.* He then tells them, that God would immediately give them a very awful proof of his displeasure, upon account of this their great wickedness, in thus asking them a king. And immediately upon the prophet's prayer, there arose such a storm of thunder and rain, as astonished the people, brought them to their senses, and made them humbly beseech the prophet, that he would pray for them to *Jehovah* their God, that *they should not die for adding to their former sins this evil of asking for themselves a king.*

Intonuit ——
Omnipotens, regemque dedit.——
Val. Flac. *Argon.* l. 1.

The prophet immediately comforts and assures them, that if *they would continue to follow and serve the Lord with all their hearts, God would forgive their sin, and never forsake them.* That as for himself, he would *not cease to pray for them, and teach them the good and the right way,* which was, that *they should fear and serve the Lord in truth, and with all their heart,* because of the great things he had done for them; but faithfully warning them at the same time, that *if they did wickedly, they should be consumed, both themselves and their king.* How noble a testimony this to the integrity, honour, and justice of this judge of *Israel!* how authentic an evidence, of his being a real prophet of God! How kind and faithful the advice he gave them; and how strong the affection and love he

discovered to them, in that, tho' in his old age, and after all the important services he had done them, from his youth upward, they had thrown contempt on him, and ungratefully divested him of all civil power and authority; he forgives them their ingratitude, assures them of his prayers, for their prosperity and peace, and that he would be ever ready to shew them the only effectual method, by which they could obtain and perpetuate it.

Let but this excellent man's conduct, in this whole affair, be judged of by the history itself, according to the rules of candor, without perverting the sense of words, and forming suppositions to supply the place of facts, and it will appear worthy a good man, and a real patriot. From the beginning to the conclusion of this great event, he never once reproaches them for their ill behaviour to himself; discovers no impatience or resentment for their reducing him to a private station; expresses no desire, nor takes a single step to be reinstated; behaves with the utmost placidity, moderation, and calmness; not to cloak over his desire of power, which was now never to be recovered, nor to disguise his inward chagrin, ambition and pride, of which he never gave the least discovery, but with a mildness which could only proceed from a spirit of genuine piety to God, a tender concern for the people's welfare, and a generous view to prevent their ruin. In a word; he acted as an able statesman, a prudent dispassionate counsellor, and as a firm and faithful friend, to the religion and liberties of his country.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Saul's *bad conduct upon the invasion of the* Philistines.

ABOUT two years after this, *Jonathan*, *Saul*'s son, having cut off the garrison of the *Philistines*, that was in *Geba*, a city of the tribe of *Benjamin*; the *Philistines*, in revenge, invaded the *Hebrews*, with such a numerous and formidable army, as struck them with the utmost consternation, so that they hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits. And what added to their fear and distress was, that the *Philistines* had totally disarmed * them, so that there was *neither sword nor spear found in any of the people that were with* Saul and *Jonathan*, who were the two only persons that were in possession of them. *Saul* † immediately sent notice of this invasion to *Samuel*, to ask his advice, and desire his assistance. *Samuel* ordered him to wait for him seven days, promising him, that after seven days he would be with him, so as to offer sacrifices on the seventh day. *Saul* accordingly waited till the seventh day, and upon *Samuel*'s not coming so soon as he expected on it, and finding the people were continually deserting him; impatient of any farther delay, he said: *Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering.* At the conclusion of the solemnity *Samuel* came, and said to *Saul*, as he went to meet and salute him: *What hast thou done?* Saul *answered him*; *because I saw that the*

* *Posthumius (Ligures) exarmavit, ut vix reliquerit ferrum, quo terra colereturur.* L. A. Flor. l. 2. c. 3. §. *ult.*

† Joseph. *Ant.* l. 6. c. 6. §. 2.

people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines *gathered themselves to* Michmash; *therefore I said: The* Philistines *will come down now upon me to* Gilgal, *and I have not made my supplication to the Lord. I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.* Samuel replied: *Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom for ever; but now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.*

The reader will here observe, that *Saul* had received a positive order, from the God of *Israel*, to wait seven days, without engaging in any undertaking, till the prophet's arrival, from whom he was to receive full instruction, how he was to act in the difficult situation of affairs, in which he then found himself. He had now scarce been two years, or but little more, king of *Israel*. When he was solemnly inaugurated at *Gilgal*, *Samuel* publicly declared to the new king and his people, met together at that solemnity †: *Behold the king whom ye have chosen, whom ye have desired. See now the Lord hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then ye shall* ‡ *be established, both you, and the king that reigneth*

† 1 Sam. xii. 13, 14, &c.

‡ Our version thus renders the latter part of the 14th verse: *If ye will fear and serve the Lord —— then shall both you, and also the king that reigns over you, continue following the Lord your God.* Thus also the *Greek* and *Latin* versions. Και ητε — οπισω Κυριου πορευομενοι. *Eritis sequentes Deum vestrum.* But this seems to

reigneth over you, after the Lord your God. But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.——If ye do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

Nothing can be more evident from hence, than that the very condition of *Saul*'s establishment upon the throne, was his fearing God, obeying his voice, and not rebelling against the commandment of the Lord; and if he did wickedly, in violating this condition, God expresly told him, *he should be consumed.* Now the very first commandment he received from God, by the hand of the prophet, was this we are now considering: That as the *Philistines* had invaded *Israel* with a very numerous and formidable army, which they

to me a tautology. For then the sense will be: If ye continue to serve the Lord, ye shall continue to serve him; the serving God, mentioned in the beginning of the verse, certainly meaning their continuing to serve him, and not any particular act of obedience; and this would be to make the reward of their continued obedience, that very continued obedience itself. But this difficulty will be quite avoided, if we take the word היתם in the sense, in which 'tis often taken in the sacred writings: *Ye shall be*, i. e. *ye shall continue to be*; היה, as the learned *Cocceius* observes, in his incomparable *Hebrew* Lexicon, signifying: *Talem esse, sive incipere, sive perseverare*; not only any ones beginning to be such and such, but continuing and persevering to be such. Thus their inheritance לעולם תהיה *shall be*, i. e. shall continue, or *be established for ever*. Ps. xxxiii. 18. So also, in the place before us. *Both you and your king shall continue to be*; i. e. You shall be both established; he, as your king, and you, in your prosperity. His reign shall be confirmed, and your happiness under it. We may also farther observe, the words, *after the Lord your God*, should be joined, as they are in the *Hebrew* text, with *reigneth over you*: *Both you, and the king that reigneth over you, after* Jehovah *your God*; i. e. who succeeded *Jehovah* in the government; the people having rejected the immediate government of God, and chosen *Saul* in his stead.

were absolutely incapable of resisting; *Saul* should wait seven days for God's direction by the prophet; which was itself an assurance, that within that time he should receive it. But *Saul*, regardless of this solemn injunction, anticipates his orders, acts for himself, and as tho' he had the supreme management of all sacred and civil affairs, could command success in wars, and imagined God and his prophet were to be subject to his caprice, calls for sacrifices, and presumes to offer them; thinking, no doubt, he had as much a right to expect himself a favourable answer from God, as if his prophet was actually present with him. For this *Samuel* reproaches him, that he *kept not the commandment of the Lord his God, which he had commanded him.* By this precipitate and rash step, he broke the condition upon which he held his crown, and thereby justly incurred the threatened forfeiture of it.

Saul's apology for himself, upon *Samuel*'s asking him: *What hast thou done?* is partly weak, partly a confession of his guilt, and partly false in fact. He urges, that his people were scattered from him, that the *Philistines* were gathered together at *Michmash*, that he was afraid they would come down and attack him at *Gilgal*. Nothing could be more weak than this; for these were all reasons, why he should have waited for the coming of the prophet, to receive his instructions, and have acted under the orders of God by him. And had he been animated by his son's piety, he would have argued like him: *It may be, that the Lord will work for us; for there is* * *no restraint to the Lord, to save by many, or by few.* Besides, the waiting the whole seventh day could have been no prejudice to his affairs; especially as he had all the reason in the world to expect, that

* 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

the

the prophet would be with him before it was expired. And thus it came to pass; for as soon as he had finished the burnt-offering, before ever the peace-offerings had been made, *Samuel* came, ‡ according to his promise; and therefore that part of *Saul*'s apology: *Thou cameſt not within the days appointed*; was either false, or a poor low equivocation, if he only meant, that he came not so soon as *Saul* expected him on the last day; tho' he came soon enough to fulfil his promise, and officiate at the sacrifice.

Saul himself very well knew that he had acted wrong; for he says to the prophet: *I forced myſelf, and offered a burnt offering*; hereby plainly acknowledging, though justifying himself in the thing, that his fear, or his impatience, or his

‡ The text informs us, that Saul *tarried ſeven days, according to the ſet time that* Samuel *had appointed. But* Samuel *came not to* Gilgal. It is inferred from hence, that Samuel *did not keep his appointment*; i. e. did not come at all on the seventh day. But the expression doth not mean any such thing, but only that *Saul* waited till the seventh day came, and that *Samuel* did not come as early on that day as *Saul* expected him. This order to stay seven days, *Joſephus* explains as a promise, *that he would come after ſeven days*, i. e. before the seventh was ended, *that they might ſacrifice on the ſeventh of thoſe days.* Μετα ημερας επτα προς αυτον εξειν, οπως θυσωσι τη εβδομη των ημερων. *A. Jud.* l. 6. c. 6. §. 2. *Saul* tarried the seven days, *i. e.* till the seventh day came; and when he saw that *Samuel* came not למועד הימים according to the appointed time of the days; part of the seventh day being already elapsed, and the prophet not then appearing; *Saul*, who knew that on the seventh day at farthest, the sacrifices were to be offered, impatient at the delay, and being displeased that *Samuel* made him wait, determined to stay no longer for him, but come or not come, immediately to offer the sacrifices that had been prepared. And indeed had not *Samuel* been present within the time appointed, or before the seven days were wholly expired, *Saul* might have done wrong in presuming to offer sacrifice without the concurrence of the prophet; but could not have been said to have transgressed that commandment, he received at this time from God by *Samuel*.

ambition

ambition and pride got the better of his duty, and made him transgress the command of God by his prophet. And what is the most absurd part of his apology, he endeavours to vindicate himself by the pretence of piety: *The* Philistines *will come down, and I have not made supplication to the Lord*; as though God could be supplicated, and rendered propitious by an offering, made to him in express contradiction to his own command. Such a conduct as this too plainly shewed, that he intended to be absolute and arbitrary in his government, to act as king independent on the orders, and without the direction of God, and to pay no regard to the laws or religion of his country, when ever his ambition or policy should prompt him to transgress them.

Of this his disregard to the divine direction he gave a farther proof, when upon finding that *Jonathan* and his armour bearer were absent from the rest of his troops, he orders *Abiah* the priest to bring the ark of God to him, that he might inquire of God how he was to act, upon hearing of the commotion in the *Philistines* camp; or might encourage his own soldiers, by having the tabernacle of the Lord present with them, that * *it might save them out of the hand of their enemies*; and then immediately dismissed it, bidding the priest in a peremptory haughty tone: *Withdraw thy hand*, upon hearing of the increasing noise and tumult in the army of the *Philistines*; as though he had no farther need of the direction of God, nor desire of his assistance. Nor can there be mentioned a greater instance of impiety, than what *Saul* was guilty of, when in the order he gave to massacre the priests, he says to some of his guards: *Turn and slay the priests of the Lord*;

* 1 Sam. iv. 3.

bidding

bidding defiance to the God of *Israel*, and as though he would wreak his vengeance on him, by murthering his priests, because he knew that he had rejected him.

And though some writers have endeavoured to extenuate this fault of *Saul*, and think it hard that he should be rejected, for so comparatively small an offence; yet to me it appears to be a very heinous and aggravated instance of disobedience, and a thorough specimen of what the man would, and actually did afterwards prove. It was the violation of the express command of God, contrary to his own conviction; and upon obedience to which his right to the continued possession of his crown depended. The occasion upon which this command was given was a very important one; the invasion of his kingdom, by a very numerous and formidable army. His own people were distressed, and hid themselves, some of them in caves and thickets and rocks, in high places, or rather fortresses, and in pits; whilst others of them forsook their habitations, and fled over *Jordan*; his own soldiers were without swords and spears, trembling for fear of the enemy, and in large numbers deserting him; circumstances these, which at all events should have made him solicitous for the divine direction, and patiently wait for the prophets appearance; who he was well assured was his friend, and the great instrument of his advancement to the throne of *Israel*; who he had no reason to imagine would desert him in this difficult situation; whom he had actually sent for, whose promise to be with him, and assist him, he had received, whose prayers he knew were of great efficacy with God, and whom in gratitude, duty, and interest, he was obliged to wait for.

It was a farther aggravation of his crime, that *Saul* offered the sacrifice himself, without the assistance of any one of the priests. This the history seems

ſeems to intimate, which tells us; that *Saul* ſays: *Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering*; without the leaſt mention of the aſſiſtance of any proper perſon, who had a right to miniſter at the altar. *Joſephus* † was of this ſentiment; for he ſays, that when *Saul* found himſelf deſerted by his ſoldiers, he took and brought the ſacrifices to the altar, and that *he wickedly officiated in ſacred things*, and was guilty of great raſhneſs, becauſe he anticipated the prayers and ſacrifices that were to be offered for the people. Now this was moſt expreſsly forbid by the law of *Moſes*, and that under the penalty of death itſelf. For the Lord ſaid to *Aaron* ‡: *Thou and thy ſons with thee ſhall keep the prieſts office, for every thing of the altar, and within the veil, and ye ſhall ſerve. I have given the prieſts office unto you, as a ſervice of gift; and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death*: i. e. every one that is not of *Aaron*'s houſe, and who hath not an expreſs permiſſion and order of God to do it. Now let any inferior prince thus violate the expreſs orders of his ſovereign, thus bid defiance to one of the moſt eſſential laws of his kingdom, and act in any affairs of importance directly contrary to his inſtructions and duty; and no one will ſcruple to pronounce him guilty of rebellion, or think he was too hardly treated by being removed from his dignity and government.

And indeed, nothing was more neceſſary to maintain the very being of the *Jewiſh* conſtitution, than to preſerve the regal and prieſtly offices in-

† Αλλ ως εωρα βραδυνοντα μεν τον προφητην—λαβων τα θυματα προσηγαγεν. επει δε τον Σαμηλον ηκουσε, προσιοντα, υπαντησομενος εξηλθεν, Ο δ' εκ ορθως αυτον εφη πεποιηκεναι—τας ευχας ϗ τας θυσιας τας υπερ τω πληθους προλαβων, κακως ιερεγγυοειν, και προθυμος γενομενος. *Ant.* l. vi. c. vi. §. 2.

‡ Numb. xviii. 7.

tirely

tirely diſtinct from one another. After the eſtabiſhment of the monarchy, the great idolatries and corruptions, that were introduced into the *Jewiſh* nation, and which finally ended in their deſtruction, were generally occaſioned by their princes intermedling with the affairs of religion, which belonged to the prieſts. And therefore God was pleaſed ſometimes to ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt theſe uſurpations. An almoſt parallel inſtance of this in *Saul*, we have in *Uriah* King of *Judah* ||, who went into the temple of the Lord to burn incenſe, upon the altar of incenſe. The high prieſt withſtood him, and told him: *It pertaineth not unto thee*, Uriah, *to burn incenſe unto the Lord, but to the prieſts, the ſons of* Aaron, *that are conſecrated to burn incenſe. Go out of the ſanctuary, for thou haſt treſpaſſed, neither ſhall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.* The conſequence was, that he was immediately ſtruck with an incurable leproſy; by which he was in fact, though not in form, depoſed from the government, forced to dwell in a ſeparate houſe, and to reſign the adminiſtration of all public affairs to his ſon and ſucceſſor *Jotham.*

Upon the whole, this inſtance of *Saul*'s diſobedience, in the very beginning of his reign, before he was well verſed in affairs of ſtate, or experienced in war, or the kingdom made hereditary in his family; and when the delay of *Samuel*'s coming made the people apprehenſive, leaſt God ſhould refuſe to appear for their deliverance; was a ſtrong ſpecimen of that raſh, obſtinate, and impetuous temper, which he manifeſted throughout the whole of his reign, and which ſeems to have been the true reaſon of his being rejected by God.

|| 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.—21.

Of

Of this disposition he gave two proofs, immediately after that, of which I have been speaking. For when, upon *Jonathan*'s invasion of the *Philistines* garrison, their whole army was struck with a panick, so that in their terrour, they fell into a general confusion, and slew one another; what doth the heroick *Saul* do? Why, he adjured the people, saying: *Cursed be the man, that eateth any food, till evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies.* This greatly distressed his army and people, so that when they were in pursuit of their enemies, they grew faint, because they were prohibited from all kind of provisions; insomuch that *Jonathan* could not forbear complaining §: *My father hath troubled the land. See, I pray you, how mine eyes have been inlightened*, i. e. how I am invigorated and refreshed, as it appeared in the vividness and brightness of his eyes, *because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies, which they found? For had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the* Philistines? It was indeed an execration fit only for a madman to utter; than which nothing could be more extravagant, unless it was what immediately followed it; his wishing the curse of God upon himself, if he did not cut the throat of his son *Jonathan*, for tasting a little honey, without knowing that he incurred his father's curse by doing it.

The reader will also observe here, one or two immediate effects of *Saul*'s acting without the advice of the prophet: The invasion and plundering his country by parties from the *Philistine* army, his being denied the honour of victory over them, and having the disgrace to render it incompleat by his rashness; as also the impertinence of part of his excuse to *Samuel*, that *the people were*

§ 1 Sam. xiv. 24, 29, 30.

scattered

scattered from him; as this very victory was obtained by two men only; *Jonathan* and his armour bearer, who struck such a terror into the whole host of the *Philistines*, that in their hast to escape, they destroyed one another. After this he will not wonder, that *Samuel* was displeased with *Saul*, not for affronting him, but for his disobedience to God; or that God determined *Saul*'s kingdom should not continue, *i. e.* should not be made hereditary in his family.

For in reality, this is all the punishment that was threatned for his disobedience; as most evidently appears by what the prophet says to him *: *Now would the Lord have established thy kingdom over* Israel *for ever*; *i. e.* settled it on thy family, throughout all generations. *But now thy kingdom shall not continue*, *i. e.* descend to thy children after thee: A plain intimation this, that hitherto his kingdom had not been established by being made hereditary in his house, either by God, or the people; without whose concurring consent, he could have no right to expect it. By this sentence, however, *Saul* himself was not deposed, during his own life. He might have reigned in honour and comfort, had it not been for his own ambitious, restless and vindictive temper. As to the succession to the kingdom, that still remained undetermined, whether it should be hereditary, or elective. *Saul* therefore only lost what he had never been promised, and had no legal claim to; and this greatly mitigates the severity of his punishment, gave him very little reason of just complaint, and rendered all his measures to establish the kingdom in his family tyrannical and illegal; in which the whole nation might justly, and indeed ought to have opposed him.

* 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14.

Let

Let me add farther, that the ſentence pronounced by *Samuel* againſt *Saul*, on this occaſion, doth not appear to me to have been peremptory and deciſive; but to be rather a warning and threatning to him, of what would certainly be the caſe, upon any future diſobedience to the expreſs orders of God; for he reigned ſeveral years after this in great proſperity, and as yet there was no perſon actually choſen or anointed to ſucceed him; and God was with him, and made him victorious in the ſeveral wars he was engaged in with the neighbouring nations, the enemies of his crown and kingdom.

For notwithſtanding the ſeverity of the rebuke given him by *Samuel* †, the hiſtorian obſerves, that upon the retreat of the *Philiſtine* army to their own borders, *Saul* took the kingdom over *Iſrael*, and fought againſt all his enemies on every ſide; againſt *Moab*, againſt the children of *Ammon*, againſt *Edom*, againſt the kings of *Zobah*, and againſt the *Philiſtines*, *and vexed them whither ſoever he turned himſelf*; and he farther particularly remarks, that *Saul* gathered an hoſt, and ſmote the *Amalekites* ‡, and delivered *Iſrael* out of the hands of them that ſpoiled them. Upon this new provocation of theſe reſtleſs and inveterate enemies of the *Iſraelites*, and the rapines and murthers they had committed in this laſt invaſion of them, the fatal order was given for their utter extirpation; of which we have the following account.

† 1 Sam. xiv. 47. ‡ Ibid. 48.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Saul's *disobedience to the divine order, in the case of the* Amalekites.

SAMUEL said to *Saul**: *The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over* Israel. *Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord: I remember that which* Amalek *did to* Israel, *how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from* Egypt. *Now go, and smite* Amalek, *and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling; ox and sheep, camel and asses.*

The introduction to this order was very solemn. *The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people. Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.* This was gently putting him in mind of his former offence. *But now hearken*; and was in effect, letting him know, that as he was anointed king partly for this very purpose, so the continuance of his kingdom depended on his punctually executing it. But he did not execute it, and for this reason God finally rejected him. *Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, therefore thy kingdom shall not stand.*

It may not be amiss here to observe, that the reason of this original sentence pronounced against them, was their base, treacherous, and unprovoked attack of the *Israelites* at *Rephidim*, soon after their coming out of *Egypt*; when, as *Moses* describes it: † *They met them by the way, and smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble behind them, and when they were faint and weary.* For

* 1 Sam. xv. 1—3. † Deut. xxv. 18, 19.

this reason the order to extirpate them is renewed by *Moses*. *When the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from thine enemies,—thou shalt blot out the remembrance of* Amalek *from under heaven. Thou shalt not forget it. Balaam* ‡ in his vision confirms their doom: Amalek's *latter end shall be, that he perish for ever.* And the *Amalekites* took care to deserve excision, by continuing to manifest the most hostile disposition to the *Hebrew* nation, by attacking them when ever they had an opportunity, and joyning their enemies upon all occasions to oppress and enslave them. They joyned the *Canaanites* ‖, and destroyed many of the people, upon their first atttempt to enter into *Canaan*. They united with the *Moabites* §, went with them and smote *Israel*, dispossessed them of the city of *palm trees*, and helped to reduce them to an eighteen years servitude *. They oppressed them also with the *Midianites*, and utterly impoverished them by their rapines and plunders; destroying the increase of the earth, leaving no sustenance for *Israel*, neither for the sheep, the oxen, or asses; and afterwards † attacked them in battle as confederates with the *Midianitish* army ‡. Under *Saul*'s reign they continued their ravages and spoiled the people; and when he had repulsed them, he received this command from God, utterly to exterminate them.

It appears from these historical remarks, that the *Amalekites* were the old, inveterate, restless enemies of the *Hebrew* nation, and engaged in many expeditions to plunder the country, and destroy the inhabitants, confederating with any of the neighbouring nations, that invaded and oppressed them. And as they appear to have been hoards

‡ Numb. xxiv. 20. ‖ Ibid. xiv. 45. § Judg. iii. 13.
* Ibid. vi. 3. † Ibid. 33. ‡ 1 Sam. xiv. 48.

or

or clans of freebooters and robbers; *rovers, who lived by theiving and murthers, and were equally enemies to all nations around them; every man had a right to cut them off, as the common pests of mankind, who had opportunity and power to do it. And indeed almost all nations † have agreed in executing the severest chastisements on such lawless *banditti*, and to exterminate them when ever they could; and those princes who have done it, so far from being reproached for cruelty and barbarity, have been regarded as common friends to society on this very account‡. Besides, the *Amalekites* were now

* *Rovers.* So these people are callled in our version. 1 Chron. xii. 21. The original word הגדוד comes from גדד *secuit*, and from thence denotes a party, or detatchment of troops, *cut off*, or separated from the main army, for sudden onsets and invasions. It is generally used in a bad sense, for a band of lawless and violent plunderers. Thus *Hos.* vii. 1. 'tis joyned with גנב *the thief*; and well rendered in our version: *The troop of robbers.* And in the place before us the Vulg. renders the words על גדוד *contra latrunculos.* See the account given of them by the very learned writers of the *Univers. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 500.

† 'Tis easy to bring numerous instances of this nature from the historians. *Greece* was formerly a nation of robbers and banditti, who, without regard to justice, equity and humanity, plundered and destroyed all they could lay hands on. *Hercules*, in his passage through it cut off great numbers of these wretches, and so cleared the country of them, as that the few, who escaped his persuit, were confined to their caves, and rendered incapable of farther mischief. *Plut.* Thes. p. 3. C. D. E. *Pompey* gained great honour by putting an end to the piratical war, destroying the fleet, reducing the towns, cutting off many of those desperadoes, and transplanting others into very distant countries. *Servilius* gained the name of *Isauricus*, by cutting off the robbers and pirates of *Isauria. Strab.* l. 14. p. 980. and *Herod*, in his early youth, was greatly esteemed and beloved by the *Syrians* for purging the country from rapine and robbery, and killing the captain, and great numbers of his followers; and thereby restoring the public peace and safety. Jos. *Ant.* l. 14. c. 9. § 2.

‡ Mr. *Bayle* himself, in his way, vindicates this order for their utter extirpation, as given by *Samuel*, that he might throw

now the aggressors; and their late invasion of the country, the depredations they committed in it, the loss *Saul* must have sustained in his late engagement with their forces, and the two nations being now in a state of mutual hostilities; gave the *Hebrews* a right, by the law of nature and nations, to invade them, and guard against all future incursions, by putting it absolutely out of their power ever to attempt it. And this severity was the more necessary and just, as these very *Amalekites* seem to have formed a design, with some other neighbouring nations, of cutting off the *Hebrews* so intirely, as that * *the name of* Israel *should never be remembered or mentioned*; and therefore by the laws of prevention and retalia-

a greater load of guilt upon *David*, for finishing the execution, which *Saul* began. For he says: *I know very well, that the most illustrious heroes, and the most famous prophets of the Old Testament have sometimes approved of putting to the sword every living thing; and I should be far from calling that which* David *did inhumanity, if he had been authorised by the command of any prophet, or if God by inspiration had commanded him to act in this manner, Note* D. *Saul* therefore, who acted by the immediate order of *Samuel*, was, according to Mr. *Bayle*, guilty of no inhumanity in this execution of the *Amalekites*. But though this order came immediately from *Samuel* to *Saul*, and though I venerate *Samuel*'s character as a real prophet; yet I will venture to pronounce it an inhuman order, if there were no just reasons for the vengeance which he ordered to be taken on this people. But there are two reasons given for their extirpation; the one, worthy the God and governor of the world; the other, of the God and king of the *Hebrews*. They were a very wicked and profligate race of men, and ripe for vengeance: *Go destroy those sinners, the* Amalekites; and the restless enemies of his people, who were no otherwise to be guarded against, but by an utter excision. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I remember what* Amalek *did to* Israel, *how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from* Egypt; hereby putting *Saul* in mind of the ancient enmity of the nation to his people, continued through all succeeding generations without intermission, by a perpetual course of hostilities committed against them, even to that day.

* Ps. lxxxiii. 4-7.

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tion, the *Hebrews* executed upon them that ſentence, which they had determined to execute without mercy on the *Hebrews*.

Thus far I have argued in defence of this command of *Samuel* to exterminate theſe *Amalekites*, upon the common principles of national policy and neceſſity; without conſidering it as a divine order. But I allow it to have been the order of God, and if he foreſaw that the ſafety of his people depended on it, the order was wiſely and juſtly given; and if they were ripe for that vengeance, with which they were threatened above four hundred years before this, and which had been ſo long mercifully delayed by the patience of almighty God; I preſume it was no injuſtice in him, who beſt knows the proper ſeaſons of his own conduct, and is the beſt judge of the means and inſtruments to execute his own purpoſes, to put the ſword of juſtice into *Saul*'s hand, and bid him cut off thoſe, whom he thought fit to make examples of for the numerous vices, oppreſſions, and cruelties of which he knew them to be guilty. No man, I believe, will diſpute the right of God to deſtroy an incorrigible wicked nation by an earthquake, or inundation, or ſtorm of fire from heaven, by the peſtilence, or famine; nor impertinently aſk: Why ſhould theſe calamities befal this, or the other nation; and ſome, that are no leſs ſinners, be intirely exempted from them? How then can it be denied, that God hath the ſame right to cut them off by the edge of the ſword? Or, to ſingle out the *Amalekites*, as the objects of his vengeance from other nations, even though they equally deſerved it? It is enough that God proſcribed them *as ſinners*, and *Saul* ought to have executed the ſentence againſt them to the utmoſt.

The ſentence was to exterminate *theſe ſinners* of the *Amalekites*, all that they had, men, women,

children, and all their cattle, without exception. How did *Saul* execute it? Why, without any kind of mercy, he utterly deſtroyed all the people with the edge of the ſword. But *Saul* and the people, the people by *Saul*'s order, or by mutual conſent, ſpared *Agag* their king. And as to their cattle, *every thing that was vile and refuſe, that they utterly deſtroyed*; but the beſt of the ſheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, *and all that was good*, they would not utterly deſtroy them. But notwithſtanding this direct violation of his orders, *Saul* hearing that *Samuel* was coming to meet him, goes to him and greets him: *Bleſſed be thou of the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* The prophet, who well knew his inſincerity, and the falſehood of his boaſt, immediately convicts him, by aſking him: *What meaneth then this bleating of the ſheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?* Conſcious of his prevarication, *Saul* replies: *They have brought them from the* Amalekites; *for the people ſpared the beſt of the ſheep and of the oxen to ſacrifice to the Lord thy God*; hereby meanly throwing the guilt upon his people, to exculpate himſelf, and endeavouring to cover over his avarice and diſobedience with the pretence of piety and devotion. But the apology itſelf was falſe; for he ſaved the beſt of all the cattle, which were much more than could be offered in ſacrifice; and beſides plundered the *Amalekites* of all their riches, and kept them for his own and people's uſe, tho' devoted to deſtruction, as well as their perſons. When *Samuel* put him again in mind of his commiſſion, and told him, that God had ſent him upon an expedition, to fight againſt the *Amalekites till he had conſumed them*, and expoſtulated with him: *Wherefore then didſt thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didſt fly upon the ſpoil?* Saul,

loth

loth to yield, and acknowledge his offence, vindicates himself, and again shifts the blame upon his army. An excuse in itself absurd, as the disposal of the prisoners and prey could be in no one's power but the king's. *Yea*, says he, *I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, gone upon the expedition, on which the Lord sent me, have brought* Agag, *the king of* Amalek, *and have utterly destroyed the* Amalekites. *But the people took of the spoil, sheep, and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in* Gilgal. The violation of the order is now confessed, that the chief things, which should have been destroyed, were spared. But his own innocence is still insisted on; and therefore the prophet lets him know, that obedience to the orders of God was more acceptable to him than the richest sacrifices, and that because he *had rejected the word of the Lord, God had rejected him from being king*. This at length brought *Saul* to acknowledge: *I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words*; and yet in extenuation of his transgression, he adds: *Because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice*. He then asked the prophet *to pardon his sin*, and to turn again with him, that he might worship the Lord. The prophet absolutely refused to return with him, as the token of his being forgiven, and of God's accepting his sacrifice; because, as he says: *Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over* Israel; and then turning about to go away, *Saul* wanting to retain him by force, laid hold of *Samuel*'s mantle, and rending it, the prophet pronounces his doom to be irrevocable, and says: *The Lord hath rent the kingdom of* Israel *this day from thee, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the strength of* Israel *will not lie, nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent*. Saul again

ackowledges that he had ſinned, and beſought the prophet that *he would do him at leaſt honour before the elders of his people, and before* Iſrael; *i. e.* as he was yet king, and permitted to hold the ſovereignty, *Samuel* would attend him as ſuch to the ſacrifice, and not give the people any occaſion, by his refuſal to appear with him, to ſuſpect, that he had incurred the diſpleaſure of God, and on that account to withdraw their allegiance to him as their king. *Samuel* however would not *go with him*, but left *Saul* to offer his ſacrifice; following him to the elders at his own conveniency, to execute the orders of God upon *Ageg*, the king of the *Amalekites*.

No man I think can read this part of the hiſtory, without forming a very bad opinion of *Saul*'s diſpoſition and temper. In his whole conduct in this affair, there is ſuch a mixture of diſobedience and ingratitude to God, ſuch falſhood and prevarication in his excuſes, ſuch meanneſſes in endeavouring to ſhift off the blame from himſelf to his people; ſuch inſincerity in the very confeſſion of his offence, ſuch timidity and want of courage to do right, and ſuch pretenſions of piety and devotion to extenuate and colour over his diſobedience, as ſhew him to have had little or no regard to the authority of God, to have been void of all integrity and true honour, and to have been deſtitute of all generous concern for the welfare and ſafety of his people. Such was the man, whom God rejected, and in whoſe family he reſolved the throne of *Iſrael* ſhould not be eſtabliſhed. The offence he was guilty of was a capital one; the ſparing an enemy, and the prey of an enemy, that the God, and the ſupreme king of *Iſrael*, had devoted to utter deſtruction; and *Samuel* expreſly calls it, *rebellion and ſtubbornneſs*.

Saul's preſumption and folly in this tranſaction was the greater, as he had an inſtance before him

of

of the danger of ſparing any thing that God had devoted to perdition, in the caſe of *Achan*; who for covetouſly ſecreting part of the plunder, that God ordered to be utterly deſtroyed, was, with all his family, as accomplices in the crime, firſt ſtoned, and then burnt to aſhes; and eſpecially as he had received ſo ſevere a reprimand from the prophet, for a former inſtance of diſobedience to God.

The true reaſon of *Saul*'s ſparing the cattle is evident enough, but why he ſaved *Agag* alive is not ſo plain. Whether he expected a ranſom for him, or ſpared him becauſe he was a brother king, or for what other reaſon it is not material to inquire. One thing is certain, it could not be through a tender and compaſſionate diſpoſition, of which *Saul* ſeems to have been utterly void, and which muſt have ſhewn itſelf, had he been poſſeſſed of it, in ſaving more than one perſon, and him the chief † author of the miſeries of his country, from the common deſtruction. However, juſtice ſuffered him not to live, for *Samuel* ordered him to be brought into his preſence, and ſaid to him: *As thy ſword hath made women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy mother be childleſs amongſt women*; *and he hewed him in pieces*; i. e. ordered him to be ſlain *before the Lord*; i. e. before the altar of the Lord at *Gilgal*; thereby juſtly retaliating his own cruelties on him, and ſhewing that he deſtroyed him by the expreſs authority and command of God ‡. The reflection that hath been thrown on the

† Τον ηγεμονα των εις εβραιους κακων εσωσε. He preſerved alive the author of the evils the *Hebrews* had ſuffered. *Joſeph.* Ant. l. 6. c. 7, §. 2.

‡ The reflection which the author of the *Treatiſe on Toleration* makes on this execution of *Agag* is very extraordinary. He ſays: *On peut regarder la mort du roi* Agag *comme un vrai ſacrifice,*

the prophet, that he was more cruel than *Saul*, in ordering *Agag* to be put to death, is too absurd to deserve any serious reply ‡.

It

sacrifice, ou voit dans cette fatale avanture un devouëment, un prêtre, une victime. C'etait donc un sacrifice. Traite sur la Tolerance, p. 117, 118. *The death of* Agag *may be regarded as a real sacrifice; and that we may perceive in this fatal accident, a consecration, a priest, and a victim. And that therefore it was a sacrifice.* And this he urges as an instance that the *Jews* sacrificed men to the deity. 'Tis certain, from the history, that *Agag* was put to death for the cruelties he had exercised on the *Hebrews*, and because his sword had made many mothers childless. He was therefore executed as a criminal, and the punishment inflicted was what he justly deserved; and he was an human sacrifice just in the same sense, and no other, as every criminal is an human sacrifice, who is put to death for robbery and murther. When he says that *Agag* was devoted or consecrated, the history mentions nothing of it, any farther, than that he was included in the general order for the utter excision of the *Amalekites*, who were therefore all of them as much human sacrifices as *Agag*. But it would be ridiculous to affirm, that a general, who cuts off a nation in war, or a prince who executes a criminal, doth, by these actions, offer human sacrifices to God. Besides, there was no priest, in the case of *Agag*, to offer him up as a sacrifice; for *Samuel* was no priest; nor can it be proved that *Samuel* put him to death by his own hands, because it is said *he hewed him in pieces*; any more than it can be proved, that *Herod* himself in person, *laid hold on* John Baptist, and *bound him*, and *put him in prison*, and *beheaded him*, because these things are affirmed of him; when every one knows the meaning to be, that these things were done by his authority and order. When *Suetonius* tells us, that *Augustus Cæsar* Antonium *Juvenem simulacro divi* Julii—*abreptum interfecit*; *item* Cæsarionem——*retractum e fuga supplicio affecit*; no one imagines that this was done by *Augustus* himself, but by persons deputed by him to execute his orders. *Octav. C. Aug.* c. 17. A thousand instances might be produced to the same purpose. And thus *Josephus* explains the place before us. Κελευει παραχρημα αυτον αποθανειν. He immediately commanded him to be put to death.

‡ It hath been observed, that *this disobedience of* Saul *to* Samuel, *in the end produced the miserable destruction, not only of himself, but of all his family.* This is not true. For as to his family, it was not all destroyed, but lasted through many generations.

It ſhould alſo be remarked, in honour of the prophet, that tho' he boldly executed the order of God, by telling *Saul* that *the Lord had rejected him, and that his kingdom ſhould be given to his neighbour*; and tho' it has been aſſerted, that *Saul's diſobedience in ſparing one man and ſome cattle, from a nation, which* Samuel *commanded him utterly to extirpate, irrevocably loſt him the prophet's favour*; yet that he acted in this affair, not from haughtineſs of diſpoſition, a ſpirit of revenge, or perſonal enmity to *Saul*. For *Saul*'s rejection was directly contrary to *Samuel*'s wiſhes and prayers, and the thought of it gave him great uneaſineſs and pain. He in his heart loved him, and was his friend, and in his intereſt. When God firſt revealed to him his purpoſe of ſetting *Saul* aſide, *it grieved* Samuel *, *and he cried unto the Lord all night*, in behalf of *Saul*, that God would forgive him; and after he had pronounced his doom, and aſſured *Saul* that God would not reverſe it, yet *Samuel* † *mourned for him, becauſe the Lord repented that he had made* Saul *king over* Iſrael; and he carried his grief to ſuch a length, as that God § reproved him for it; and ſaid: *How long wilt thou mourn for* Saul, *ſeeing I have rejected him?* It is alſo worthy our obſervation, that after he had pronounced the ſentence of *Saul*'s rejection, and anointed *David* to be his ſucceſſor, by God's appointment; inſtead of entering into any meaſures for diſturbing

rations. And as to thoſe of them that were cut off, it was occaſioned, partly by his own injuſtice and cruelty, as ſhall be ſhewn in its proper place; whilſt others of them fell with himſelf honourably in the field of battle, by the hands of the *Philiſtines*, without any influence of *Samuel*, and even ſeveral years after his death. So that *Saul*'s diſobedience in ſparing *Agag*, no otherwiſe produced the deſtruction of himſelf, or any one of his family, than as this, with his other crimes, loſt him the favour and protection of God, who, on theſe accounts, *departed from him, and became his enemy*. 1 Sam. xxviii. 16.

* 1 Sam. xv. 11. † Ib. xv. 35. § Ib. xvi. 1.

or

or depoſing his prince; he ſeems to have entirely withdrawn himſelf from all public affairs, and never to have ſeen *Saul* or *David* afterwards, but once at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, where God protected them both from the fury of this mad and relentleſs perſecutor.

The END *of the* FIRST BOOK.

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

In FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK II.

From the election of David *to be king, to his settlement on the throne over all* Israel.

ONE would really think, by the concern and grief, that *Samuel* expressed for *Saul*'s rejection, and the prayers he offered up in his behalf, that he had some hopes, upon *Saul*'s repentance, of obtaining for him forgiveness, and establishing the kingdom in his family. But now, as God's purpose was fixed, he orders the prophet to ‡ cease his mourning, to fill his horn

‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

with

with oil, and go to *Jesse*, the *Bethlehemite*, amongst whose sons he had provided himself a king. The prophet shewed a great deal of reluctance to go on this errand, saying: *How can I go? If* Saul *hear it, he will kill me.* The Lord said unto him: *Take an heifer with thee, and say: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.* He went, offered his sacrifice, and invited *Jesse* and his sons to partake of it; and finally, took his horn of oil, and anointed *David* in the midst of his brethren. This done, he immediately departed, and returned to his usual residence at *Ramah* *.

When *David* had been thus consecrated to succeed *Saul*, the historian observes, that *the*

* How partially and injuriously hath this transaction been represented! It hath been said, that *Samuel, in pursuance of his intention to make another king, goes, under pretence of a sacrifice, and anoints another shepherd boy*, David, *the youngest son of* Jesse. But if this was intirely *Samuel*'s own contrivance and doing, as this representation supposes, I wonder how *David*, the youngest son of *Jesse*, of all the shepherd boys in *Israel*, should come into *Samuel*'s head. One would think that he had enough of boys, in the first raw boy that he chose. That boy, indeed, 'tis said, *opportunely for* Samuel's *purpose, applied to him*; but I no where read, that *David* opportunely applied himself to the prophet, but that the prophet was sent to *David*, by an authority, which, contrary to his own inclination, he thought himself obliged to submit to. As for any thing that appears, he knew nothing of *Jesse*'s family, had never seen *David*, did not know there was any such person living, had no intention to anoint him, would certainly have chosen *Eliab* for king, had he been permitted to make his own choice; and when all the seven elder sons of *Jesse* had passed before him, and every one was refused; surprised, he asked *Jesse: Are here all thy children?* Jesse told him there remained yet the youngest; who being sent for, the prophet was immediately ordered to anoint him. What is there of *Samuel*'s contrivance in all this, who went to a family he knew nothing of, and anointed a man, he had never seen or heard of? The sacrifice he took with him he really offered, and this added much to the solemnity of *David*'s consecration.

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the † spirit of the Lord came upon David *from that day forward*; i. e. God, by the influence of his power and spirit, inspired a disposition into *David* as he had before inspired *Saul* after his consecration, worthy of royalty. He no longer considered himself as a shepherd, but as one destined to be a king, and was endued with courage, resolution, and prudence, to fit him for the events that awaited him; and for the government of God's people, whenever he should be actually promoted to that dignity.

On the other hand, the sacred historian observes, that ‡ *the spirit of the Lord had departed from* Saul, *and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.* The spirit of the Lord departed from him; God was no longer with him to prosper and guide him; he lost the spirit of a sound mind, prudence, kingly disposition, princely behaviour, openness, fortitude, forbearance, with which God inspired him, immediately to fit him for the government, and enable him to repulse the invaders and enemies of his country, and of which he gave several remarkable proofs upon his accession to the throne. The evil spirit that came on him from, or by permission of the Lord, was the evil spirit of melancholy, jealousy, suspicion, hatred, envy, malice, and cruelty, that governed him all the after-part of his life, to which he gave himself up, and sacrificed every consideration of honour, duty, and interest whatsoever. And such an evil spirit will, in the nature of things, banish the spirit of a sound mind, moderation, equity, and every princely virtue, introduce an almost perpetual gloom, and dispose those, who are under the unhappy influence of it, to the most unwarrantable and criminal excesses.

† 1 Sam. xvi. 13. ‡ Ibid. ver. 14.

CHAP. I.

David's *first introduction to* Saul.

THIS melancholy of *Saul* was the occasion of *David*'s * being first introduced to him; for some of *Saul*'s servants, observing this unhappy turn of disposition, advised him to seek out a man, *who was a skilful player on the harp*, that when his spirit was disturbed, he might relieve him by his music. *Saul* accordingly gave orders; on which one of his attendants said, that he had seen one of the sons of *Jesse* the *Bethlehemite*, who was very expert in playing, of great strength and courage, a warlike man, an excellent speaker, comely personage, and favoured of the Lord. *Saul*, pleased with the character, immediately sent messengers to *Jesse*, desiring that the young shepherd might be sent to him. *Jesse*, in obedience to *Saul*, sends *David* with a present; and he so gained the affection of *Saul*, by frequently relieving him with his music in his fits of melancholy, that he made him his † armour bearer, and

* 1 Sam. xvi. 16. 23.

† *His armour-bearer.* The literal rendering of the original words, נשא כלים is, *bearer of the instruments*, or *weapons*. Of these there were different sorts. Some bear the shield, 1 Sam. xvii. 41. Some the target and spear. 2 Chron. xiv. 8. Others bucklers and swords. 1 Chron. v. 18. Of these bearers of arms, princes and generals had many. *Joab* had ten. 2 Sam. xviii. 15. *Saul* seems to have had two thousand, and his son *Jonathan* one thousand. 1 Sam. xiii. 2. And *David*'s being made armour-bearer to *Saul*, implies no more, than that he was constituted one of his guards; to bear what instrument is not particularly said. It should also be remarked, that in the account which *Josephus* gives of this affair, he mentions nothing of *Saul* and *Abner*'s not knowing who was *David*'s father; which probably is an interpolation in the original text, as there is some reason to

and ſent to his father to deſire his continuance with him.

David was now full twenty years of age, and the ſecret of his conſecration ſeems as yet to have been confined to his own family, ſince which he had continued with his father, and kept his ſheep, till *Saul* ſent for him to his court. His coming here was purely accidental, and not the effect of any plot, that had been concerted by his friends in order to his promotion, of which there is not the leaſt intimation or appearance in the hiſtory. *Saul*'s diſorder could not be inflicted on him by *David* or his agents. *Samuel* was now abſent from *Saul*, and could not recommend him; the prieſts knew no more of *David*'s conſecration than *Saul* himſelf, had never been injured by *Saul*, and could have no intereſt to ſet up a rival to his crown. The officer, that propoſed the cure by muſic, doth not ſeem to have heard there was ever ſuch a man living as *David*; for he only adviſed that an inquiry ſhould be made for one that could play well on the harp. The perſon that propoſed *David* was another officer of *Saul*'s, in actual employment and favour with him, mentioned *David* upon the ſpot, becauſe the king needed immediate aſſiſtance, and becauſe he knew *David* would be acceptable to his maſter as a man of courage, and might do him ſervice as a ſkilful muſician. So that the naming him on this occaſion was perfectly natural; without the aſſiſtance of any plot or contrivance to advance *David*.

How long he continued with *Saul*, after this firſt introduction to his court, the hiſtorian doth not mention; but only in general, that he ſtaid

to ſuſpect, of all the verſes of the 17th chapter, from verſe 11. to the 32d. See the learned Dr. *Kennicot*'s Diſſert. ii. p. 418, &c. And thus the ſtumbling block will alſo be effectually removed; tho' I think the difficulty doth not want ſuch a ſolution.

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till *Saul* was cured of his melancholy. *When* the evil spirit was upon* Saul, David *took an harp, and played with his hand: So* Saul *was refreshed, and was well, aud the evil spirit departed from him.* He however expresly asserts, that *David* † *went and returned from* Saul *to feed his father's sheep at* Bethlehem. 'Tis probable that upon the king's being relieved, *David*'s father might send for him, either out of tenderness, as his youngest son, or because he needed his assistance in the management of his flocks; and that *Saul* himself the more readily assented to it, as *Jesse* sent his three eldest sons to supply *David*'s place.

CHAP. II.

His victory over Goliah.

CERTAIN it is, however, that *David* had left *Saul*, and returned to his father before the *Philistine* war broke out, in which his conquest of *Goliah* acquired him a reputation and glory, that was the foundation of all his future advancement. For as his three ‡ elder brethren were in the army that *Saul* had gathered against the *Philistines*, *Jesse* sent *David* into the camp to inquire after his brethrens welfare, and carry a supply of provision for them, with a present to the colonel of the regiment in which they served. He came to his brethren just as the two armies were going to engage, and as he was conversing with them, saw *Goliah* appear at the head of the *Philistine* forces, breathing out defiance to all the men of *Israel*, and challenging any one of them to single combat, and to rest the decision of their quarrel upon the event of the duel. But not one

* 1 Sam. xvi: 23. † Ibid. xvii. 15: ‡ Ibid. xvii.

amongst

amongſt the *Hebrews* was hardy enough to accept the challenge. Terrified at his gigantic ſtature, they fled from him wherever he approached. Even *Saul* himſelf, as well as his men §, *was diſmayed, and greatly afraid.* But tho' he had not courage ſufficient to engage with him in perſon, he had prudence enough to promiſe a great reward to any one that would fight him, and take off his head; *viz.* a preſent of great riches, *Saul*'s own daughter in marriage, and the freedom of his father's houſe in *Iſrael.* *David* upon hearing this, and inquiring farther into the truth of it, plainly intimated that he would fight this *Philiſtine. Who,* ſays he, *is this uncircumciſed* Philiſtine, *that he ſhould deſy the armies of the living God? Eliab, David*'s eldeſt brother, upon finding him ſo inquiſitive about the reward that ſhould be given to him that conquered *Goliah,* and dropping ſeveral intimations of his readineſs to engage him, ſeverely rebuked him; whether through fear that *David* would be ſlain in the engagement, or moved by jealouſy and envy, that his youngeſt brother ſhould aſpire after, and attain ſuch diſtinguiſhing advancement; and ſaid to him in a paſſion: *Why did you come down here? And with whom haſt thou left thoſe few ſheep in the wilderneſs? I know the pride and evil of thy heart.* Your end in coming hither, is not ſo much to inquire after us, as to ſee the battle, and find an opportunity, if you can, to diſtinguiſh yourſelf in it. *David* calmly anſwered him: *And what evil have I done? Is not this the thing?* Is not the queſtion I have aſked a proper one? Have I not a right to make this inquiry? And turning himſelf immediately from his brother to another perſon, he

§ 1 Sam. xvii. 11.

asked again, what should be the reward of him that conquered the *Philistine?* And upon receiving a confirmation of what he had been informed of before, he expressed the same desire of engaging him. The bravery of the young shepherd was immediately reported to *Saul*, who as soon as he was introduced to the king, boldly said: *Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go fight with this* Philistine. *Saul* was pleased with his courage, but thought it too unequal a combat, to expect any great success from it, and said to him: *Thou art not able to go against this* Philistine, *to fight with him. For thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. David*, very modestly, but prudently replied, that as he had, at two different times, slain a lion and a bear, that had each taken a lamb out of his flock, and rescued his prey from their jaws; so he did not doubt, but that he should as certainly vanquish the uncircumcised *Philistine*, seeing *he had defied the armies of the living God*; and trusted, *that as the Lord had delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and the bear, he would also deliver him out of the hand of the* Philistine. *Saul*, encouraged by the humble fortitude of this brave youth, said to him: *Go, and the Lord be with thee.* Not being accustomed to armour, he chose to go in his shepherds dress, took his staff in one hand, put five smooth stones in his shepherd's bag, and with his sling in the other, drew near to the *Philistine*; who, when he saw *David*, disdained him, as he was but a youth, and of a ruddy fair countenance, that had not been at all changed by the fatigues of war; and cries out to him with indignation: *Am I a dog that thou comest to me with stones? Then he cursed him by his Gods*, and sure of victory, says to him: *Come to me, and I will give*

thy

thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Alitibus linquere feris. *Virg. Æn.* 10.

What a rash boy did this gigantic *Philistine* think *David* to be, thus to come against him with a pouch of stones and a sling! But what says *the man after God's own heart*, to this gigantic blasphemer? † *I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of* Israel, *whom thou hast defied; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee, and I will give the carcases of the host of the* Philistines *this day unto the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know, that there is a God in* Israel. *And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with a sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.* Cannot every one see here, how the spirit of the Lord came upon our young shepherd? especially when he considers the issue of the engagement. For, upon the *Philistine*'s drawing near to *David*, *David* ran to meet him, and putting his hand in his bag, he took out a stone, slang it, smote the *Philistine* in his forehead, and levelled the proud boaster to the ground. He then ran, stood upon his body, drew the *Philistine*'s own sword, and bravely severed his head from his body.

——— *Jacet ingens litore truncus,*
Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.
Virg. *Æn.* 2.

He then presented his head to *Saul*, afterwards carried it to *Jerusalem*, and put his armour in his own tent. The consequence was, the entire rout and slaughter of the *Philistine* army, the taking of their baggage, and the plunder of their

† 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

camp *. How unjustly is this action of our youthful hero stiled *a rash undertaking, though stamped with a more respectable name?* What in the nature of the thing could be a more brave and gallant one †?

I will not insist on it, that *David*'s confidence in God might be offered to take away the charge of rashness from this bold and valorous action. But considering it in the view of probability, I see no character of rashness in it, but really think *David* had the advantage of the two. The huge bulk of the giant made him a fair mark for the stripling; his armour was heavy and unweildy, the sword, the spear and the shield; *David*, tho' young, was nimble, and active; quite safe whilst he kept the stalking monster at a distance from him, and had this peculiar advantage over him, that he could strike him at a distance, and when, *if he had missed once, he had four more chances of hitting, and from whom, at last, he could easily have ran away*; whereas the sword, the spear and shield of his enemy were wholly insignificant and useless, as they could only be employed against him in a close encounter. *David* was dexterous at his sling, and knew that he could scarce fail of his blow; and as the sling was an offensive weapon used in war, it was reckoned an exceeding useful

* The decision of national controversies, by the duels of the chiefs, was frequent enough in ancient times. That between the *Horatii* and *Curiatii*, every one knows; and even before that, *Romulus*, and *Aruns* king of the *Ceninenses*, ended their national quarrel by the like method; *Romulus* killing his adversary, taking his capital, and dedicating the spoils to *Jupiter Feretrius*. Val. Max. l. 8 c. 2. § 3.

† There is in some of the *Greek* Psalteries added after the last, or 150th Psalm, a psalm ascribed to *David* on his victory over *Goliah*. And it is also turned into heroic verse by *Apollinarius*, in his interpretation of the Psalms, and placed as the last of them. But as it is not in any of the *Hebrew* copies, nor in the *septuagint* version of the Psalms, I shall take no notice of it. See it in *Cod. Pseud. Vet. Test.* per Fabricium, *vol.* i. *p.* 906.

qua-

qualification for a soldier to be expert in it. They were brought up to *, frequently exercised in it,

* It is no wonder they were extreamly dexterous, and certainly hit the mark they aimed at, since no boy, amongst some nations, was to receive any food from his mother, without first striking it in the place where she had laid it. *Certos esse quis miretur ictus, quum hæc sola genti arma sint, id unum ab infantia studium. Cibum puer a matre non accipit, nisi quem, ipsa monstrante, percusserit.* Flor. *lib.* 3. c. 9. *Bell. Balear.* *Livy* tells us, that the slingers, which the inhabitants of *Sama* in *Cephallenia* hired for their defence against the *Romans, a pueris more quodam gentis—funda, mare apertum incessantes, exercebantur—et non capita solum hostium vulnerabant, sed quem locum destinassent oris*; were exercised in the sling from children, and not only wounded the heads of their enemies, but any part of the face they aimed at. *Lib.* 38. *c.* 29. And *Aristotle* observes, that some of the ancient inhabitants of *Liguria* were so extreamly skilful in the use of the sling, that when they saw a flock of birds, they singled out amongst themselves the bird each was to strike, being sure that every one of them should immediately bring down that bird he aimed at. Λεγεται δε τινας των Λιγυςιων ουτως σφενδονας, ωςε οταν πλειους ιδωσιν ορνιθας, διεριζεσθαι, lege διοριζεσθαι προς αλληλους ποιον εκαςος παρασκευαζεται βαλειν, ως ετοιμως απαντων τευξομενων. *De Mirabil.* p. 1158. *edit.* Lutet. Paris 1629.

Strabo hath a story exactly parallel with this account of *David*, and *Goliah*. *Pyræchmes* the *Ætolian*, and *Degmenus* the *Epeian*, when the two armies were about to engage, agreed to a single combat; *Degmenus* being lightly armed, and carrying only his bow; and *Pyræchmes* his sling, and pouch of stones. The consequence was, that the sling carrying the stone farther than the bow its arrow, *Pyræchmes* slew his adversary, and gained the victory. Μετα σφενδονης ϗ πηρας λιθων. Strab. *Geog.* l. 8. p. 548. *edit.* Amstel. So, Εκραταιωσεν Δαυιδ εν τη σφενδονη ϗ εν τω λιθω. *Vers.* των. 70. 1 Sam. xvii. 50. Thus also *Virgil's Mezentius*, laying by his armour, with a piece of lead from his sling killed the son of *Arcens*.

Stridentem fundam, positis Mezentius armis,
Ipse ter adducta circum caput egit habena;
Et media adversi liquefacto tempora plumbo
Diffidit, ac multa porrectum extendit arena.

Æneid. l. 9 v. 586—589.

Him when he spied from far, the *Thuscan* king
Laid by the lance, and took him to the string.
Thrice whirl'd the thong about his head, and threw
The heated lead, half melted as it flew.
It pierc'd his hollow temples and his brain.
The youth came tumbling down, and spurn'd the plain.

DRYDEN.

and attained to such an amazing dexterity in the use of it, as that they † *could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss.*

But the scripture history takes notice ‡, that when *Saul* saw *David* go forth against the *Philistine*, he said to *Abner* his general: *Whose son is this youth? Abner* said, he could not tell. *Saul* ordered him to inquire, *whose son he was*; and when *David* presented him with the head of the *Philistine*, *Saul* asked him: *Whose son art thou, young man? David* answered him, that *he was the son of* Jesse *the* Bethlehemite. That he knew *David*'s name and person is certain; as nothing can be more absurd, than to imagine, that *David*'s words should be reported to *Saul*, that *Saul* should send for him, and have a long conversation with him, upon one of the most important affairs that could offer, without so much as asking, or being told his name. Had he been ignorant of this, he would have ordered *Abner* to inquire his name, as well as his parentage; of which, however, the scripture history mentions not a word ‖.

The

† Jud. xx. 16. 1 Chron. xii. 2. 2 Chron. xxvi. 14.

‡ 1 Sam. xvii. 55—58.

‖ And yet Mr. *B.*'s critical note C is founded on this mistaken supposition, that *Saul* did not know *David*; which he thinks *very strange, because the young man had played on musical instruments, several times in his presence, to calm the melancholy vapours that tormented him*; and on this he observes, *That if such a narration as this was found in* Thucydides *or* Livy, *all the critics would unanimously conclude, that the transcribers had transposed the pages, put one thing in this place, repeated it in another, and inserted some unconnected passages in the author's work.* Critics, that *audax hominum genus*, are too often very rash in censuring, and making alteration in passages, they do not understand, or the connection and sense of which they mistake. Mr. *B.* with other writers, have wrongly supposed, that *Saul* did not know *David*, then wonder at the reason why he did not, and then conclude, that the history is confused, and wants the amendment of the critics. Hence it is, that some of them pretend, that

The reputation, which this gallant action procured to *David*, soon gained him advancement in

that the affair of *David*'s duel with *Goliah* was previous to his playing on the harp before *Saul*. But this is contrary to what the scripture history expressly asserts, 1 Sam. xvii. 15. that *David* had left *Saul*, after his first playing before him, and returned again from his father to fight in single combat with *Goliah*. The true and full solution of the difficulty is: *Non inquirere* Saulem, *quis sit* David, *sed* cujus filius; *quia ejus intererat scire, cujus familiæ esset is adolescens, cui filiam suam promiserat se uxorem daturum, si vincceret* Philistæum. Houbig. *in loc.* That *Saul* did not inquire who *David* was, but whose son; because it was of importance to him to know of what family he was, as he had promised to give him his own daughter to wife, if he should conquer the *Philistine*.

How long the space of time was between *David*'s first and second introduction to *Saul*, is not particularly mentioned in the history. Mr. *Bayle* censures the Abbe de *Choisi*, for saying, that *Saul* had not seen *David* for several years after he first left him, upon the cure of his melancholy. But, I think, there must have been some considerable period between the one and the other. *Josephus* says it was, Χρονοις υςερον ȣ πολλοις. Jud. *An.* l. c. 6. §. 9. *Init. Not many years after*; thereby plainly intimating there were several. Both the preparation of the *Philistines* to invade the *Hebrews*, and of *Saul* to oppose the *Philistines*, were after *David*'s first introduction to, and dismission from *Saul*, and his three brethrens going into the army; and must require some considerable space of time. Suppose it was an year or two; what is there improbable, that an youth, who had been so little with *Saul*, and who, though one of his armour bearers, had never been employed in any command by him, should, after an year or two's absence, not even be remembered by him in person, at first view; especially, as he was now in his shepherd's habit, and not in that of *Saul*'s guards; and when *Saul* had himself been engaged in a multiplicity of important affairs, since his first interview with *David*, seen such a variety of different persons, and had been greatly disordered by the melancholy turn of his own mind? *Viderat eum, et genus ejus audierat* Saul *jam ante.* cap. xvii. 20. *Sed facile talium oblivio subit reges, in tantis negotiis, in tanta eum adeuntium multitudine, præsertim si et morbi accedunt.* Grot. *in loc.* But it is still less to be wondered at, that he should not remember his parentage, as that could then be of no importance to him; which is the only thing the sacred historian affirms, and that I am concerned to clear up.

the

the army. *Saul* would no more suffer him to go to his father's house, * *set him over the men of war, with whom he went out whither soever* Saul *sent him, so that he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of* Saul's *servants. Saul*, at first, kept him near his own person, and by his wise behaviour, he gained universal affection and esteem. And it should be remarked, that *David* made use of no dishonourable and base arts to advance himself in the court or camp of *Saul*; but that his whole preferment was intirely owing to his singular modesty, prudence, courage, and merit.

Amongst other fortunate consequences of this victory to *David*, was the friendship of *Jonathan*, the king's eldest son, to which he owed his life, and which was never interrupted till death. For as he could not but admire his courage and prudence in his victory over *Goliah*, he was so charmed with his person, and the manner of his address to *Saul*, when he was admitted into his presence, after the defeat of the *Philistines*, as that he conceived the highest affection for him. † *The soul of* Jonathan *was tied fast to the soul of* David, so that Jonathan *loved him as his own soul*; and as the proof of it, took off his own robe that he wore, and put it on *David*, as also his other garments, together with his sword, his bow, and his military girdle, that hereby he might appear as a king's son, and be known and honoured as his own intimate friend. *David* entered cordially into this friendship, and fully proved the sincerity of it through the whole of his life.

* 1 Sam. xviii. 5. † Ibid. xviii. 1, 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The rise of Saul's *enmity to* David.

HITHERTO every thing went as *David*'s own heart could have wished. He was in high favour with *Saul*, who seems determined to have given him his eldest daughter, after he had made some farther trial of his valor and prudence. But an accident happened, that raised the incurable jealousy of *Saul*, and made him resolve the destruction of *David*. The *Philistines* had encamped in the territories of the tribe of *Judah*, and not far from *Jerusalem*; where *Saul* seems to have continued some time after the rout of their army, and where *David* received the first fruits of his favour. But as *Saul* was returning to his own city, accompanied by *David*, the women came out of all the cities of *Israel*, through which they passed, singing and dancing, to meet the king, with tabrets and other instruments of music to express their joy; and singing alternatly, one chorus chanted: *Saul *hath slain his thousands*; and the other replied: David *hath slain his ten thousands*. This, though probably innocently intended, filled *Saul* with indignation and rage; and the preference here given to *David*, I doubt not, raised the first suspicion, that *David* was the man intended by *Samuel*, when he assured him, that *the kingdom should be given to a neighbour of his, that was better than himself*; for *Saul* said in his rage: *They have ascribed to* David *ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?* And from this time to the very end of his life, *Saul* looked on *David* with a malignant

* 1 Sam. xviii. 7, 8.

eye,

eye, and watched every opportunity to destroy him.

Of this he soon gave *David* two very convincing proofs *. For the very next day after these acclamations of the women, *Saul* fell into one of his mad fits of melancholy, and as we render the words, *prophesied in the midst of the house*; or as I should rather render the word, *howled* † *and grumbled* in his frenzy; and as *David* was playing, without the least suspicion of danger, to divert his melancholy, *Saul*, in an instant, threw at him a javelin that he had in his hand, with a resolution to strike him dead to the wall. *David* happily escaped this danger, and ran out of the room; and upon his entering it a second time, *Saul* threw a dagger at him, which he also avoided, and immediately withdrew from the king's presence.

This double deliverance alarmed *Saul*, and he was more than ever afraid and suspicious of *David*; because ‡ he saw that he was under the peculiar protection of God, whilst he found himself destitute of his direction and favour. For this reason he removed him § from his immediate attendance on him, gave him a regiment, which he well disci-

* 1 Sam. xviii. 10. 11.

† Among other significations of the verb נבא, this is one, as we find it in Golius: *Submissam, vel occultam edidit vocem canis*; and a derivative from the verb denotes, *Vox occulta et submissa*, a low inward voice: Or, *Vox canum*, the noise of a dog, or his barking. And this is no uncommon effect of a melancholy disordered mind, to mutter to itself, and as it where whisper, or growl out, what the distempered imagination prompts to The *Chaldee* Paraphrase in some measure confirms this sense, by rendering the *Hebrew* word יתנבי *he prophecied*, by אשתטי *insanivit*. He acted like a madman in the house; of which nothing could be a greater evidence than his thus muttering or grumbling to himself.

‡ 1 Sam. xviii. 12. § Ibid xviii. 13. 16.

plined,

plined, and headed upon every occasion where their service was necessary. In this command he behaved with that remarkable prudence and circumspection, as that *Saul* could find no reason for complaint; which, tho' it heightened *Saul*'s distrust of, and malice against him, yet secured him the esteem of all *Israel* and *Judah*; because they found him a good commander, and successful in all the expeditions in which he employed them.

Saul, who as it hath been justly observed, *politically hoped to ensnare him by exalting him high in his family, and to get rid of him by putting him on performing feats of valour*, being disappointed by *David*'s cautious and gallant behaviour, sent for him, and treacherously told him: * *Behold, my elder daughter* Merab, *I will give her thee to wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the battles of the Lord*; resolving, not to destroy him by his own hand; but hoping, that by venturing on some dangerous expedition against the *Philistines*, in order the more effectually to merit the king's daughter, he would be some time or other cut off in an engagement, by their hands. † *David* received the proposal with humility and gratitude. But *Saul* broke his promise, and when *David* expected to have married *Merab*, *Saul* disposed of her to *Adriel* the *Meholathite*.

CHAP. IV.

David's *marriage with* Saul's *daughter*.

BUT *Saul* had a second daughter named *Michal*, who was in love with *David*, and when *Saul* was informed of it, he was greatly pleased, and promised to give her to him in marriage ‡,

* 1 Sam. xviii. 17. † Ibid. xviii. 18. 19. ‡ Ibid xviii. 21.

that

that she might be a snare to him; as he determined to insist on such a condition of his having her, as he hoped would be fatal to *David*, and even prevent the marriage, with the hope of which he flattered himself. He accordingly tells him: ‡ *Thou shalt be my son-in-law*, and gives secret orders to his servants to press him to accept the offer. *Commune with* David *secretly, and say: Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee. Now therefore be the king's son-in-law.* David, with great modesty, replied: *Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?* This hath all the appearance of modesty. Why then should we suspect the reality of it? Tho' *David knew himself to be secretly intended for the kingdom by* Samuel, yet he was really but a poor man, and comparatively lightly esteemed, when *Saul* made him the offer of his daughter. *David* says so himself, and nobody contradicted him; and that *Saul*'s servants knew him to be so, appears from what they said to him: *The king desires not any dowry.* On this occasion *David* expresses himself with ingenuous modesty, without the least appearance of affectation, and says no more than what such an offer to a young shepherd naturally dictated; *viz.* that it was too high an offer for him to expect in his circumstances, and with his narrow fortune. And tho' he knew himself to be secretly intended by *Samuel*, and that God, whose prophet *Samuel* was, for the kingdom; his future hopes did not alter his present circumstances, nor render him one jot richer than he was before, nor make him in the least, as a poor man, at that time, fitter for a king's son-in-law. Besides, did he know only that *Samuel* intended him secretly for the kingdom? What great ground of encouragement could that be for his ever expecting to receive it;

‡ 1 Sam. xviii. 22.

since

ſince there was no probability of *Samuel*'s out-living *Saul*, or of entering into, or ſucceeding in any meaſures to ſecure *David*'s ſucceſſion? But if *David* knew that God intended him for the kingdom, his modeſty, in expreſſing himſelf unworthy of the offer, at the time that he was ſo, was truly exemplary, and ſhews that his future expectations made no change in the virtuous diſpoſition of his mind, and his modeſty will deſerve the higheſt commendation.

But I would farther obſerve here, that the words may be ſo rendered, as to expreſs no great matter of modeſty at all; but only the difficulty of his obtaining a king's daughter for his wife, in his circumſtances; with an intent to find out the condition of the offer. For thus they run: *Do you think it an* * *eaſy matter to be a king's ſon-in-law, ſince I am a poor man, and lightly eſteemed?* Can I eaſily obtain the king's daughter, who have no riches nor honours? And to this ſenſe the anſwer of *Saul*'s ſervants leads us: *The king deſires no dowry, but an hundred foreſkins of the* Philiſtines.

— *Petitur cuiquam per tanta pericula conjux?*
Ovid. *Met.* l. 10.

Yes. *David*, when he knew it, bravely accepted of the offer upon the condition required, and before the term fixed had run out, produced double the number aſked in full tale. And in *this* I can ſee no *proof of his delight in blood.*

The *Hebrews* were in a perpetual ſtate of war with the *Philiſtines* during the whole reign of *Saul*‡. *David* had a regiment of ſoldiers, and *Saul*, in

* And this is the frequent ſenſe of the word. Thus *Eliſha*, נקל זאת. *This is but a light thing in the ſight of the Lord*; an eaſy thing for God to do. 2 Kings iii. 18. Again: *Knowledge* לנבון נקל *is eaſy to a man of underſtanding*, i. e. eaſy to be obtained. *Prov.* xiv. 6. ‡ 1 Sam. xiv. 52.

hopes

hopes of getting rid of the man he hated †, sends him upon an expedition, to execute his vengeance on his enemies; and tells him, that if he was so successful as to destroy one hundred of them, he should be his son-in-law. What doth our young hero do? He accepts the offer, takes his men, attacks the enemy, obtains a much greater advantage over them than *Saul* expected, and slew two hundred of them, instead of one. Now, can any one really imagine, that in the heat of the action, *David* and his troop could destroy just one hundred to a single man? Or if he could pursue an advantage against the enemies of his king and country, that he would refuse, or ought to have refused it? *Saul*'s asking of *David* for one hundred foreskins, did not limit him to that number. It was not to be less. And if it was no argument of *David*'s delight in blood, that he killed an hundred of *Saul*'s enemies, because *Saul* required it of him; it could be no argument of his delight in blood, to kill two hundred of them; because he had no orders to the contrary, and knew that it would be agreeable to the will of *Saul* his master.

If the taking away the lives of the *Philistines* was a thing, in itself, inconsistent with justice and mercy, *Saul*'s requiring of *David* to kill an hundred of them, and *David*'s killing them in obedience to his order, would have been an argument of a very wicked bloody disposition in both; and if *Saul* had a right to require these hundred foreskins without violating the laws of justice and mercy, or deserving to be branded as one delighting in blood; *David*'s cutting off one, or two, or five hundred of them was not, for the same reasons, inconsistent with those laws, or any

† 1 Sam. xviii. 25.

proof

proof of his delighting in blood. For the only just reasons that could vindicate *Saul* in commanding, and *David* in executing his command, to cut off an hundred *Philistines*, were either God's order, or their being at war with the *Philistines*, or the necessity of it to weaken their enemies, or the safety of their country, the security of their liberties, and such like motives; and if these motives concurred, to justify *David*, in accepting the condition of becoming *Saul*'s son-in-law, by bringing the hundred foreskins; his cutting off more of them, was a yet higher service to the public; and so far from being any breach of the rules of religion and morality, as that it was a proof of real patriotism and public spirit; highly merited the thanks of his king and country, and rendered him more worthy of the honour intended him; his alliance with *Saul* by the marriage of his daughter.

David therefore might still be *the man after God's own heart*, and in this very instance approving himself so; for tho' *God is unalterable*, and always required that we should *do justly and love mercy*; yet I do not find, that God hath any where fixed the exact number of enemies to be killed in an expedition; and presume he doth not require, that a general should spare an implacable enemy, invading his country, destroying the inhabitants of it, and determined to subvert the religion and liberties of it, when he hath an opportunity of destroying him, and when such destruction becomes necessary to the preservation and safety of the public.

I allow that the different manners of mankind, in the early or late, the more or less civilized ages of the world, can make no alteration in the nature of morality; not make that good, which is really bad, nor render any person a *man after God's*

own heart, that is not really, in any respect, a man after God's own heart. But surely the rules of morality may be better understood in some periods than others; and a man, in the less civilized ages of the world, who acts agreeable to the light he hath, and steadily regards the obligations and rules of religion and moral virtue, as far as he understands them; may be so far a man after God's own heart, as to be in some degree approved of him; and he may be, much more *a man after God's own heart*, in the sense in which *David* is said to be so, tho' his morals were more imperfect, than they will ever be proved to be; and tho' we should allow there were some very great blemishes in his conduct and character. And with respect to such blemishes, I see nothing inconsistent with reason, the immutable rectitude of God, and his always requiring that we should *do justly, and love mercy*, in supposing, that God may mercifully forgive them, upon a sincere repentance and amendment; or that God should shew very singular marks of his favour to such a person, if amidst the prevailing impieties and corruptions of the age he lives in, he *doth justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly with God*, in the main of his behaviour, and according to the best of his knowledge; even tho' he should be defective in some duties, for want of knowing them; or allow himself in some liberties, from which better information, a purer doctrine, and a more civilized state of things, would certainly have preserved him. But in the case before us, *David*, in the destruction of these *Philistines*, acted contrary to no rules of religion and morality; for the men he destroyed were the enemies of his country, in a state of actual war with his prince and people; and therefore, lawful prize wherever he could lay hold of them, and in every expedition,

in

in which he was employed to harrass and destroy them.

But tho' *Saul* was disappointed by *David*'s success in this expedition, yet he performed his promise, and gave him his daughter *Michal* to wife; at the same time * that he saw with regret, and the utmost vexation, that God protected him, and that his daughter affectionately loved him. This increased his apprehensions from and dread of *David*, and rendered his hatred and malice towards him still more and more implacable.

Soon after this, the *Philistines* † renewed their hostilities against the *Hebrews*. *David* was in the action, and his prudence and bravery became so remarkable, that he was reckoned superior to all the other commanders of *Saul*, and held in high esteem for his military abilities and conduct.

CHAP. V.

Jonathan *and* David's *Friendship*.

THE friendship which *Jonathan* conceived for *David*, upon his first interview and conversation with *Saul*, was the most affectionate and generous; of which he soon gave him a very convincing proof. For *Saul* ‡ was not to be satisfied but by *David*'s destruction; and therefore he excited his son *Jonathan*, and ordered all his own servants, to murther him. *Jonathan* gives *David* notice of his father's intention, beseeching him to take heed to, and conceal himself till next morning, when he would sound his father's intention, and fully acquaint him with it. *Jonathan* accordingly, with great tenderness and force, pleads his friend's cause before his enraged father; speaks

* 1 Sam. xviii. 28. 29. † Ibid. xviii. 30. ‡ Ibid. xix. 1.

of him as an innocent deſerving man; beſeeches his father not to ſin againſt his own ſervant, even againſt *David*; becauſe, ſays he, * *he hath not ſinned againſt thee, and becauſe his actions towards thee have been very good*; worthy the character of an uſeful and faithful ſervant. *For he put his life in his hand*, run the hazard of it, *and ſlew the* Philiſtine, *and the Lord wrought a great ſalvation for all* Iſrael. *Thou ſaweſt it, and didſt rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou ſin againſt innocent blood, to ſlay* David *without a cauſe!* Admirable ſon, thus ſolicitous to preſerve his father's honour! Incomparable friend, thus to plead for his innocent injured friend, even in oppoſition to the very order to deſtroy him! Nor did he plead in vain; for *Saul*, prevailed on by his ſon's reaſoning, and the convictions of his own mind, immediately ſwore: *As the Lord liveth* David *ſhall not be ſlain*; and he was accordingly reſtored to *Saul*'s preſence and favour as before.

But upon *David*'s † gathering freſh laurels, in a ſucceſsful expedition againſt the *Philiſtines*, in which he ſlew great numbers of them, and intirely routed the remainder, *Saul* fell into a freſh frenzy of jealouſy and rage; and as *David* was playing on his harp, as uſual, to divert his melancholy, *Saul* threw a javelin with ſuch force at *David*, that happily miſſing him, it ſtuck faſt into the wall of the room where he was ſitting.

——————— *Ingens*
Inſtat fama viri, virtuſque haud læta tyranno.
Ergo anteire metus, juvenemque extinguere pergit
Oeſonium, letique vias et tempora verſat.
Val. Flac. *Argon.* l. 1.

* 1 Sam. xix. 4, 5. † Ibid. xix. 8.

David

David immediately fled, and retreated to his own house. Thither *Saul* * pursued him, sending his emissaries to surround and watch the house, that he might not escape, but that they might slay him the next day. *Michal* his wife informed him of his danger, and told him, that if he did not get away, and flee for his life that very night, he would certainly be destroyed on the morrow. *David*, by his wife's assistance, escaped out of one of the windows of his house, and got safe to *Samuel* at *Ramah*. *Saul*, however, in the morning hunted after his prey, and sent to apprehend *David*. *Michal* orders the messengers to tell her father, that *David* was ill. *Saul* sends them back to bring him sick or well, as he was in his bed, that he might kill him; and finding himself at last disappointed by her, and that she had been instrumental in *David*'s escape, he bitterly reproached her, and said to her: *Why hast thou deceived me, and sent away my enemy, that he is escaped* †? On this deliverance *David* composed the following psalm ‡.

1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God. *Set* me on high from them, who rise up against me.

2. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from the men of blood.

3. For, see, they lie in wait for my life, the mighty are turned aside to lay snares against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.

4. Without

* 1 Sam. xix. 11, &c. † Ibid. ver. 18, &c. ‡ Ps. lix.

Ver. 3. *The mighty are gathered against me.* יגרו עלי. This place and another, *Ps.* lvi. 6. are the only ones where גור hath been rendered by *gathering together*, and it doth not well suit either of them; for in both of them the Psalmist speaks of the snares that were laid for him. There is another sense, that is more applicable to both of them. In *Arabick* it signifies *deflectere a via, ad injustam fraudem, dolum, laqueum nectendum*; to

4. Without iniquity in me they run and prepare themselves. Awake to help me, and behold,

5. And do thou, O Lord God of hosts, thou God of *Israel*, awake to visit all the nations. Be not favourable to any perfidious workers of iniquity.

6. They return in the evening, they growl like a dog, they go round the city.

7. Behold, they belch out with their mouth, swords are in their lips; for who, *say they*, doth hear:

8. But

turn aside to injustice, fraud, and lay snares to intrap unwary people. And this 'tis well joined, *Ps.* lvi. 6. with *hiding themselves, and marking the footsteps of those, for whom they laid in wait.* And to this sense I have kept in my version.

4. *They run and prepare themselves.* i. e. diligently, eagerly set about my destruction.

5. *Wicked Transgressors.* בוגדי און. Literally, *the prevaricators of wickedness*; i. e. such who are guilty of great treachery and perfidiousness.

6. *They return at even. Saul* sent once to destroy him, and the messenger went back, to inform him that he was ill. But they returned in the evening to bring him even in his bed. 1 *Sam.* xix. 11—16.

Ibid. *They make a noise like a dog.* יהמו ככלב. The verb המה is frequently used to denote *the confused humm and noise of an assembled crowd.* The Psamist compares the muttered threats of his enemies to the growlings, or snarlings of a dog, ready to bite and tare any person. And the comparison is just and natural.

7. *They belch out with their mouths.* יביעון בפיהם. The verb נבע properly signifies *the bubling noise of water rising out of a spring.* Hence it is used in a good and bad sense of what is uttered by the mouth, according as that is good or evil. In the good sense we have it, *Prov.* i. 23. *I will pour out my spirit upon you.* In the place before us 'tis taken in the bad sense, and denotes those numerous threatenings, calumnies, and imprecations, which *David*'s persuers poured out against him.

Swords are in their lips.] Their threatenings were cruel and deadly. *Ps.* lvii. 4. and the calumnies, which they privately insinuated to *Saul*, such as made him determine his destruction; especially

8. But thou, O Lord shall laugh at them, thou shalt have all the nations in derision.

9. As for his strength, I will look to thee; for God is my high place.

10. The God of my mercy will prevent me with kindness. God will cause me to see amongst my enemies:

11. Wilt thou not cut them of? Least my people forget *thee*, cause them to shake by thy power; and bring them down into destruction, O Lord our shield.

12. The

especially as *David* had not the liberty of vindicating himself. Therefore it is added: *For who heareth?* They vent their calumnies more freely and dangerously, because privately, so that none could refute them.

9. *Because of his strength I will wait upon thee.*] עזו אליך אשמרה. *Coicecus*, in his Lexicon, gives the expression this turn. *I, whose strength is in thee, will observe*, viz. how God will act; or, I will observe and expect his aid; which agrees well with the following words: *God is my defence.* But I think the more easy and natural version is that which I have given: *As for his strength, I will observe*, I will look to, *thee: Saul*'s soldiers give me no concern. My eyes are towards thee, for God is my refuge. The accusative case absolute is thus frequent in the *Hebrew* language. The ancient versons read, עוי for עזו, and then the rendering will be: *O my strength, I will look to thee.* But there is no need of this alteration.

10. *God shall let me see my desire on mine enemies.*] בשוררי יראני. The word we render *enemies* properly signifies *insidious men, that craftily observed and lay in wait for him*; and *David* says, that God *will cause me to see amongst them*; i. e. to discover their plots and contrivances to ruin me, that they might not prove fatal to me; or, to see them fall by the destruction they intend me.

11. *Destroy them not.*] אל תהרגם. I have rendered it interrogatively: *Wilt thou not cut them off?* and thus the words will answer to those immediatly after: *Cause them to shake by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord*; and to those at verse 13. *Consume them in wrath*; as the question implies *David*'s certainty that they should be finally destroyed; and it should be remarked, that the word הורידמו, which we render, *bring them down*, is frequently used to denote the being brought into absolute destruction, or brought down to the grave, the pit, the

12. The ſin of their mouth is the word of their lips; let them therefore be taken in their pride, and for the curſing and lying which they have uttered.

13. Conſume them in wrath, conſume them that they may not be, and let them know that God ruleth in *Jacob*, unto the ends of the earth.

14. Let them therefore return in the evening, let them growl like a dog; and go round about the city!

15. Let them wander ſhivering for food, and murmur, becauſe they are not ſatisfied!

16. But

duſt, and death, and is undoubtedly intended to convey this ſignification here. The following words, *leaſt my people forget*, may be connected with the foregoing: *Wilt thou not deſtroy them, leaſt my people forget*, to hope and truſt in God; or they may be connected with thoſe that follow, as I have connected them in my verſion.

12. *For the ſin of their mouth, and the words of their lips.*] חטאת פימו דבר שפתימו. The literal rendering is: *The ſin of their mouth is the word of their lips.* Every thing they ſpeak is criminal. In what their lips utter, their mouth offends. Their threatenings were haughty and inſolent, and attended with lies and imprecations.

14. This verſe is a repetition of verſe the ſixth, but is here to be underſtood in a ſomewhat different view. The ſixth verſe is a real complaint of their fury and diligence in perſuing him. Here he ſpeaks of them with a kind of indifference and contempt, and as free from any apprehenſion of danger from them. *Let them, if they pleaſe, return in the evening, growl at me like dogs, and watch all the avenues of the city to take me.* Yet like greedy dogs they ſhall want their food, and wander about as tho' ſhivering for hunger; for they ſhall not be ſatisfied, but murmur upon account of their diſappointment.

15. *Let them wander up and down to eat.*] Or, they *ſhall* wander ינועון לאכל. The verb נוע properly ſignifies *to be ſhaken like a tree toſſed by the wind*; and from hence denotes to be ſhaken with fear, or through any great calamity. In *Iſa.* vii. 2. it is uſed both in the proper and improper ſenſe. *His heart was moved, viz.* with the tidings of the confederacy of *Syria* and *Ephraim, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* 'Tis uſed, *Pſ.* cix. 10. of beggars thus ſhaking for want of bread.

16. But I will ſing of thy power, and ſhout aloud, in the morning, thy mercy: For thou haſt been my high place, and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17. O my ſtrength, unto thee will I ſing; for God is my high place, the God of my mercy.

bread. And in the *Arabick* language the participle of the verb is an epithet of *a beggar*, *famelicus*, one who is reduced to the utmoſt extremity, ſhivering and ſhaking and wandering for want of bread. *Vid.* Gol. *in voce.* This ſhaking of a tree alſo naturally points out the ſtate of one, who, like a bough ſhaken by the wind, is continually ſhifting his place, and therefore applicable to a wretched beggar, who is continually driven about from place to place by his hunger to beg his bread. The image therefore by which the Pſalmiſt points out the diſappointment of his enemies, in their miſſing him, when they came to his houſe to ſeize him, is by that of a dog, driven about by hunger from place to place, and murmuring and growling becauſe not able to ſatisfy his hunger. They ſhall wander about ſhivering for hunger through want of food; עם לא ישבעו *and becauſe not ſatisfied,* vid. Nold. *they ſhall murmur.*

And grudge.] ילינו. This verb hath two ſignifications, that of *ſitting up all night*, and that of *murmuring*; which laſt I prefer in the place before us, as it anſwers to what immediately preceeds, and is much more ſignificant than, *let them continue all night not ſatisfied*; or, as the words literally rendered in this ſenſe run: *And if they are not ſatisfied, let them continue all the night.*

This pſalm is a noble vindication of *David*'s innocence, in that he could, in the moſt private retirement, and upon the moſt ſerious and deliberate reflection, thus ſolemnly appeal to God, that he was not chargeable with the leaſt perfidy, wickedneſs or crime, that could excite the hatred of his enemies, and give occaſion to *Saul*, to purſue him with ſuch eagerneſs and malice, to his deſtruction. *See* verſ. 3, 4. For he repreſents them as falſely defaming him, running to prepare themſelves, and execute *Saul*'s commands, as ſome of them beſetting his houſe by night, and like ſnarling dogs ready to bite, threatening to lay hold of and murther him; whilſt others went about the city, to prevent any poſſible way of eſcaping; ſo that, according to the hiſtory, *Michael* was forced to let him down through a window, to ſecure his retreat. Verſ. 6, 7, 12. He therefore earneſtly prays for God's protection, declares that his dependence for ſafety was on his power, aſſures himſelf that God would defend him, and reſolves to celebrate the praiſes of him, who had been his refuge and ſecurity in the time of his danger.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

David's *flight to* Ramah, *and wonderful escape from it.*

WHEN *David* had got safe to *Ramah*, he acquainted *Samuel* with all that had passed between *Saul* and him, upon which they both removed from the city, and dwelt amongst the pleasant cottages and lodges that were in the neighbourhood of the town, and which belonged to the prophets, and sons of the prophets, who chose that pleasant spot for their habitation, and over whom *Samuel* presided. When *Saul* had intelligence whither *David* had retreated, he sent his Janizaries to seise him; who, instead of executing their commission, when they saw the company of prophets prophesying, and *Samuel* their president standing by them, prophesied also with them, under the immediate influence of the spirit of God. He sent, a second and a third time, messengers for the same purpose; who, instead of executing the king's unjust commands, were also turned instantly into prophets, and lost both the disposition and power to apprehend *David*. *Saul*, enraged to be thus disappointed three times, determined himself to go and seise the enemy, he wanted to destroy; accordingly he went to *Ramah*, and being told that *Samuel* and *David* were in the neighbouring villages, or lodges about the town, hasted immediately thither. But instead of seising his man,

Quantum mutatus ab illo! ——

How is he changed from himself! He lost in an instant all his rage and fury, desisted from his cruel purpose, and was turned from an intended murtherer into a real prophet; and so strong was the sacred enthusiasm that possessed him, that stripping himself of his military habit, he continued naked and unarmed

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the whole day, and the following night; prophecying and acting as the other prophets did in the presence of *Samuel*; and putting it into their power, had it been in *David*'s or *Samuel*'s heart, utterly to have destroyed him. But they both abhorred the thought; and as the spirit of the Lord kept *Saul* in this condition till *David* was safe; so also *Saul* was safe during the time that he was naked; *i. e.* destitute of his royal or military robe and armour. A noble evidence this of the innocence and loyalty of *Samuel*, the prophets and *David*; and at the same time it affords a most pleasing instance, to a generous compassionate mind, of the care of providence over persecuted virtue, and of the impotence of human malice towards those, whom God is determined to preserve.

It is to little purpose here to inquire, *what was the subject of* Saul's *prophecying*; and which, did we know it, would not at all illustrate this part of our history. Why *Saul* and his guards were thus on a sudden seised with a prophetic spirit is most evident and plain, *viz.* to prevent them from laying hold on, and him from murthering, certainly *David*, and probably, in the same fit of rage, as in a like frensy, he afterwards did the priests of the Lord, *Samuel*, and the company of prophets who harboured him. And this good effect was worthy the good spirit of the Lord to produce; and it was necessary to take place, because God had destined *David* to, and assured him that he should sit on the throne of *Israel*.

This circumstance of *Saul*'s being seized with the prophetic spirit intirely destroys the supposition, that David *and the prophets had corrupted and bought off* Saul's *emissaries that were sent after him*; for no body will imagine that *David* and *Samuel* could buy off *Saul*, however they might have been able to corrupt his messengers. Nor can I conceive

ceive how these messengers, and especially *Saul*, could be so instantly changed from themselves, forget the errand on which they came, and when they had the man they sought after, as it were, in their hands, yet should have neither power or disposition to apprehend him. *The only thing*, 'tis said, *we can suppose here is, that the prophets knew how to inspire these bigotted people with occasional fits of enthusiastical frenzy; such fits, and such only being able to influence extravagances of this nature.* But this seems to me a very enthusiastical kind of solution, and the supposition, that the prophets had a power to inspire the *Hebrews* with fits of such a frenzy, as often as their interest required it, will be looked on as a very chimerical one, that hath neither reason or experience to support it; and scarce will it be believed, till the method of this inspiration, how it is communicated, how it is catched and exercised, be fairly and rationally accounted for, and some striking instances of it produced, to render the assertion credible or probable. It hath been said indeed, that *prophane history, both ancient and modern, will suggest instances, which will render the supposition probable.* The probability will be immediately allowed, when some few instances from either, parallel to the case of *Saul* and his janizaries prophecying, and the happy effect it wrought, are produced.

But how capable soever these prophets might be of inspiring bigotted people with occasional fits of enthusiastical frenzy, I cannot conceive how they could be able to inspire *Saul* with them, who doth not seem to have been a fit vessel for receiving them. For *Saul* is represented and commended as a person of a quite different character; as a free-thinker, one that would not be a dupe to the priests, not over well affected to the *Levites*, who had too much spirit to continue in subjection to them,

them, who considered the priests as traitors, who had no great opinion of their holiness, and who was none of your implicit men, *i. e.* who had no kind of bigottry in him. *Saul* therefore was no proper subject of this enthusiastical frenzy, and to ascribe his prophecying to his bigottry, is ascribing it to a cause, which the very character given of him renders impossible to be the real one.

As to *the very extravagant circumstances* complained of in *Saul*'s conduct, during his prophecying; such as *stripping himself naked, and lying in that condition for a day and a night*, it is no difficult matter to shew that the representation is founded on a mistaken sense of the words. *Saul* took off only his exterior * garments, his military habit, and royal robe, and thus appeared like the rest of the prophets, a plain, disarmed, and therefore naked man; the word in all languages, answering to our *English* word *naked*, being frequently used, not in the sense of *stark naked*, but in that of being ill dreſt, stript of an exterior garment, and being quite destitute of arms; for the proof of which I refer the reader to † the margin. And therefore I con-

* בגדיו. *His outward garments.* This is the certain meaning of the word בגד without any forced criticism. One instance shall suffice for all. *Joseph*'s mistress *caught him by his* בגד *garment, and he left his garment, and she laid up his garment by her.* This can mean nothing but his outward habit, his coat or his cloak, which she laid hold of, and he easily dropt when she pulled it.

† In Latin *nudus* is used in this sense. *Nuda virtus*, is courage unarmed. Stat. *Thebaid.* l. iv. ver. 229. *Nudæ vires*, strength without arms. Id. ibid. l. vi. ver. 18. *Inermes, nudi, exsangues*, are not men without arms, cloaths, or blood; but ill armed, badly cloathed, and almost exhausted of their blood. Curt. l. ix. c. 3, 5. *Qui male vestitum et pannosum vidit, nudum se vidisse dicit.* Senec. *de benef.* l. v. c. 13. *Virtus nudo homine contenta est.* Virtue is content, not with a man stript stark-naked, but with the man himself, abstracted from the consideration, whether he

I conclude that *Saul* might be thus naked, without any of those circumstances of extravagance and indecency; that have been ascribed to him, to render contemptible the gift of prophecy, and expose it to the ridicule of the ignorant and un-

he be a servant, freeman, king, with house and estate, or without them. *Id. ibid. l.* iii *c.* 18. *En nudus adsto, vel meis armis licet petas inermem.* Here I stand *naked*, which is expressly explained by *stript of my arms.* Senec. *Hercul. fur.* v. 1172, 1173. The *Roman* deputies found Quinctius Cincinnatus *nudum arantem trans Tiburim.* Aurel. Vict. *de vir. illust.* c. 17. *i. e.* cloathed only with his inner garment, having laid by his *toga* or gown; for *Livy* tells us, that the ambassadors from the senate, bid him put on his gown to hear the commands of the senate, and that he ordered his wife immediately to bring it him, l. iii. c. 26. In this sense is to be understood, *nudus ara; nudus sere.* Virgil *Georg. l.* i. *ver.* 299: not, *wholly naked, but stript to the shirt.*

Thus also γυμνος in *Greek* is frequently used by the best writers, to denote one stript of his armour. Γυμνος βαδιζειν. Lucian. *Cyn.* p. 546, 31, 48. To go naked, *i. e.* covered only with a skin.

Τον δ' ως ειδησε ποδαρκης διος Αχιλλευς
Γυμνον, ατερ κορυθος τε καὶ ασπιδος, ἠδ' εχεν εγχος.
Hom. Il. xxi. ver. 49, 50.

Naked without helmet, shield or spear, where *Eustathius* remarks: Ορα δε οτι γυμνον ειπε, τον αοπλον. p. 1222. *Edit. Rom. He calls him naked, because without arms.* So *Josephus* joins γυμνοι and αοπλοι together, the latter being explicative of the former; and says that God, fighting against the *Philistines*, των χειρων εκκροτησας τα οπλα γυμνους εις φυγην απεστρεφεν. *Shaking their weapons out of their hands, put them naked to flight.* J. *Ant. l.* vi. *c.* 2. §. 2. So *Gelo* king of *Syracuse* ελθων εις την αγοραν γυμνος, Ælian. *Var. Hist. l.* vi. *c.* 11. came naked into the assembly, i. e. απεδυσατο την παροπλιαν, ειπων προς παντας· Ιδε τοινυν υμιν εν χιτωνισκω γυμνος των οπλων παρεστηκα, *He threw off his armor*, and said to them all: See, I present myself before you, *stript of my arms, and military habit, without any other covering but my doublet. Id. ibid. l.* xiii. *c.* 37. The very description this of *Saul*'s nakedness in the passage before us.

In *Hebrew* also a man is said to be naked, when divested of his proper habit, or outward garment. *Isaiah* is ordered to put of his sackcloath, *and walk naked*, i. e. without his prophetical dress. *Isai.* xx. 2. And we read of *stripping the naked of their cloaths*, Job xxii. 6.—xxiv. 7. See also *Grotius* on *Job.* xxi. 7. who gives many other examples of the same form of speech.

learned.

learned. Thus disarmed, he lay or sat at his ease *, quiet, without any violent passions to disturb him, whilst this divine influence continued on him.

During this change of *Saul*, and the continuance of the prophetic impulse he was under, *David* had time to make his escape, and immediately went to his faithful friend *Jonathan*; and expostulates with him: † *What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?* *Jonathan* upon this gave him another substantial proof of the sincerity of his friendship, and assures him *he should not die*; and that his father, who made him a confident in all his affairs, doing nothing without him, would by no means take such a step as this, without acquainting him with it. *David* told him, that *Saul* well knew the greatness of his, *Jonathan*'s, friendship for him, and that therefore he would purposely conceal this resolution of killing *David* from him, to prevent his, *Jonathan*'s, uneasiness upon account of it; but that he was very sure, ‡ *there was but a step between him and death*, or, that his life was in the most imminent danger; and therefore begs that *Jonathan* would sound his father, and give him notice of his real intention by a signal, mutually agreed on between them both. *Jonathan* solemnly promises to do as *David* desires;

* *Lay down naked.* ויפל ערם. This by no means necessarily signifies, that he *lay upon the ground* naked. The original word נפל being used to signify amongst other things, putting ones self in a posture of rest and ease, or *sitting ones self down at leasure* and undisturbed. So the *Midianites*, and the other eastern people with them were נפלים בעמק not all *flat on the ground* in the wilderness, which is ridiculous; but *fallen into* a state of security, and taking their rest and pleasure in it. *Jud.* vii. 12. So *Saul*, dropping his restless revengful purposes, *fell into a calm and easy state*, and continued stript of his armour a day and night.

† 1 Sam. xx. 1 ‡ Ibid. ver. 3.

and

and that if good was intended to him by *Saul*, he would send and shew it him, as he hoped for favour and mercy from God. But that if it should please his father to do him evil, he obliged himself by the same oath to discover it to him, and send him away, that * *he might go in peace, and that the Lord might be with him, as he had been with his father. But not, if I yet live, and thou wilt not shew me the mercy of the Lord, that I die not; and that thou wilt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of* David, *every one from the face of the earth* †. This covenant of friendship between *Jonathan* and *David*, and their respective families, being thus renewed, and solemnly sworn to by both; *Jonathan* appoints both time and place were he would meet him, and the token by which *David* might be fully assured of *Saul*'s disposition towards him.

The morning after this solemn engagement between the two friends, which was the festival of the new moon ‡, the king sat at table, accompanied by *Jonathan*, and *Abner*; but *David*, who, as the king's son-in-law, was to have been there, was absent. *Saul* not knowing but that some accident might have prevented his coming, took no notice of his absence the first day; but finding his place

* 1 Sam. xx. 12, 13.

† The 14th verse in our version is injudiciously rendered. *And thou shalt not only while yet I live, shew me the kindness of the Lord*, &c. In the foregoing verse, *Jonathan* swears, that if his father had determined evil, he would shew it him, that he, *David, might go in peace, and that the Lord might be with him*; adding: ולא, *but not* עם עודני חי *if I yet live*, ולא תעשה, *and thou dost not shew to me the mercy of the Lord that I die not*, i. e. I permit you to depart in peace, and wish you the protection of the Lord, only on this condition, that you secure my life, and preserve my family. Our version leaves out one of the negative particles, and thereby alters the sense, and greatly detracts from the emphasis of the passage.

‡ 1 Sam. xx. 25—42.

empty

empty the second day, he inquired of *Jonathan*: *Wherefore cometh not the son of* Jesse *to meat, neither yesterday nor to day? Jonathan* then answered, that upon *David*'s earnest request, he had permitted him to go to *Bethlehem*, to partake of a sacrifice, to which his brethren had invited him, and so he could not be present at the king's table. This put *Saul* into an outrageous passion, that made him break out into the most indecent reproaches against *Jonathan*'s mother, and against *Jonathan* himself, for the friendship that he had entered into with *David*; telling him, that it would turn out to his own confusion and ruin. *Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do I not know that thou hast chosen the son of* Jesse *to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of* Jesse *liveth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. Jonathan*, who had still his friend's safety at heart, and willing to pacify his father, calmly remonstrates: *Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?* This put *Saul* into such a fury, that he only replied to him, by endeavouring to pierce him through the heart with a dagger. This abundantly convinced him, that his father was determined to destroy *David*, and he accordingly kept his appointment with him, gave him the signal agreed on, and after most tenderly embracing one another, *Jonathan* takes his leave of him: * *Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord, saying: The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.* Thus parted the two royal friends; *David* into banishment, and *Jonathan* into the city.

And what is there criminal in this friendship between them, inconsistent with *Saul*'s interest, or unbecoming men of integrity and honour? It can

* 1 Sam. xx. 42.

never be inferred from this transaction, that *Jonathan was seduced by the arts of* David *from his allegiance and filial duty, to engage in* David's *cause against his own father by covenant*; for the only two things they here covenanted and swore to, were; that if *Jonathan* should be alive, when *David* had the power in his hands, *David* would not put him to death; and that *David* should not cut off his kindness from *Jonathan*'s house and family for ever; no, *not when the Lord should have cut off the enemies of* David, *every one from the face of the Earth.* But where is the conspiracy against *Saul* in all this? Or, how can *David* be said to have seduced *Jonathan* in this transaction from his filial duty, when it was *Jonathan* himself who proposed the covenant, and caused *David* to swear to it?

Jonathan did, I confess, when *Saul* ordered him to kill *David*, absolutely refuse obedience to his command, and instead of murthering him, as his father ordered, turns his advocate, and affectionately pleads his innocence and merits, even to the immediate hazard of his own life. He did also discover his father's design and fixed resolution to cut him off, once and again, and advised him to take care of his own safety. And in my judgment, neither was inconsistent with his duty and allegiance to his father and his king. He who knows of a conspiracy against an innocent person's life, and doth not discover it, or who kills such a one, knowing him to be such, by another's instigation and command, is himself a murtherer; and no duty † to a father, nor allegiance to a prince, can oblige any one to shed innocent blood, or justify him in doing it. *Jonathan* therefore was so far from acting contrary to his duty and allegiance, in refusing to become his father's instrument in destroying *David*, as that he

† *Non facere ea quæ non facienda sunt, laudem meretur, non dedecus. Si igitur quis aut patri, aut magistratui, aut domino, turpia*

he gave a noble proof of his filial piety, affection and duty, in his repeated endeavours to preſerve him from ſo unnatural and atrocious a crime; and humanity and virtue will ever applaud him for the generous concern he expreſſed for the honour of his father, and the preſervation of his own injured friend.

The reader will obſerve, that *Jonathan* ever conſiders *David* as an innocent perſon, and pleads for him to his father, not as for a rebel, or notorious offender, to obtain his pardon; but as never having done any thing to forfeit *Saul*'s favour, or his own life. * *Wherefore ſhall he be ſlain? What hath he done?* is *Jonathan*'s language; and *Saul* himſelf, even in the heighth of his rage againſt *Jonathan*, for endeavouring to protect *David*, neither intimates any ſuſpicion of, nor charges *David* with any rebellious treaſonable practices againſt him, nor reproaches *Jonathan* with being privy to, or a ſharer in them; but only tells him, as the cauſe of his anger to him, and what lay

—— *Alta mente repoſtum* ——

That *as long as the ſon of* Jeſſe *lives upon the ground, thou ſhalt not be eſtabliſhed, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now ſend, and fetch him unto me, for he ſhall ſurely die.* But the princely friend ſcorned a crown, that was to be purchaſed by treachery and murther.

CHAP. VII.

David's *flight to* Achiſh, *and eſcape from him to* Adullam.

WHEN *David* took his leave of *Jonathan* †, he went immediately to *Nob*, a city belonging to the prieſts, in his way to the *Philiſtines*,

pia aut iniqua factu imperanti, non paret, is nec inobediens eſt, nec injuriam facit, nec peccat. Muſon. apud. *Stob.* Serm. 77. as tranſlated by *Grotius, de J. B. et P. l.* 2. *c.* xxvi. 2. 1.

* 1 Sam. xx. 32. † Ibid. xxi. 1, &c.

amongst whom he intended to take refuge from the persecutions of *Saul*. As he passed through the town, he went to *Abimelech* the priest; who seeing him without his proper attendants, which *David* had left in some neighbouring place, was greatly surprised and afraid, and therefore asked him: *Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?* *David*, unwilling to tell the priest the reason of his flight, and to prevent as much as he could any suspicion, that there was any confederacy between them against *Saul*, only tells him in general, that he was intrusted with a secret commission from the king, and that he had appointed his attendants to meet him at an appointed time and place. *David*'s flight was so sudden, as that he had not had time to provide himself, and his few servants, with any provisions for their journey, nor to take any arms with him for his own defence; and he therefore asks the priest to spare him five loaves of bread, or any other provision that he had in hand. *Abimelech*, having no other, took the shew bread that was taken from the table of the Lord, in order to be replaced by fresh bread; which *David* very readily took, and in which he is vindicated by our blessed Savour *; because it was real necessity that forced him to it.

And as *David* had no weapon to defend him, he farther asked the priest, whether he had either sword or spear? The priest answered, that he had only the sword of *Goliah*, whom he himself had slain with it; to which *David* replied: *There is none like it. Give* † *me that.* He then took it, and

* Matt. xii. 3, 4.

† *David*, I doubt not, thought this his recovering *Goliah*'s sword, was a very fortunate accident; but little thought this circumstance would ever be alledged against him by his enemies to prove him a rebel and a traitor. And yet unfortunately this

and being thus provided with a few necessaries for his journey, made the best of his way, and went to

this hath been the case; for it hath been alledged, that *his resuming the sword, with which he slew* Goliah, *is to be considered as a manifestation of hostile intentions, or a declaration of war against* Saul. *David*, who had no arms, wanted a sword. Now supposing some other sword had been there, and not *Goliah*'s, would the taking of that have been also a declaration of war against *Saul?* If so, then it will follow, that every man, who takes up a sword in his own defence, discovers hostile intentions, and makes a declaration of war against his prince; than which nothing can be more absurd. If not so, then, as there was no other sword but this of *Goliah*, it could be no more a declaration of war, than if he had taken up any other sword whatsoever; because he must have had that, or none.

But *it had been dedicated as a religious trophy.* So *Josephus* affirms: Την ρομφαιαν ανεθηκεν τω θεω. Ant. *l.* 6. *c.* 9. §. 5. and Mr. *Bayle* says, with great assurance, that *Goliah*'s *arms were put up in some sacred place*, because *Abimelech* tells *David*, that *Goliah*'s sword was wraped up in a linen cloath, and put behind the ephod, and he might take that. But this reasoning of Mr. *Bayle*'s is by no means convincing; because, though *Josephus* says, that *David* consecrated *Goliah*'s sword to God, he says nothing of his arms, and the Bible says nothing about the dedication of either; and the sword might be left with *Abimelech* to be forthcoming upon occasion: And that it was so, seems probable, because had it been dedicated as a trophy, it would have been placed trophy like, in some conspicuous view; whereas this sword was wrapt up in a cloath, and seems to have been carelessly thrown out of the way behind the ephod. Besides, though it was customary amongst the Heathens to hang up the armour of their slain enemies, in the temples of their gods. 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 10. yet this doth not appear to have been customary amongst the *Jews*; and as the armour of an uncircumcised infidel was unclean, it could not be admitted into any sacred place. Nor was *Nob* a sacred place; for neither the ark nor tabernacle were there. And though *Abimelech* the priest dwelt there, and had the ephod with him, to inquire of the Lord by, yet these two circumstances made *Nob* no more sacred than it did *Keilah*, where *David* called for the ephod, and inquired of the Lord by the hands of *Abiathar*. But *Keilah* was never taken for a sacred place.

But supposing the sword had been consecrated, how doth this circumstance prove an hostile intention, and a declaration of

to *Achish*, king of *Gath*. His arrival there threw him into fresh difficulties; for as soon as ever it was known, the servants of that prince informed the king, and said to him: *Is not this* David *the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying:* Saul *hath slain his thousands, and* David *his ten thousands?* Thus representing him as a very obnoxious and dangerous person, who deserved to be narrowly guarded, and whom it might be necessary to secure for the public safety. When this was reported to him, probably by some of his own servants, *David* was afraid of *Achish*, and apprehensive of the dangerous situation in which he here found himself; and as he was strictly watched, so that he could not possibly make his escape, he took the only method that he thought was left him to prevent his destruction; a method that hath been successfully practiced by other * great and wise men, on particular

war? He took the sword for the same reason of necessity, as he did the consecrated bread, because there was no other, and he wanted both; and the taking the consecrated bread to keep himself, and his men from starving, may, with as much reason, be looked on as a declaration of war against *Saul*, as his taking the consecrated sword to defend himself against the attack of his enemies; and as our Saviour expresly vindicates *David* in taking the one, he doth also in the other; because the same necessity might be pleaded for both. And indeed the objection is so trifling, as that it scarce deserves an answer.

* David *feigned himself mad.* 1 Sam xxi. 13. and acted the madman so well, as to impose on the king and his nobles, and make them take his feigned madness for a real one. And he is not the only instance of this kind. Among the *Easterns*, *Baibasus* the *Arabian*, surnamed *Naama*, had several of his brethren killed, whose death he wanted to revenge. And in order to it, he feigned himself mad, putting on his shirt in the place of his breeches, and his breeches in the place of his shirt; till at length he found an opportunity of executing his intended revenge, by killing all who had a share in his brethrens murther. *Anthol. vet. Hamasa*, p. 535. *edit.* Schulten. Amongst the *Greeks*, *Ulysses*

cular emergences; which was his counterfeiting madness, after they had taken him into custody. *He changed* * *his behaviour before them*, feigned himself distracted whilst he was in their hands, making scratches on the doors of the gates where he was confined, and letting the spittle fall down upon his beard; so that when he was brought before *Achish*, he so well counterfeited the madman, that *Achish* said to his officers: *Lo you see the man is mad. Wherefore have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad-men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad-man in my presence? Shall this fellow*

Ulysses is said to have counterfeited madness, to prevent his going to the *Trojan* war. Cicer. *de Offic. l.* iii. *c.* 26. Plutarch *de Aud. Poet.* p. 18. A. *Solon* also, the great *Athenian* lawgiver, practiced the same deceit, and by appearing in the dress, and with the air of a madman, and singing a song to the *Athenians*, carried his point, and got the law repealed, that prohibited, under the penalty of death, any application to the people for the recovery of *Salamis*. Plut. *vit. Solon.* p. 82. B. C. Diog. Laert. l. i. §. 46. *Callidum factum Solonis, qui, quo et tutior vita ejus esset, et plus aliquanto reipublicæ prodesset, furere se simulavit.* Cicer. *de Offic. l.* i. *c.* 30. Justin. *l.* ii. *c.* 7. In like manner, *Meto*, the famous *Athenian* astronomer, when he was enrolled to serve in the expedition against *Sicily*, in order to get free of that service, counterfeited madness, and like a madman set fire to his house, and so obtained his discharge. *Ælian.* V. H. *l.* 3. *c.* 12. *Plut. Alcib.* p. 199, 200. And to mention no more, *Brutus*, the noble *Roman*, to secure his own life, and reserve himself for the deliverance of his country, ἔργον ἐπεχείρησε ποιῆσαι παντῶν φρονιμώτατον, ἐπίθετον ἑαυτῷ καταψευσάσθαι μωρίαν, καὶ διέμεινεν ἅπαντα τὸν ἐξ ἐκείνου χρόνον, ἕως ἂν τὸν ἐπιτήδειον καιρὸν ἔχειν, τὸ πρόσποιημα τῆς ἀνοίας. Dion. Hal. *A. R. l.* iv. §. 68. p. 254. *edit.* Hudf. He acted the most prudent part, and feigned himself to be an ideot, and continued, till the proper opportunity offered itself, to preserve this appearance of madness. So that a very wise man may, at times, feign himself to be a fool and a madman, and *David* therefore, without any reflection on his character, might be allowed to do it, to save his life, and serve his country.

* *He changed his behaviour before them.* וישנו את טעמו. *mutavit saporem ejus.* He changed his *savouryness*, and became *insulsus*, unsavoury, *insipid*, foolish and *mad*. *See* Schult. *in Proverb.* xi. 22.

come into my house? David apprehended his danger to be so great on this occasion, as that he composed the following psalm in commemoration of it. *

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, for wretched man is every day eagerly hunting after me.

2. The enemy is ready to oppress me. My observers eagerly hunt after my life every day; for many are they that fight against me in high places *and stations.*

3. What time I shall be afraid, I will securely trust in thee,

4. In

* Ps. lvi.

Ver. 1. שאפני אנוש. *Man would swallow me up.* The original word שאף properly signifies *anhelari, auram haurire.* To breathe, or *pant after*; to draw, or *snuff the air*; and from thence *to hunt*, by drawing in and following the scent of the air; and as hunting ends in the capture and destruction of the prey, it farther denotes, *absorbere, to swallow up*, and *devour*; and it is rendered in our version by *panting, snuffing up, swallowing up, and devouring*, and other words of like nature. I have translated it by *eagerly hunting after*, which perfectly agrees with the character and conduct of *Saul*, who furiously pursued and hunted after *David* to destroy him.

2. *Many are they who fight against me.* מרום, *O thou most high*, as we render the word, with the *Chaldee*, and other *Jewish* interpreters. *Qui sedes in excelso.* But I do not find this word any where singly applied to God. It generally signifies *an high place*, and when applied to persons, it denotes *their superior elevation* as to dwelling and station. It is applied to God. Thus he is called *the Lord on high.* Ps. xciii. 4. highly exalted in heavenly glory. Thus also it should be rendered, *Ps.* xcii. 8. *Thou O Lord art on high for ever more.* And when applied to men it denotes heighth in rank and dignity. *The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones, that are on high*, even the kings of the earth. *Isai.* xxiv. 21. And thus what we render, *Eccles.* x. 6. *in great dignity*, is in the *Hebrew, in great heigths.* And *David* might well complain, that those who fought against him were in high places and stations, since his enemies were *Saul* and his officers; and when he fled from them, *Achish* and the princes of the *Philistines*, amongst whom he promised himself a safe retreat.

4. In

4. In God I will celebrate his word. In God I securely trust. I will not be afraid what flesh can do against me.

5. They torture my words every day. All their machinations are against me to do me mischief.

6. They secretly gather together *to ensnare me.* They observe my steps; for they wait for my life.

7. Shall they escape by *their* iniquity? Bring down, O Lord, in thine anger the people.

8. Thou

4. *In God I will praise his word.* Truth and faithfulness to his promises are attributes that dwell in, or belong to God. God had promised *David* the kingdom of *Israel*, and therefore in God he would praise his word, or promise, *i. e.* under his protection, and by trusting in his power, even amidst the most powerful enemies, he would celebrate the praises of his truth and goodness, not doubting but that God would in due time accomplish his promise; for it follows: *In God will I trust, I will not fear what man can do unto me.*

5. *They wrest my words.* דברי יעצבו. The original word עצב properly signifies *to bind* or *strain*, and from thence denotes *vexare, torquere,* to teize and twist; and as applied to words denotes, *torquere et fidiculis exprimere inde, quis quid lubcat, præter mentem loquentis*; to squeeze from them, as it were by torture, any sense one pleases, contrary to the intention of the speaker. *Vid.* Schult. *de defect. hod. l.* 8. §. 148.

6. *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves.* יגורו יצפינו, *i. e.* they have their secret meetings and consultations, how they may most effectually ensnare me, and work my ruine.

7. על און פלט למו. *Shall they escape by iniquity?* So our version. In the *Chaldee* dialect פלט signifies, *exspuere, ejicere,* to spit, or cast out; and accordingly the *Targum* renders it by רוקן a word of the same meaning with the former, *evacua illos.* *Cocceius* in his Lex. goes a different way, and renders the words: *Super vanitate liberatio ipsis.* Their safety is founded in vanity; which he explains by, *confidunt vanitati, quod ea sit ipsis præstitura effugium.* They trust in vanity to procure themselves an escape. But I think we may safely retain our own version, which the words will bear, and which is confirmed by *Kimchi*, in *lib. rad.* who renders them: *Num propter iniquitatem evadere, evasio et liberatio?* Shall they escape, or be delivered for their iniquity? intimating they are to be read by way of admiration. *Strange that*

8. Thou numbereſt my wanderings. O put my tears into thy bottle. Are they not in thy regiſter?

9. Then ſhall mine enemies turn their backs, in the day that I call *upon thee*; for this I know, that God is with me.

that their iniquity ſhould deliver them! Therefore the Pſalmiſt adds: *In anger bring down, O Lord, the people, ſhew thy diſpleaſure to their crimes, by inflicting the juſt puniſhment on them.*

8. *Thou numbereſt my wanderings.* *David*'s whole life, from his victory over *Goliah* to the death of *Saul*, was almoſt intirely ſpent in wandering from place to place, to eſcape the fury of *Saul*, and the ſnares his enemies laid for his deſtruction. He was now an exile and vagabond at *Gath*, comforts himſelf however, that God was with him where-ever he fled, and knew all the diſtreſſes that he ſuffered upon account of ſo uncomfortable and wretched a ſituation. He therefore adds,

Ibid. *Put my tears into thy bottle.* Doth not this ſeem to intimate, that the cuſtom of putting tears into the *ampullæ*, or *urnæ lachrymales*, ſo well known amongſt the *Romans*, was more anciently in uſe amongſt the Eaſtern nations, and particularly amongſt the *Hebrews?* Theſe urns were of different materials, ſome of glaſs, ſome of earth; as may be ſeen in Montfaucon's *Antiq. Expliq. vol.* v. *p.* 116. where alſo may be ſeen the various forms or ſhapes of them. Theſe urns were placed on the ſepulchres of the deceaſed, as a memorial of the diſtreſs and affection of their ſurviving relations and friends. It will be difficult to account for this expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, but upon this ſuppoſition. If this be allowed, when the Pſalmiſt prays: *Put my tears into thy bottle*, the meaning will be: *Let my diſtreſs, and the tears I ſhed in conſequence of it, be ever before thee, excite thy kind remembrance of me, and plead with thee to grant me the relief I ſtand in need off.* The alluſion will be pertinent and expreſſive.

Ibid. *Are they not in thy book?* בספרתך. The word is the *fœminine* from ספר, which ſignifies *any book*, and particularly *a book of accounts*; and therefore *F. Houbigant* had no reaſon to doubt whether ספרה hath the ſame meaning. *Rabbi Menachem* and *Jarchi* from *Kimchi* explain the word by *in libro tuo.* The expreſſion denotes the confidence the Pſalmiſt placed in the kind regards of God towards him, as though he took an account of every tear he ſhed, and would, in due time, remember and comfort him.

10. In

10. In God I will celebrate *his* word. In the Lord I will celebrate *his* word.

11. In God I ſecurely truſt, nor will I fear what man can do unto me.

12. Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will return *my* acknowledgments to thee.

13. For thou haſt reſcued my life from death. Wilt thou not reſcue my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

The reaſon of *David*'s retreat to *Gath* was, as the hiſtory expreſsly ſays *, through fear of *Saul*. *David* aroſe and fled that day *for fear of* Saul, to

12. *Thy vows are upon me.* i. e. the vows I have made to thee. *F. Houbigant* ſays; *Nihil ſententiæ habet*, vota tua. *Quæ ſunt vota tua? Minime gentium, vota ad te facta. Vota tua* ſignifies thy vows, but by no means, vows made to thee. But this is an obſervation that cannot be ſupported, as there are many places, both in the Old and New Teſtament, and even in profane writers, where the ſame kind of conſtruction is to be found. So *his praiſe*, not, *God*'s *praiſe*, but my praiſe of God, *ſhall be continually in my mouth.* Pſ. xxxiv. 1. *See remarks on Pſ.* lv. 23. The expreſſion itſelf, *thy vows are upon me*, means, I am under the obligation of vows to God, and therefore *will render thee the ſacrifices of thankſgiving I owe thee.*

13. *That I ſhould walk before God in the light of the living.* i. e. ſerve God, whilſt he enjoyed the common light of mankind, or during the whole of his future life.

Dum optata luce fruatur. Virg. Æn. iv.

This pſalm is well ſuited to the occaſion, on which the inſcription ſays it was written; his ſeizure by the *Philiſtines* on his firſt arrival at *Gath.* He begins it by imploring the merciful protection of God, upon account of the numerous enemies that waited for his deſtruction, v. 1. 2. who wreſted his words, and narrowly watched all his actions, that they might find ſome pretence to cut him off. v. 5, 6. But he encourages himſelf by truſt in God, and reſts aſſured that he would deliver him, and give him renewed occaſions of acknowledging his faithfulneſs, and celebrating his praiſes.

* 1 Sam. xxi. 10.

Achiſh

Achish the king of *Gath* *; and the suggestion, that *he intended to enter into a treaty of alliance with that* Philistine *prince against the* Hebrews, is contrary to all the probability of circumstances; for as he fled to him, through his apprehension of being murthered by *Saul*, so that he never discovered any design of engaging with *Achish* against his king and country, is evident, from his being taken up as a spy, and then dismissed as a madman.

Had his intention been to have joined *Achish* in an invasion of the *Hebrews*, he had the noblest opportunity in the world of doing it, by boldly owning the errand he came on, before the king and his princes: A conduct that would immediately, in all probability, not only have saved him from suspicion and danger, but made the *Philistines* to have received him with open arms, as a man, who though he had slain his ten thousands, was now come to them, that he might repair that injury, and avenge himself and them of their common

* It hath been said, that David *appears to disadvantage in this retreat to* Achish. He was certainly unhappy in being forced to it; but what disadvantage can this be to his character? It was nothing more, than what some of the most famous commanders of other nations have done, such as *Themistocles*, *Coriolanus*, and many others that might be named; who retreated to hostile nations, in order to escape the rage and fury of their own princes and countrymen. But in one thing he appears to excellent advantage, even above these great commanders; that he went into exile without any hostile disposition, or spirit of revenge towards his country, which he affectionatly loved; like *Camillus*; ελπιδας λαμβανων κ᾽ διαλογισμους, ουχι το λαθειν κ᾽ διαφυγειν τους πολεμιους αγαπωντος τω ακδρος, αλλ᾽ οπως, ει παραγενοιτο καιρος, αμυνειται σκοπουντος. Plut. *Camill.* p. 140. E. hoping and consulting within himself; not only how he should secure his own safety, but most effectually serve his country, and, when opportunity offered, avenge himself of the enemies of it. This opportunity, even in his banishment, *David* once and again found, and improved like a wise and valiant commander.

enemies.

enemies. This was the conduct of the *Roman* * *Coriolanus*; who all alone threw himself into the power of *Tullus*, the *Volscian* general; and so far from being terrified by the former victories he had obtained over them, he made this the very argument, why *Tullus* should embrace his friendship, and he accordingly prevailed.

Besides, why should he enter into a treaty of alliance with *Achish*, against the *Hebrews?* Had they ever injured him? Had he any quarrel with them? Was he not to reign over them, and would not such an alliance with the king of *Gath*, against his own nation, have been a sure means of cutting off every expectation of his ever coming to the *Hebrew* throne? It hath been well observed, upon another occasion, that David *knew better what he was about, than to act so rashly, and could entertain no hopes that the* Jews *would receive for their king, a man, who should fight against his own nation, and embrew his hands in the blood of his countrymen.* But *he had a quarrel with* Saul, *and was proscribed by him.* True, and therefore to get out of the reach of the proscription, and the immediate danger he was continually in upon account of it, he fled with a very few attendants, as an exile from his own country, to the nearest place of safety he could think of; as I imagine any man in like circumstances would have done.

When *David* was thus dismissed from *Achish*, he was ordered immediately to depart his dominions, and accordingly he made the best of his way out of the territories of the *Philistines*, and was so affected with the consideration of his wonderful and unexpected escape from them, that he penned the following psalm upon this happy deliverance †.

* Υπισχνουμαι δε σοι τοσαυτα αγαθα ποιησαι Ουολισκους, φιλος τω εθνει γενομενος, οσα κακα ειργασαμην εχθρος ων. Dion. Hal. *A. R. l.* viii. *c.* 1. *edit.* Hudf. † Pf. xxxiv.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth.

2. My soul shall glory in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof, and rejoice.

3. Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. *For*

4. I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. *And*

5. They earnestly looked to him *on my account*, and were enlightened, and their faces were not ashamed. *They said with joy:*

Ver. 3. *Magnify the Lord.* These and the like expressions do not mean, that we can add any thing to the glory of the name or nature of God; but that we should shew forth, and publickly celebrate his majesty and greatness, when we experience the interpositions of his providence, in our deliverance from any threatening evils. We should then with the Psalmist *glory in god*, i. e. ascribe our safety, not to our own contrivance and subtlety or power, but to the assistance and care of God, who watches over us.

4. *Delivered me from all my fears.* This exactly answers to the history, which informs us, that when *David* heard what the servants of *Achish* said to their master, concerning him; *he laid up those words in his heart, and was greatly afraid.* 1 Sam. xxi. 13. Undoubtedly he thought himself in extream danger; but instead of removing their suspicions, and his own fears, by offering to join with the *Philistines* against his country; he rather chose to counterfeit madness, and trust providence with the success of it, than secure his safety by base and dishonourable compliances.

5. *And were enlightned.* ונהרו. The verb נהר signifies properly *fluere, manare, to flow down*, or *flow around*, and is used properly of the flow of rivers, and with equal propriety applied to the flow of light, which is a most pure and subtle fluid. And accordingly in the *Chaldee* and *Arabick* languages, it hath the signification of light and splendor, and unquestionably it had so originally in the *Hebrew*. See *Job* iii. 4. The meaning of the word in the passage before us is, that the humble looked unto God for the Psalmist's protection, and received that light, *i. e.* that comfort and joy from him upon *David*'s return in safety, that diffused itself throughout their whole hearts; so that *their faces were not ashamed*; or as the word signifies, not put to the blush for shame, by being disappointed as to their hope on his account.

6. "This

6. " This distressed man cried, and the Lord
" heard, and delivered him out of all his straits.
7. " The angel of Lord encampeth round about
" them that fear him, and delivereth them.
8. " O taste, and see that the Lord is good. Bless-
" ed is the man who trusteth in him.
9. " Fear the Lord, O ye his Saints, for there
" is no want to them that fear him.
10. " The lions of prey may lack and suffer
" hunger, but they who seek the Lord shall not
" want any thing that is good."
11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12. What

6. *This distressed man cried.* This seems to be the triumph of *David*'s afflicted friends for his safe return: This distressed man cried and sought for the help of God, when he was in the greatest straits at *Gath*, as being in danger of destruction if he staid there, and yet not knowing how to escape. But God heard his cry, and delivered him out of them all, *&c.*

7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about*, &c. This is not spoken of a single angel, but of a commanding angel, ordering his forces to encamp round about those, whom God commissions him to preserve in safety.

10. *The young lions may lack.* All the ancient versions, except the *Chaldee*, read כבירים, *great, powerful men*, instead of כפירים *young lions*, as in our version. And *F. Houbigant* thus renders the place: *Divites egeni facti sunt, et esurierunt.* Rich men are become poor and hungry; but they who seek the Lord, *&c.* The sense is undoubtedly good; but I see nothing to object against our own reading; for the meaning is, that if God takes care of the beast of the field, he will much more take care of them that fear him; and much sooner suffer those to die for want of their prey, than these to perish, through the want of necessaries, or the failure of his protection. The sense of *young lions* given to כפירים doth not seem to be well supported, though the learned *Bochart* endeavours to defend it. *Vid.* Hier. *vol.* ii. p. 714. Mr. *Schulten*'s derivation appears to me the more natural and easy. כפיר *proprie est leo prædator, cruore illitus.* It signifies properly *a lion of prey*, besmeared with blood, for the root כפר properly signifies *linere, oblinere*, to daub or smear over. See him on *Prov.* xix. 12.

13. The

12. What man is he that desireth life, that wishes *to prolong his* days, that he may see prosperity?

13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14. Depart from evil, and do good: Seek after peace and persue it.

15. The eyes of the Lord are towards the just, and his ears to their cry.

16. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17. *The righteous* cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivers them out of all their straits.

18. The Lord is nigh to them that are broken in heart, and will save them that are contrite in spirit.

19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver him from them all.

20. He keepeth all his bones: Not one of them is broken.

21. Evil

13. The meaning of this verse is: Who is the man that desires a long and happy life? *The seeing good* must be referred to both clauses of the verse. *Seeing* here means *enjoying*.

15. *The eyes of the Lord are towards the just. i. e.* he beholds them with approbation, and is constantly watchful over them to protect and supply them; and on the other hand, *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*, as he views them with displeasure, and marks them out for vengeance.

18. *The Lord is nigh to them, that are broken in heart.* God is near to all men, for in him they all live. But he is near to the broken in heart in a peculiar sense, as he is ever ready, and always able to help them; as men are much more capable of assisting those they value, when present with, than when absent from them; from which the form of speech, as applied to God, is taken.

20. *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.* These words were peculiarly accomplished in *Christ*, whose bones were not broken on the cross, according to the usual custom of treating those who were crucified, to put them the sooner out of their pain.

21. Evil ſhall deſtroy the wicked, and they that hate the righteous ſhall be guilty.

22. The Lord redeemeth the life of his ſervants, and none of them that truſt in him ſhall be held guilty.

When

pain. Many others alſo experience the protection of God in this reſpect, who live and die without broken bones. The expreſſion may be figurative, and mean deliverance from all grievous, diſtreſſing and deadly affliction. This is what good men may generally expect from God. It is probable alſo, that the Pſalmiſt might be preſerved from broken bones, in a very dangerous accident that happened to him in his flight to, or from *Gath*.

21. *Evil ſhall deſtroy the wicked.* The conſequences of mens crimes are often fatal to them. Or, thoſe, who deviſe evil againſt others, often periſh by their own wicked contrivances.

Malum conſilium conſultori peſſimum eſt. P. Syr. *Sentent.*

22. *They that hate the righteous ſhall be deſolate.* In the margin it is, *ſhall be guilty.* And this is the proper meaning of the original word יאשמו. They are guilty and liable to puniſhment. Thus the word is frequently rendered in our verſion. See *Levit.* iv. 13. 22. and generally includes in it the idea of guilt, and the puniſhment incurred by it.

This pſalm is well adapted to the occaſion on which it was penned. *David* was in a very dangerous ſituation at *Gath*, and ſeems to have been apprehenſive, that the *Philiſtines* would have treated him as an enemy and ſpy. He was himſelf greatly afraid. v. 4. His friends were in pain for him, when they heard of his ſituation, and earneſtly looked to God, that as he had promiſed him the crown, he would protect, and reſtore him to his country in ſafety. v. 5. There is ſomewhat very ſtriking and pleaſing in the ſudden tranſitions, and the change of perſons, that is obſervable in theſe few verſes. *My ſoul ſhall boaſt.—The humble ſhall hear.—I ſought the Lord.—They looked to him.—This poor man cried.*—There is a force and elegance in the very unconnection of the expreſſions, which, had they been more cloſely tied by the proper particles, would have been in a great meaſure loſt. Things thus ſeparated from each other, and yet accelerated, diſcover, as *Longinus* obſerves, the earneſtneſs and vehemency of the inward working of the mind; and though it may ſeem to interrupt, or diſturb the ſentence, yet quickens and enforces it. *De Sublim.* c. 19. The ſixth, to the tenth verſe incluſive, appears to me, to be the triumph of *David*'s friends upon his return in ſafety, in which they repre-

When *David* was thus driven out from *Gath*, he came back to the tribe of *Judah*, and retired to the cave of *Adullam*. When he got safe to this fortress there resorted to him his brethren, with all his father's house, with many others that were in distress, or in debt, or discontented *. To these joined themselves *Abiathar* the high priest, *Joab*, † *Abishai*, *Benaiah*, ‡ eleven principal commanders of the tribe of *Gad*, men of known reputation and courage, men of might and men of war, *fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as the roes on the mountains.* These were all captains of the host, some of them commanders of a thousand men, others of them of an hundred. These brave officers had signalised their courage and conduct, by passing over *Jordan* in the beginning of the year, during the time of the inundation, and putting to flight all the enemies of

sent him as deserted and distressed, and in so dangerous a situation, as that he owed his protection to a guard of surrounding angels. Yet their eyes were towards God, that he would protect him, and with joy in their faces, and gladness in their hearts, they made their acknowledgments to God, that they had not been disappointed. The eleventh and following verses contain the pious reflections, which the Psalmist makes on his wonderful escape. He takes occasion to recommend the advantages of a religious disposition, the prudence and the necessity of governing the tongue, by not murmuring against providence, or reproaching the authors of our distresses, of using no criminal methods to procure the removal of our afflictions, and of studying, amidst all kind of provocations, the things that make for peace; reflections these, which naturally occurred to him from the situation in which he had been, and as he himself had found the benefit and reward of this happy temper and conduct. He concludes by observing, that though, as he had been, the righteous may be under many afflictions, yet that, sooner or later, God would certainly deliver them, and that the authors of their distresses should reap the consequences of their guilt, and meet with their deserved destruction.

* 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2. † 1 Chron. xi. 15, &c. ‡ Ibid. xii. 8.

their

their country, who inhabited the vallies east and west of that river.

Surrounded by these brave men, *David* was now in some condition to protect himself; not indeed from the forces of *Saul*, for which his little party was no match, but from the inhabitants of the country where he might reside, or thro' which he occasionally passed, should any of them attempt to surprize him, or lay in wait for his destruction. And as the men that came to him appear all of them to have joined him of their own accord, without any management or intrigue of *David*, he was obliged, in self defence, to receive them for his guard, since he had no other method left for his own protection and security. He found by *Jonathan* that his father *Saul*'s malice was incurable, and that nothing would satisfy him but his destruction. He had fled from *Saul* to take refuge in *Gath*, where he had like to have been seized and put to death as a spy, and saved himself only by a stratagem, that furnished him with an opportunity of escaping into his own country. Here again he knew his fate would be certain death, should any one deliver him into the hand of *Saul*. What could *this hunted patridge* do? He found friends to protect him. He received them as his guard; and the only thing he intended by receiving them, was not to injure his king and father-in-law, but to preserve his own life, and the succession which God had promised him to the throne of *Israel*. And in this I think he acted a wise and prudent part.

The number of those, who first came over to him at the cave, was about four hundred men, and they joined him probably with different views. His family, for their own and his better security; *Achimelech*, to save his life from the murtherer of his father and family; his captains, because they knew

him to be a man of valour and prudence, and who had probably, several of them, served under him in some former expeditions; others of them, to rescue themselves from the grievous oppressions of their cruel creditors; others of them, out of dislike to *Saul*'s arbitrary tyrannical proceedings; and all of them, undoubtedly, to defend the well known successor to the crown, against the attempts of him, who practised all arts and methods to destroy him.*

Conveniunt, quibus aut odium crudele tyranni,
Aut metus acer erat ——— Virg. Æn. i.

Soon after this there came to him a reinforcement from the tribes of *Benjamin* and *Judah*, headed by *Amasa*. *David*, at first, had some suspicion, as several of them were of the tribe of *Benjamin*, that they came with a design to betray him to *Saul*; but, conscious of his own innocence, boldly went out to meet them, and said to them: *If you are come to me with a peaceable and friendly intention, to help me* in preserving my life from destruction, I will enter into the strictest friendship with you. *But if you come to betray me to my enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands; the God of our fathers*, who knows my intentions, and that I have no view to injure and do violence to any one, beholds your treachery, and will avenge it. *Amasa*, the chief of the captains, and leader of this corps, piqued at *David*'s having the least suspicion of their honour and integrity, cries out with eagerness and warmth: *Thine we are, O* David, *and on thy side, O son of* Jesse. *Peace, peace be to thee, and peace to thy helpers. For thy God helpeth thee.* Upon this *David* received them with pleasure, incorporated them into his troops, and

* 1 Chron. xii. 16. &c.

placed

placed the proper officers over them; his forces now amounting to about ſix hundred men.

The character given of ſome of thoſe, who joined *David*, furniſhes Mr. *B.* with an occaſion of flouriſhing away, and letting the world know, in how odious a light he could, if he pleaſed, ſet the conduct of *David*, for putting himſelf at the head of ſuch a body of men. *With what infamous names*, ſays he, *would not the* Syrians *have loaded that troop of adventurers, who went to join him, after he had retired from* Saul's *court? All that were perſecuted by their creditors, all the diſcontented, and all who were in bad circumſtances repaired to him.* I ſuppoſe he thinks, they would have complimented them with the honourable titles of *a parcel of banditti, a gang of ruffians, deſperadoes, vagrants, and the out-caſts of their country*; as ſome of our modern hiſtorians chuſe to do. But could Mr. *B.* be ſure of this? Why may we not ſuppoſe, that they would have ſpoken of them in a more favourable manner; as the words *, by which they are deſcribed, by no means

* איש מצוק. *The man in ſtraits, or difficulties.* Πας ὁ αναγκη, as the 70″. *qui erant in auguſtia conſtituti*, as the vulg. The *Hebrew* word denotes, ſuch ſtraits and difficulties, as the beſt and worthieſt men may be in. Thus the Pſalmiſt ſays of himſelf: צר ומצוק מצאוני. Pſ. cxix. 143. *Trouble and anguiſh have found me.* And he elſewhere prays: Pſ. xxv. 17. *O bring thou me* ממצוקותי, *out of my diſtreſſes.* Mr. *B.* confines the expreſſion to ſignify *perſons of diſtreſſed, or broken fortunes.* Tous ceux qui *etoient tres mal dans leurs affairs.* They may be included, but the deſcription is by no means to be confined to them; but extended to any other diſtreſſes, that might make men weary of their condition, and glad to exchange it, in hopes of mending it by adhering to the fortunes of *David.* In like manner: *Every one that was in debt.* איש אשר לו נשא. *The man that hath a creditor*, an exacting, cruel, *biting creditor.* It was provided by the law, that if any one lent money to any of his poor brethren, he ſhould not be to him כנשך *as an uſurer*, i. e. as it is immediately explained: *Thou ſhalt not lay upon him*

means neceſſitate us to think, that they were men of ſuch abandoned and infamous characters. I appeal to every man of candor, whether becauſe men are oppreſſed, cruelly treated by avaricious creditors, and diſcontented with the meaſures of an arbitrary ſanguinary prince, they all deſerve, merely, on that account, to be loaded with theſe vile and ſcandalous appellations? Undoubtedly, ſome of them were, like thoſe of all other troops, wicked and profligate enough; but their whole conduct ſhews them generally to have been of a quite contrary character, and men every way reſpectable for their rank, ſobriety, good order, and readineſs to engage in every kind and uſeful ſervice whatſoever, and to ſubmit to every appointment of juſtice and equity *.

The captains, that *David* had under him, were men of great experience and character, and *David* himſelf was known to be a man zealous in the religion

him נשך *biting uſury*, as the word properly ſignifies; the root from whence it comes originally ſignifying *to bite*. The *Jews* were exceedingly criminal in this reſpect; frequently uſing their debtors with great ſeverity; taking away their lands and vineyards, and bringing into ſlavery their ſons and daughters, in expreſs violation of the laws of God. So that the man who is in debt is properly one, who is cruelly and illegally oppreſſed by an avaricious and unmerciful creditor. And finally, the מר נפש *the diſcontented* perſon, by no means ſignifies, a perſon of an uneaſy, turbulent, ſeditious ſpirit, but one greatly troubled in heart by very grievous and undeſerved, or providential afflictions; and is rendered by the 70" πας κατωδυνος τη ψυχη. *Every one grieved in his ſoul.* 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Thus all *David*'s people were מרה נפש *bitter of ſpirit*, extreamly diſtreſſed and grieved for the loſs of their wives and children. Thus *Job* complains, *Job* xxvii. 2. שדי המר נפשי *The Almighty hath embittered my ſoul.* And in other places. I add, that the words are never uſed to ſignify *banditti, ruffians, and out-caſts of their country*, as ſuch.

* After *David* had recovered from the *Amalekites* the booty they had taken from *Ziglag*, ſome of his profligate ſoldiers, who

ligion of his forefathers. The two hundred, that came to him from the tribes of *Benjamin* and *Judah*, appear to have been veteran ſoldiers, and not of the number of thoſe who joined him, becauſe they were in debt, or circumſtances of diſtreſs; as they went to him under the command of their ſeveral leaders; and on the whole, it ſhould be proved, from their behaviour, that they deſerved to be loaded with infamous names; or elſe the inſinuation, that they deſerved them, will be uncandid and injurious.

But ſuppoſing them to be as bad as Mr. *B.* repreſents them, men loaded with debts, of broken fortunes, and factious diſcontented perſons; with what commendation and wonder would the *Syrians* have ſpoken of them, and *David* their captain, when they found that ſuch perſons, under *David*'s command, were kept in the moſt exact diſcipline and order; never allowed to plunder their fellow ſubjects, nor engaged in any one ſingle action, in oppoſition to the public welfare and peace; but on the contrary, employed in the moſt friendly and beneficent private ſervices, in defence of their country, and repelling the enemies that had beſieged and plundered their cities, and carried away all the inhabitants into captivity. For they were guards to *Nabal*'s flocks, and ſervants, from the vagrant plundering *Arabians*, they beat the *Philiſtines* at the ſiege of *Keilah*, they deſtroyed the hords of the *Geſhurites*, *Gezrites*, and *Amalekites*, and after this another party of the *Amalekites*, and recovered all the priſoners and booty they had taken from *Ziglag*. What infamous names did theſe

who were with him in the expedition, refuſed to give ought of the ſpoil they had recovered to the two hundred who ſtaid behind. But *David* immediatly ſilenced them, by plainly telling them: *You ſhall not do thus, my brethren. And who will hearken*

these adventurers deserve, and would have been loaded with by the *Syrians*, had they known their exploits, and given the real character of them! *

to you in this matter? I will not suffer this injustice, nor will the rest of my companions support you in so unreasonable a demand; an evident proof of *David*'s absolute command over all his soldiers, and that the number of these bad men was but small in comparison of the others, and had neither power or influence enough to support a measure, that had so manifest an appearance of partiality and wickedness. 1 Sam. xxx. 22.—24.

* Mr. *B.* is of opinion, that *nothing is capable of being more maliciously represented than a thing of this kind, and that those, who have written the history of* Catiline *and* Cæsar, *would furnish a satyrical painter with a great many colours*; he means, I suppose, to give the portrait of *David*, and shew the resemblance he bears to those two infamous wretches, who attempted to subvert the government, and destroy the liberties of the *Roman* people; the one perishing in the attempt, and the other impiously succeeding in it. But what one feature is there, in which *David* resembles either of those two execrable traitors to their country? The few forces he had were for self-defence only; theirs were raised by all the methods of villainy, to repair those fortunes, which they had dissipated by their crimes, and gratify their revenge and ambition, in defiance of all laws human and divine. Catilinam *luxuria primum, tum hinc conflata egestas rei familiaris, simul occasio—in nefaria consilia opprimendæ patriæ suæ compulere; senatum confodere, consules trucidare, distringere incendiis urbem, diripere ærarium, totam denique rempublicam funditus tollere.* Flor. *l.* iv. *c.* 1. *Init.* *David* employed his men in the most useful services to the public, and to private persons; they, in murthering and destroying their fellow subjects. *David*, for the most part, kept himself and his men in rocks and caves in the wilderness, to avoid giving any suspicion of his intention to disturb the quiet of the king, or engaging in any rebellion against him; and at last fled his country, when he could not stay any longer in it with safety, or could not secure himself without repelling force by force; they ravaged provinces, and involved their country in all the calamities of a civil war. Never were portraits and characters more utterly unlike, than that of *David*, compared with *Catiline*'s and *Cæsar*'s; and tho' Mr. *B.* did what he could to set the satyrical painters on work, to draw the resemblance in this instance, and hath, in fact, excited one or more to attempt the performance; yet there is not a single line in which they are made to agree, that doth not evidently appear to have been drawn by the partial hands of misrepresentation and fiction.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The charge of rebellion against David *considered.*

NOTHING therefore can be a more undeſerved and injurious charge, than what has been thrown on *David*, for his receiving theſe troops, and keeping them about him for the ſecurity of his perſon; *viz.* that *thinking it high time to avow his deſign of diſputing the crown openly with* Saul, *he went to the cave of* Adullam, *which he appointed the place of rendezvous for his partiſans, and that here he opened his rebellion, by heading this party of banditti.* But I do not find, that the real hiſtory any where informs us, how this place of his retreat came to be found out. However, it was impoſſible that ſuch an affair could be long concealed, as *David* was well known, and *Saul* ever upon the hunt to find him; and as probably *Saul* and *David* had each their friends, to give the proper intelligences concerning them. But the ſuppoſition, that *David* himſelf appointed this cave of *Adullam*, as the place of his followers rendezvous, is of all other the moſt improbable. When *David* fled from *Nob*, and retired to *Achiſh*, he was almoſt alone, and afterwards could have very few attendants with him, when he retired to the cave. Where had he then the meſſengers to ſend abroad into all the tribes of *Iſrael*, to give them notice? Muſt they not have been diſcovered, if he could have found out a ſufficient number for this purpoſe? How did he know that the oppreſſed, the debtors, and diſcontented, would join him? How could they be his partiſans before ever he had inliſted them, or they had declared for and joined him? Or how could he appoint thoſe, who never had been his partiſans, to meet

meet him as his partisans in the cave of *Adullam?* *David* doth not appear to have had any considerable numbers about him, or that declared for him, till his retreat to *Adullam*; and many of them that joined him there, did it freely and unsolicited by *David*; and were suspected by him, at first, as coming with a treacherous design to apprehend and deliver him up to *Saul.*

But not to insist on this, it is more material to inquire, whether *David* was guilty of rebellion against *Saul*, by receiving these people when they resorted to him, and putting himself at their head. The history, and the facts recorded in it, must determine this.

The first thing he did, after he had obtained this guard to his person, was to take care of his father and mother, and place them out of the reach of *Saul*'s resentment. This was an instance of great filial piety and affection to them, but not of rebellion against his prince. In order to this, he went in person to the king of *Moab*, and intreated his protection for them; saying to him: *Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me*: An expression, that certainly means nothing else, but till he knew how God in his providence would dispose of him, and what measures he would direct him to take for the security of himself, his family, and followers; and to interpret it so as to signify, *till he knew what would be the event of his enterprise*, or rebellion against *Saul*, is such an invidious interpretation, as *David*'s whole conduct is an effectual confutation of; for that he never intended to rebel, may be most certainly concluded, from his never committing one act of hostility against him, nor, in a single instance, ever disputing in arms the crown with him, or endeavouring to deprive him of it, or take

take away his life, even when he had it absolutely in his power. And here Mr. *B.* doth him justice; for he says: *It is false, that* David *ever made any attempt, either on the life or crown of* Saul.*

If what hath been asserted is true, that *Saul had only the shew of an election*, he had no real election to the crown at all, and therefore was not the rightful king of *Israel*; and tho', in order to invalidate *David*'s title to it, 'tis urged, that *he had no pretension to the sovereignty, either by right of inheritance, or popular election*; yet *Saul* himself was just in the same condition, without any right of inheritance, and with only the shew of a popular election. And if, as it is objected, David *was appointed only by the clandestine management of an old* Levite, *Saul* also, it hath been affirmed, was appointed by the like clandestine management of the same old *Levite*. So that as *Saul* and *David* had, thus far, the same right to the crown, *i. e.* neither of them in reality any right at all;

* The judgment which *Grotius* passes on *David*, when the company gathered to him at *Adullam*, deserves to be regarded. David, *qui extra pauca facta, testimonium habet vitæ secundum leges exactæ, armatos circum se primum quadringentos, deinde plures aliquanto habuit. Quo, nisi ad vim arcendam, si inferretur? Sed simul illud notandum est, non factum id a* Davide, *nisi postquam et* Jonathanis *indicio, et pluribus aliis certissimis argumentis compererat,* Saulum *vitæ suæ imminere. Deinde vero nec urbes invadit, nec pugnandi captat occasiones, sed latebras quærit, modo in locis deviis, modo apud populos externos; et hac religione, ut popularibus suis numquam noceat. De jure* B. *et* P. *l.* 3. *c.* iv. §. 7. *paragr.* 4. *David*, who, except a few instances, was very observant of the law, had about him at first four hundred armed persons, and afterwards a somewhat greater number. For what? To repel any force that might be offered him. But then it is to be remarked, that *David* did not do this, till he found out by *Jonathan*'s information, and many other most certain proofs, that *Saul* was determined to have his life. Besides, he invaded no cities, took no opportunities for fighting, but went into lurking holes, inaccessible places, and foreign nations; religiously abstaining from injuring his countrymen; and, let me also add, from doing any hurt to *Saul*, and disturbing his government.

it

it was equal rebellion in *Saul* to oppose *David*, as in *David* to oppose *Saul*; and *David* had as good a right to dispute the title of *Saul* and his family to the kingdom, as *Saul* had to dispute *David*'s; and therefore, by this way of reasoning, *David* is at once exculpated from the charge of rebellion against *Saul*. It is true, that *Saul* was afterwards confirmed in the kingdom at *Gilgal*; but then it was upon the supposition, that he had been, not in shew only, but in fact, fairly and honestly elected to it.

But allowing *Saul* to be king *de jure*, as well as *de facto*, *David* acted solely upon the principle of self-preservation and defence; never opposed or disturbed the quiet of *Saul*'s government; never sollicited the tribes to join him during his life, or excited a spirit of discontent and rebellion, or popular commotions against him; never entered into any conspiracy to dethrone him; never attacked his army; never by force levied contributions upon his subjects to support him; never joined the enemies of his country to invade it; never disputed any of his reasonable commands, but served him faithfully whilst he employed him; never deserted him, or provided himself with guards, till forced to it by the unrelenting jealousy and rage of his unhappy persecutor; never took any advantage that was put into his hands, to seize his person, or destroy him; but, in the whole of his conduct, behaved with all the submission that became him as a dutiful son-in-law to his father, and a good subject to his prince. Now, as a faithful subject, he had a natural right to protection, and secure himself from the violence of a tyrant, by any just and prudent measures within his power.

Besides, it should be farther observed, that supposing *Saul*'s title to be valid, as I think it was, his

his continuing to poſſeſs the kingdom, or at leaſt to retain it in his family, was conditional, and expreſly made to depend upon his good behaviour; and in particular, upon his continued obedience to the commands of God. *Saul* once and again broke through the conditions of his being eſtabliſhed king over *Iſrael*, ſubjected himſelf to depoſition, was actually deprived by God of the ſucceſſion in his family; and *David* acted right in oppoſing him, ſo far as was neceſſary to vindicate his own title, and ſecure to himſelf the ſucceſſion to the throne of *Iſrael*, which God had promiſed him after *Saul*'s deceaſe. Yea, if *Saul* had attacked *David*, in order to have deſtroyed him, and *David* could not have ſaved himſelf but by deſtroying *Saul*; all juſt laws, human and divine, would have vindicated him in taking the proper meaſures for his own ſafety, how fatal ſoever it might have proved to the arbitrary and cruel aggreſſor. And I believe, ſhould any innocent and worthy man, in defence of his life, privileges, and rights, be forced to cut off a tyrant, that ſhould attempt to murder him; every man of courage, every friend of liberty, would vindicate the action, as brave and manly; and commend him as a hero for his public ſpirit and reſolution. But *David* kept from every thing of this nature, and was ſo far from being a rebel to his prince, as that he would not oppoſe or hurt him, when he had him in his power, and when he was actually purſuing him to his deſtruction.

But I will yet farther exculpate *David* from the charge of endeavouring to diſpute the crown with *Saul*, and raiſing a rebellion againſt him, by the moſt indiſputable evidence. Let *David* in the firſt place ſpeak for himſelf; for his evidence and apology ought to be taken at an impartial tribunal; eſpecially, as he appeals to two perſons, who

muſt

must have known, whether what he appeals to them for is true; and who, if they had known it false, could, and would have contradicted it. To *Jonathan*, his friend, he appeals *: *What have I done? What is mine iniquity, and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? Notwithstanding if there be any iniquity in me, slay me thy self, for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?* With a like noble confidence of his innocence, he says to *Saul* himself, after he was at the head of the four hundred or six hundred men †. *Wherefore hearest thou mens words, saying, behold* David *seeketh thy hurt? See, my father, yea, see the skirt of thy robe, in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor* ‡ *rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou hunteſt my soul to take it*; and as the next words should be rendered, *the Lord shall judge between me and thee, and the Lord shall avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be upon thee. The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand*; hereby appealing solemnly to God for his innocence, and declaring, that he only hoped that God would deliver him from *Saul*, as that appeal was founded on truth. There were, 'tis true, in those days evil-minded persons, who, when *David* put himself at the head of his followers, and was surrounded with his guard, insinuated

* 1 Sam. xx. 1.—8. † Ibid. xxiv. 9.—11.

‡ פשע. The verb, in the original, signifies, *defecit, rebellavit*, to revolt and rebel. Thus it is rendered; Moab *rebelled against* Israel. 2 *Kings* i. 1.—3. 5. 7. And Edom *revolted from the hand of* Judah. Hence the substantive is rendered in our translation by *rebellion*. For *he addeth rebellion to his sin*. Job xxxiv. 37. and this is the proper governing sense of the word.

that

that he was a rebel, aimed at *Saul*'s crown, and had a design on his life. But *David*, and what is much more, *David*'s whole conduct towards *Saul*, gave them the lie, and he is not afraid to appeal to *Saul* himself for his innocence. For afterwards, upon a like occasion, he says to him §: *Wherefore doth my Lord thus pursue after his servants? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand?* My reader will observe, that both these appeals to *Saul* were made after, what *David* hath been charged with, his *manifestation of hostile intentions, or his declaration of war against* Saul; and *his openly avowing his design of disputing the crown with him, and opening his rebellion by heading a parcel of banditti.*

But what credit, it may be asked, is to be given to these protestations of *David?* I desire thee not, reader, to credit *David* upon his own word, tho' his protestation hath every circumstance of probability and truth to support it. Hear the most unexceptionable testimonies to his innocence; testimonies, that malice itself shall not be able to except against. *Jonathan* *, in order to bring about a reconciliation between his father and his friend, tells his father: *Let not the king sin against his servant* David, *because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee wards very good. Wherefore wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay* David *without a cause?* And in order to pacify his father, who told him *David* should die, he said to him again †: *Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?* Can there be a nobler vindication of *David*'s past innocence and integrity?

But *Jonathan*, it may be said, was partial to his friend. Wilt thou then, reader, believe *Saul*

§ 1 Sam. xxvi. 18. * Ibid xix. 4—6. † Ibid xx. 2.

himself?

himſelf? He ſhall teſtify in favour of *David*'s innocence. Upon the occaſion of *David*'s ſparing *Saul*'s life in a cave at *Engedi*, and aſſuring him that he neither intended to hurt him, or rebel againſt him, *Saul*, from the ſtrongeſt conviction of his innocence, that it was impoſſible for him to reſiſt, ſays to him ‡: *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil, and thou haſt ſhewed me this day, how that thou haſt dealt well with me, foraſmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou haſt done me good this day.* He was aſtoniſhed at *David*'s noble generoſity, extols it as an unknown and unparalelled inſtance of greatneſs and goodneſs of mind; and, as overcome by it himſelf, wiſhes that God may recompence it with his bleſſing. And, upon another like occaſion, when *David* appeals to him †: *What have I done, or what evil is in mine hand? Saul* acknowleges: *I have ſinned. Return, my ſon* David, *for I will no more do thee harm, becauſe my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly*; and then ſays: *Bleſſed be thou my ſon* David. *Thou ſhalt prevail.*

How fair an opportunity, on theſe occaſions, had *Saul* to reproach him with ingratitude, treachery, treaſon, intreaguing with the prieſts, declaring war againſt him, diſputing the crown with him, and opening his rebellion, by heading a parcel of banditti, had he known him, or thought him to be guilty of theſe crimes? Yea, had he not had the fulleſt conviction that he was guilty of none of them? For *Saul* himſelf confeſſes his innocence, condemns himſelf for in-

‡ 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. 18. 19. † Ibid xxvi. 18. 21. 25.

gratitude

gratitude, wickedness and folly, repeatedly and solemnly justifies *David*'s conduct, and prays to God to reward him for his goodness.

When *David* had put his father and mother under the protection of the king of *Moab*, he removed from the cave of *Adullam* ‡, by the advice of *Gad* the prophet, into the forest of *Hareth*, who, as some think, *no doubt hoped, that as the young adventurer was of that tribe, he would there meet with considerable reinforcement.* But this suspicion is groundless, as the cave of § *Adullam*, where the principal part of his followers came to him, was itself in the tribe of *Judah*, as well as the forest of *Hareth* ‖, where there is no intimation that any fresh recruits ever joined him. It was undoubtedly natural to think, that *David* would be more safe in his own tribe, than in any other, and in a thick forest, than in a cave; and safety was all that he wanted, or God intended him before the death of *Saul*; and not any reinforcements to support an insurrection against him, in order to dispossess him of his crown, or take away his life. As the men he had with him were all volunteers, as for any thing that appears to the contrary, and must be so from the character given of them, and the situation in which *David* was, when they first came to him; there is not one instance to be produced of his attempting to levy forces, or travelling from tribe to tribe, or sending letters or messengers to them, to raise an army in opposition to the king; and *David* himself declares to *Abishai*, that he would not hurt him, as he was the Lord's anointed *; *till his day should come to die.*

‡ 1 Sam. xxii. 5. § 1 Chron. xii. 8. 16. ‖ *Reland*, p. 480. *Cleric. in loc.* * 1 Sam. xxvi. x.

The reason of *Gad*'s advising him to go into the forest of *Judah*, from the strong hold of *Adullam*, was, I apprehend, because God intended to do him the honour of delivering one of the cities of *Israel*, out of the hand of the *Philistines* †; and therefore sent him thither, that he might be near at hand, to protect it at the proper season, from the invasion and plunder of their enemies; and this he effected, as will be presently shewn, whilst he abode with his men, in that part of the country. In this retreat he penned the following admirable hymn, which shews how well he employed his leisure hours, and how warm the piety was, with which he was animated, even amidst the numerous dangers and terrors that encompassed him.‡

1. O God, thou art my God. I will seek thee early. My soul thirsteth for thee. My flesh pines away for thee, in a dry land, and where I am faint without water:

2. That

† 1 Sam. xxiii. 3. ‡ Psalm lxiii.

Ver 1. *I will seek thee early.* To seek God is to address him by supplication and thanksgiving, and as our safety by night should be acknowleged by the sacrifice of praise, so should our protection through the day be humbly sought after by serious prayer every morning.

Ibid. *My soul thirsteth for thee.* i. e. eagerly desires to aproach thee. *Thirsting*, in all languages, is frequently used for earnestly longing after, or passionately wishing for any thing. *Famæ sitiens.* Sil. Ital. l. 3. v. 578. *Honores sitit.* Cicer. *ad Q. Frat.* l. 1. *Ep.* 5. *Virtutis suæ sitientem. Id pro* Plan. *c.* xiii.

Ibid. *My flesh longeth for thee.* The verb כמה is used only in this place, and therefore the signification of it is rather uncertain; but will receive light from the *Arabic* dialect. In *Golius*'s Lexicon it signifies, *caligavit oculus, alteratus colore, et mente debilitatus fuit.* His eye grew dim, his colour was changed, and his mind weakned; and therefore, as used by the psalmist, implies

2. That so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary, I may behold thy power and thy glory.

3. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4. Thus will I bless thee, whilst I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5. My

implies, the utmost intenseness and fervency of desire; as tho' it almost impaired his sight, altered the very hue of his body, and even injured his understanding; effects oftentimes of eager and unsatisfied desires.

Ibid. *In a dry and thirsty land.* בארץ ציה ועיף. Father *Houbigant*, and some other critics, are for altering בארץ into כארץ *My soul thirsteth for thee*, not *in a dry land*, but, *as a dry land*, that is figuratively said to thirst for water, when it wants rain. But *David* describes his own eager desire to approach God's sanctuary, by the figurative expression of thirsting himself, and not by barren lands thirsting for, or desiring water; and the reading of the text is genuine, as he represents his present situation, which was in a dry and thirsty wilderness. It should be farther observed, that our version, and that of many others, is wrong, who make *the dry and thirsty*, both epithets of *the land*; for ארץ is of the feminine gender, and the word ציה *dry*, which immediately follows it. But the ensuing word עיף *thirsty*, is in the masculine, and belongs to *David* himself, and should be rendered: *Where I am thirsty without water.* He experienced the vehemency of thirst, in a wilderness, where he could get no supply of water, and by that sensation expresses the vehemence and impatience of his own mind, to be restored to the worship of God. We may also take notice, that עיף signifies such a degree of thirst, as renders the head giddy, and makes persons ready to faint thro' the excess of it.

2. *To see thy power and thy glory.* *Jarchi*'s remark here is pertinent: The meaning, says he, is: I have thirsted to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the holy tabernacle in *Shilo*, where my soul was satisfied with the vision of thy power and glory. The psalmist refers here to the cloud and glory, that he had seen in the tabernacle and ark, which were the peculiar emblems of the divine majesty and glory.

4. *In thy name will I lift up my hands.* Lifting up the hands was a posture, or action of adoration, in prayer and thanksgiving, or taking of an oath. Thus Abraham: *I have lift up my hands unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and*

5. My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with exulting lips;

6. When I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the *night* watches.

7. For thou hast been my help, and I will exult under the shadow of thy wings.

8. My soul follows closely after thee, for thy right hand hath sustained me.

9. But they shall be for destruction who seek my life. They shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.

10. Their

of earth. i. e. I have solemnly sworn by him. Gen. xiv. 22. *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.* Ps. cxxxiv. 2. The same practice obtained amongst the heathen.

——— Oculos ad sidera lætus
Extulit, et cœlo palmas cum voce tetendit:
Jupiter omnipotens, precibus si flectteris ullis,
Aspice nos.——— Virg. *Æn.* 2.

And the psalmist means, by *lifting up his hands in the name of God,* that he would, in the most solemn manner, pay his adoration to him, and render him the most grateful acknowledgements for his benefits, as the only living and true God.

8. *My Soul followeth hard after thee.* דבקה אחריך. The primary sense of דבק is *agglutinavit,* to glue together; from thence it signifies figuratively to *associate,* to adhere to, and be united with; and particularly to be firmly united with strong affection. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother,* ודבק באשתו, *and cleave to his wife;* properly, be closely united and compacted with his wife, with the most permanent affection. Gen. ii. 24. The psalmist therefore means, that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifices of praise in his sanctuary.

9. *But those, who seek my life to destroy to it, shall go down to the lower parts of the earth.* Thus our version; closely connecting both parts of the verse. I rather think there are two distinct parts in it, as there are in all the other verses, and that the rendering should be: *They shall be for destruction who seek my life. They shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.* The original word שואה hath a very strong significant meaning, and denotes the being violently torn to-

10 Their blood ſhall guſh out by the edge of the ſword, they ſhall be a portion for the foxes.

11. Then the king ſhall rejoice in God, every one that ſwears by him ſhall glory. But the mouth of thoſe who ſpeak falſehood ſhall be ſtopped.

CHAP.

to pieces, and utterly ruined, as to fortune, every thing valuable in life, and even life itſelf. See Schul. *in Prov.* i. 27. This *David* predicts ſhould be the portion of thoſe, who ſought his life to deſtroy it. And he lived to ſee it verified in *Saul*, and other of his enemies. When he adds, that *they ſhall go into the lower parts of the earth*, he means, that they themſelves ſhould be deſtroyed, and brought down to the grave who ſought his deſtruction.

10. *They ſhall fall by the ſword.* יגירהו על ידי חרב. The original word נגר the learned Schultens, *de Defect. Ling. Heb.* p. 66. hath ſhewn, properly to ſignify *the boiling of water in a pot, when through the violence of the heat it is thrown out of it*; and from hence figuratively denotes, the burſting or boiling out of the blood from the wound of a ſword, or any other deadly inſtrument. *Virgil* hath, in a very lively manner, by another almoſt ſimilar word expreſſed it.

Tum caput ipſi aufert domino, truncumque reliquit
Sanguine ſingultantem. *Æn.* ix. v. 332. 333.

One almoſt ſees the blood ſobbing, as it were, and guſhing out from the headleſs body The expreſſion, as uſed by the pſalmiſt, denotes, that they ſhould die a violent death, and their blood ſhould be ſpilt by the edge of the ſword.

Ibid. *They ſhall be a portion for the foxes*; i. e. be left unburied, and as a prey to ravenous beaſts. The learned *Bochart* hath ſhewn, that foxes preyed upon dead bodies. *Hier. part* 1. c. xiii.

11. *But the king ſhall rejoice in God.* David was king by deſignation, and being anointed, when he was in the wilderneſs of *Judah*; but had not then taken the title, and was not advanced to the throne. Hence Mr. *Le Clerc* and others think, that this pſalm could not be wrote by him, when he ſojourned in the wilderneſs. But I apprehend this objection is but of little force; for all that he affirms is, that when all his enemies ſhould be deſtroyed, then the king ſhould rejoice in God; ſpeaking of himſelf undoubtedly, but not of what he

CHAP. IX.

The massacre of the priests by Saul.

IT was not long after *David*'s sheltering himself in this forest, that *Saul* discovered where he and his attendants were, and, as we are told, *when he heard of* David's *insurrection, pathetically laments his misfortune to those about him, that they, and even his son* Jonathan, *should conspire against him.* But this very pathetic complaint shews, that it was very unreasonable and causeless. For the history says, that Saul *was in* Gibeah, *and all his servants standing about him* †. And *Saul* said unto his servants: *Will the son of* Jesse *give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you captains*

now was, but should then be, when God had delivered him from those who sought his life.

Ibid. *Every one that swears by him shall glory.* An oath is an immediate appeal, and solemn act of worship to God; and therefore swearing by God means, the invoking his name, the worshiping him, and making him the object of religious reverence and fear.

The beginning of this psalm evidently shews, that *David* was, when he wrote it, in a wilderness, or desert country, 1 *Sam.* xxii. 5. probably the forest of *Hareth*, or *Ziph*, belonging to *Judah*; absent from the sanctuary; for he therein expresses the impatience of his desire to be restored to the solemnity of divine worship, and resolves, when God grants him that satisfaction, that he would continually employ himself in celebrating his loving kindness. v. 3. 4. This he tells us, would be to him a more grateful entertainment, than the richest feast. ver. 5. should employ his waking hours in the watches of the night. ver. 6. and confirm his pleasing trust and confidence in the divine protection. ver. 7. And, from his adherence to God, and past experience of his favour, he assures himself of the disappointment and destruction of his enemies, but that himself, and all who feared God, should rejoice in his salvation, ver, 8——11.

† 1 Sam. xxii. 6.

of

of thousands, and captains of hundreds‡, *that all of you have conspired against me; and there is none that sheweth me, that my son hath made a league with the son of* Jesse; *and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait as at this day.* If this complaint was true, *Saul* must have been an exceeding bad master, to be so intirely deserted and unpitied by his own servants, even when he had estates and preferments to give them. But what was the complaint? *That all of them had conspired against him.* How did this appear? Why, because *none of them shewed him, that his son had made a league with the son of* Jesse. And why should they shew him this, when he himself well knew it already, and needed not to be informed of it by them: For he had told his son before, that *he had chosen the son of* Jesse *to the confusion of his mother's nakedness.* He adds, as a farther matter of complaint, *that none of you is sorry for me*; and if they thought that *Jonathan*'s league with *David* was a thing right in itself, and a very happy circumstance for the kingdom in general; there was no cause why they should for this be sorry for him; and to charge them with conspiring against him for not telling him what he knew before, and for their not being grieved, on his account, for what they thought neither he nor they had any reason to be sorry for; is the most evident symptom of a disordered mind.

But what shall we say to the last part of this pathetic complaint? *There is none of you that sheweth unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day:* Why, that they could not discover what was not true in itself, and what they knew nothing of. Besides,

‡ 1 Sam. v. 8.

Saul himself confesses, that it had no other foundation than his own surmise and jealousy, and that he had received no manner of proof of it. *None of you*, says *Saul*, *shews unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait*. He had therefore no proof from any of his servants of this wickedness of his son. *Jonathan* was innocent, and his father's suspicion and complaint groundless and unjust.

There was, however, one of *Saul*'s attendants, *a man after his master's own heart*, who, when *Saul* was in this passion, inflames his resentment, by telling him: *I saw the son of* Jesse *coming to* Nob *to* Ahimelech, *and he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of* Goliah, *the* Philistine; or, as the affair hath been represented: Doeg *informed* Saul, *that he had seen* David *harboured by the priests in* Nob. But this representation is not true; for *Doeg* gave *Saul* no such account, that *the priests had harboured* David; and though by such a representation any one would imagine, that *David* stayed a considerable while in the city, and had entered into schemes with the priests that dwelt in it, and had been secreted by them, contrary to the king's prohibition; yet not one word of this is in the real history; and *Doeg* mentions only *Ahimelech* as having been applied to by *David*, and what had passed between them alone. And in like manner *Saul*, in the charge he brings against *Ahimelech*: *Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of* Jesse †? without a syllable of any other of the priests; who are introduced only to justify, in some measure, *Saul*'s massacre of them, by throwing on them the guilt of being *deeply concerned in*, what is termed, *the rebellion of* David.

† 1 Sam. xxii. 13.

But

But what was the consequence of this information of *Doeg* against *Ahimelech* the priest? A barbarity such, as many a savage would have abhorred to commit, or even to palliate and justify. Let us hear the history. *Saul* summoned *Ahimelech, and all his father's house, the priests that were in* Nob, *before him; and said to* Ahimelech: *Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of* Jesse, *in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait as at this day? Ahimelech*'s apology is such a one, as abundantly shews his innocence, and the rage and cruelty of his inhuman murtherer. *Saul*'s charge was, that *Ahimelech had conspired with* David *against him.* What proof doth he alledge? That *he had given him bread and a sword, and inquired of God for him.* What was *Ahimelech*'s vindication? *And who, amongst all thy servants, is like* David, *faithful, and the king's son in law* ‡, *and goes at thy bidding, and is honourable in thy house.* He owns he gave him bread and a sword, because he believed him to be the most faithful of all the king's servants, because he was his son-in-law, thought him now employed in an affair of consequence by him, knew him diligent in executing his orders, and that he was of the highest esteem in his family; upon which accounts 'twas impossible that he could ever be justly thought to enter into any conspiracy with him against his sovereign; and even *Saul* himself would have deeply resented it, had he refused thus to supply him, upon any other occasion.

‡ 1 Sam. xxi. 1, 2. The words סר אל משמעתך may be rendered, *who departed at thy command*; alluding to what *David* said to *Ahimelech*, when he asked him: *Why art thou alone? The king hath commanded me a business.*

As

As to the other part of the charge, his inquiring of God for him, *Abimelech* replies: *Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Be it far from me.* i. e. 'Tis only what I have often done before, and that without any suspicion or blame; as some § understand the words. But it should be observed, that the sacred historian makes no mention at all of *Abimelech*'s consulting God for *David*. 'Twas indeed what *Doeg* charged him with; but I think falsely and maliciously; only to heighten the king's resentment against the priests; and therefore the words may be very naturally so interpreted, as to imply an absolute denial of the charge. Did I then begin ‖ to inquire of God for him? I never did it before, nor did I begin to do it now. *God forbid. Let not the king impute the thing to his servant, amidst all the house of my father; for thy servant knew not any thing, small or great, in all this affair*; and therefore he could not have con-

§ In this sense *Josephus* explains them. Προφητευσαι δε ου πρωτον αυτω, αλλα ϗ πολλαχις ϗ αλλοτε τουτο πεποιηκεναι. *A. I.* l. vi. c. 12. §. 5.

‖ The words in the original are היום החלתי לשאול לו; and it should be observed, that the verb חלל we render *begin*, is frequently used almost as *an expletive*; not to denote the first beginning of an action, but the action itself, as begun and finished. Thus, *they began to smite*, means, they actually smote, *Judg.* xx. 31. And again: *The people began to commit whoredom*, i. e. actually committed it. *Num.* xxv. 1. See *Glass.* P. S. p. 350, 351. And thus in the place before us: *Did I this day begin*, i. e. Did I now, or at any time, consult for him? *Far be it from me.* That this is the real sense, I think is evident; because that oracle was never to be consulted but by the people, or the prince, and that upon public and extraordinary occasions, and never by private persons, or on private affairs. Besides, we never once read of *David*'s consulting it before this; and that he did it not now appears, in that he had taken his measures before he came to *Nob*, and because the measure he resolved on was a mistaken one, as is plain by the event, and therefore could never be dictated by the oracle upon consulting it.

sulted

ſulted God for *David* upon account of it: This vindication was honeſt and ſufficient. But what was the effect of it? A reſolution worthy the tyrant that made it. *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Ahimelech, *thou, and all thy father's houſe*; which reſolution he immediately put in execution, by ſaying to his guards, that ſtood about him: *Turn and ſlay the prieſts of the Lord.* But they had too much reverence for the God of *Iſrael* to obey ſuch an impious command, and refuſed *to put forth their hands to fall upon the prieſts of the Lord. Doeg*, however, who was an *Edomite*, inſtantly executed the order, and with a relentleſs barbarity cut the throats of fourſcore and five prieſts, and maſſacred all the men, women and children, the oxen, aſſes and ſheep, of the whole city of *Nob*, in cold blood; *Abiathar* only, one of *Ahimelech*'s ſons, eſcaping the carnage, and informing *David* of the tragedy: An execution this ſo outrageous and cruel, that had *David* ordered it, he would have been painted, and juſtly too, in the moſt horrid colours, and repreſented, as he would have well deſerved, as the *Hebrew Nero*, and a blood-thirſty tyrant.

One immediate conſequence of this bloody tragedy was, that *Saul* for ever deprived himſelf of the protection and counſel of the God of *Iſrael*, and could make no farther inquiries, whatever were the exigencies of his affairs, how he was to act in them, and what would be the event of them. For *Abiathar*, who ſucceeded his father, in the high prieſthood, having eſcaped the common maſſacre, fled to *David* with the ephod in his hand, in which was the judgment of *Urim*; becauſe when the high prieſt was cloathed with it, he gave clear and certain anſwers, when God was inquired of by him in the great affairs of ſtate. Of the want of this *Saul* himſelf was fully ſenſible; for

for just before his last fatal engagement with the *Philistines*, he *inquired of the Lord, but the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by* Urim, *nor by prophets*. The high priest was now with *David*, and the ephod transferred to him, and he had the right of inquiring of God by it, from whom he received the fullest and plainest answers for his direction, in circumstances wherein his safety and life were concerned, and in which his future prosperity depended on the wisdom and propriety of his conduct.

Upon this dreadful occasion, *David* penned the following hymn *.

1. Why glorieſt thou, O mighty man, in evil? The goodneſs of God *endureth* continually.

2. Thou art ſubtily inventing the deepeſt miſchiefs. Thy tongue *wounds* like a ſharp raſor, O thou deceitful doer.

3. Thou

* Pſalm lii.

Ver. 1. *O mighty man.* It ſeems probable that *Doeg*, after he had maſſacred the prieſts, boaſted of his loyalty to *Saul*, in having prevented the treaſonable ſchemes, which he artfully inſinuated, had been concerted by *David* and the prieſts, and that he had been liberally rewarded by *Saul* upon account of it. Now the pſalm begins by expreſſing a kind of contempt of *Doeg*. *O mighty man! Saul's* chief herdſman! Man of wonderous courage, thus to deſtroy defenceleſs and innocent men! *Boaſt no more!* Thy cruelty ſhall be amply repaid. As for me, I am out of the reach of thy malice. That *goodneſs of God*, thou reproacheſt me for truſting in, is my ſure protection, and *will follow me day by day*. Mr. *Schulten's* remarks, that גבור ſignifies in *Arabic, a proud, impious man*; a ſenſe that well ſuits the place before us. See him on *Job* xxxvi. 9.

2. *Thy tongue deviſeth miſchief, like a ſharp raſor, working deceitfully.* Thus our verſion. But I do not very well underſtand the propriety of *the tongues deviſing miſchief*, and deviſing it *like a ſharp raſor*. But we may eaſily avoid this harſh compariſon, Mr. *Le Clerc* juſtly complains of, by rendering the words: *Thou contriveſt miſchiefs with thy tongue, as with a ſharp raſor, O thou dealer in deceit.* i. e. Thou contriveſt with thy ſmooth and

3. Thou preferreſt evil to goodneſs, falſehood to ſpeaking righteouſneſs.

4. Thou loveſt all deſtructive ſpeeches, O thou deceitful tongue.

5. God alſo ſhall utterly deſtroy thee, he ſhall pluck thee up, and ſweep thee away with thy habitation, and root thee out from the land of the living.

6. This the righteous ſhall ſee, and fear, and ſhall laugh over thee, *and ſay:*

7. See

and flattering tongue, to wound the reputation and character of others, as though thou waſt cutting their throats with a ſmooth or ſharp raſor. Or much to the ſame ſenſe. *Thou contriveſt wickedneſſes. Thy tongue is like a ſharp raſor. Thou dealeſt in deceit:* Or, *O thou deceitful doer.* The conſtruction will bear either of theſe ſenſes. The comparing a ſmooth, deceitful, murtherous tongue to a ſharp raſor, is natural and lively.

4. *Thou loveſt all devouring words,* Heb. *all the words of devouring,* or deſtruction, *O thou deceitful tongue*; or repeating the verb from the foregoing clauſe: *Thou loveſt the tongue of deceit, i. e.* the deceitful tongue, *i. e.* ſuch calumnies, as are the moſt pernicious in their nature, and as may moſt effectually involve others in utter deſtruction.

5. *But God ſhall deſtroy thee for ever.* There are four words the Pſalmiſt makes uſe of to denote the utter vengeance, that awaited this deceitful and bloody wretch, all of them having a very ſtrong meaning. The firſt, יתצך from נתץ ſignifies *to pull down,* and break utterly into pieces; as when an altar, or tower is demoliſhed. *Judg.* vi. 30—viii. 9. The ſecond יהתך from the root חתה, which ſignifies *to twiſt* any thing, or *pluck it up by twiſting it round*; as trees are ſometimes twiſted up. See *Schult.* in *Prov.* vi. 27. The third יסחך from נסח which properly ſignifies, *utterly to ſweep away any thing like duſt, or chaff.* See *Gol. in voce*; and the expreſſion יסחך מאהל means, not *ſweep thee away from thy tent,* but *ſweep thee away, that thou mayſt be no longer a tent*; thy ſelf, thy family, thy fortune, ſhall be wholly and intirely ſwept away, and diſſipated for ever; to which the fourth word, שרשך, anſwers: *Eradicabit te,* he ſhall root thee out *from the land of the living.* 'Tis impoſſible words can expreſs a more intire and abſolute deſtruction.

6. *The righteous ſhall ſee, and glory over him.* The peculiar judgments of God, inflicted upon exemplary offenders, who have

7. See the man! He made not God his fortress; but trusted in the multitude of his riches. He strengthned *himself* in his insatiable passions.

8. But I *shall be* as a green olive in the house of God. I confide in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9. I

have been guilty of treachery, rapine, and murther, good men will carefully observe, and observe with awful pleasure, and thankfulness; not that they rejoice to see the punishments and miseries of mankind, in themselves considered; no person of humanity taking pleasure in the execution of the worst of criminals, as such. But as the administration of justice is always a right, and so far a pleasing thing; as such instances of God's vengeance are sometimes necessary to keep men in tolerable order; and as the cutting off such kind of incorrigible offenders prevents them from doing farther mischiefs, and is so far a public and common blessing to mankind; it was impossible, that any good man, who had seen the crimes of this treacherous and bloody *Edomite* retaliated on him by divine providence, could do otherwise than approve so righteous a retribution; and when he observed it, forbear in triumph to say, as at the next verse:

7. *Lo! This is the man, who made not God his strength.* See the fate of this haughty slanderer, and murtherer! Where are all his boasted riches and prosperity? He was too proud to place his safety in God; *but trusted in the multitude of his riches*, thinking his wealth would defend him from the punishment due to his villanies. Mr. *Schulten* renders the words יעז בהותו by, *ferociebat in vasta sua cupiditate.* He grew insolent and furious in his boundless appetite, *viz.* to heap up riches, and satisfy the malice and cruelty of his heart.

8. *But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God.* The olive-tree is an ever green, not liable to grow rotten and decay, and therefore of a very long duration. To this the Psalmist compares himself, to denote the stability and perpetuity of his prosperity, and that of his family; the olive propagating itself by fresh shoots, and being thus far, as it were, immortal. *Quadam æternitate consenescunt, proxima adoptioni virga emissa; atque ita alia arbore ex eadem juvenescente; iterumque et quotiies opus sit, ut ævis eadem oliveta constent.* Plin. *N. Hist. l.* 17. *c.* 30. *Vid.* Theophr. *Hist. Plant. l.* 4. *c.* 15. One principal part also of the happiness he promised himself was, that he should have a constant admission to the house of God, and the solemnities of his

9. I will acknowledge thee for ever, becauſe thou haſt done it: And I will wait for thy name; this will be pleaſing before thy ſaints.

CHAP. X.

David's *bravery in ſaving* Keilah *from the* Philiſtines.

NOT long after this barbarous outrage upon the prieſts, *David* was informed, that the *Philiſtines* were beſieging *Keilah*, a city in the tribe of *Judah*, and plundering the granaries and threſhing floors about the country. On this *David*, who had now the high prieſt and ephod along with him, inquired of the Lord, whether he ſhould go and ſmite the *Philiſtines?* The an-

his worſhip there, notwithſtanding he was now driven from it, by the malice of his enemies: Adding; *I truſt in the mercy of God for ever and for ever.* His promiſes ſhall never fail, nor thoſe who hate me, rejoice over me in my deſtruction.

9. *I will wait on thy name, for this is good before thy ſaints.* To *wait on God's name*, is to wait, or call upon, and expect aid from him, whoſe name is Jehovah, and who is every thing which that name implies: *This is good before the ſaints*, as they would approve his piety and devotion, and as it would tend to confirm and eſtabliſh them in their religious principles, practices and hopes.

This pſalm conſiſts of three parts. The firſt is a deſcription of *Doeg*'s character. He was one that gloried in his villainy, was fruitful in inventions to ruin others; of a ſmooth-tongue, but of an extreamly miſchievous one, who delighted in malicious charges, ſupported them by lies, and took pleaſure in acts of wickedneſs and cruelty. The ſhare he had in the murther of the prieſts is full proof of the truth of this character. The ſecond part foretels the utter ruin of himſelf, his fortune and family, and the triumph of good men, when they ſaw him made an example of divine juſtice. In the third part, the Pſalmiſt aſſures himſelf of protection and future proſperity from God; and declares, that his name and character were the ſupport of all his expectations, and that his example in praiſing God, and patiently waiting for his ſalvation, would be a pleaſing encouragement to all the ſaints.

ſwer

swer he received was: *Go and smite the* Philistines, *and save* Keilah. *David* then proposed it to his men, who seemed at first to think it was a rash and impracticable attempt. *Behold we are here afraid in* Judah; *how much more then if we come to* Keilah *against the armies of the* Philistines! *David*, to encourage and hearten them, by removing all their fears, inquired of the Lord a second time, and was answered again: *Arise, go down to* Keilah, *for I will deliver the* Philistines *into thine hands.* So *David* and his men went to *Keilah*, fought with the *Philistines*, brought away their cattle, smote them with a great slaughter, and thus saved the city and its inhabitants. And this was so brave and gallant an action, that it deserves the highest commendation. It was, as ‡ *Grotius* justly observes, an instance of his great love to his country, who, tho' proscribed as a rebel by the king, was so far from injuring his country, as that he served it at the cost of his enemies.

But it is suggested, that *David* rescued this city, *the better to support his rebellion, and from a political view of making it a garrison for himself.* I believe indeed *David* was in hopes, that after he had rescued this town from the *Philistine* army, *Saul* would not have pursued him thither, but permitted him to have remained there, without farther molesting him; as by his conquest of the *Philistines* he proved himself a friend to *Saul*'s government, and the interest of his country. He might also reasonably conclude, that the citizens who had such obligations to him, would have protected him as long as they could; at least would not have betrayed him, but in case of

‡ *Magnus amor patriæ in* Davide, *qui a rege perduellis indicatus, patriæ tamen non modò non nocet, sed et prodest, de hostico vivens.* Grot. *in loc.*

danger,

danger, given him warning of it, that he might timely have escaped it. But he could never hope to make a garrison of it, to support a rebellion, because he knew he had not men enough for the purpose, as appears from his conduct; because when he had sure information of the treachery they intended him, he abandoned the city, as not able to curb the inhabitants, and prevent their delivering him up to *Saul* as they intended.

Nor is there any ground to suspect, that David *had endeavoured to seduce the inhabitants from their loyalty to* Saul, whilst he continued with them. The history, doth not intimate any thing of such an attempt. Nor doth *David's* past conduct render it probable: as he never attempted to seize on any city or fortified place, or solicited the tribes to favour him in opposition to *Saul*. Nor is there any natural probability of the thing; because he knew the city was not capable, even with the assistance of his own soldiers, to resist the forces of *Saul*, and hold out a siege against his army. For *Saul* had called all the people together to war, to go down against *Keilah*, to besiege *David* and his men; and *David* had been certainly informed that *Saul* was coming against the city to destroy it for his sake; and he thought himself so sure of his prey, when he heard *David* was in *Keilah*, that he impiously triumphed in the thoughts of it, saying: *God hath delivered him into my hands, for he is shut up by entering into a town, that hath gates and bars.* And therefore *David* could not attempt to seduce the citizens of *Keilah* from their allegiance to *Saul*, with any view to make that city a garrison for himself; because, could he have seduced them, he knew it would not have answered his end, had he attached them ever so firmly to his interest and service.

But supposing *David* could have kept this important fortress, would it not have enabled him

to dispossess *Saul* of his kingdom; and is it not probable, that *had he gained this one city, as his strength increased, he would have concluded as many more as he could have procured, necessary for his preservation, untill he had monopolized the whole country, agreeable to the grant of* Samuel, *which would then have justified the usurpation?* How easy it is to win battles, and conquer towns and kingdoms in imagination! After *David* had the whole tribe of *Judah* on his side, actually reigned over them, and was in possession of *Hebron*, and all the other cities of that tribe; yet, in seven years and an half, he made very little progress in reducing the other tribes and their cities to his obedience; and, in all probability, would not have done it in many more by force of arms; for, even at last, it was owing to mere accident that he obtained the sovereignty over them. But that with six hundred men, and one poor fortress only, he should be able to monopolize the whole country, in *Saul*'s life time, when he had raised all the forces of *Judah* and *Israel* to suppress him, is so absurd a supposition, that I leave every one to digest it, who is able to do it.

CHAP. XI.

David's *deliverance from* Saul *in the wilderness of* Ziph.

BUT whatever use *David* might intend to make of *Keilah*, he soon found himself obliged to quit it, and departing from the town, *went*, as the text expresses it, *whithersoever he could*; i. e. to the first place of safety that he could possibly find out. This was the wilderness of *Ziph*, where he concealed himself in the natural fortresses of the rocks and mountains of that desert. Here *Saul* pursued him every day, and *David* knew that *Saul* was come out to seek his life; but God delivered him not into his hands.

In

In this expedition against *David*, *Saul* seems to have taken with him his eldest son *Jonathan*; who having intelligence that his friend *David* was concealed in a wood in the wilderness, privately went into the wood, met with David, *strengthened his hand in God*, and said to him: *Fear not, for the hand of* Saul *my father shall not find thee, and thou shalt be king over* Israel, *and I shall be next unto thee; and that also* Saul *my father knoweth.* After this, they both renewed their covenant before the Lord, and departed.

The conduct of *Jonathan*, in this remarkable transaction, appears to me truly disinterested, generous and great. He could not now be ignorant of *David*'s destination to the throne of *Israel*, by the will of God, and knew that nothing could prevent his succession to it, as God had appointed it. In such a situation how doth he act? He scorns by fraud and violence to attempt the life of the man, whom God had fixed on to be king, even in preference to himself; but seeks him out in the wilderness, where his father was hunting him to destruction, and *strengthened his hand in God*; not by money, forces, or any military aid; not by promising to assist him in dispossessing his father of his kingdom, or disturbing and distressing his government; not by entering into any conspiracy or plot with him against his father's interest and honour; of which there is not the least probability, nor a single intimation in the scripture history; but by comforting him under his cruel persecution, and assuring him of God's protection from the hand or power of his father, his future advancement to the crown, and of his own confidence in *David*'s friendship, that if he lived he should be advanced to the highest honours in his court. He lets him know also, that *Saul* his father very well knew, that *David* should be his successor; and

that *Jonathan* said the truth in this, is evident from what *Saul* himself said to *David*, but a little while after †: *I know well, that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of* Israel *shall be established in thine hand.*

Saul, I believe, received the first suspicion, that *David* was *that neighbour of his*, that man, *that was better than himself, to whom the Lord*, as *Samuel* told him, *had given the kingdom*, from the acclamations of the women, that David *had slain his ten thousands*; which, I suppose, brought this declaration of the prophet to his remembrance; without which, such an acclamation would scarce have so deeply affected and impressed him. This appears probable from his saying *: *And what can he have more but the kingdom?* And from what is farther added: Saul *eyed* David *from that day and forward.* This suspicion was increased by God's visibly protecting *David* from two attempts of *Saul*, to strike him with a javelin ‡; for Saul *was afraid of* David, *because the Lord was with him, and was departed from* Saul. It was farther heightened by his prudent behaviour, as captain over his regiment ‖; for *when* Saul *saw he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him*; and by the growing esteem that he had with all *Israel* and *Judah, because he went out and came in before them*; till at length the suspicion grew into a full assurance, which *Saul* owned to *Jonathan* §, when he told him: *As long as the son of* Jesse *liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom.* In this whole affair, therefore, between *Jonathan* and *David*, nothing passed but what was perfectly consistent with the allegiance and duty of these two eminent friends to their common sovereign and father; there was no treason talked; no event spoken of; but what was known

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 20. * Ibid. xxviii. 9. ‡ Ibid. ver. 12. ‖ Ibid. ver. 15. § Ibid. xx. 31.

to

to *Saul*, equally as to *Jonathan*; nor any treasonable measures concerted to precipitate and hasten the event, before the proper season for it appointed by providence; nor any covenant entered into by *Jonathan*, to engage with *David* in any common cause against his own father. Will any man of virtue affirm, that Jonathan's *strengthning* David's *hand in God*, by bidding him be of good courage, and telling him that the hand of *Saul* should not find him, was a deviation from his allegiance and filial duty? Hard, that a friend dare not encourage a friend, under a long series of undeserved sufferings, by assurances of a divine protection, without becoming a rebel, a traitor, and parricide! Will any one assert, that *Jonathan* piously engaged in the cause against his own father, because he assured *David*, he should be king over *Israel?* By the same rule, *Saul* piously engaged in the cause against himself with *David*; for he not only told him, he should be surely king, but that *the kingdom should be established in his hand*; and hereby as really strengthened his hand in God, as *Jonathan* his son did.

But did not *Jonathan* agree by covenant, that if *David* succeeded, he, *Jonathan*, was to be *a partaker of his good fortune*; or, *did not* David *covenant with* Jonathan, *that if he obtained the kingdom*, Jonathan *should be the next person in authority under him?* My bible says nothing of any such covenant between them. It tells me only what *Jonathan* said to *David* concerning his succession, and the honour he promised himself from *David*'s friendship during his reign; but says not a syllable of *David*'s engagement, and covenant with *Jonathan*, or of any mutual agreement between both, that it should be so. For after the sacred historian hath related *Jonathan*'s words to *David*, he adds: And *they two made a covenant before the Lord.* What this covenant was is no where said,

tho' it may be easily guessed, from the use of the same expression in other places†; where it certainly means only a covenant of perpetual friendship and fidelity, between themselves personally, and their respective posterity. But surely it could be no treason in *Jonathan* to enter into a new covenant or engagement with *David*, for his own security, and the preservation of his family under *David*'s reign; for if it was, then also was *Saul* guilty of treason against himself*; for he also, from the certain foresight of *David*'s succeeding him, entered into a like covenant with him, and made him swear, that *he would not cut off his seed after him, nor destroy his name out of his father's house*: An oath, which he religiously kept, as we shall see hereafter.

In reality, the representing *Jonathan* as entering into a conspiracy to dethrone his father, and engaging by covenant in the cause against him, is without any foundation in probability or truth. *David*'s succession to the crown after *Saul* was well known both to *Saul* and *Jonathan*; and the only circumstance, in which *Jonathan*'s conduct differed from his father's, was; that with respect to an event, which both of them equally foresaw would certainly come to pass, *Jonathan* was for quietly submitting to it, as an appointment of God; whilst *Saul* was for moving earth and hell, if possible, to prevent it.

In a word, *Jonathan* was so far from being a private rebel and traitor against his father, that he shewed himself most affectionately concerned for his honour whilst he lived, and gallantly died fighting in defence of him against the common enemies of their country; and *Saul*'s affectionate regard to him is abundantly evident, in that his implacable hatred to *David* was principally occa-

† 1 Sam. xxviii. 3.—xx. 16. * Ibid. xxiv. 21.

sioned

ſioned by the apprehenſion that, if he lived, *Jonathan* would never ſucceed to the kingdom after himſelf. So true is it what *David* ſays of them upon their death: * *Saul* and *Jonathan, were beloved by, and dear to each other, whilſt they lived; and in their death they were not divided.*

Upon the whole, the friendſhip of theſe two noble perſons, as it was warm and conſtant, was founded on principles of the trueſt honour, and thoroghly conſiſtent with all the obligations of religion and virtue.

Fortunati ambo! Siquid mea carmina poſſunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo.
Virgil *Æn.* 9.

David had not long been concealed in this wilderneſs, but *Saul* ‡ had intelligence of it from the *Ziphites*, who promiſed to do every thing in their power to deliver him into the king's hand. *Saul* piouſly bleſſes them in the name of the Lord for their compaſſion to him, and bids them watch his motions, that *Saul* might the more eaſily find him, when he came with his forces to apprehend him. He accordingly purſued him, firſt to the ſtrong holds in the wood, on the hill of *Hachilah*; and as *David* had altered his ſituation, and gone down to the wilderneſs of *Maon*, *Saul* followed him thither, beſet the mountain, where he was concealed, on all ſides, ſo that *David* was in the utmoſt danger of being taken. But, happily for him, *Saul* was called off from the purſuit, by the news of a freſh invaſion of his territories by the *Philiſtines*; which it was impoſſible could *be of* David's *procuring*. For as *David* had juſt before this ſmote the *Philiſtines* with a great ſlaughter at *Keilah*, and had been ever ſince wandering about from rock to rock, and from one

* 2 Sam. i. 23. ‡ Ibid. xxiii. 19.

mountain to another; he had neither opportunity nor means for exerting his dexterity to engage them to make a fresh invasion of his country, and bring them into it, just in the very nick of time, when *Saul* was on the point of seizing this hunted deer, and putting the knife to his throat. 'Tis evident from the history, that *David* knew nothing of the treachery of the *Ziphites*, and that *Saul* came upon him unawares. And after he knew that *Saul* was come after him, he was so watched by his spies, so warmly pursued by *Saul*, and so much taken up in providing a place of security for himself, and avoiding the danger that immediately threatened him, that he could not, if he would have done it, have sollicited the assistance of the *Philistines*. The supposition is utterly incredible; and if no better arguments or suppositions than these can be urged on this head, *David*'s character will never suffer by the charge of rebellion.

David was so affected with the treachery of the *Ziphites*, and his own almost miraculous escape from the danger, into which their malicious informations had brought him, that on this remarkable occasion he penned the following psalm.*

1. O Lord, save me by thy name, and judge me by thy power.

2. Hear

* Psalm liv.

Ver. 1. *Save me by thy name.* The name of God frequently denotes the attributes, or providence, or operations of God in the sacred writings; and to be saved by his name, is to be saved by the interposition of his power and goodness. Or the words may be rendered: *Save me* בשמך *because of thy name*; viz. to vindicate the honour of it, and thy truth and faithfulness in the promises thou hast made me. See *Nold.* p. 152. §. 23.

Ibid. *Judge me by thy strength*, or power, *i. e.* determine, decide my cause by thy mighty power. *Saul*, in the cause between him and *David*, was resolved to end it by force only, and to arbitrate it no other way than by a javelin, a sword, or his forces. The Psalmist well knew that *Saul*, in this respect, would be too hard for him; and therefore applies for protection and

2. Hear, O God, my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth.

3. For ſtrangers have riſen up againſt me, and violent oppreſſors ſeek after my life, who have not ſet God before them.

4. Behold, God is my helper. The Lord is among them that uphold my life.

5. He will return evil to thoſe that watch me. Cut them off according to thy truth.

6. I

and juſtice to one, whoſe power he knew was infinitely ſuperior to his adverſaries, and who, he was aſſured, could and would defend him.

3. *Strangers have riſen up againſt me.* The inhabitants of *Ziph*, the wilderneſs and mountains near it, might, very probably, as ſome think, be moſtly aliens and foreigners, under the dominion of the *Hebrews*. But it is to be remarked, that זרים *ſtrangers* are not always to be underſtood of perſons, who are ſtrangers by birth, or nation, but as to acquaintance, manners and affection; of an hoſtile diſpoſition and mind, ſtrangers as to religion, virtue, compaſſion, and humanity. Thus *David* complains: *I am become a ſtranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.* Pſ. lxix. 8. Thus Hoſea: *They have dealt treacherouſly againſt the Lord. For they have begotten ſtranger children:* Children as real ſtrangers to God, and as degenerate from all piety and goodneſs, as if born of heathen and idolatrous parents. And that this is the Pſalmiſt's meaning, appears from the following words: *Oppreſſors ſeek after my life, who have not ſet God before them.* A deſcription that well agrees with the character and conduct of theſe treacherous *Ziphites*.

4. *The Lord is with them that uphold my ſoul.* Theſe words are capable of a double ſenſe, each applicable to the context. Either, *God is with them that uphold me*, as their friend and helper, to aſſiſt and proſper them; or, *God is amongſt them*, he is one of the number of thoſe who ſupport me, and will preſerve me in ſafety.

5. *He will reward evil unto mine enemies.* לשוררי *To them, that* with an hoſtile mind *watch and obſerve me.* This was the conduct of the *Ziphites* to *David*. *Saul* bid them: *See, take knowledge of all the lurking places, where he hideth himſelf.* 1 Sam. xxiii. 23. They acted as *Saul*'s ſpies, and watched *David* to betray him to deſtruction.

6. I

6. I will sacrifice to thee voluntary oblations, I will acknowlege thy name; for this is good.

7. For he hath delivered me from every strait; and mine eye hath seen with pleasure my enemies.

6. *I will freely sacrifice to thee.* נדבה signifies *a voluntary oblation.* The children of Israel *brought a willing offering to the Lord.* Exod. xxxv. 29. Not expresly commanded them by the law; but which was purely free, and dictated only by the affection and gratitude of their hearts. And these voluntary oblations were frequently made by pious and good men, as an acknowledgement to God for peculiar and extraordinary favours.

7. *Mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemy.* A like expression we have, Ps. xcii. 12. and other places, where the words, *my desire*, are supplied by our translators, and not in the original. As the sentence: *Mine eye hath seen upon mine enemies*, seems imperfect, it hath been variously filled up. Bishop *Hare* adds, *quod volui.* Mine eye hath seen what I would, or wished. Le Clerc, *sine metu*, without any fear of them; not to mention any others. But I apprehend there is no need of any supplement, and that tho' the sentence is not quite compleat, yet the adding any supplement will take off from the force and spirit of it. 'Tis a sort of triumph over his enemies. *Mine eye looked upon them*, as we render the words. *Gen.* xxix. 32. They came near enough to be seen by me, and that was all. God kept them from coming nearer me, so that they have been disappointed of their prey. This was the very case of *David*, when *Saul* encompassed him with his troops, and by an unexpected call was obliged to abandon his prey. Or, the words may be rendered: *Mine eyes saw mine enemies*; for ראה in construction with ב is frequently so to be interpreted. Thus every one ראה בם *who sees them.* Ps. lxiv. 8. And again: *I said in my heart* ראה בטוב *Enjoy pleasure.* Eccles. ii. 1. And so in many other places. It may be observed also that ראה signifies, not only *to see*, but to *see with pleasure*, to enjoy any sight; as in the last cited place. So *Isai.* lxvi. 5. where what we render: *He shall appear to your joy* נראה בשמחתכם should have been rendered: *We shall see your joy*; i. e. see it with pleasure, and partake of it. And so the words, in the place before us, may be rendered: *Mine eye hath looked on*, or saw *with pleasure* mine enemies. I saw them at a distance, and enjoyed the sight; especially when they marched off, and left me to escape.

This psalm begins with prayer to God for his protection. The Psalmist then represents his danger from lawless oppressive men, who sought after his life. He encourages himself by faith and hope in God, and declares his resolution to render a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving to his kind preserver, who had delivered him out of all his troubles. Of the suitableness of the psalm to the occasion, every one who reads it, will be convinced. CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

David's *generosity to* Saul, *at the cave of* Engedi.

AS soon as *Saul* had repelled the *Philistines*, he returns to the pursuit of *David*; and *an unexpected accident put the life of* Saul *into the power of* David, which he generously spared: And in spite of malice itself, *David* will appear like *a man after God's own heart*, in thus suppressing every thing of an ambitious vindictive spirit, and leaving God to plead his cause against his unreasonable and implacable prosecutor. The real history is this.

Saul being informed * that *David* was in † the wilderness of *Engedi*, pursued him with three thousand souldiers, and hunted him and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats; *i. e.* very high rocks, where these creatures used to browse. As he passed by some sheepfolds that were by the way, near which he saw a cave, he went into it to *cover his feet*, *i. e.* as some think ‡, *to repose himself alone*;

* 'Tis not said in the history, who gave *Saul* this information. 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 19. The strong holds in the wood, *on the hill* of *Hachilah*, on the south of *Jeshimon*, were the possession of the *Ziphites*. But *David* and his men, when *Saul* first pursued him, were in the wilderness of *Maon*, *in the plain*, on the south of *Jeshimon*. v. 24. After this it is expresly said, that *David* went up from thence, and dwelt in the strong holds at *Engedi*. v. 29. As there is no proof that *Engedi* belonged to the *Ziphites*, 'tis not probable that the *Ziphites* informed *Saul* that *David* was there; and the history accordingly only says: 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 1. *That it was told* Saul, without any mention of his informers. So also *Josephus*. Ηκον απαγγελλοντες τινες τον Δαυιδην εν τοις Ενγεδηνοις διατριβειν οροις. Lib. vi. c. 13. §. 4.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 1. &c.

‡ There are two places cited in proof, that the expression, of *covering the feet*, means to repose one's self by sleep. But they are nothing to the purpose. As to *Eglon*, we do not find any thing about his servants supposing, that he had locked himself in the chamber to repose himself in sleep. All that they said

alone; or as others, with much more reason, explain the words, *to ease nature*. *David* and his men

said on the occasion was: *Surely he covereth his feet, in his summer-chamber*; and having tarried some considerable time, they thought he could not be such a while easing nature, and were ashamed of their having waited so long on that account. The other place is that, in which *Ruth* is said to uncover the feet of *Boaz*. *He went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn, and she came softly and uncovered his feet*; *Ruth*. iii. 4 7. or turned up the bed-cloaths from them. But surely it can never be justly said, that because uncovering the feet signifies to pull off the bed-cloaths from them, therefore covering the feet signifies going to sleep; or because uncovering my feet signifies pulling off my shoes and stockings; therefore putting them on, or covering my feet with them, signifies going to bed. But it should be farther remarked, that the expression of *Ruth*'s uncovering the feet of *Boaz* is absolutely different, in the original, from that made use of, when *Eglon* and *Saul* are said to cover their feet. Of *Eglon* it is said, מסיך, דוא את רגליו, and of *Saul*, להסך את רגליו, both the verbs being from the same root, סכך, which properly signifies *to cover*. But in *Ruth* the words are, וגלית מרגלתיו. *Thou shalt* discover, or *open the place of his feet*; or as we have it in our margin: *Lift up the cloaths, that are on his feet*. And again: ותגל מרגלתיו. *She opened the coverings of his feet*; the verb in both places being from גלה, which signifies *revelare, nudare, patefacere*; *to reveal, make naked*, or *open*. Now 'tis no inference, that because two words in *Hebrew* signify, *opening the bed-cloaths at the feet*, therefore two quite different expressions in the same language, which properly signify *to cover the feet*, must denote the taking a nap. Indeed, there is nothing in the form of the expression, that can lead us to think it means *taking repose*; the whole body being covered as well as the feet, when persons go to sleep. But it is quite natural in the other sense, of *easing nature*; the garments in the East being long and flowing, and when persons are postured for this purpose, necessarily falling down, and covering their feet. And the vulgate version accordingly renders it: *Ut purgaret ventrem*. And *Jonathan* in his paraphrase: למעבד צירכה *ad faciendum necessaria sua*. And *Josephus*: Επειγομενος υπο των κατα φυσιν, *stimulatus ad requisita naturæ*. Ant. l. 6. c. 13. §. 4.

And indeed, it is not in the least probable, that *Saul* would enter into a cave by himself, and venture to sleep there in the day time separate from his guard. This is not the manner of princes,

men were within that cave, lining both sides of it, and such was their danger, that if the least discovery had been made of them, it must have proved their intire destruction. This *David* acknowledges in a psalm, which he composed on this occasion §.

1. I will cry unto the Lord with my voice. With my voice I will make my moan to the Lord.
2. I will pour out my meditation before him. Before him I will tell my distress.

princes, and *Saul* was too eager an enemy, to waste that time in sleep, which his revenge prompted him to employ against the man, whom he furiously pursued to his destruction. 1 Sam. xxvi. 7. We find him indeed a little after this incident, fast asleep. But then it was by night, in the midst of his camp, with his general *Abner*, and his whole army surrounding him.

But will it not be difficult to account for the discourse between *David* and his men, in so quiet a recess, without *Saul*'s hearing them, and for the cutting off the skirt of his robe without his perceiving it, if *Saul* was really awake at this operation? The cave itself is described by *Josephus*, Ορα παρα την οδον σπηλαιον βαθυ καὶ κοιλον, εις πολυ καὶ μηκος ανεωγος καὶ πλατος. Ant. l. 6. c. 13. §. 4. an hollow deep cavern, widely extended in length and breadth; and therefore *David* and his companions, as they were in darkness at the farther end of the cave, might be themselves invisible to those who came into it, and yet easily, by the light at the aperture of it, see and distinguish those who entered; and as easily, with a low voice, talk to one another at the farther end, without being heard by those at the other, as the cave was very long and capacious. Nor is it at all incredible, that a skilful hand should cut off a piece of a man's garment, without his feeling it, though awake, if he be intent and thoughtful, as *Saul* must have been on this occasion, and by a man coming behind him, unthought of and unseen by him, and in a dark and gloomy cavern. There are many instances of more difficult things having been done than this. It was indeed a bold undertaking, but *David* had courage and prudence to manage such an affair, and was determined to run this hazard, to have it in his power to give his king and father the most convincing proof of his magnanimity and innocence, and that *there was no evil or rebellion against him in his hand.*

§ Psalm cxlii.

Ver. 1, 2. *I cried with my voice.* All the verbs are in the future tense, in these verses, as I have rendered them; and they express

3. When my ſpirit was oppreſſed with grief within me,
Then thou kneweſt my way.
In the path in which I walked, they ſecretly laid ſnares for me.
4. Look on my right-hand, and behold:
For there is no one that will acknowledge me.
Every refuge is periſhed from me.
There is no one that concerns himſelf for my life.
5. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I ſaid thou art my refuge.
Thou art my portion in the land of the living.
6. O

preſs *David*'s reſolution of immediately applying himſelf to God for his deliverance. The *Alexandrian* MS. reads the firſt verſe, Η φωνη μου προς τον θεον, καὶ προσεκεκραξα προς σε. *My voice is unto God, and I cried unto thee.* But as this is a needleſs diviſion of the ſentence into two parts, the common reading is preferable, eſpecially as the conſtruction will admit it, and all the verſions agree in it.

3. בהתעטף עלי רוחי. *When my ſpirit was overwhelmed within me.* The *Chaldee* renders it by באשתל היות. When my ſpirit *was tired out within me.* The 70. Εν τω εκλειπειν εξ εμου το πνευμα μου. *In deficiendo ex me ſpiritum meum,* as the Vulg. *When my ſpirit fainted from me.* עטף properly ſignifies to *cover over*, or involve one's ſelf. It is hence applied to the mind, and denotes its fainting, when involved in, or overwhelmed with trouble; ſo that the eyes fail, and are covered with darkneſs. *Pſ.* cii. 1. כי יעטף. *Quum ſe operit. metaphora. Quum triſtatur et lumen non accipit. Quod contingit iis, qui animo linquuntur. Vid.* Cocceii *lex. in voce, et* Harir. *Conſeſs. prim. per* Schult. *p.* 18. *in notis. P. Houbigant* thinks this place defective, and that it ſhould be ſupplied from the fourth verſe of the next pſalm, were we have a like complaint, but expreſſed in two diſtinct ſentences. *My ſpirit is overwhelmed within me. My heart within me is deſolate.* But ſuch additions to any claſſical poet would be juſtly thought inſtances of very bold criticiſm; and as the ſenſe and connection is compleat without the addition, it is wholly unneceſſary, and hath none of the ancient verſions to juſtify it.

4. *Look on my right hand and behold.* The ſame learned father thinks, that after *behold*, there ſhould be added שמואל *on the left*; leaſt, as he expreſſes it, the right hand ſhould miſs the left. But here we have no authority, to ſupport the addition; and Mr.

6. O regard my cry, for I am greatly exhausted: Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

7. Bring my soul out from my confinement, that I may make my acknowledgments to thy name. The righteous will crown thee *with praises* on my account, when thou hast rewarded me.

Though

Mr. *Le Clerc* justly accounts for the nature of the expression; because Seconds and Patrons stood on the right-hand of those they were to defend. Ps. xvi. 8. *Because the Lord is at my right-hand I shall not be moved.* See also *Ps.* cix. 31.—cx. 5. And these places will sufficiently obviate the good father's observation, that such an omission is without example in the sacred writers. The connection of the words is: *Look to my right-hand, and see that I have no one that knows me.*

Ib. *No man cared for my soul.* אין דורש לנפשי. The verb דרש signifies *to seek after*, studiously to persue, and with care to attend to any thing; and the Psalmist complains, and prays that God would regard it with compassion, that no one consulted his safety, nor took any care to preserve his life; for נפשי should be rendered in this, and many other places; *my life*, and not *my soul.*

7. *The righteous shall compass me about.* So our version. בי יכתרו צדקים. The *Chaldee* Par. renders the words: *The righteous on my account shall make thee a crown of praise*, referring the words to God. So also *Jarchi.* The 70. Vulg. and other versions refer them to *David: The righteous shall wait for*, or expect *me, till thou shalt reward me*; and *P. Houbigant*, by changing בי into כי renders the words: *The righteous expect till thou shalt recompense me.* Mr. *Le Clerc: The good shall encompass me, when thou shalt reward me.* I think the words refer to God, and would render them: *On my account the righteous shall encompass thee*, for the favours thou hast bountifully conferred on me. This is no unusual expression in the sacred writings. *The congregation of thy people shall compass thee about.* Ps. vii. 7. And which is to the same meaning: *I will compass thine altar, O Lord.* Ps. xxvi. 6. This is the unquestionable meaning of כתר. Thus 'tis rendered, *Ps.* xxii. 13. *The bulls of* Bashan *have beset me round.* The sense will then be; that when good men should see the kindness of God, in the favours bestowed on the Psalmist, they would bring their offerings of thanksgiving, and compass round his altar with their praises.

Every

Though *David*'s thoughts were thus religiously employed in this dangerous situation, some of his officers formed a scheme, as they imagined, that would have effectually rid him of all his fears and dangers at once. For when *David*'s men beheld *Saul* thus unguarded, they said: *Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee: Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him, as it shall seem good unto thee.* Fine opportunity this, to satiate *David*'s ambition and revenge, if he was now in actual rebellion against *Saul*, and wanted to dispossess him of his throne! But doth he seize the opportunity, and follow the advice of his soldiers? No. He only goes softly up to him,

Every part of this psalm shews the propriety of the inscription or title. He expressly mentions his being במסגר in a place where he was intirely shut up, were he saw no possible method of escaping, as having no friends that dared to own him, and appear for his deliverance, and when every one seemed to desert him, and to have abandoned all care of his safety and life. This he pathetically describes, and in such terms, as cannot fail to move the tender affections of every one who considers them. On the first sense of his danger, shut up in a cave, surrounded by three thousand chosen soldiers, closely observed by a watchful enemy, and that would spare no art or pains to apprehend him, he seems almost to have despaired of himself, declares that his spirit was quite overwhelmed with the greatness of his distress; till at length recollecting his principles, and the promises that God had made him, he earnestly supplicates the protection of God, and assures himself that he should still praise God for his deliverance, and that good men should share his joy, and encompass the altar of God with thanksgiving for the mercy that he had shewn him.

The psalm consists of three parts. The first describes to us the religious turn of his mind, in all the various distresses to which he was subject, and the most threatning evils that encompassed him. He would pour forth his supplications before God. v. 1, 2. The second part, the greatness of his danger, and the secret hope he had in that God, who saw his situation, and whom he had chosen for his portion. v. 3, 4, 5. The last part contains his earnest supplication to God to extricate him out of the cave, and give him and his friends fresh occasion for gratitude and praise:

and

and instead of cutting his throat, he only secretly cut off the skirt of his robe; and even for that *his heart smote him*, as though he had gone too far, and committed a sort of violence upon his father-in-law and king. But as to destroying him, he abhors the thought; and with indignation says: *The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord*; and thus prevented his men from destroying their common enemy. *Saul*, little thinking of the danger he had been in, soon retired from the cave, and joined his forces; when, *David*, conscious of his innocence, and trusting in the protection of his God, soon followed, and bowing down with his face to the earth, thus addressed him: "Why "wilt thou regard the accusations of those, who "irritate thee against me, and say: *Behold*, David "*seeks thy destruction?* Behold, thine eyes have "seen this day, that the Lord had put thy life in "my power this day in the cave; and some that "were with me even prompted me to kill thee. "But I spared thee, and said: I will offer no vio-"lence to my Lord, for he is the Lord's anoin-"ted. And now, my Father, see to thy full "conviction the proof of my innocence. See the "skirt of thy robe, that I now hold in my hand. "This I cut off, and with the same ease could have "taken thy life. And let this, my refusal to "destroy thee, be owned as a proof, that I have "no evil design against thee, am not guilty of "the rebellion I am charged with, and that I have "committed no crime against thee, though thou "hunteſt after my life to take it away. I appeal to "God, the righteous judge between me and thee. "To him I leave it to take vengeance on thee; "but my hand shall never avenge me. Wise and "just is that maxim of the antients: *Evil pro-*

"*ceeds from evil men.* But this charge ſhould never "be deſervedly thrown on me. For my hand "ſhall never be employed to thy deſtruction. "And indeed what motive can induce the king "of *Iſrael* thus to perſue me with his forces? "What reaſon can he have to fear me? What "more power have I to hurt thee, than a dead dog, "or a ſingle flea? Let the Lord decide our con-"troverſy, and judge between thee and me, and "let him regard and plead my cauſe, and by his "righteous ſentence deliver me out of thy hand." When *David* had ended this admirable apology, *Saul* immediatly replied: *Is this thy voice, my ſon* David? And not being able to ſuppreſs the inward emotions of his ſoul, he burſt out into a flood of tears, and wept with a loud voice; and after recovering himſelf, ſaid: *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt repaid with good the evil I have done thee, but I have returned thee evil for thy kindneſs. For thou haſt demonſtrated this day thy generoſity and goodneſs towards me, in that when God put me abſolutely into thy hands, thou didſt not kill me. For was it ever known, that any one found his enemy in his power, and permitted him to eſcape with impunity? The Lord reward thee good for the kindneſs thou haſt ſhewn to me this day. I acknowledge, and am fully perſuaded, that thou ſhalt certainly be king, and that the kingdom of* Iſrael *ſhall be eſtabliſhed in thy hand. Swear to me now therefore by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my family after my death, and that thou wilt not thereby deſtroy my name out of my father's houſe.* *David* immediately ſwore as *Saul* deſired him, and then they ſeparated; *Saul* returning home, and *David* and his men retiring to their ſtrong hold for ſecurity. This is the plain hiſtory, and is it poſſible for any one to read it, and not to acknowledge *David*'s greatneſs and generoſity of mind in this conduct?

But

Yes, this noble instance of *David*'s moderation and forbearance hath had the misfortune to have a quite different turn given to it, and his sparing *Saul*, and his behaviour upon it, hath been represented as all dissimulation and policy. 'Tis said; *This, one would imagine to have been a fine opportunity for* David *to have given a finishing stroke to his fortune, by killing* Saul, *and jumping into the throne at once, but that* David *knew better what he was about, than to act so rashly*, as to take away *Saul*'s life. Any one would have thought this *a fine opportunity*, upon reading the history, and so imagined *David*'s men, when they said to him† : *Behold the day of which the Lord said to thee : Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him, as it shall seem good unto thee.* And so imagined *Saul* himself, when he coolly and deliberately said ‡ : *Thou hast dealt well with me, for as much as when the Lord delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?* This, in *Saul*'s opinion, was inconsistent with all the rules of good politics, who would never himself have missed such an opportunity of destroying *David*.

But were there not some peculiar circumstances in *David*'s situation, that made it more conducive to his interest to spare *Saul* at this time, than to take him off? And might not *this seeming moderation be more owing to prudence and self-interest*, than real piety and virtue? This cannot be asserted, but in direct opposition to *David*'s most solemn profession, and the generous testimony of that very enemy, whom his eye and hand spared, when he had his life in his power. But *did not* David *know better what he was about, than to act so rashly*, as to kill *Saul*? If *David* could have taken him off with ease and safety, *and given hereby a finishing stroke to his fortune*, and seized at once upon the

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. ‡ Ibid. ver. 18, 19.

crown and kingdom of *Saul*; tho' the justice of such a proceeding might have been questioned, where would the rashness of it have been? And yet he certainly did know better than to do it, tho' he might have done it with the utmost safety; and if we can believe *David* himself, the reasons that restrained him were worthy a brave and generous man, a man of honour, religion, and virtue. He durst not stretch forth his hand *against his master, and the Lord's anointed.* Under these sacred characters he forgot *Saul* was his implacable enemy, and instantly sacrifices his resentment to his conscience and duty; and hereby acted with a goodness and greatness of mind, that *Saul* thought no man in the world would have done besides him. This was *Saul*'s opinion of the reasons of *Davia*'s sparing him, and he did not so much as suspect him of craft and hypocrisy.

Should it be urged, that *David* knew *he could entertain no hopes, that the* Jews *would receive for their king a man, who should embrew his hands in the blood of the Lord's anointed, and therefore he only privately cut off the skirt of* Saul's *robe, and suffered him to depart in peace:* Surely, if this be a good reason, it will hold as strongly against his rebelling against *Saul*, and by force of arms disputing the crown with him; for what reasonable hopes could he entertain, that the *Jews* would receive for their king, a man that should dare to rise up in rebellion against the Lord's anointed, and with a company of banditti and ruffians, by disputing the crown with him, endeavour to snatch it impiously from his head? Especially, as a rebellion against a prince is an actual attempt upon his life, and when successful, generally issues in his destruction.

It is true, *there is a difference in appearance, and in the feelings of mankind, when a prince falls in the common distresses of open war, and when by a private assassination; and had* David *at this time destroyed* Saul

Saul, *would not the people have looked on it as a private assassination, and been alienated from* David, *from the natural abhorrence of such a fact?* Probably they would not; for *Saul* had several times attempted privately to assassinate *David*, had declared open war against him, had vowed his destruction, was seeking his life the very moment *David* spared his, and *David* with his men was now so closely shut up in a cave, that had *Saul* known it, he could easily, and would certainly have destroyed him, and there scarce seemed any other method left of *David*'s securing himself, but this of destroying his persecutor; and if instead of saving him, he had cut him off, he might fairly have pleaded the necessity of self-preservation, and the actual attempt then openly made on his life; and the action would have lost much of its horrour, and instead of being regarded as a private assassination, it might have been allowed to have been a necessary measure of self-defence; and nothing more than a right and prudent use of an opportunity, that might never be offered again, of freeing himself from the rage and persecution of an unrighteous and implacable adversary.

Besides, this reason is a very absurd one, if what hath been asserted is true; that the prophets and the priests were all in a conspiracy with *David*, that they maintained an absolute dominion over this superstitious people, and had already anointed *David* to be king in *Saul*'s room. If then, *David* had now taken vengeance on *Saul*, and killed him, when so tempting an opportunity presented itself, he would have acted according to the clergy's inclinations and wishes, he would have had them to have justified his behaviour, and *Saul*'s unjust persecution of *David* would have given them but too fair an handle for it. *Samuel* himself, who anointed *David* to be king, who was yet alive, and for whom the people had the highest venera-

tion, if he was that crafty and imperious man, as ſome have repreſented him, would have undoubtedly been pleaſed with the event, ſupported his own choice of *David*, and by joining with the other prophets and prieſts, have perſuaded the people, who, we are told, *were bigotted to their intereſt*, and *over whom they had an abſolute aſcendant*, that it was done by order of the Lord, that *David* only executed God's vengance on *Saul*, and all would eaſily have acquieſced in their determination. Being conſcious at the ſame time, that *David was*, as well as *Saul*, *the Lord's anointed, and anointed purpoſely to ſuperſede the other Lord's anointed*, they would have readily received him, and ſubmitted to his government without any oppoſition. This muſt have been the caſe, if the prieſts and prophets were all in *David*'s intereſt, had ſuch abſolute power over the people, and acted upon no other principles but thoſe of policy and revenge; and *David* was a fool, upon all the rules of human policy and prudence, to let ſlip ſo fair an opportunity, when every circumſtance concurred to crown his ambition and utmoſt wiſhes with ſucceſs. *David* therefore in ſparing *Saul*'s life acted a truly ſelf-denying part, contrary to the maxims of human policy, and worthy the character of a man *after God's own heart*.

But would not David *and his ſmall corps have had but very little chance for eſcaping, if* Saul *had been miſſing, and if upon ſearch he had been found murthered in the cave?* I think that he would have had juſt the ſame chance for eſcaping, if he had taken *Saul* off, as he had when he came out of the cave after *Saul* had left it, and *David* was ſo near him, as to be able to ſpeak to him, ſo as that *Saul* might hear and anſwer him; for nothing could have prevented *David* from coming out of it, immediately after *Saul* had been ſlain, any more than his coming out of it, immediately after *Saul* had

taken

taken himself away. His cutting off *Saul* would rather have facilitated his escape, as he might not immediately have been missed, and as his souldiers would have been disconcerted, and in great confusion at the loss of their general and king; and as *David* could have concealed *Saul*'s body in the farther part of the cave; circumstances, which would have afforded *David* all the time for making his escape, that he could have needed or desired. But instead of taking away *Saul*'s life, he only privately cut off the skirt of his robe, and suffered him to depart in peace.

When the king was gone out from the cave, doth not David *call after him, and artfully make a merit of his forbearance, protesting his innocency; to which his being in arms was however a flat contradiction?* I should rather think, that *David*'s being in arms, and not using those arms for the destruction of an enemy, that lay at his mercy, was a demonstration, that he took up arms only for his own defence, and not with any design of rebellion against, and dethroning *Saul*; and that therefore *David*'s protestation of his innocence, and having no intention to deprive *Saul* of his crown and life, deserves belief, because it was founded in truth, and verified by the most authentick facts. An innocent man and good subject may be driven, in some cases, to the necessity of taking arms, and the taking them will be no contradiction to his innocence; unless a man's being in arms only to preserve his life, and not to oppose his prince, argues him guilty of rebellion; or unless, when a tyrant tells a man he will have his life, such a person is bound to hold out his throat to the Lord's anointed, and humbly bid him to cut it at his pleasure. *David*, and I cannot help commending him for it, did not seem to be of this opinion, and therefore kept himself in arms, and upon his defence, because he had no

other possible means of safety to his person, or securing the succession that God had given him.

What art there is in *David*'s making a merit of his forbearance, I cannot see. The only merit he makes of it is *: *Know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee. Yet thou hunteſt my soul to take it. The Lord shall judge between thee and me, and the Lord shall avenge me of thee. But my hand shall not be upon thee.* Nobly resolved this, like a man of steady integrity, a dutiful son, and a faithful subject! *Saul* himself, with all his rage and malice, could not stand this instance of generosity; but melted and sunk under it, and instead of defaming it as a piece of mere art and policy, or lessening the merit of it with an unrelenting heart, *lift up his voice and wept*, and with tears acknowledged *David*'s innocence, and his own guilt; and even prayed God to reward him, whom, but the moment before, he was persuing to his destruction. *Thou*, says he, *art more righteous than I.* What, this of a man, whom *Saul* thought to be in arms against him, and seeking how to dispossess him of his throne, and life? Whom he was endeavouring with justice and honour to suppress, only that he might put an end to an impious and unnatural rebellion? What, to such a man: *Thou art more righteous than I?* Yes, this is the language of *Saul* to *David*; and the reason of the acknowledgement was: *Thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* I confess thy innocence, and my own guilt. *The Lord reward thee good, for that which thou haſt done unto me this day.*

But he says more than this, and said it in his reasonable hours too, when he was calm, and capable of sober reflection; cool, and in perfect possession of himself; when he had vented his passion

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12.

by

by weeping, when the tumult of his rage was subsided, and he seriously reflected on *Davia*'s generosity to him: *Now behold I know well, that thou shalt be surely king, and that the kingdom of* Israel *shall surely be established in thy hand.* But how did *Saul* know this? Because he saw, by the manifold proofs of God's protecting him, that he must be that man, of whom *Samuel* spoke, when he said to him: *The Lord hath given the kingdom to a neighbour of thine, who is better than thou.* Thus, also, *Jonathan* assured *David: Thou shalt be king over* Israel, *and that also* Saul *my father knoweth.* He knew it, because he knew and acknowledged, that *David* was that very man, who was better than himself.

Should it be said, that *if* Saul *was really assured of* David's *destination to succeed him by divine decree, there was nothing left for him but resignation*; I think there was another way left for him to take; and that was to make his own reign as comfortable to himself, and his government of his people as easy to them, as he could, and quietly to leave the event of the succession to the providence of God: For *David* was not appointed to supersede *Saul* whilst living, but to succeed him after his death. This appears from what *Samuel* says to *Saul*, that * *had he kept the commandment of the Lord, he would have established his kingdom for ever*, i. e. rendered it hereditary in his family. *But now thy kingdom shall not continue*, i. e. shall be translated to another man and family. Not a syllable here of *Saul*'s deposition. And again: † *The Lord hath rejected thee from being king over* Israel. *He hath rent the kingdom of* Israel *from thee this day, and hath given it to thy neighbour.* Now it is not true, that God then rejected him from being king, or rent the kingdom from him that day, or gave it to

* 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14. † Ibid. xv. 26, 28.

his

his neighbour; and the meaning can only be, that God had then so rejected him, as that he would rend the kingdom from his posterity, and translate it to another person, in whose family it should be hereditary. But there is not one single word, or intimation of a permission to *David*, to take him off before his time. *David* himself abhorred the thought, knew he had not the liberty of doing it, never attempted it, and was determined that he would not stretch forth his hand against him, because he was anointed king by God's order, who only had a right to remove him at the season, and in the manner he himself saw fit *; for *who*, says he, *can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.* *Saul* therefore needed not to have resigned, for *David* had no right to dethrone him. He might have peaceably kept the kingdom during life, and been happy whilst he reigned, had not his own restless disposition of mind prevented him.

But, *would* Saul *fight against God, by opposing and endeavouring to destroy* David, *if he really thought God had appointed him to succeed him?* I am apt to think he would not, if he had always continued in his reasonable hours; for when he was in those hours, he actually † left off persecuting *David*, and even resolved, because he knew it was fighting against God to attempt his life ‡, *I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day.* But what will not a man do, when his passions destroy his reason, and he is under the influence of that wisdom, which *is earthly, sensual, and devilish*; stimulated with the evil spirit of ambition, envy, rage, and malice! It was this

* 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. Ibid. xxiv. 6. † Ibid. xxiv. 22. ‡ Ibid. xxvi. 21, 25.

made

made the unhappy king regardleſs of God and man, and excited him to fight againſt heaven and earth. And this hath too frequently been the caſe in every age of the world; for there have always been men found, and eſpecially tyrants above all others, who have ſacrificed all conſiderations of piety and virtue to their paſſions and vices, and given up all ſenſe of God and goodneſs to obtain their purpoſes of ambition and revenge. *Saul* doth not appear to have had any great apprehenſions of *David* on his own account. *David*'s appointment to ſucceed him, to the excluſion of his own family, was the circumſtance that puſhed him on to every meaſure he thought neceſſary to prevent it; and he acted upon that bad principle, by which others have been prevailed on to fight their God:

Si violandum eſt jus, regnandi gratia violandum eſt.

But may we not account for this acknowledgement of *Saul* to *David: I know that thou ſhalt be king*, ſo as to exclude every thing of a divine appointment; by ſuppoſing that Saul *was really convinced of* David's *ſtrength, and his own weakneſs? And did he not candidly confeſs it?* This ſuppoſition contradicts the moſt certain facts. For *David* aſks *Saul: After whom is the king of* Iſrael *come out? After whom doſt thou perſue? After a dead dog? After a flea?* One of the weakeſt and meaneſt of thy ſubjects, and of no more ſignification and ſtrength, in compariſon of the king of *Iſrael*, at the head of his choſen troops, than a dead dog, or a contemptible flea? And this was juſtly ſaid. For *Saul* had now three thouſand men with him, and *David* at moſt but ſix hundred. How then could *Saul* ſeem convinced of *David*'s ſtrength and his own weakneſs? Could he be convinced, that *David*, with only ſix-hundred men, was ſtronger than himſelf

ſelf with three thouſand; even when it is moſt certain, that ſome time after this *David* found, *that with his preſent ſtrength, he was not able to maintain any footing in* Judea? *Saul* indeed knew, that he himſelf was rejected, and that *Samuel* had anointed *David*, by God's order, to ſucceed him. He plainly ſaw that God was with him, and preſerved him, and would finally put him into poſſeſſion of the ſovereignty; and as one, who clearly foreſaw this event, frankly acknowleges it; and becauſe he knew that his family would be in *David*'s power, and was conſcious to himſelf, how cruelly and treacherouſly he himſelf had treated him; he exacts an oath from David, *not to cut off his ſeed* when he came to the throne, *nor to deſtroy his name out of his father's houſe*: An oath, which *David* generouſly took, and honourably and religiouſly performed.

Theſe obſervations thoroughly account for ſuch an application of *Saul* to *David*, without any need of cenſuring it, as *an inſtance of meanneſs, and a conduct not to be palliated, but by ſuppoſing that* Saul *muſt have ſtrayed very far from his own men, to let* David *catch him at ſo great an advantage.* For it could be no meanneſs to acknowlege, that *David* would obtain that ſovereignty, to which *Saul* knew God had anointed him by *Samuel*; or to intreat him in behalf of his family, who, tho' he forced him to be a fugitive, he knew would be his ſucceſſor, and have it in his power amply to revenge upon his poſterity, the undeſerved injuries that *Saul* had done him. 'Tis certain, that the reaſon could not be, that of *Saul*'s *having ſtrayed far from his men*, or being in *David*'s hands, or in fear of any violence from him. For the hiſtory makes not the leaſt mention of *Saul*'s ſtraying at all from his men. The occaſion of his going into the cave did not at all require it; nor

is

is there any probability of the thing; nor can his conduct be accounted for, even by admitting it. For *Saul*'s answer to *David* was, after *Saul* was out of the cave, had escaped the danger, could not be again surprised, and had been assured by David: *Mine hand shall not be upon thee.* Fear therefore could not extort this answer from *Saul*, had he been alone, because he knew he had nothing to fear from *David*. No. It was the natural effect of the various thoughts and passions, which then agitated his breast. The full conviction he had of *David*'s innocence, the proof now given him of the greatness of his temper, some remains of generosity in his own breast, the consciousness of the falshood of his past suspicions, and of his ungrateful and injurious conduct towards him, the recollection of *David*'s being appointed and anointed to succeed him, the vanity of opposing the order of God, the future fate of his own family under *David*'s reign, the tender concern he had for their safety, and the desire of perpetuating his name in his father's house: I say all these considerations, and the various passions arising from them, crowding into his mind, and uniting their forces, drew forth an acknowledgement and request, which nothing else could have forced from him. And he who doth not see and feel the propriety of *Saul*'s answer to *David*, in such a situation, is a stranger to the genuine workings of the human heart, and to the influence and efficacy of the most tender and powerful affections.

The truth is, that this generous conduct of *David* shews him in so glorious a light, and exhibits to us such an instance of true greatness of soul, such moderation, fidelity to his prince, reverence for his father, and piety to God, as that his enemies want to get rid of this part of the history; because they know not how to reconcile it

with

with the character they give of him; and therefore they endeavour * to *discredit the relation*, and seem to

* They think *the scripture representations are partial, and the history it gives us not well put together; hat many things are omitted, which would give great light, had they come to our knowledge; that 'tis impossible to argue from every expression that may be produced, and that we must form our judgments from leading events and correspondent expressions, and determine as they tally with probability.* I very well understand the meaning of these observations, *viz.* that the leading blemishes of *David*'s character, are to be considered, without arguing from any particular passages that may tend to alleviate them, or exculpate him; and that we must form our judgment *of him* from these blemishes only, and the expressions that correspond to them. But this is a method of reading history, that I can by no means think equitable and just. Circumstances determine the nature of facts, and they will always be more or less good or evil, right or wrong, according to the circumstances attending them. These may make an action, that, when simply related, carries the appearance of injustice and cruelty, perfectly innocent, prudent, and necessary; and therefore every expression in an history, that tends to elucidate facts, opens the sources and reasons of them, and the ends that were intended to be answered by them, is of great importance, and deserves to be attended to. Even a single hint hath often thrown great light upon history, and he who should take no notice of such passages and hints, would be a very unfair reader of history, and likely to pass a very partial judgment concerning it.

There may be, for any thing I know, some omissions in the scripture history, which, had they come to our knowledge, might have given great light, in many particulars. But why may we not suppose, that they would have cleared up those parts of *David*'s history, that now seem the most unfavourable to him, and prevented many of the principal objections that have been made to his integrity and honour? Surely this may be supposed as well as the contrary. But no suppositions should be put in the room of facts, and on whatsoever side they are made, they prove nothing, and are of little weight.

As to the complaint of partiality in the scripture accounts, whatever reason there may be to complain of it in other instances, surely there can be none to do it in this; since *David*'s sins are narrated in the plainest manner, with all the appearances of impartiality; and in such strong and lively colours, as that they afford matter to his censurers to represent him, in consequence of the scripture account of him, as the worst of men,

to insinuate, that it doth not deserve much regard, so far as it sets *David*'s character in a more amiable light than *Saul*'s. And therefore to detract from *David*'s merit in this transaction, they charge him with, what *Saul* scorned to impute to him, dissimulation and hypocrisy; *by his pretending to* Saul *a great reverence for the Lord's anointed; tho' conscious at the same time, that he was also the Lord's anointed, and anointed purposely to supersede the other Lord's anointed; and was at this very time aiming to put his election in force.* David's conduct, which is the best proof, shewed that his reverence for *Saul*, the Lord's anointed, was real, and not pretended; for he would not take his life, when it was in his power, and assures him twice, *that his hand should never be upon him.* And tho' he knew himself to be the Lord's anointed, yet he was never conscious to himself, because he never acted, as tho' he was conscious to himself, that he was anointed purposely to supersede *Saul*, the other Lord's anointed, but to succeed him after his death; and was therefore determined to wait that event, in the course of providence, and

men, and the very vilest of tyrants. And if the scripture representations do justify such a character of him, this is the most convincing proof of the impartiality of the scripture historians, that can be given or desired. But men of candor and ingenuous minds will take history as they find it, will form their sentiments of the characters of others, as history describes them; will own, but pity the blemishes they find mixed with good ones, will acknowledge every appearance of virtue in bad ones, and not endeavour to depreciate, or conceal, or pervert the nature of such appearances, by unfriendly suspicions and intimations. Let any one, without prepossession, read over *David*'s appeal to *Saul*, after he had spared his life, in the instance now before us; and I think he cannot help discerning that 'tis perfectly natural, looks as if it came from the heart; that it hath nothing of art, no sign of disguise to render his sincerity suspected.

and not to hasten it by any act of his own; and so far was he from *aiming at this time to put his election in force*, that he religiously abstained from that very action, which alone could at that time secure his election.

How the people would have stood affected to *David*, had he seized the opportunity, and cut off his enemy, is uncertain. But if he refused to do it, because *the people were not of his council*, the inference from thence is; that *David* had hitherto taken no measures to seduce the people, was wholly innocent of the charge of rebellion against *Saul*, and was not aiming to put his election in force. For how he could be aiming to put his election in force, without first gaining the people, or raising a sufficient army to do it, is a mystery not easily to be accounted for. To set an example of piety is always an argument of prudence. *David* in this instance set such an example to his prince, from principle and conscience; and therefore had just reason to hope, that he should, some time or other, reap the benefit of it himself. Having escaped this danger, and got safe out of the cave, he composed the following ode.

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me, for my soul trusteth in thee, and I will make my refuge under the shadow of thy wings, till these heavy distresses are past away.

2. I will

Psalm lvii.

Ver. 1. חסיה. *Trusteth.* This comes regularly from the antient root חסי *tert. fæmin. præter. Kal.* and many other instances of a like nature may be seen in Mr. Schulten's *Instit.* p. 385. עד יעבר הוות. *Till these deep and heavy distresses are overpast.* For the construction, see Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

2. עלי

2. I will cry unto God most high, to God who performs every thing concerning me.

3. He will send from heaven, and save me: *Tho'* he who would devour *me* reproaches *me*, God will send his mercy and truth *to protect me.*

4. I am amidst fierce lions; I lie down amongst men who are inflamed *with malice*; *amongst* the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharpned sword.

5. Exalt

2. גמר עלי. The verb occurs five times, but in the Psalms only. The 70' render the word in this place by ευεργετησαντα με, and the Vulg. by *Qui benefecit mihi*, who *hath been my benefactor.* It signifies in the *Syriack* tongue, *Perfecit, consummavit, to perfect, and consummate*, or do every thing necessary for a person in his particular station and character. Thus, in the *Syriack* version of the New Testament, the word is used of Christ's being *made perfect by sufferings.* Heb. xii. 21. And this rendering well suits the place before us. *It is God who effectually doth every thing concerning me*, that is, which is necessary to my safety. *P. Houbigant*'s amendment of גמר into גמל *he hath recompensed me*, is intirely unnecessary, and doth not give a sense more suitable to the circumstances of *David.* I would also observe, that the word signifies in the *Chaldee* dialect, *Statuit, decidit*, to determine or decide concerning any person or thing; and this will afford a very significant meaning. *I will cry unto God, who decides, or determines concerning me.* i. e. who will finish my troubles, and finally settle me in peace and happiness.

3. חרף שאפי. These words may be rendered either: *He that is ready to devour me reproaches me*; or as *P. Houbigant* hath done it, and Bp. *Patrick* in his paraphrase: *God will dishonour*, or *disgrace him who oppresseth me.* I think the former sense suits *David*'s circumstances best, and agrees well with the concise manner of the *Hebrew* phraseology: *God will send from heaven and save me. He that strives to devour me reproaches me.* i. e. tho' he reproaches me as a fugitive, and wholly deserted of God. Instances of this kind are frequent in the scripture.

The Lord shall send his mercy and his truth, viz. to save me. *i. e.* God, to manifest his mercy, and vindicate the truth of his promises, will save me. The reader will observe, that mercy and truth are here poetically represented, as ministers of God, standing in his presence, ready to execute his pleasure, and employed by him in the salvation of his people.

5. Exalt *thyself*, O God, above the heavens, thy glory above all the earth.

6. They have prepared a net for my steps. He boweth down my soul. They have dug the pit before me. They themselves are fallen into the midst of it.

7. My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready, I will sing and give praise.

8. I will sing and give praise. Awake, O my glory. Awake, O psaltery and harp. I myself will awake early.

9. I will

4. I think our version hath rendered this verse very properly. *My soul is amongst lions.* i. e. I am amongst lion-like, fierce and cruel men. *I lie amongst those who are set on fire,* who are inflamed by anger and fury; *amongst the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,* ready to wound and stab my character, and incensing *Saul* continually against me to destroy me. *P. Houbigant* interpolates the word אמץ at the end of the former verse, and joins it with נפשי at the beginning of this, and renders the place: *God will send his mercy and his truth, and will confirm my soul*; following herein the 70th and *Syriack* versions, which have: *Eripuit animam meam.* But this is wholly unnecessary. For נפשי as it stands in the *Hebrew*, is connected with the following words בתוך לבאם *My soul is in the midst of lions*; and in the next clause, the word בתוך is to be repeated from the foregoing: *I lie down amongst men that are inflamed,* amongst *the sons of men,* &c. The addition of a word απο κοινου is frequent in the *Hebrew.*

5. This verse may be rendered: *Exalt, O God, above the heavens, above all the earth, thy glory*; and means, that God would manifest the glory of his power, mercy and faithfulness to heaven and earth, in his salvation.

6. כפף נפשי. The syntax here is thought to be irregular, as נפש is fœminine, and כפף, the verb, masculine. But the literal rendering is: *They have prepared a net for my steps. He boweth down my soul*; referring to *Saul* at the head of his troops, pursuing *David* to his destruction. This makes the construction regular; and the sense in connection will be: *They have prepared a net for me, that he,* Saul, *may bow down my soul,* i. e. cause me to fall into the snare that is laid for me.

7. *My heart is fixed,* or *prepared,* as in the margin. He says in the conclusion of the foregoing verse, that his enemies had *fallen*

9. I will make my acknowledgements to thee, O Lord, amongst the people. I will praise thee amongst the nations.

10. For thy mercy is great *and reaches* to the heavens, and thy truth even to the clouds.

11. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, and thy glory above all the earth.

CHAP. XIII.

Of David *and* Abigail.

WHILST *David* was in the wilderness with his guards, he lay near the estate of *Nabal* in *Maon*, whose possessions were in *Carmel*; where he had sheep and goats in abundance.

fallen into the pit they had prepared for him; as *Saul*, who sought his life, had fallen in the cave into *David*'s hands, and put his life in his power; and he therefore in the triumph of his joy cries out: *My heart is fixed*, and prepared to celebrate God's goodness; and his repeating the words, adds great emphasis to them.

Awake my glory. Awake psaltery and harp. This is truly poetical. So *Horace:*

Age dic Latinum barbite carmen.
Carm. Ode xxxii ver. 3, 4.

The reader will observe how suitable this psalm is to the circumstances in which *David* was, that gave occasion to it, when he represents himself as encompassed with lions, or merciless men, inflamed with rage, seeking his destruction, and laying snares for his ruin. In such a situation he will admire the firmness of his hope in God, and full assurance of his deliverance; and scarce be able to avoid joining with him in the triumph of his gratitude, when his distresses were overpast: *My heart is fixed. My heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise.* Nor will he fail of being pleased with the images of taking refuge under the shadow of God's wings, of God's making truth and mercy the ministers of salvation to his people, or of his address to his psaltery and harp, and his representation of God's dominion, extending to the heavens and the earth.

David kept his men in admirable order; and instead of suffering them to pilfer, or take away by violence any part of *Nabal*'s property, *they were*, said *Nabal*'s men, *a wall to us both by day and night, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep*; a security to us and our cattle from every kind of evil; *neither were we hurt, nor missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields.* At the proper season *Nabal* sheered his sheep; and this being a time of festivity and plenty, *David* sent him a respectful messuage by ten of his servants, whom he ordered to inquire after *Nabal*'s health, and say to him: "Long may † you live. Prosperity to "your family, and prosperity to all your affairs. "I have been informed that the sheerers are now "with you; and as to the shepherds, they have "been in the place where we have resided. But "we have not unworthily treated, or injuriously "behaved towards them, nor was there any "thing that they missed, during the whole time "they were in *Carmel*. Enquire of the young "men, and they will confirm what I now say. "Wherefore let my servants find favour in thy "sight, as we are come in a season of joy and "plenty, and give unto thy servants and thy

† לחי. *Ad vitam sis, Valeas.* So Jarchi. *Long may you live.* Health be to you. And so the *Arabick* version. And this is the true meaning of the expression. Mr. *Houbigant* corrects the text, and instead of לחי reads אחי אתה *Thou art my brother.* But this emendation can never be right. For *David* cannot be thought, in the same breath, to say to *Nabal*, with an air of familiarity: *Thou art my brother*; and with an air of reverence and submission: *I am thy son*; thereby paying him the deference due to a father. Compare ver. 6—8. If any alteration is necessary, I should think אבי *my father* would be the most proper. But the text needs no critical amendment, to make the sense plainer than it is, and the suspected word in reality contains a very respectful compliment.

"son

"son *David*, whatever comes to thy hand, for "our present supply." The request was modest, without prescribing any thing to *Nabal*, and referring the whole to his own generosity.

Instead of rewarding *David*'s men by a kind present, or even returning a civil refusal, the churl sent back an abusive message, and said to *David*'s servants: *Who is* David, *and who is the son of* Jesse? I neither know him, nor regard him. Not content with this insolence, he goes farther, and charges him with being a run-away from his lawful master. *There be many servants, now a days, that break away every man from his master*; one of the most atrocious reproaches, that could be thrown upon a well-born, well-bred, and innocent man; implying those crimes, on account of which bad servants become fugitives from their masters. To heighten the insult, he adds: *Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, that I have killed for my sheerers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?* And to compleat the affront and injury, *he* farther *flew on them*, and probably by his servants assaulted and abused them. For one of his own servants told *Abigail*, that when David *sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master*; not as we render it, *he railed on them*, in which sense the word is never used; but *he flew* ‡ *at* them, like a ravenous bird

‡ Thus the same verb is used to denote the sudden, furious, hostile invasion of the prey. 1 Sam. xxiv. 32.—xv. 19. and is there rendered by the 70. ωρμησας επι τα σκυλα, *hast rushed upon the spoil*; viz. in order to seize it. The substantive עַיִט, signifies in general, *avis prædatrix, a bird of prey*. So we read in *Jerem.* xii. 9. of הָעַיִט צָבוּעַ *the bird with talons*, as that place should be rendered. So in Latin, *involare in aliquem*, signifies suddenly and furiously to invade or attack him. *Qui nunc si detur mihi, ut ego unguibus facile illi in oculos involem veneficio!* Ter. *Eun.* iv. 3. 5. *Vid. ibid.* v. 2. 20. And what seems to represent

on its prey; an expression used almost in all languages, to denote a violent attack or assault upon any person, to abuse and injure him; and it is probable, by *David*'s resentment, that the brute imployed some of his servants, thus rudely and insolently to attack them. This infamous breach of all the rules of hospitality and good manners being reported to *David*, he, in the first start and heat of his resentment, instantly resolved to cut off *Nabal*, and his whole family; too hastily judging, that it was a family affront, or that the whole house was as brutal, as the master of it. He immediately marched with his men, to execute the revenge he had sworn to take of him. One of *Nabal*'s servants having some apprehension, from the resentment expressed by *David*'s messengers, of the mischief that was likely to ensue, immediately informed *Abigail* of what had passed, and advised her: * *Now therefore know and consider, what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his houshold; for he is such a son of* Belial, *that no one can speak to him.*

She being a woman of great temper and prudence, immediatly took the proper precaution to disarm *David*'s anger, and hinder the effects of it, by providing a present for him and his men, and making an apology for the brutality of her husband, and the insolence with which he had treated the messengers.

Her apology, prostrate at *David*'s feet, was this.

"I acknowledge, my Lord, the outrage that "hath been offered you, take it upon myself, and "pray that I only may be regarded as the guilty "person. But I beseech thee permit thine hand-

present the case before us, *Apuleius* says of *Venus: His dictis, involat in eam, vestemque plurifariam diloricat, capilleque discisso, et capite conquassato, graviter affligit.* Metamorph. *L* 6. *p.* 182.

* 1 Sam. xxv. 17.

"maid

" maid to ſpeak before thee, and give a favour-
" able audience to thine handmaid's apology.
" Let not, my Lord, I beſeech thee, too deeply
" reſent the injury that hath been offered thee by
" this man of *Belial*, even by *Nabal*. For what
" his name denotes, ſuch is he. His name ſig-
" nifies a fool, and his characteriſtick is folly.
" He deſerves contempt rather than indignation.
" But as for me, thine handmaid, I did not even
" ſee the young men that were ſent by thine or-
" der. And now, my Lord, as the Lord liveth,
" may thy ſoul live, ſince the Lord hath with-
" holden thee from coming to incur the guilt of
" ſhedding blood, and hath prevented thy hand
" from doing it. And now may thy enemies, and
" all who contrive evil againſt my Lord, be as
" contemptible as *Nabal*. And now as to the
" preſent, which thine handmaid preſents to my
" Lord, let it be diſtributed to the brave youth,
" who ſerve under my Lord's command. And as
" I have taken *Nabal*'s crime upon myſelf, I pray
" thee forgive the treſpaſs of thine handmaid.
" The avenging it will add nothing to thy ſecu-
" rity; for the Lord will certainly eſtabliſh thy
" houſe, becauſe my Lord fighteth the battles of
" the Lord, and thy ſword is drawn againſt the ene-
" mies of his people. Blameleſs hath thy conduct
" been hitherto, and, though heir to the crown,
" thou haſt uſed no criminal methods to obtain it.
" And yet innocent as thou art, there is a man
" who is riſen up to purſue thee, and who cruelly
" ſeeks thy life. But my lord is ſecure under the
" protection of the Lord thy God, who will keep
" thy ſoul in ſafety, as a treaſure carefully wrapt
" up, to prevent its being loſt; whilſt he will caſt
" away with violence the lives of thine enemies,
" as a ſtone violently whirled out from the middle
" of a ſling. And at that happy ſeaſon, when

"the Lord shall have performed all the great and "good things which he hath promised thee, and "raised thee to be king over his people *Israel*; it "will cause no uneasy agitations, nor give any re-"morse of heart to my lord, even the reflection, "that thou hast shed blood without a just cause, "or that my lord hath avenged himself. And "may the Lord do good to my lord, and you will "then with pleasure remember thy handmaid."

In this apology there is somewhat so artful, delicate, insinuating, and persuasive, as could not possibly fail of success with one of *David*'s generous dispositions. She prudently owns her husband's fault; but at the same time extenuates it, by imputing it rather to stupidity than design; and to save him, begs his crime may be imputed to herself. She pleads however, her utter ignorance of the affair to move compassion, and wishes *David*'s enemies may be as contemptible as *Nabal*, to shew her high regard for his interest, and ingratiate herself with an offended soldier. Having thus prepared him, she shews him her present, which though a princely one, she speaks of as too mean for him, and fit only for his followers. How polite the compliment upon his victories, and how artful the insinuation, that the avenging himself upon so worthless a man as *Nabal*, would be beneath him, and unworthy that sword, which had been so much more honourably employed in fighting the battles of the Lord! How pleasing must it be to *David*, to hear her justify his innocence, speak of his persecutor with indignation, and represent his own life as dear to God, and the object of his peculiar care! But nothing could more effectually mollify his anger, and disarm his resentment, than when she put him in mind, that if she could prevail with him by her intreaties to drop his intended vengeance, he would not have

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the reflection, when God ſhould bring him to the throne of *Iſrael*, of having raſhly ſhed blood, and cruelly avenged himſelf, to make his crown ſit uneaſy upon his head, and pierce his heart with anguiſh and remorſe; but that he would rather then think of her with pleaſure, by whom he had been perſuaded to moderation and forbearance, and ſpare thoſe who had injuriouſly treated him.

There is ſomewhat ſo humane, tender and moving, ſuch frankneſs, humility, prudence and piety in this addreſs, as I think excludes every cauſe of juſt ſuſpicion, that ſhe intended any thing inconſiſtent with the moſt perfect chaſtity and virtue. By her ſeaſonable preſent, and this admirable addreſs, *Abigail* prevailed, and diſarmed *David* of his propoſed revenge; for he immediately replied, as a man of honour and virtue, who had recollected himſelf, and was ſenſible he had been too far tranſported by the violence of his paſſion: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who ſent thee this day to meet me. And bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou, who haſt kept me this day from coming to ſhed blood, and from avenging myſelf with my own hand.* He then acknowledges the raſh purpoſe he he had made, received her preſent, and ſaid to her: *Go up in peace to thy houſe. See I have hearkned to thy voice, and have accepted thy perſon.*

Abigail thought herſelf happy in thus ſecuring her huſband and family from the deſtruction that threatened them; and upon her informing *Nabal*, how narrowly he had eſcaped deſtruction. and of the preſent ſhe had been forced to make for ſaving his life; he was ſo affected with one and other, or both theſe circumſtances, that he ſickned and died in ten days, and *Abigail* in ſome time after became *David*'s wife. This is the plain and naked hiſtory, as the ſcriptures relate it; and the reader will obſerve, that the whole affair

between

between *David* and *Abigail* was carried on in the moſt open and public manner, in the preſence of *David*'s men and *Abigail*'s ſervants, in the very field where they met, and began and finiſhed without interruption, or any private conference between them, as appears by the whole ſeries of the hiſtory, that could give them the leaſt opportunity for any criminal intercourſe.

As to *Nabal* himſelf, the hiſtory ſays, that *he was a churl, and evil in his doings, a man of* Belial, *and that folly was with him, and that no one could ſpeak to him.* *David*'s meſſage to him was civil, reſpectful, courtly and modeſt. The ſervants he ſent had no commiſſion *to levy a contribution upon him*; as that implies force and violence, and military execution; becauſe, though ill uſed, they never attempted it. Their orders were only to aſk ſome preſent ſupply from him, of any thing that *Nabal* thought proper to ſpare him.

The merit he makes is, that he had not only kept his men from treating his ſhepherds injuriouſly, but that they had ſecured all his property from being invaded by others. This was real merit, ſhews the excellent order in which *David* kept his men, and was a circumſtance, that *David* might juſtly expect ſome grateful acknowledgement for, as he well deſerved. Inſtead of this, *Nabal* requited *David* evil for good, not only by giving him a flat denial, but a denial attended with the moſt injurious and abuſive inſolence.

If we put all theſe circumſtances together, tho' *David*'s paſſion, and oath to deſtroy *Nabal* and his family, are by no means to be vindicated; tho' the reſolution was cruel, and the oath a raſh and wicked one; yet it muſt be allowed, that the provocation given him was of the higheſt nature, aggravated with the moſt outrageous circumſtances, and ſuch as no military man could poſſibly help grievouſly

grievouſly reſenting. What man of honour and generoſity, what ſoldier at the head of his troops, what ſon-in-law of a king, and heir to his throne, would have tamely borne all this vile indignity, and unmerited calumny and abuſe? Would any partiſan, in our modern armies, put up with an affront and injury like this, and not retaliate * it with a ſeverity equal to what *David* threatned?

How-

* But would it not be ſtill unjuſt; or, in Mr. *Bayle*'s words: *Is it not inconteſtible, that* David *was going to commit a very criminal action?* He certainly was; nor do I in this defend and juſtify his conduct; and what ſurely might have ſatisfied Mr. *B.* neither doth *David* himſelf vindicate it, but acknowledges the raſhneſs of his anger, by bleſſing God, and her, by whom he had been prevented from executing the vengeance he had meditated. And as neither *David*, nor any one that I ever heard of, juſtified *David*'s raſh reſolution, ſo Mr. *B.* thinks he hath found out a ſign that God did not approve it. For he obſerves, that *ſcripture acquaints us that* David *conſulted, and followed the orders of God, when aggreſſors were to be repulſed. But that he did not conſult God when he had a mind to ruin* Nabal: *A ſign God did not approve the intention.* 'Tis pity Mr. *B.*'s good ſenſe could find out no better reaſon for God's not approving ſuch actions, than an obſervation that is not founded in fact. I think we need go no farther than the nature of the action itſelf, to prove it diſpleaſing to God; and as I am well aware of the inſinuation here intended to be conveyed, ſo I am very free to declare; that if any actions, immoral in their nature, are in ſcripture, ſaid to be authoriſed by God, I ſhall not ſcruple to condemn them, as unworthy to be commanded or approved by him.

Mr. *B.* adds, that David *had no right to* Nabal's *goods, nor any authority to puniſh him for his incivility. He ranged up and down with a band of truſty friends. He might indeed be allowed to aſk ſome gratification of people, who were at their eaſe; but if they refuſed—he could not compel them to it by military force, without plunging the world into confuſion.* But *David* did not claim any right to *Nabal*'s goods, and only modeſtly aſked ſome gratification from a rich man, for real and important ſervices done him; and the inſinuation of *David*'s claiming any ſuch right, hath nothing in the hiſtory to ſupport it. 'Tis true, that *David* had no authority to puniſh *Nabal* for mere incivility. Nor did he ever attempt to puniſh him for it. No, it was for inſulting and reviling him, and loading him with the moſt villainous charges, and actually abuſing and violently aſſaulting his meſſengers,

However, he was happily prevented from avenging himself according to his intention, by being

messengers. And it is by no means so absolutely certain, as Mr. *B.* imagines, that *David* had no right to punish *Nabal* for this injury. I say nothing here of *David*'s being obliged in honour, as a soldier, to vindicate his character, and avenge himself on a wretch, that to atrocious calumnies had added violence and outrage. But he should be considered as the anointed king of *Israel*, and as having a real right on that account to support the honour of his character, his claim to the crown, and to protect the persons of those, who followed his fortune, and whose assistance was necessary to the preservation of his life, and securing to him the succession God had promised him. *With these trusty companions*, Mr. *B.* says, David *ranged up and down the country*. If he means by it, as *a free booter*, raising contribution by military force, and plundering and destroying those who refused what he demanded, as the connection seems to intimate, Mr. *B.* should have produced instances of this. But no one instance can be alledged of his exacting contributions, in this manner, or offering violence to the person or property of any one on this account. And though he wandered up and down the country, it was not as a criminal to escape the justice of his country, or live upon the plunder of it; but because the hatred of *Saul* every where persued him, drove him from place to place, and would not permit him any safe and quiet residence whatsoever.

Mr. *B.* adds: *What shall we say, if in our days, a prince of the blood of* France, *being disgraced at court, should save himself where-ever he could, with certain of his friends, who are willing to be the companions of his fortune? What judgment should one pass, if he should resolve to establish contributions in the country where he abide, and to put all to the sword in the several districts of it, who should refuse to pay the taxes laid on them?* To say nothing of the partial representation of this part of *David*'s conduct, in his establishing contributions, and putting all to the sword in the several districts of it, who should refuse the taxes laid on them, which *David* neither resolved nor attempted; the instance itself is nothing to the purpose; because the circumstances of *France*, in its present constitution, and those of the kingdom of *Israel*, in the times of *Saul*, were totally the reverse of each other. The constitution of *France* is settled by fundamental laws, or customs immemorial, which have the force of laws. But the monarchy of the *Hebrews* was yet in its infancy; the succession was not established in any particular family; that of *Saul* was declared to be rejected by the very power that advanced him; *David* was anointed in his room by the same authority, and had therefore

ing brought to a just sense of the rashness and cruelty of his purpose, and not by any methods of wickedness and villainy; and nothing can be more unreasonable, than the suspicion of *Abigail*'s prostituting herself to *David*; since the two expressions, that may have given rise to it, are not possibly capable of any such interpretation.

As to the first * expression: *Upon me let this iniquity be:* It never had any thing of an immoral meaning;

therefore a right by the supream law of the *Hebrew* constitution, to defend himself from violence, by any proper means necessary to his security, and to repel force by force, when ever he found it necessary to his safety. It would be criminal in an high degree, in any kingdom, where the succession is settled by law, to endeavour to set aside that succession. But in an elective kingdom, such as that of *Poland*, the family of the reigning prince may be legally set aside, and often hath been so, and proper measures may be concerted by any candidate to advance himself to the throne, on his demise, as the electors may think most expedient to the national liberty, safety and honour. The kingdom of the *Hebrews* was now properly elective; the first king was chosen by the suffrages of the people, and *Saul*'s sons had no more right to the succession, than any other person in the nation, till by the authority of God, and the free choice of the tribes, the crown had been rendered hereditary in his family. But it never was thus rendered hereditary, and *David*, who was nominated by the supreme authority to succeed him, did right in guarding his own person, and securing his succession, against the attempts of the tyrant, who swore his destruction, and by all the means of perfidy and violence, attempted to accomplish it.

However, though *David* was certainly exceedingly to blame in suffering himself, contrary to his usual disposition and practice, to be transported into this rage, by the ungrateful conduct of a brute, whose reproaches he ought to have despised; yet he was as easily and suddenly brought to himself, and instantly rendered calm, placable, and humane.

* *Upon me let this iniquity be.* בי אני אדני העון. This is a form of speech frequently used, and hath a certain determinate meaning. It is used in deprecating a punishment which another deserves, by transferring, as it were, the crime and punishment upon the person who pleads for the criminal. Thus the woman of *Tekoa* to *David*. עלי אדני העון. 2 Kin. xiv. 9. *This iniquity,*

meaning; but signified only a respectful and earnest application for pardon; and is no more than if she had said: *Rather let me suffer than him.* It is a way of speaking so often used, and so perfectly understood, as that it is impossible the sense of it can be mistaken, by a careful and candid reader; or interpreted, without the utmost violence to the words, as *Abigail*'s invitation to *David* to debauch her. As to the other expression †: *I have accepted*

guity, O my Lord, be upon me, and on my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless. 'Tis a like expression which the Psalmist uses. ימיטו עלי עון. Ps. lv. 3. *They cast iniquity upon me*; and the prophet *Isaiah.* הפגיע בו את עון. Isai. liii. 6. *They have laid on him the iniquity of us all*; charged him with their guilt, and inflicted on him the punishment they deserved. And thus *Nabal*'s wife prays, that she might be looked on as guilty, rather than her husband, and punished, so that he and his family might be spared. Mr. *Le Clerc* makes some little difficulty about *Abigail*'s manner of expressing herself, which literally runs: *On me, I, O my Lord, let this iniquity be.* But there is no need of altering the text, for the pronoun אני I, is an elegant expletive; many like instances of which may be seen in *Glassius*; and there is nothiug more frequent in the *Arabick* language, as the learned *Schultens* hath shewn, *Animad. Philol.* p. 133.

† *I have accepted thy person.* ואשא פניך. Properly, and *I have accepted thy faces.* This expression is used so often, as to take away all difficulty, as to the proper sense of it, which is: I regard, and favourably accept you. Thus the angel to *Lot:* Gen. xix. 21. *See, I have accepted thy faces.* נשאתי פניך. *I have accepted thee,* as we render the words, *concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken,* i. e. I have granted thy request. So also, וישא יהוה את פני איוב. Job xlii. 9. *The Lord accepted the faces of* Job, *i. e.* was gracious and favourable to him. So also a man is said to be נשוא פנים. Isa. iii. 3. *Accepted as to his faces,* who is in high esteem and regard with others. Thus it is said of the jealous man, לא ישא פני כל כפר. *He will not accept the faces of any expiation.* No bribes or satisfaction will appease him, but he will have his revenge. And on the contrary, as the acceptance of persons may be sometimes extreamly unjust, hence also, the same expression is used to denote a criminal partiality, an unjust preference of one person to

accepted thy person: The meaning is: I have accepted thy interposition for *Nabal*, and for thy sake will not execute my intended revenge upon him.

The whole conduct, indeed, of this excellent woman, shews, that she aimed at nothing but the preservation of *Nabal* and her family. And as to the prostitution of herself, what could tempt her to such an infamous sacrifice of her honour? What, to preserve the life of her husband? Then it must have proceeded from a generous affection to him, and sense of duty. But had she had either the one or the other, it must have preserved her from such a criminal commerce with *David*, in violation of both. At least she would not have been so extreamly forward, as to offer him her person upon the very first salutation, before she had tried any more honourable methods of appeasing his anger; and that openly and publickly in the view of her own servants, and all the soldiers of *David*, who attended him. If on the other hand, she was wicked enough thus unsolicited to abuse her husband, could she possibly have any regard for his life, or desire to save it? Would she not rather have sacrificed him to her own lust, and *David*'s vengeance, that she might be in immediate possession of the man she preferred to him, and at once delivered from the tyranny of a surly and illnatured brute? But *David*'s answer to her is a full refutation of any suspicion of this nature. For when she made her apology, and *David* had thankfully received the supply she had

to another. *Prov.* xviii. 5. Thus, *'tis not good* שאת פני רשע *to accept the person of the wicked,* viz. as it follows: *To overthrow the righteous in judgment:* And to mention no more: Thus *Elihu* says to *Job: That God* לא נשא פני שרים *doth not accept the faces of princes,* i. e. as it follows, he *doth not regard the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hand.*

brought

brought him, he ſaid to her on the ſpot, and without farther parley: *Go up in peace to thy houſe, I have hearkened to thy voice*; yielded to thy interceſſion, dropped my reſentment, and will do no injury to *Nabal*, or his family.

It is too common a thing, when the truth of facts will not furniſh matter for blaming thoſe, of whom we have conceived an ill opinion, and wiſh to decry; to ſuffer jealouſy and ſuſpicion to furniſh evidence, and to take advantage of every little circumſtance, that can be laid hold of, to inſinuate real faults, or aggravate ſmall ones. Thus, as the expreſſions, on which the criminal correſpondence between *David* and *Abigail* hath been ſuggeſted, evidently appear to be incapable, according to the nature of the language, of ſupporting ſuch a charge; to give ſome colour to it we muſt conſider *the lady was beautiful, the ſoldier young, and ſuſceptible of amorous impreſſions*; *that* Abigail *obtained her ſuit*, *that* Nabal *broke his heart*, *and* David *ſoon after married the widow*. But what doth all this prove? What, that *Abigail* was an abandoned proſtitute, becauſe ſhe was beautiful? Or, that becauſe *David* was young and amorous, he muſt debauch every handſome woman he converſed with? 'Tis true, *Abigail* obtained her ſuit. But doth it follow, that ſhe obtained it by adultery? Who can wonder that ſhe ſucceeded, that reads her apology? To the power of this *David* aſcribes the dropping his reſentment againſt *Nabal*. And though when *Nabal* was dead, he married the widow, becauſe he could do it with honour, and without any violation of the laws of God and man; yet no one of any candor will from thence, without any farther proof, infer, that he violated her honour, whilſt her huſband was living.

As to *Nabal*'s death, the ſcripture account of it is this. That having the night before got very drunk,

drunk, when *Abigail* the next morning, as soon as he recovered his senses, informed him of these things, *i. e.* the danger he and his whole family had been in, and the method she had taken to save their lives; *his heart died within him, and he became as a stone*; *i. e.* wholly stupid and insensible, continued in this lethargic condition for about ten days, and then died. And what is there unnatural in this relation; that he should be extreamly surprised and terrified at the danger he had been in; or that one of his sordid disposition should be grieved to the heart, at the expence, which the preservation of his life had put him to; or that both these circumstances, added to the fumes of his debauch the night before, should occasion a sudden stupor, and in a few days end in death? How frequently hath this been the effect of one night's intemperance? Instances enough also may be produced of persons, who after having escaped some very extraordinary danger, they had not been aware of, have instantly died of surprise, as soon as they were made sensible of it.

It is therefore an insinuation, that hath no one circumstance of probability to support it, and which the whole history of this affair contradicts: That Nabal *was not well pleased with the composition his wife had made for him, and that when he came to understand so much of the story, as she chose to inform him of, he guessed the remainder, broke his heart, and died in ten days after.* If this was really the case, that he entertained such a suspicion of her, as this account intimates, I think he deserved to die for the injury he did her. But if there are no reasons to believe, that she made this infamous composition; the insinuation that *Nabal* broke his heart upon account of it, must be acknowledged to be unreasonable and groundless. Every circumstance, indeed, of this affair, proves the inno-

cence of the persons accused, and the injustice of the accusation.

I shall only add two favourable circumstances, with regard to *David*, in this affair; that the most generous minds are often apt to be soon * irritated, and as easily pacified; the very temper of *David* this, who, though naturally warm, was soon mollified by *Abigail*'s prudence: and then blesses the Lord God of *Israel* for sending her, blesses her advice, and blesses her which kept him that day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging himself with his own hand: All circumstances these, that indicated an ingenuous disposition, and the great moderation and humanity of his temper, when he was once returned to himself, and free from the transport of anger and passion.

CHAP. XIII.

David's *great moderation in sparing* Saul's *life a second time.*

AFTER *David* † had thus honourably dismissed *Nabal*'s wife and servants, he went up from the wilderness of *Paran*, and concealed himself in the hill *Hachilah*, which is before *Jeshimon*, and which was near, or belonged to the *Ziphites*; who immediately went and informed *Saul* where he was. *Saul* pursued him there with three thousand chosen men, and encamped upon the hill. But

* *Cicero* observes: *Irritabiles animos esse optimorum sæpe hominum, et eosdem placabiles.* Epist. ad. Attic. l. 1. Epist. 17. And in another place he says: *Nihil laudabilius, nihil magno et præclaro viro dignius placabilitate et clementia.* De Offic. l. 1. c. 25. Thus *Horace* describes his own character:

Irasci celerem, tamen ut placabilis essem.
Epist. l. 1. Ep. 20. v. 25.

† 1 Sam. xxvi. 1, &c.

David

David had retreated from it into the wilderness, and having found out *Saul*'s situation. he boldly went with *Abishai* into *Saul*'s camp, where he could have instantly destroyed him; but again, generously refused it. The history is this:

When *David* understood by his spies that *Saul* was certainly come down against him, he took his opportunity, and observed where *Saul* was encamped, and asking two of his officers: *Who will go down with me to* Saul *in his camp? Abishai* bravely answered: *I will go down with thee.* A bold and hazardous undertaking this, that had been certain death to *David*, had he been discovered. But he was brave and intrepid, and his and *Abishai*'s gallantry in this affair, deserves, at least, to be as highly celebrated, as that of *Ulysses* and *Diomedes*, when they went as spies to the *Trojan* camp. True courage despises danger, and the ardour of it grows warmer by the difficulties attending it. Accordingly they went, in the dead of the night, and found *Saul*, with *Abner*, and all the people round about him, fast asleep. *Abishai*, willing to lay hold of so fair an opportunity to dispatch his master's enemy, said to him: *God hath delivered thy enemy into thy hand this day. Now therefore I pray thee suffer me to smite him with my spear*, and I will dispatch him with a single blow. *David* instantly repressed *Abishai*'s eagerness, and said to him: *Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless*; for as he was anointed by God's express order, he only had a right to remove him, when, and by what means soever he pleased. He added: *As the Lord lives, the Lord will smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish. God forbid that I should have any hand in the destruction of him, who was anointed king by God's special order.*

O glorious moderation and fortitude of mind! Was ever resolution more generous and loyal? One stroke would have fixed his mortal enemy dead on the spot, put an end to all his fears, and mounted him to a throne. And yet this hypocrite, this dissembler, this rebel, traitor, bloody ambitious parricide, for these are the titles with which he hath been decorated, immediately starts back at the proposal of it, and the prospect of a crown will not tempt him to a base, disloyal and impious action to obtain it.

However, though *David* refused to mount the throne by the murther of his master, he resolved to make some use of this adventure for his own vindication, and as a proof of his innocency from all attempts of taking away the life of his implacable father, and therefore ordered *Abishai*: *Take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruise of water that stands by him, and carry them off, as the* proofs of his danger, and my fidelity to him. With these tokens *David* and *Abishai* left the camp, without waking, or being observed by a single person; so deep was the sleep that oppressed them all. When they were got safe on the other side of *Saul*'s camp, on an hill at some considerable distance from it, but so as to be within hearing of *Saul* and his men, *David* cried out with a loud voice to the people; and addressing himself particularly to *Abner*, *Saul*'s captain general, says to him, after calling on him several times before he was awake to hear him: *Answerest thou not*, Abner? *Abner*, just roused out of his sleep, cries out in a surprise: *Who art thou that callest to the king? David* replied, with an air of contempt: *Art not thou a mighty man indeed! Is there such another man as thou in* Israel? *Why then didst thou not better guard thy lord the king? There came one of my people into the camp this night to destroy the king, thy lord.* This conduct, of which thou hast been guilty,

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is highly criminal. *As the Lord lives, thou deserveſt to die, becauſe thou haſt no better guarded the perſon of the king.* And then holding up to his view the proofs, they had taken away with them, of *Abner*'s negligence and the king's danger, he ſays: *Now ſee where the king's ſpear is, and the cruiſe of water, that ſtood by his head.* *Saul* at length knew by his voice that it was *David*, who was thus ſpeaking to *Abner*, and ſaid to him in a kind and affectionate manner: *Is it thy voice, O my ſon* David? *Yes*, replied *David*, *it is my voice, O my Lord the king. Why doth my Lord thus purſue after his ſervant? For what have I done? Or what is the crime that I have been guilty of? Hear, I beſeech thee, O my Lord the king, the words of thy ſervant. If the Lord hath ſtirred thee up againſt me, and I have deſerved to die, the Lord proſper thee, and let me fall by thy hand as an acceptable ſacrifice to juſtice. But if they be the children of men who have done it, let them be accurſed before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day, that I ſhould not have the leaſt ſhare in the inheritance of the Lord, and have thereby bid me go, and ſerve other Gods. But now let not my blood fall to the ground, and make not God witneſs to thy ſhedding it without cauſe. I am not worthy that the king of* Iſrael *ſhould thus purſue me. Will he thus come out to ſeek after a contemptible flea? Or, act the the part of one, who is hunting after a poor ſingle partridge on a mountain?* *Saul*, overcome by this tender addreſs of *David* to him, ſays: *I have ſinned. Return, O my ſon* David. *I will no more do thee harm; becauſe my life was precious in thy ſight this day. I acknowledge I have acted foolißly, and have erred exceedingly.* David immediatly replied: *Behold, here is the king's ſpear. Let one of the young men come over and receive it. And may God reward the man according to his righteouſneſs and fidelity, who when the Lord delivered thee into his power this day, yet*

would not use it for the destruction of the Lord's anointed. See therefore, that as thy life was highly regarded in my account this day, so let my life be as highly regarded by the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all my straits. Saul in reply, answered: *Blessed be thou, my son* David. *Thou shalt do great things, and shalt finally prevail.* After this *David* went off, and *Saul* returned to his own habitation.

Had such an historical passage as this been found any where but in the Bible, it would have been read with pleasure, and pointed out as worthy of admiration, for the many excellencies contained in it. What propriety of character, what justness of sentiment, what tenderness of address, is there throughout the whole of it? *Abishai* appears, what he was, a soldier, warm, and thirsty of revenge. *David*, resolute and brave, calm and steady, full of loyalty to his prince, of affection and duty to his father, and reverence for his God; so that it is scarce possible not to be prejudiced in his favour; and his character shines with so amiable a light, as that I do not wonder his enemies should be willing to expunge this part also of his history, and defraud him of that honour, which they are too prejudiced to allow him. *Saul* shews himself cruel, unconstant, relenting, falls under conviction, owns his fault, justifies his son-in-law, and according to the present turn of his mind, promises to injure him no more, and in spite of all his faults, moves one's compassion towards him. The manner of the conversation is tender and moving; and if the observation of *Longinus* * be just, that interrogations and questions add to the force, the vehemency, the acrimony, and dignity of a speech, here they will ap-

* Τι δ' εκεινα φωμεν, τας πυσεις τε ϗ ερωτησεις; αρα ουκ αυταις ταις των σχηματων ειδοποιιαις παραπολυ εμπρακτοτερα ϗ σοβαρωτερα συντεινει τα λεγομενα; Longin. *de Sublim.* §. 18. *ed.* Toll.

pear

pear to the highest advantage. *Why doth my Lord thus pursue his servant? What have I done? Is it thy voice, O my son* David? Let the reader peruse the whole, if he can, without being tenderly affected and moved.

But it will be necessary to vindicate the genuineness of this passage, against the objections of Mr. *B.* and others, who think that *this whole affair is but another detail of the adventure at* Engedi, and that *we are furnished with two relations of the same adventure.* But the reasons they allege on this head are far from being unanswerable. We are told,

1. That in each story *the* Ziphites *gave* Saul *intelligence of the place where* David *harboured.* Suppose this was true, if they knew where *David* harboured a second time, might they not give *Saul* notice a second time, as well as the first? Did a man never give two informations against another? But there is no proof that the *Ziphites* gave *Saul* intelligence, when *David* was at *Engedi.* They indeed told him, when he was in the wilderness of *Ziph*, before he retreated to *Engedi*; but who told him, that he had concealed himself at *Engedi*, the history doth not inform us. 'Tis only said: * *That it was told him* †, saying: *Behold* David *is in the wilderness of* Engedi, without any mention who were his informers. And it is extreamly probable, I may say certain, that the information did not come from the *Ziphites*, as *Engedi* did not belong ‡ to them, and was at a very considerable distance from them.

2. 'Tis

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 1.

† So *Josephus.* Ηκον απαγγελλοντες τινες. There came certain persons and told him. *Ant. l.* 6. *c.* 13. §. 4. And the 70 interpreters. Και απηγγελε αυτω. It was told him.

‡ *Ziph*, with its wilderness, was in the plains of *Doronids*, or southern part of the tribe of *Judah*, between which and *Maon* lay *Carmel. Josh.* xv. 55. about eight miles S. E. of *Chebron.* Reland.

2. 'Tis farther urged, that *in each story*, David *comes upon* Saul, *in much the same manner, witholds his people from killing him, and contents himself with taking away a testimonial of the king's having been in his power.* Supposing this representation to be true, is it any wonder that, in like circumstances, there should be a resemblance of one to the other? If *Saul* was twice in *David*'s power, and *David* spared him both times, was he not in the right to have some testimonial of his generosity, that he might shew it to *Saul*, to convince him, that he had no design to rob him of his life or crown? But this representation, that each story is told much in the same manner, is by no means just; for the circumstances of the two narratives are intirely different, as shall be soon made appear to the fullest conviction.

3. 'Tis also said, that David *doth not represent to* Saul *that this was the second time of his sparing him, and that* Saul *makes no mention of any former obligation of this kind, altho' it was so recent. This*

Reland. *Palæst.* p. 1064. Whereas *Engedi* lay much farther to the N. E. near the beginning of the *dead sea*, where the river *Jordan* makes its first entrance into it, and must be nineteen or twenty miles distant from *Ziph*, and in that part of the tribe of *Judah*, which is in the *Aulon*, or great plain of *Jericho*. Reland. *Palæstin.* p. 763. And *Josephus* very plainly intimates, that *Engedi* was not within the territories of the *Ziphites*; for he expresly says: That *David* removed from *Engedi*, and came into a certain place belonging to the *Ziphites*; which is the same thing as to say, that when at *Engedi*, he was out of the country belonging to them. Απηρε——εις την ερημον επανω της Εγγεδαιν λεγομενης——εκειθεν δε αρας, εις τινα τοπον, Καινην καλουμενην, της Ζιφινης παραγινεται. *Ant.* l. vi. c. 13. §. 1. 2. This is farther confirmed by the book of *Joshua*, which makes *Maon*, *Carmel*, and *Ziph*, and seven other cities, with their villages, to be situated in the mountains; and *Engedi*, with five other cities, and their villages, to be situated in the wilderness. *Josh.* xvi. 48—62. hereby plainly distinguishing, not only the difference of their situation, but of their respective territories. *Ziph. in octavo milliario* Chebron *contra orientem.* Engedi *in tribu* Judah, *juxta mare mortuum, contra occidentem.* Hieron. *de Loc. Heb.*

Mr.

Mr. *B.* thinks *is matter of surprise*, and says: *It must be confessed, that such circumstances are not to be forgotten.* Perhaps this very recency of the thing might be the real reason, why neither of them make any mention of it on this new occasion. Why should *David* put *Saul* in mind of a former transaction, which he, *Saul*, could not forget, and when he, *David*, had so glorious an opportunity of triumphing again, in this second instance of forbearance and generosity to him? Not to add, that *David* was a politer man, and knew his place better, than to reproach his father-in-law and king with any past instances of misconduct towards him. This may be gathered from his past behaviour. For when he spared him at *Engedi*, he never reproached him for his former attempts to murther him, nor with his breach of oath to *Jonathan* that he would not destroy him, nor with his coming to *Naioth* to cut him off, when *David* first spared him when in his power, nor with his pursuing him to *Keilah*, nor with the attempt to surprise him in the wilderness of *Maon*. *David* did not want to reproach and enrage him, but to bring him to a sense of his fault, and win him over to moderation, and a regard to justice. Much less could it be expected from *Saul*, that he would mention a foregoing event, that could only tend to blacken his own character; and shew in stronger colours his own ingratitude, malice, and cruelty. And yet there is something very like this in *Saul*'s reply to *David*, after this second proof of his innocence and generosity. For *Saul* says to him: *I have sinned. Return, my son* David; *for I will* no † more *do thee*

† In this sense *Josephus* understands the expression, *I will no more do thee harm*, as an acknowledgment that he had frequently attempted it before, and that *David* had oftentimes spared him, when his life was in his power. Αυτος δ' ε παυεται πολλακις υπ' αυτε σωζομενος, εδε την ψυχην φανερως απολλυμενην λαμβανων. *Ant.* l. vi. c. 13. §. 9.

harm;

harm; plainly referring to the former attempts he had made on *David*'s life; one of which was at *Engedi*; a transaction so recent, that he could not possibly forget it.

4. It is again objected, that *the historian, who evidently intends to blacken the character of* Saul, *and whiten that of* David, *doth not make the least observation himself, in the second narrative, of reference to the first*; and Mr. *B.* observes, with a kind of surprise, that *the scriptures, to aggravate* Saul's *crime, do not take notice, that he quickly repented of his reconciliation with* David, *and rendered himself guilty of black ingratitude.* This surprise he repeats again, that *the scripture doth not make use of the first of these two facts, to make* Saul's *obstinacy in persecuting his son in law more odious*; and says, *that two or three lines might have produced a considerable effect. A reader would have been struck to see, that* Saul, *being obliged to his son in law for his life, praises him, admires him, wishes him a thousand blessings, and in a little time takes the field to destroy him.* He adds, that *the laws of history require, without doubt, that in speaking of this new pursuit, it should have been observed, that it was an infraction of that solemn agreement, which had followed the adventure of the cave, and yet you will not find one tittle in the scripture concerning this circumstance.*

To this it may be replied, that as the historian, in the second narration, makes no kind of reference to the first, he did not intend to *blacken* the character of *Saul*, any more than to *whiten* that of *David*; but was content simply to relate the facts themselves, and leave the reader to form his judgment of both of them, by the nature of those facts. And 'tis this very circumstance which occasioned Mr. *B*'s surprise, that the scripture doth not take notice of the affair at *Engedi*, to aggravate *Saul*'s crime, to heighten his black ingra-

ingratitude, and render his obſtinate perſecution of his ſon in law more odious, in his ſecond attempt to deſtroy him at *Hachilah*. This circumſtance vindicates the ſcripture from any intention of *blackening* Saul's character.

As to the laws of hiſtory which Mr. *B*. ſpeaks of, it will be allowed, that they certainly require, that when ſuch facts are related, as bear any reſemblance to each other, they ſhould be related with all thoſe particular circumſtances of occaſion, time, place, perſons, and ſpeeches, as may diſtinguiſh them from each other, and give the reader a clear and preciſe knowledge of each. But I want to know, what thoſe laws of hiſtory are, where they are recorded, and who preſcribed them, which oblige an hiſtorian, after he hath given a relation of two facts, with all theſe particular circumſtances juſt mentioned, to tell his reader, that the laſt was an infraction of an agreement in the firſt, when the reader himſelf knows it immediately without any ſuch farther information, merely to aggravate the ingratitude and crime of the perſon who was guilty of it, and render him more odious.

If this law of hiſtory be juſt, as Mr. *B*. thinks, then the more there are of theſe aggravating facts, and the blacker one can render any man by relating them; the ſame laws of hiſtory ſeem to require, that in order to expoſe him to greater hatred, all ſuch former facts ſhould be brought in, to heighten the guilt and ingratitude of the laſt. Thus, in the new purſuit of *David* by *Saul* at *Engedi*, according to Mr. *B*. the laws of hiſtory required, to make *Saul*'s obſtinacy in perſecuting his ſon in law more odious, that the ſcripture ſhould have taken notice, that this attempt upon his life was contrary to the ſolemn oath he had made to *Jonathan*, that he ſhould not be ſlain, and aggra-

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vated with the highest ingratitude, as *David* had once before spared his life, when he continued a whole day and night prophecying, stript of his armour, and intirely defenceless. But tho' the scripture takes notice of neither of these facts, when relating the affair at *Engedi*, Mr. *B.* expresses no surprise about it, nor insinuates that the laws of history have been broken, because we do not find one tittle in scripture about them, in the account of that transaction, to render *Saul*'s persecution of his son in law more odious, tho' *two or three lines*, as Mr. *B.* says, *might have produced a considerable effect.*

But tho' I will not compare myself with Mr. *B.* for the knowledge of the laws of history, yet I must confess, that I do not think it an established law of history, that an historian should be solicitous to aggravate men's crimes, and studiously endeavour to render them odious, and heighten every subsequent fault, by referring to a former. This, I apprehend, is contrary to all the just laws of history. It is one of those laws, as laid down by one, who was no very bad judge, that ‡ every thing should be related just as it was transacted; and that as to the praising * or blaming others, it should be very sparing, cautious, short, seasonable, lest we should be thought to blame others out of enmity, and be accusers rather than writers of history. And this is the general method of scripture, to relate facts, plainly and simply as they are, and to leave every one who reads them to make his own reflections, and judge how far they are commendable or criminal. And indeed I think, that no two or three

‡ Τὸ δὴ συγγραφεως ἔργον ἐν, ὡς ἐπραχθη ειπειν. Lucian. *quom. hist. conscrib.* c. 39 *edit.* Reitzii.

* Επαινοι μεν γαρ η ψογοι πανυ πεφεισμενοι ϗ περιεσκεμμενοι——— Και μετα αποδειξεων, και ταχεις, ϗ μη ακαιροι———και την αυτην Θεοπομπω αἰτίαν ἡξεις, φιλαπεχθημονως κατηγορουντι των πλεκων——— καὶ ὡς κατηγορειν μαλλον η ιστορειν τα πεπραγμενα. Id. ibid. c. 59.

lines,

lines, that Mr. *B.* himſelf, or even the author of the book of *Samuel*, could have wrote, could make *Saul* more odious for his repeated perſecutions of *David*, than the facts themſelves, in the candid artleſs manner, in which they are narrated; and a reader muſt be extreamly inſenſible, who is not ſtruck with an immediate abhorrence of *Saul*'s ingratitude to *David*, the moment he reads, that he purſued him to death, ſo ſoon after his own life had been ſo generouſly ſaved by him. Lines of aggravation here would have been juſtly cenſured as invidious, and unbecoming a fair and candid hiſtorian, whoſe character it is § that he ſhould be an equitable judge, and benevolent to all, ſo far, as to aſcribe nothing to any one but what is juſt and neceſſary.

5. Mr. *B.* farther objects, that *on the firſt of theſe two occaſions*, David *and* Saul *make uſe of nearly the ſame words, as they do on the ſecond.* But Mr. *B*'s bible and mine muſt be very different, if his account of what was ſaid on the two occaſions be the real one; for according to my bible, what was ſaid on them was as different, the one from the other, as it well could be. *Saul*'s ſpeech to *David*, on the firſt occaſion, hath ſcarce a word, or ſentence, the ſame with what he ſaid on the ſecond, in which there is a total omiſſion of the moſt remarkable things contained in the firſt; and in what *David* ſaid to *Saul* there is the ſame variation in ſentiment and expreſſion; and the particularly calling to *Saul* the firſt time: *See, my father, yea, ſee the ſkirt of thy robe in my hand*; and on the ſecond: *Behold the king's ſpear, let one of the young men come over and fetch it*; ſhews, that the two relations could no more belong to one fact, than the ſkirt of a gar-

§ Ισος δικαστης, ενιοις απασιν. Id. ibid. c. 41.

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ment could be the ſame thing with a ſpear. Mr. *B.* himſelf, I believe, would have ſaid, upon ſuppoſition, that the two accounts, ſo intirely differently related in all the main circumſtances of them, of one and the ſame fact, were ſo contradictory to each other, that one of them muſt certainly be falſe, and that therefore little credit was to be given to either. And indeed Mr. *B.* finds himſelf not a little embarraſſed, how to account for theſe two different relations, ſuppoſing them relations of one and the ſame tranſaction. He knew well enough, that *Ziph* and *Engedi* were two very different and diſtant places, and that an action that paſſed at *Ziph* could never be the ſame with one that was done at *Engedi*. And therefore, in order to get rid of this difficulty, like a bold reſolute critic, he ſacrifices the honour and credit of ſcripture to his own opinion, by ſuppoſing, without giving any reaſon for it, a diſlocation of the paſſage which ſtood in his way, and that it belonged to an affair before related. For he ſays, with great aſſurance, that *the action of the* Ziphites *related*, 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. &c. *is not different from that which is related*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 1. 2, 3. *and that whoever will take the pains to compare theſe two relations, will be doubtleſs of my mind.* I have taken ſome pains to compare them, and yet intirely differ from Mr. *B.* becauſe theſe two relations are ſo very different from each other, as that they can never belong to the ſame action and period.

1 *Sam.* xxiii. 19.	1 *Sam.* xxvi. 1, 2, 3.
19. The *Ziphites* inform *Saul*, that *David* was on that part of *Hachilah*, that was on *the right hand* or ſouth of *Jeſhimon*.	1. They inform him, that *David* was on that part of *Hachilah*, that was *over againſt* Jeſhimon.

24. When

1 *Sam.* xxiii. 19.	1 *Sam.* xxvi. 1, 2, 3.
24. When *Saul* came to ſeek *David*, he, *David*, was removed from *Ziph* to the wilderneſs of *Maon*.	3. *David* abode in the wilderneſs of *Ziph*, and was not at *Maon*.
25. *Saul* left *Hachilah* and *Ziph*, and went into the wilderneſs of *Maon* in purſuit of *David*.	*Saul* encamped on the hill *Hachilah*, and did not go into the wilder neſs of *Maon*, in purſuit of *David*.
26. *David* carefully avoided and haſted to get away from *Saul*, for fear of him.	5. *David* actually went into *Saul*'s camp, with great courage and bravery.
Saul and his men encompaſſed *David* and his men round about, and was near taking them.	*Saul* and his men did not encompaſs *David* and his men round about, who were in no danger of being taken by them.
27. *Saul* was called of from purſuing *David*, upon information of an invaſion by the *Philiſtines*.	*Saul* had no information of an invaſion by the *Philiſtines*, and did not ceaſe his purſuit of *David* on that account.
29. After *David*'s eſcape from *Saul*, happened the affair of *Engedi*, the death of *Samuel*, and the tranſaction with *Nabal*.	Upon *David*'s eſcape, he fled to the *Philiſtines*, and appeared no more in *Judea*, till after the death of *Saul*.
David never ſaw nor ſpake to *Saul*, nor *Saul* to him.	*David* ſaw and ſpake to *Abner* and *Saul*, and *Saul* to *David* from the place of his encampment.

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From these circumstances I think nothing can more evidently appear, than that these two accounts of the *Ziphites* are not two accounts of one and the same transaction, but of two intirely different ones, that were carried on at some considerable distance of time from each other. And the history speaks of the information of the *Ziphites*, 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 19. the transaction at *Engedi*, and the second information of the *Ziphites*, chap. xxvi. as quite different affairs, and that came to pass at very different periods from one another.

I shall only add, that if we read chap. xxvi. 1. AGAIN, † *the* Ziphites *came to* Saul, this will plainly distinguish this information of the *Ziphites*, from that mentioned, chap. xxiii. 19. And the connective prefix will allow this version.

But there is yet another way taken, to shew that a transaction said in one part of the scripture history to have happened at *Engedi*, may be one and the same with that, which in another place is said to have come to pass at *Ziph*; and that is by supposing that *as in* England, *a forest or heath will have several local names, if it be, common to several bordering towns, so the wilderness, between* Ziph *and* Engedi, *might at each place obtain each name, and that* David's *several movements appear to have been within the compass of this wilderness.* Allowing the truth of this observation, that this wilderness was called the wilderness of *Ziph*, at *Ziph*, and the wilderness of *Engedi* at *Engedi*, doth this prove, that *Ziph* and *Engedi* were

† The prefix ו is frequently to be understood in the sense of *again*, and is often so rendered in our version, and as often by *moreover*. See *Nold. Zechar.* ii. 1. Ezek. vii. 1.——12. 17. In this sense *Josephus* also understood it; for he says the *Ziphites* came to *Saul*, and told him, ως ειη παλιν Δαυιδης εν τη χωρα αυτων That *David* was come again into their country. *Ant.* l. vi, c. 13. §. 9.

the

the ſelf ſame place, and that becauſe the ſcripture ſays, that a certain tranſaction was done at *Ziph*, it was therefore done at *Engedi* too? If this remark proves any thing to the purpoſe, it muſt prove this. For the ſcripture ſays expreſly, that *David* went up from *Ziph* and *Maon*, and dwelt in the ſtrong holds at *Engedi*; where he ſpared *Saul*'s life, when he could have deſtroyed him in the cave; but that when he ſpared him the ſecond time, it was in a particular place of the very wilderneſs of *Ziph* itſelf, called the hill of *Hachilah*; which, as hath been ſhewn, is many miles diſtance from *Engedi*, the two cities being in very different parts of the country. Now unleſs *Ziph* and *Engedi*, which are two different cities, many miles diſtant from each other, and ſituated in very different parts of the country, can be one and the ſame city; or an action, done in that part of a wilderneſs which bordered upon *Ziph*, can be one and the ſame with that, which was done at another very diſtant part of that wilderneſs, which lay contiguous to *Engedi*; theſe two accounts of *David*'s ſparing *Saul* can never be accounts of one and the ſame tranſaction, but of two ſucceſſive ones, as diſtinct from each other as the places themſelves, in which they are recorded to have ſeverally happened. And if the reader will take the pains to compare theſe two relations, and remark the many eſſential differences between them, he will doubtleſs be of my mind. The differences are theſe.

In that related chap. xxiv.	*In that related* chap. xxvi.
1. *David* was in the ſtrong holds of the wilderneſs of *Engedi*.	1. He was in the wilderneſs of *Ziph*.
2. *Saul* went to ſeek *David* on the rocks of the wild goats.	2. *Saul* pitched in the hill of *Hachilah*.

3. *Saul* was alone.	3. *Saul* was encamped with his ſoldiers, and lay in the midſt of them.
4. *Saul* was in a cave, to eaſe nature.	4. *Saul* lay aſleep in his camp.
5. *David* was in the ſame cave with *Saul*, tho' unſeen, and went out of it after *Saul* was gone.	5. *Saul* in the hill *Hachilah*, but *David* and his men abode in the wilderneſs.
6. *David*'s men were with him in that cave.	6. *David* was only accompanied by *Abiſhai*.
7. *David*'s men ſaid to him: *Behold the day, of which the Lord ſaid: I will deliver*, &c.	7. *Abiſhai* ſaid to *David: God hath delivered*, &c.
8. When *Saul* was ſeeking *David* at *Engedi*, it was day.	8. When *David* went to *Saul*'s camp at *Hachilah*, it was night.
9. *David* cut off the ſkirt of *Saul*'s robe.	9. *David* took the ſpear and cruiſe of water from *Saul*'s bolſter.
10. *David*, when come out of the cave, cried after *Saul*, ſaying: *My lord the king*.	10. *David* cried to the people and to Abner: *Anſwereſt thou not*, Abner?
11. *David* ſpeaks firſt to *Saul*.	11. *Saul* ſpeaks firſt to *David*.
12. *David* tells *Saul*, he found him in a cave.	12. *David* tells *Abner*, there came one of the people in, *viz.* the camp, to deſtroy the king.
13. *Saul* exacts an oath of *David*, not to deſtroy his poſterity.	13. *Saul* exacts no ſuch oath of *David*.
14. *David* only ſhewed *Saul* the ſkirt of his robe.	14. *David* ſaid: Behold the king's ſpear. Let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

15. The

15. The affair at *Engedi* was prior to that relating to *Nabal.*	15. The affair at *Hachilah* was after that of *Nabal.*
16. *David* dwelt a considerable time in his own country, after his sparing *Saul* at *Engedi.*	16. *David* retreated from *Hachilah* to the *Philistines*, and never returned till after the death of *Saul.*

I think there needs no other evidence to prove, that these were two intirely different transactions, since the only circumstance in which they agree is, that of sparing *Saul*'s life, when *David* had it absolutely in his power, whilst all the rest of them intirely vary from each other; and I am apt to think that any impartial and judicious critic, who should see in *Ælian* or *Valerius Maximus*, two accounts of this nature, agreeing only in one single circumstance, would make no difficulty to believe, that they must be two actions, and not one related two different ways. If these two facts had been related by two different authors, who lived at some distance of time from each other, there would have been some greater shew of reason for Mr. *B*'s suspicion. But nothing can be more incredible, than that the same historian, within a few pages one of another, should so differently relate one and the same fact, without taking notice, as the laws of history certainly require, that the fact was thus differently reported. This is certainly the way of good writers, as may be shewn from many * instances in the best historians. Such

* The accounts of the sudden disappearance of *Romulus* were various, and accordingly the historian in reporting it says: *Discerptum aliqui a senatu putant ob asperius ingenium: sed oborta tempestas solisque defectio consecrationis speciem præbuere.* Flor. lib. i. c. 1. §. 17. See also the different reports of the death of

Such an omission certainly proves, that the historian reported what he knew, or believed to be two very different stories, though there might be one principal fact, in which both of them agreed.

CHAP. XIV.

David's *retreat to* Gath *and* Ziglag.

BUT notwithstanding *Saul*'s promise to *David*, at *Ziph*, that he would do him no more harm, yet knowing his implacable temper, and apprehensive, that the spirit of jealousy and rage would return on him, *David* lived in a state of perpetual anxiety; and he said within himself: * *I shall one day or other*

Marius by *Plutarch*, Vit. *Mar* p. 432, 433. So *Herodotus*, when giving an account of the manner how *Darius* was exalted to the *Persian* throne, and the method his equerry took to procure the neighing of his master's horse, says: Οι μεν δε φασι τον Οιβαρεα ταυτα μηχανησασθαι· Οι δε, τοιαδε. Και γαρ επ' αμφοτερα λεγεται υπο Περσεων. Some say *Oebares* took this method. Others, a different one. For the *Persians* relate it both ways. *Thal. c.* 85—88. Surely, according to this law of history, the writer ought to have taken notice, that this one fact, if he knew it to be one, was thus differently related. As he hath not taken any notice of this kind, we may be sure he intended to relate two distinct parts of *David*'s history; especially as he makes a considerable interval of time, and mentions several remarkable transactions that happened between them.

* Mr. *B.* positively affirms, that *it is not true, that* Saul *renewed the persecution against* David, *after the latter had twice forborn to do him the least harm.* Rem. K. §. 2. or, as he expresses himself, §. 3. *It is very certain, that* Saul *did not persecute him after the second reconciliation.* This observation, as made by Mr. *B.* hath no manner of meaning in it, because he denies there was any such second reconciliation, and that the history we have of it is only that mentioned 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 19, *&c.* which happened some time before; and that *Saul* persecuted *David* after this, Mr. *B.* himself will not deny, as the affair of *Engedi* was subsequent to it. But even upon the supposition, that there was a second reconciliation, I do not know how this learned critic could be

other perish by the hand of Saul. *There is † nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the* Philistines. Agreeably to this purpose he immediately retired with his followers to *Achish* king of *Gath*, to prevent *Saul*'s farther pursuing him, and that he might be intirely out of the reach of his power. That prince gave him, his family, and companions, a very friendly reception. *David* was not now, as in his former

be so very certain that *Saul* never persecuted *David* after it. There are several intimations in the scripture history, that weaken the credit of this assertion. It expresly says, that Saul *was* David's *enemy* כל הימים *all his days.* 1 Sam. xviii. 29. Agreeably, after this second reconciliation, *David* saw that he could not trust *Saul*'s promises. *I shall now*, says he, *one day or other perish by the hands of* Saul. *I will escape into the land of the* Philistines, *and* Saul *shall despair of me to seek me any more in any coast of* Israel. *So shall I escape out of his hand.* And when it was told *Saul*, that *David* was fled to *Gath*, *he sought no more for him again.* So that *Saul* never left persecuting *David* openly, whilst he continued in the coasts of *Israel*; and what is not greatly to his honour, and looks as if he had not quite lost his enmity to *David*, the reason why he at last left off doing it, if he ever did leave it of, was, because he was out of his reach, and under the protection of *Achish*, king of *Gath*. But even after he was in the dominions of that prince, *David*, who was a better judge of *Saul*'s conduct than Mr. *B.* did not think himself secure from *Saul*'s malice even in the territories of *Achish*. For whilst he was at *Ziglag*, the historian expresly asserts, that David *kept himself close shut up, whilst he was there, because of* Saul, *the son of* Kish. 1 *Chron.* xii 1. For though he sought no more again for him in the coasts of *Israel*, nor pursued him to *Gath*, or *Ziglag*, by an armed force, yet *David* had too much reason to suspect, that he secretly practiced mischief against him there, had his spies upon him, and private emissaries to watch every opportunity to surprise and destroy him; and therefore shut himself up within the fortress, that *Achish* had assigned him.

Nec juvenis virtus per tot spectata labores,
Nec mala mollierant, sed inexorabile durus
Exercet odium, nec iniqua finis in ira est. Ovid. Met. l. 5.

† אין לי טוב. *Is it not good for me?* Doth not my advantage and safety require it? 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, &c.

retreat to *Achish*, a poor solitary exile; but at the head of a brave corps of bold and resolute men, who were enured to war, and had been several of them commanders in the forces of their own country; and in this situation was a man of consequence, and worthy to be gained over to the interest of the *Philistines*. *Achish* knew his worth, and after some short stay in *Gath*, at *David*'s request gave him the town of *Ziglag*, in property for himself and followers.

Whilst he was here, he was joined by some other great captains,† mighty men of valour of *Saul*'s brethren of *Benjamin*, who assisted him in the following expedition. For he went up with them from *Ziglag*, and invaded the *Geshurites*, and the *Gezrites*, and the *Amalekites*, who were the ancient inhabitants of the land in the way by *Shur*, to the land of *Egypt*. And *David* smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, to bring the news of what he had done to *Gath*; to prevent those suspicions, which the knowledge of this execution might raise in the mind of *Achish* and the *Philistines*, to the disadvantage of himself and followers; and that none who escaped alive might insinuate, that as *David* had done in this incursion, so he would continue to do, whilst he was suffered to reside in the territories of the *Philistines*. The plunder, the sheep and the oxen, the asses and the camels, together with the apparel, he reserved for himself and his people.

Mr. *Bayle*'s account of this affair is extreamly partial, and his censures on *David*'s conduct very severe. He says, that David, *whilst at* Ziglag, *often* ‡ *led his men out in parties, and killed, without mercy, men and women, and saved only the cattle, which was all the booty he returned with. He was afraid, least the prisoners should discover the whole mystery to* Achish; *for which reason he carried none*

† 1 Chron. xii. 1, &c. ‡ *Fit cent courses.*

with

with him, but put both sexes to the sword. This he calls *very unjustifiable, and great cruelty*; adding: *If* David *had been asked: By what authority doest thou these things? What could he have answered? Has a private man, as he was, a fugitive, who finds shelter in the territories of a neighbouring prince, a right to commit hostilities, for his own account, and without a commission from the sovereign of the country? Had* David *any such commission? On the contrary, did he not act in opposition to the intention and interests of the king of* Gath?

Any one, who reads this account, would imagine, that *David* had led out his men, on several of these expeditions, and that it was what he accustomed his men to at *Ziglag*, always slaying both sexes, to prevent *Achish* from coming to the knowledge of what he had done; and this he more strongly affirms elsewhere. ‡ For he says, that David, *with his little flying camp, was exterminating all the infidel countries, wherever he could penetrate.* Should any one have asked Mr. *B. By what authority provest thou these things? What could he have answered?* In reality, this charge hath no foundation in the history; which only relates this one single instance of his destroying the *Amalekites*, *Geshurites* and *Gezrites*, to prevent their giving any intelligence to *Achish*.

As to this execution, which Mr. *B.* censures as exceedingly bad, and prodigiously cruel, the circumstances must determine the nature of it. As to the *Amalekites*, they were the ancient enemies of the *Jewish* nation, doomed, many ages before this, to destruction by the God of *Israel*; and they are frequently mentioned in the books of the Old Testament, as the common enemies of the *Hebrews*, engaged in many expeditions to plunder their country, and destroy the inhabitants *. In

‡ Note E. * 1 Sam. xiv. 48.

Saul's reign they brought an army into the field against him, and spoiled his people. On this provocation, God commanded *Saul* by *Samuel*: * *Go and utterly destroy the sinners the* Amalekites, *and fight against them till they be consumed.* † *Spare them not, but slay both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass*; and he accordingly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword, *Agag* excepted, and brought his booty home, ‡ *which consisted of all which those miserable victims possessed.* If therefore *Saul* did right in cutting off the *Amalekites*, *David* could not do wrong in finishing the execution *Saul* begun ‖. For the *Amalekites*, cut off by *David*, plainly appear to have been the remains of those destroyed by *Saul*; being both described as the inhabitants of the land, as they travelled through *Shur*, even to *Egypt*. Both therefore, or neither of them are to be blamed for excessive cruelty. For the same reasons subsisted, and equally justified the one as the other.

But if *David* had been asked: *By what authority doest thou these things? What could he have answered?* He might have answered: I act under the standing command of God, utterly to extirpate them, and maintain an eternal war against them, till they were utterly destroyed. § *The Lord said unto* Moses: *Write this for a memorial in a book.—I will utterly put out the remembrance of* Amalek *from under heaven; because the Lord hath sworn, that he will have war with* Amalek *from generation to generation.* He might also have farther said: I act agreeable to the command of God to *Saul*, and for the benefit of my country, in exterminating the restless and inveterate enemies of it. *David* was therefore

* 1 Sam. xv. 18. † Ibid. vers. 3. ‡ Hist. p. 35, 36.
‖ Ibid. xv. 7. xxvii. 8. § Exod. xvii. 14—16.

justified

justified by as real, and positive an order from God, as *Saul* himself, and by reasons that fully clear him from the charge of cruelty.

But Mr. *B.* asks: *Was not* David *a private man?* I answer: No. He was anointed king of *Israel*, and as such had, at least, an equal right with *Saul* himself, to defend his people against the inroads and plunders of their enemies.

He asks farther: *Has a private man, as* David *was, a fugitive, who finds shelter in the territories of a neighbouring prince, a right to commit hostilities, for his own account, without a commission from the sovereign of the country? Had* David *any such commission?* It doth not appear, that he had; but then there is no proof, that *David*, in this execution, acted contrary to the circumstances of those times, and the constant practices of nations one to another; and especially the constant practice of the neighbouring nations towards the *Hebrews*; who, as appears from the whole tenour of the history, made perpetual incursions on them, and ravaged their territories, when ever they found themselves in a condition to do it. And though *David* was a fugitive, yet it is plain, that *Achish* did not consider him as a mere private man, or contemptible fugitive, nor think that he acted in this very incursion, made without any commission from him, inconsistent with any obligations he was under to him for the protection he had given him.

Nay more than this: *Achish* approved of, and was pleased with this expedition of *David*; as he imagined that *David*, by invading his own people, had rendered his return to, and reconciliation with them absolutely, and for ever impossible. Now if the circumstances of *David*'s being a private man, and a fugitive, and acting without any commission from *Achish*, were what rendered the incursion upon these hoards inconsistent with right and justice, *David* had no more right to invade his

his own country, without a commiſſion from *Achiſh*, than the country of the *Amalekites*, &c. But *Achiſh* approved this invaſion without his commiſſion, and therefore did not think any ſuch commiſſion from himſelf was neceſſary.

Nor had *David* any apprehenſion of offending *Achiſh*, merely by an incurſion upon ſome neighbouring clans; becauſe he took no care to conceal it from him; the very booty, which he brought home, being a ſufficient diſcovery of what he had been doing; part of which he reſerved for the ſupport of his own men, who had ſcarce any other way of ſubſiſtence in the country of the *Philiſtines*, but by ſuch kind of incurſions; and part of which he unqueſtionably preſented to that **Philiſtine* prince. *He took away the ſheep*, &c. *and returned and came to* Achiſh. He, without any the leaſt ſign of diſpleaſure, or intention to blame or reproach him, for having acted without his commiſſion, only aſks; *Where*, or, *What*, *have ye made an incurſion to day?* And, indeed, I ſee no occaſion that *David* had of any commiſſion from *Achiſh*; for tho' he was accountable to him for his public behaviour in the territories of *Achiſh*, yet when *David* cut off theſe *Amalekites*, he was not in that prince's territories, and therefore not accountable to him for what he did out of them; eſpecially, if he did his ſubjects no injury, nor invaded, nor plundered any of his allies.

And in anſwer to Mr. *B.*'s farther queſtion on this article: *Did he not act in oppoſition to the intentions and intereſts of the king of* Gath? It may be obſerved, that Mr. *B.* ſhould have brought ſomewhat in ſupport of this inſinuation. But this he hath omitted to do, for this very good reaſon, becauſe he was really unable to do it. For as to

* This *Joſephus* affirms. Το μεντοιγε της λειας μερος αυτω δωρεαν εκπεμπει. Ant. l. 6. c. 13. §. ult. 1 Sam. xxvii. 9.

theſe

these *Amalekites*, they were so far from being allies of, or confederates with *Achish*, as Mr. *B.* asserts, that they were in a state of actual hostility with him; for we find them soon after this making great depredations upon the *Philistines* territories; not merely on *Ziglag*, by way of retaliation; for they invaded the * *Cherethites*, the south and *Ziglag*, and † *had taken great spoil out of the land of the* Philistines, *and out of the land* of *Judah.* They were open enemies to both nations, and *David* really served both by destroying them.

As to the *Geshurites* and *Gezrites*, we know but little of them; only that they were neighbours to these *Amalekites*, and lived in the same territories with them, from *Shur* even to the land of *Egypt*, and were therefore, with the other nations, commanded by God to be extirpated. And accordingly their territories are expressly mentioned ‡, as a part of that country which was to be possessed by the *Hebrews*, and ordered, with some other lands, to be divided for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of *Manasseh.* This was, in its nature, a proscription of them; and therefore though this sentence had not been put in execution, through the neglect of the *Hebrews*; *David*, as the anointed of the Lord, had a right to recall them to their proper doom; and as they

* The *Cherethites* are expressly numbered amongst the tribes or families of the *Philistines.* Gaza *shall be forsaken, and* Ashkelon *a desolation. They shall drive out* Ashdod *at the noon day, and* Ekron *shall be rooted up. Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coasts, the nation of the* Cherethites, *the word of the Lord is against you. O* Canaan, *the land of the* Philistines, *I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.* Zephan. ii. 5. Thus also, *Ezekiel* xxv. 16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will stretch out my hand upon the* Philistines, *and I will cut off the* Cherethites, *and destroy the remnant of the sea coast*; quia *Palæstinæ* regio ad mare tota patebat. Jam in utroque loco clarum est, *Cherethæos* et *Philistæos pro uno sumi.* Bochart. *Geog. sac.* l. 1. c. 15. p. 422.

† 1 Sam. xxx. 1, 14, 16. ‡ Josh. xiii. 2, 7.

were

were mixed with the *Amalekites*, and no doubt partook of their plunders, he executed the same vengeance on them all. And that *David* had the ancient sentence of excision against them in view, is more than probable; for the reason of his invading them is expressly said to be, because those nations *were of old the inhabitants of the land**; *viz.* of the land given to be possessed by some of the tribes of *Israel*; and when *David* sent part of the spoil of the *Amalekites* to the elders of *Judah*, that were his friends, he said: † *Behold a present for you of spoil of the enemies of the Lord.*

I think therefore, *David* is fairly vindicable in the execution, which he performed on these nations. Many instances might be produced, of generals giving orders to act by their enemies, when overcome, as *David* did by these people, when he saved neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to *Gath*. The reader may see several in the ‡ note, and others may be easily produced. But

* 1 Sam. xxvii. 8. † Ibid. xxx. 26.

‡ *Camillus*, after the burning of *Rome* by *Brennus* the *Gaul*, beat his army in two battles, and made such a thorough slaughter of them, as that there was not *nuncius cladis relictus*, not a messenger left to carry the news of their destruction. *Liv.* l. 5. c. 49. So in the destruction of the army of *Cyrus* by the *Scythians*, the historian says: *Etiam illud memorabile fuit, quod ne nuncius quidem tantæ claais superfuit.* Justin. *Histor.* 1. 8, 12. In like manner *Mummius*, the *Roman* general, when the *Lusitanians* had invaded some of the allies of *Rome*, killed fifteen thousand of those ravagers, and just as *David* did, εντυχων δε τοις φερουσι α εσυληκασαν, εκτεινε ϗ τους δε παντας, ως μηδ' αγγελον απο του κακου διαφυγειν, killed all those who were carrying away the booty, so that he did not suffer a single messenger to escape the carnage. Appian. Al. *de bell. Hispan.* p. 485. In like manner *Gelo* gave orders to take none of the *Carthaginians* alive, and they were so intirely cut off, ως μηδ' αγγελον τις την Καρχηδονα διασωθηναι; not so much as a messenger was left alive to escape to *Carthage*. Diodor. Sic. *l.* 11. §. 33. The criticks observe, that this expression, of *not leaving one alive*, is not to be understood in its full

But much more consistent is it with all the laws of justice and humanity, to put an end to the incursions of those roving clans, who live in open defiance of the laws of nature and nations, and to root them out, if by gentler methods they will not be recovered to a more civil and social life; and the doing it is a common service to all that lie exposed to their invasions and ravages.

I do not indeed suppose, that *David*, in exterminating these clans, much consulted the interest of *Achish* and the *Philistines*. But he was now in this peculiarly fortunate situation, that in this instance he could serve his own country, and *Achish* too; or at least befriend his country without injuring *Achish*. But though this was no injustice to that prince, yet *David* had good reason to prevent him from knowing against whom the expedition was particularly made. For had he known that *David* had only invaded the enemies of his own country, without doing it the least injury, he must immediately have suspected his attatchment and fidelity to himself, and looked with a jealous eye upon a man, who, though an exile in a foreign country, took every opportunity of weakening the enemies of his own; and the suggestion would be natural, and easily believed: *So did* David, *and so will be his manner all the while he dwells in the country of the*

full extent, but as a proverbial manner of speech, to denote a general destruction. Thus 'tis said, that in the destruction of the army of *Crassus* by the *Parthians*, the slaughter was so great, that *vix nuncium cladis retulerunt*. And yet the same writer tells us, that there were *reliquiæ infelicis exercitus*, who were in *Armeniam, Ciliciam, Syriamque distractæ*. Flor. l. 3. c. 11. §. 10. And we learn from *Appian* de Bell. Civil. l. 2. p 438. that out of one hundred thousand soldiers, of which the army of *Crassus* consisted, near ten thousand of them escaped. And how severe soever such executions may appear, yet there may be such reasons for them, as that even generals of great humanity may think them necessary, and absolutely conducive to the public welfare.

Philistines;

Philiſtines: Nothing can detach him from the love of his country, and whilſt ſheltered by the *Philiſtines*, he will, on every occaſion, ſerve the intereſts of it, and by every method he can, ingratiate himſelf with, and ſecure the affection and eſteem of the people. But this was contrary to all the views of *Achiſh*, who wanted to excite an implacable enmity between him and them, and to have ſecured *David* in his ſervice for ever. A diſappointment in this view would have enraged *Achiſh*, and the conſequence of it muſt have been, his immediate expulſion from that prince's territories, or a worſe fate, that of being cut to pieces and his troops, by the army of the *Philiſtines*. He therefore uſed his right of cutting off theſe proſcribed enemies of his country, that none of them might eſcape to inform *Achiſh* who they were, and to excite the power and indignation of that prince againſt him.

But may it not be thought difficult to account for the difference made between *Saul* and *David*, in that Saul *is ſaid to have incurred the divine diſpleaſure, by ſaving all the cattle of the* Amalekites, *when he was ſent on the expedition againſt them, but that* David *ſaved and brought them away, without any cenſure or blame whatſoever.* But the two caſes are quite different. *Saul*'s orders were expreſly, to put to the ſword, without exception, men, women, and children, oxen, ſheep, camels, and aſſes. But *David* had no ſuch orders; and therefore, tho' *Saul* did wrong in ſparing the cattle of the *Amalekites*, becauſe he was ordered utterly to deſtroy them; *David* did right in ſaving them, and reſerving them for his own uſe, becauſe he had no prohibition to the contrary, and it would have been criminal in him to have done otherwiſe. The order to *Saul*, utterly to deſtroy all the cattle of the *Amalekites*, was not the firſt of the kind. The ſame command

mand was given at the taking of *Jericho*. I do not pretend to know all the reasons of God's proceedure in the judgments he executes. But probably the reason in both these instances was, to keep up, by these severities, a detestation of idolatry, and the vices connected with it; and to let the *Hebrews* see, that they should be cursed in their persons, their cattle, and all their substance, if they fell into the idolatrous criminal practices of the nations around them. And there is no more difficulty in God's ordering such destruction of the cattle by the sword, than in his destroying them by a murrain, or any pestilential disorder; since the original cause is the same in the one as the other, and the end of both is the punishment of sinful nations, and the depriving them of their plenty, to excite them, and other nations, to repentance. But as murrains, and pestilential distempers amongst cattle, are not common, no more were such orders for destroying them by the sword, amongst the *Jews*, and it was absolutely unlawful to do it without them.

After the expedition was over, *David* returns to *Achish*, and upon being asked where he had made his incursion? *David* answers: *Against the south of* Judah, *and against the south of the* Jerahmelites, *and against the south of the* Kenites. Mr. *Bayle*, not with extream good manners, calls this A LIE. But, with his leave, the answer was literally true, but ambiguous; for all those people dwelt on the south of *Judah*, &c. *Achish*, thro' self partiality, understood the answer to mean, that the incursion was made on the southern borders of *Judah*, the *Jerahmelites* and *Kenites* themselves, tho' David asserted no such thing. *David* therefore was not guilty of any falsity; and if he was in any thing to blame, it was for giving an ambi-

ambiguous anſwer to a queſtion, to which he was not obliged to give any direct reply.

Mr. *B.* ſays: *This conduct was very unjuſtifiable, in that he deceived a king to whom he had obligations.* But *David*'s anſwer was not ſuch, as neceſſarily to impoſe on *Achiſh*, and therefore it may be as truly ſaid, that *Achiſh* put a deceit upon himſelf, as that *David* deceived him. I allow he intended to conceal from *Achiſh* who the people were that he invaded, and this he did, not by a lie, but by an anſwer true in fact. The preciſe determined truth was, that he had made an incurſion on the ſouth of *Judah* and the *Kenites*. The *Amalekites* dwelt on the ſouth of *Judah*, and the *Kenites* † lived intermingled with them, till they removed by *Saul*'s order, when he was ſent to deſtroy the *Amalekites*, and probably returned to their former dwellings, after that expedition was over. It is certain at leaſt, that they were much in the ſame ſituation as before; *viz.* on the ſouth of *Judah*, and at no great diſtance from the country of the *Amalekites*; and therefore *Achiſh* might as reaſonably have underſtood *David*'s anſwer to mean, that he invaded the *Amalekites*, and neighbouring hoards, who dwelt beyond the ſouth parts of *Judah*, as that he invaded the ſouthern parts of the very country of *Judah*. For the original * words will equally bear this double verſion: *Againſt the country ſouth of* Judah, &c. and, *againſt the ſouth country of* Judah. If *Achiſh* took *David* in a wrong ſenſe, I do not

† 1 Sam. xv. 6.

* על נגב יהודה. נגב is frequently uſed to denote, *regio auſtrali*, a country ſituated ſouth of any other place. Thus נגב ירושלם *Zech.* xiv. 10. is not the ſouth part of that city, but the country that lies ſouth of *Jeruſalem*. So alſo, the uttermoſt cities of the tribe of the children of *Judah*, towards the coaſt of *Edom* בנגבה in the ſouth, not the ſouth part of *Edom*, but the country ſouth of *Idumæa*. Joſh. xv. 21.

ſee

ſee that *David* in his circumſtances was obliged to undeceive him. For as he had done *Achiſh* no injury in the expedition againſt the *Amalekites*, &c. ſo neither did he, in permitting him quietly to impoſe on himſelf. Whereas had he convinced *Achiſh* of his miſtake, he would have endangered his own life, and the deſtruction of all his people.

The greateſt and beſt caſuiſts have allowed, that ambiguous anſwers are not always criminal, but ſometimes juſtifiable, and particularly in the critical ſituation in which *David* now was. Thus Grotius: † *When any word, or ſentence, admits of more ſignifications than one, whether from common uſe, or the cuſtom of art, or by any intelligible figure; and if the ſenſe of one's own mind agrees to any one of theſe interpretations, 'tis no lie, tho' we ſhould have reaſon to think, that he who hears us ſhould take it in the other. Such a manner of ſpeaking ſhould not be uſed raſhly; but it may be juſtified by antecedent cauſes; as when it is for the inſtruction of him who is committed to our care, or when it is to avoid an unjuſt interrogation*; i. e. *as* Gronovius explains it, *ſuch an interrogation, which, if we gave a ſimple plain anſwer to, would hazard our own ſafety, or that of other innocent perſons.* Of this ſentiment were *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, *Cicero*, the *Stoicks*, *Ariſtotle*, *Quintilian*, and others men-

† Cum vox aliqua, aut ſermonis complexio eſt πολυσημος, id eſt, plures uno ſignificatus admittit, ſive ex vulgi uſu, ſive ex artis conſuetudine, ſive ex figura aliqua intelligibili; tunc ſi animi conceptus uni iſtarum ſignificationum congruat, non admitti mendacium, etiam ſi putetur is qui audit in aliam partem id accepturus. Grot. *de J. B. et P. l.* 3. *c.* 1. §. 10. See alſo the note of *Gronovius* on the paſſage, *paragr.* 1. *note* 74. *Grotius* allows this ambiguity, particularly in the caſe before us, ad evitandam iniquam interrogationem, *i. e.* as *Gronovius* explains it: Ad quam ſi reſpondeamus ſimpliciter, aut nobis, aut aliis innocentibus periculum immineat. *Ib. par.* 2. *note* 75.

tioned by *Grotius* *; and it may be reasonably expected, that those who condemn *David* for his ambiguous answers to *Achish*, should fairly prove, that they are in their nature, and therefore always criminal; or in what circumstances they are so; or that there is somewhat in this answer of *David* that peculiarly renders it so.

Mr. *B.* thinks he says something very considerable, when he says, *that he deceived a king to whom he had obligations*; others charge him *with ingratitude, because he deceived his patron and benefactor.* This would be an objection of some weight, if it could be proved, that he deceived him to his real injury, or the injury of his country. But this, as hath been shewn, cannot be proved. A man may lawfully conceal his sentiments, on some occasions, even from a real friend and benefactor, who asks him questions, which, if clearly answered, may be prejudicial to his interest.

But *he had obligations to* Achish, *who was his patron and benefactor.* What were these great obligations, and in what respects was *Achish* a benefactor to *David?* Why, he allowed him, and his followers, a safe retreat into his country from the persecutions of *Saul*, for about sixteen months; first, at *Gath* his capital, and soon after, upon *David*'s request, at *Ziglag*. But with what view did *Achish* allow him this retreat? Not with the noble generous view of giving refuge to a brave man, ungratefully persecuted, and driven into exile by the unrelenting malice of an arbitrary prince; but merely from political mercenary considerations; to detach so great a general, and so brave a body of soldiers from the interest of their country, and to prevent their joining with the *Hebrew* army in the defence of it, against that invasion which the *Philistines* were now meditating,

* l. 5. c. 1. §. 9. par. 3. 4.

ditating, and to engage him in actual hostilities with his own nation, that he might make him and them perpetual and irreconcileable enemies to each other. This appears from what *Achish* said, either to himself, or some of the *Philistine* princes, upon the invasion of the *Geshurites*, &c. † *He hath made his people* Israel *utterly to abhor him, therefore he shall be my servant for ever*. Both *Achish* and *David* seem to have acted merely upon political principles in this affair, and their obligations to each other to be pretty equal. *David* fled for protection to *Achish*, but with no design to assist him against the *Hebrews*. *Achish* received *David*, not out of any love and friendship to him, but to serve himself, by engaging *David* and his forces against the *Hebrews*, and thereby to put him under a necessity of continuing in his service for ever. They both appear to act with great confidence in each other, without either letting the other into their secret and real views; and therefore as *Achish* was under no obligation to *David* for his retiring to *Gath*, *David* was really under as little to *Achish* for the reception he gave him; for as *David* would not have put himself under his protection, but to serve his own purposes; so neither would *Achish* have received him, had he not had his own views of advantage in doing it. *David*'s deceiving *Achish* therefore received no aggravation from any ingratitude in *David* towards him; but the shelter *Achish* gave him was upon the mean, dishonourable, perfidious principle, of making *David* a detestable traitor to his king and country.

Soon after these transactions, whilst *David* yet remained in the territories of the *Philistines*, they formed their army to invade the *Hebrews*, when

† 1 Sam. xxvii. 12.

Achish said to David: ‡ *Know thou assuredly, that thou and thy men shall go with me to the camp* †; his troops being now increased * by a party from the tribe of *Manasseh*. David answered him: *Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do*; i. e. as some interpret the words: Achish *met with a chearful compliance from* David; and Mr. *Bayle* affirms, *that it was not owing to* David, *that he did not fight under the standard of this* Philistine *prince against the* Israelites, *in the unhappy war wherein* Saul *perished*; or, as he farther says, that *when the* Philistines *had assembled their forces*, David *and his brave adventurers joined the army of* Achish, *and would have fought like lions against their brethren, if the suspicious* Philistines *had not forced* Achish *to dismiss them.*

I am extreamly glad however, that the princes of the *Philistines*, who may reasonably be supposed to know as much of *David*'s dispositions and views, as any modern writers can do, were of a quite different opinion from Mr. *B.* and his followers; who, instead of believing with *Achish* and Mr. *Bayle*, that *David* would have been so very fierce against his own people, made no doubt but he would have fought like a lion, or a tyger, against *Achish* and the *Philistines*.

And indeed *David*'s answer to *Achish* implies nothing like a chearful compliance with him, to engage with his forces against his own people. *Achish* did not directly ask this, and therefore *David* had no occasion to make the promise. The demand was only that he would go to the camp. And the answer was, that he would there make *Achish* witness to his conduct. But this was so

‡ 1 Sam. xxviii. 1.

† תצא במחנה. Thou shalt go with me *to the camp*, not *to battle*, as our version renders it.

* 1 Chron. xii. 19.

far

far from promising that he would employ his men, as *Achish* promised himself, as that it seems rather to imply a kind of denial; and would appear, I believe, very unsatisfactory to most persons in like circumstances: *You shall see what I will do.* I make no promise, but I will go with you to the camp, where you yourself will be judge of my conduct. An evidently cold, and evasive answer.

Thus far there appears to me nothing blamable in *David*'s conduct, and it is worthy of observation, that *David*'s going to the camp was not his own forward officious proposal to *Achish*, but the order of *Achish* to him, which he was not then in circumstances to dispute, and which, in his situation, he was forced to obey; and therefore it is not true, that *David voluntarily offered his assistance against* Saul *and the* Hebrews, to the *Philistine army.* If he was in any thing to blame, it was for throwing himself into the power of the *Philistines.* But he thought that this was the only method left him for the preservation of his life from the power and malice of *Saul*, who was therefore in reality responsible for *David*'s conduct in this instance, and the real cause of that embarrassment, in which he now unhappily found himself.

His situation was undoubtedly very delicate and difficult, and it hath been thought *impossible for him to have performed an honourable part, let him have acted how he would; and that in his circumstances, he would not have deserved a much better character, had he betrayed his benefactor for the sake of his country, than he would, had he betrayed his country for the sake of his benefactor.* But it hath been shewn, that *David* owed *Achish* little thanks for the refuge he gave him, and that his debt of gratitude on this account was too small, to pre-

vent him from exerting himself in his country's service, whenever he had an opportunity.

But supposing his obligations to *Achish* were real, yet surely the affection and duty he owed his country were infinitely superior to any demands of friendship and gratitude, that *Achish* could have upon him. I will therefore suppose that *David* was reduced to the necessity of acting contrary to the gratitude he owed *Achish*, or the natural affection and duty he owed his country. And can there be a moment's doubt, whether private affection should not give place to publick? Or, Whether one particular accidental obligation to the avowed enemy of a man's country, and that greatly lessened by political views of interest in him who conferred it, should not yield to innumerable obligations, arising out of nature, constant and immutable, and which to counter act would argue the most detestable baseness, perfidy, and iniquity? Had *David* therefore been reduced to the hard necessity of fighting against *Achish*, or his country, tho' the alternate would have been grating to a generous mind; yet his preferring his duty, which he owed to his country, to his personal obligations to *Achish*, was right in itself, would have been truly heroick, and deserved immortal applause and commendation. Such was the virtue of the ancient *Romans*, that they would have sacrificed the love of father, son, brother, the nearest relations by blood and affinity, * the obligations of friendship,

* When the proposal was made, that the contention for the superiority, between *Rome* and *Alba*, should be decided by an engagement between the *Horatii* and *Curiatii*, it was reasonably objected by *Tullus* the *Roman* king, that the near relation, and mutual affection and love, that subsisted between the combatants on each side, they being cousin germans, might abate their ardor, and render them less active in the engagement. But the *Curiatii* declared their readiness to sacrifice themselves for

friendſhip, and even life itſelf, to their affection to their country. And would they have ſcrupled, or

for the honour of their country; and the *Horatii*, in their turn, that they would chearfully contend, and ſubmit to any evil, for the ſake of maintaining the ſuperiority of *Rome*; and that tho' the near relation to their antagoniſts muſt be hereby diſſolved, they would ſubmit to it with patience; for that as the *Curiatii* preferred their honour to any nearneſs of relation, the *Horatii* would not eſteem any degree of kindred more ſacred than virtue. *Dion. Hal.* Ant. l. iii. c. 17, 18. The *Roman* orator tells us, that the connection that is created between men, by benefits mutually conferred and received, is very great; but that of all our connections, there is none more important, none dearer than that, which every one hath with his country. Our parents are dear, our children, our relations, our friends, are dear; but our country alone comprehends all theſe dearneſſes; for the benefit of which, what good man would heſitate to die? Hence nothing can be more deteſtable than the inhumanity of thoſe, who tear their country in pieces by their crimes, and are employing their endeavours for its utter deſtruction. *De Offic.* l. i. c. 17. Again he aſſerts, that no good man will act againſt his country, his oath, or promiſe, for the ſake of his friend. *Ib. l.* 3. *c.* 10. Nay he goes farther, and aſking what a ſon muſt do, if a father endeavours to deſtroy his country, he anſwers: The ſon muſt beſeech him not to do it, and if he doth not prevail, he muſt accuſe and threaten him; and finally, if the ſafety of his country is threatened, he muſt prefer that to the ſafety of his father. *Ib. l.* iii. *c.* 23. Once more, which comes up to the caſe in point: Who was, ſays he, more famous in *Greece* than *Themiſtocles*, who having, as commander in the *Perſian* war, delivered *Greece* from bondage, was baniſhed thro' envy, but could not brook, as he ought to have done, the injury he received from his ungrateful country. He acted, as *Coriolanus* did twenty years before, *viz.* fled and joined his country's enemies. But when neither of them found any to aſſiſt them againſt it, they both laid violent hands upon themſelves. He adds: Such a conſpiracy we ſhould be ſo far from covering under the pretence of friendſhip, as that it deſerves to be revenged by every kind of puniſhment, that no one may think it is lawful for him to follow a friend, when he endeavours to make war upon his country. *Id. de Amic.* c. 12. And to mention a modern noble inſtance: The brave *Guſtavus Erickſon*, unwilling to injure *Banner*, his generous protector, or violate the ſacred rights of friendſhip, gratitude, and hoſpitality, yet in any events judged, and judged heroically too, that

or thought it dishonourable, to have sacrificed some personal obligations to an avowed enemy of it, when such sacrifice was necessary to its preservation and safety?

But 'tis possible, that if *David* had continued with the *Philistine* army, he might not have been reduced to the necessity of employing his arms against either his country, or the *Philistines*. May we not suppose, that before the engagement, *David* might have proposed terms of peace, in order to prevent it? Might he not have told *Achish*, that notwithstanding his personal obligations to him, he had none to the *Philistines* in general, and therefore could not stand still, and see his countrymen destroyed by the *Philistine* forces? That unless they would give over the expedition, he should think himself obliged to join the army of *Saul*, and do his utmost to prevent their destruction? And would not this have been acting like a man of honour, a lover of his country, and been consistent with any gratitude that he owed to *Achish* for his protection? This, I think, I may safely affirm, that it is in all views of policy impossible, that as Mr. *B.* asserts, he could have fought under the standard of the *Philistine* princes against the *Israelites*. For as he had in immediate view the throne of *Israel*, had he fought in the *Philistine* army against his own nation, it must have irritated all the tribes of *Israel* against him, and according as *Achish* wished, made all his people abhor him for ever; whereby he

obligations to the publick, and duty to one's country, ought to supersede all the ties of private affection. And upon this principle he acted. *See Univers. Mod. Hist.* vol. xxxiii. p. 115. And there is no rule of conduct more incontestible and rational, than that where two real obligations interfere with one another, so that if one be regarded, the other must be superseded; the obligation of lesser importance must give way to that which is greater.

would

would have cut off every possible prospect of succeeding to the crown. But *David* was too prudent a man to take such a step, and if *Achish* endeavoured, by forcing him into his camp, to ensnare, and ruin him with his own nation; as he well knew the intention of *Achish*, he had a right to guard against it, to counteract policy by policy, and tho' obliged to give an answer, to give him such a one, as should leave himself at liberty to act as prudence and duty should direct him. And finally, had he turned his arms against the *Philistines*, he might have shewn his gratitude to *Achish*, without injuring his country, by affording him protection in his turn, and securing his person, and the lives of many of his people, had the *Israelites* been victorious in the engagement.

However, *Achish* had such an opinion of his interest in *David*'s friendship, that he took his answer in good part, and concluding that he was intirely gained over to his interest, and the more effectually to secure and encourage him, promises him: *I will make you keeper of my head for ever.* You shall be always near me, and have the charge of my person. *David* made no reply, but kept himself intirely upon the reserve, without disclosing the real sentiments of his mind. He followed *Achish* with his forces, who marched into the territories of the *Hebrews*, and encamped at *Shunem*, in the tribe of *Naphthali*; whilst *Saul*, with his army, pitched their tents on the famous mountains of *Gilboa*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Saul's *consultation with the Witch of* Endor.

WHEN *Saul* had surveyed the forces of his enemies from the hill where he was encamped, he found them much more numerous than his own; as they had, probably, the assistance of several of the neighbouring states and princes, who willingly joined the *Philistines* as auxiliaries in this expedition, either for the sake of plunder, or because they had been hired by them for the service. *Saul* was extreamly surprised and terrified at the dangerous situation in which he found himself, seeing, as * *Josephus* explains it, how unable he was to oppose an army so greatly superiour to his own, and probably apprehensive that this engagement would prove fatal to him. What aggravated his terror was, that though now he earnestly desired the direction and assistance of the God of *Israel*, he saw himself quite deserted by him, and in every method, by which God usually conveyed his will to those, who inquired of him, intirely disappointed. *Abiathar*, the high priest, who escaped the massacre of his father and family, attended *David* with the pontifical ephod, so that he could not receive any answer from God by *Urim*. The prophets of God had forsaken him, as he had shewn his contempt of them, and once and again refused to obey the orders, God had given him by their ministration; and tho' he ardently wished it, he had nothing suggested to himself, or others, by any dreams or visions of the night, how he was to act, or what was likely to be his fate. As all these resources failed him, he at length bethought him of *Samuel*, his former friend, by whom he had been anointed king over *Israel*; and who, if

* A. J. l. 6. c. 14. §. 2.

if he could consult him, he hoped would give him that information he needed, and assist him by his counsel in this deep exigency of his affairs. He immediately resolved to try the experiment, and see if he could not conjure up the soul of the deceased prophet, and learn by him what God refused to inform him of. An attempt as absurd as impious, and which compleated the measure of the iniquities of this unhappy prince; herein acting like the haughty impatient queen of the heathen Gods:

Flectere si nequeo superos, acheronta movebo.

God had expressly forbidden, that any * consultor with familiar spirits, or necromancer, who inquired of the dead †, should be permitted amongst his people, and as they were an abomination to him, commanded them to be put to death; ‡ and *Saul* himself, probably by the advice of *Samuel*, or in conformity to the law, had ordered an inquisition to be made against them, and cut of as many of them as he could find. But such was the impatience and anxiety of his mind, that he now ordered some of his attendants to seek him out one of those women, that pretended to ‖ have a familiar

* Deut. xviii. 11. † Levit. xx. 27. ‡ 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 9.

‖ בעלת אוב. *A woman that hath a familiar spirit.* So our version. The words literally rendered will run: *The mistress*, or, *she that hath the power of the bottle*, or *belly*. אוב signifies *a bottle*, and is transferred to denote *a bottle bellied person*; or one whose belly is distended, large and round, as a bottle, whether by food or fat, or any other kind of repletion; in like manner as the *Greek* ασκος, a bottle, is used in this figurative sense. Hence אוב is farther applied to signify those impostors, who pretended to foretel futurities, by raising up the dead, or converse with familiar spirits; whose oracles they delivered as from their bellies, inflated or swelled, as they would have it thought, by some divine energy, or power that possessed them; and who were

familiar spirit, that he might go to and inquire of her. They immediately informed him, that there was

were called by the *Greeks*, εγγαςριμυθοι, *ventriloqui*, persons who spoke in, or by the belly. Thus *Josephus* explaining *Saul's* order, says: Ζητηθηναι δ' αυτω κελευει γυναιον τι των εγγαςριμυθων, και τας των τεθνηκοτων ψυχας εκκαλουμενων, ως ουτω γνωσομενος ει κατα νουν χωρειν αυτω μελλει τα πραγματα. Το γαρ εγγαςριμυθων γενος αναγον των νεκρων ψυχας προλεγει τοις δεομενοις τα αποβησομενα. *Saul* commanded that they should seek out for him one of those women that could speak out of their bellies, and call forth the souls of the dead, that by this means he might know, if his affairs should succeed according to his mind. For this sort of belly speakers can bring up the souls of the dead, and by their help can foretel futurities to those who inquire of them. *Antiq. l.* 6. *c.* 15. §. These pretenders to call up the spirits of the deceased were not unfrequent amongst the *Heathens*. We have an instance mentioned by *Herodotus*, l. 5. c. 29. of *Melissa*, the wife of *Periander*, who was raised up by these dealers with the dead, and whose ειδωλον discovered the deposit, that *Periander* was solicitous to know where it had been concealed.

Thus *Canidia* boasted,

Possim crematos excitare mortuos. Horat. *epod. od. ult.*

So also the *Thessalian* witch in *Lucan*, lib. 6. v. 592, when *S. Pompeius* addressed her,

——Ut certum liceat mihi noscere finem
Quem belli fortuna paret ——

And desired,

—— Vel numina torque,
Vel tu parce Deis, & manibus exprime verum. Ver. 591.

Tells him, that by her art she could

—— Quos velles in actus Invitos præbere Deos. Ver. 606.

And that she would,

Emathiis unum campis attollere corpus,
Ut modo defuncti tepidique cadaveris ora
Plena voce sonent. Ver. 620, &c.

And *Medea* in *Ovid* boasts,

Quorum ope, quum volui, jubeoque tremiscere montes,
Et mugire solum, manesque exire sepulchris.
Metam. l. 7. v. 199, 205.

And

was ſuch a woman at *Endor*, which could not be far from *Gilboa*, where *Saul* lay encamped. Determined to conſult her, he immediately put of his royal habit, and cloathed himſelf in a quite different dreſs, that he might not be known to the woman, nor be ſeen, to his own reproach, to uſe and encourage thoſe criminal arts, the dealers in which he himſelf had ſo ſeverely puniſhed. He left his camp, and with only two attendants came to the woman by night, and ſaid to her: *Divine* †

to

And to mention no more, *Heliodorus* deſcribes an *Ægyptian* old hag, by her incantations, as twice raiſing up violently, againſt his will, her dead ſon, to inquire of him whether her other ſon was yet alive, and would return in ſafety to her; and as receiving for anſwer from him, that the ſon ſhe inquired after ſhould never return to her, and that ſhe herſelf ſhould, as ſhe well deſerved, die by the ſword. *Æthiop.* l. 6. p. 293, &c. edit. *Bourdelot.* 1619. See alſo what *Merſe* boaſts of in *Apuleius*, Apolog. l. 1. p. 15.

It may be further obſerved of theſe ſorcereſſes, that by ſpeaking from their bellies, they altered the natural tone of the voice, ſo that though they really ſpoke themſelves, they could eaſily impoſe on thoſe who conſulted them, by making them think that they received their anſwers from the ſpirit that was conjured up. They could alſo ſo manage their voice, as to make it be heard, either above them, or below them, or on either ſide of them, down a chimney, or through a wall, as ſhould beſt ſuit their impoſture, and moſt effectually deceive thoſe who applied to them; and there have been various inſtances of perſons, who have had this art of ſpeaking out of their bellies, and by cauſing the ſound of their words to come from different places, have greatly ſurpriſed and terrified thoſe who have been with them; though they never pretended to the art of conjuration, or the power of converſation with the dead.

† קסומי באוב. *Divine unto me by the familiar ſpirit.* So our verſion. קסם is a word equally uſed in a good and a bad ſenſe. It ſignifies a ſagacious, or prudent man, as we render it, *Iſai.* iii. 2. and the ſubſtantive from it is rendered, *Prov.* xvi. 10. *a divine ſentence.* The word ſignifies *to divide*, thence *to diſtinguiſh*, thence *preciſely and diſtinctly to declare*; as *Golius* explains it: *Menſura ſua, modoque debito definivit; ita expendit, diſpoſuitque et inſtituit negotium.* Hence in a good ſenſe, it denotes

to me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring him up to me, whom I shall name to thee. The woman replied: *Behold thou knowest what* Saul *hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land; wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to be put to death.* On this *Saul* swore by the living God, that *no punishment should happen to her* on this account. Encouraged by this assurance of impunity, she asked him: *Whom shall I bring up to thee?* He answered: *Bring me up* Samuel. As soon as she saw the prophet, she cried out with a loud voice, and said to *Saul: Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art* Saul. But the king said to her: *Fear not. What hast thou seen?* She replied: *I*

notes a wise man, who so distinguishes things, by the appearances of them, and the reason of his own mind, as to pass a proper judgment upon them, and to advise what is fit to be done in any circumstances of importance whatsoever. When used in a criminal sense it means, one who pretends to pass judgment in cases of difficulty, or with respect to future events, by illicit, deceitful methods; the cheats of sorcery, conversing with the dead, and the like, to impose on weak, credulous, and superstitious persons. See *Ezek.* xxii. 28. And though *Saul* knew, that those who pretended to this art, and those who consulted them, both incurred the displeasure of God, yet he says to the woman: *Divine*, declare to me what I want to know, by that power which possesses and fills thee, *and raise up to me him, whom I shall name to thee.* They pretended, that when they were agitated and swelled by the influence of their familiar spirit, they had power, by his means, to bring up any ghosts that should be named to them, to satisfy the questions of those who consulted them. And in order the more effectually to carry on the fraud, these impostors altered their voice, and spoke in a low, whispering, shrill tone, that it might be thought to come out of the earth, and seem more like the voice of a Spirit. *Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be* כאוב מארץ *as the voice of one that speaks out of her belly, seemingly coming from the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust*; or as the word signifies, be like the shrill, low muttering, or chattering of a swallow, or a crane. See *Isai.* xxxviii. 14.

have

have seen Gods * *ascending out of the earth. Saul* asked: *What is his form*, or in what form doth he appear? She answered: *An old man ariseth, and he is cloathed with a mantle.* By this *Saul perceived* that it was *Samuel*; because the description she gave, of what she pretended to see, agreed to the usual appearance and dress of that prophet. *Saul*, immediately bowed his face to the earth, and paid him the reverence due to his character, as though he had actually seen him. *Samuel*, however, did not seem to know what *Saul* wanted with him, and therefore said to him: *Why hast thou* † *disquieted me*, thus *to bring me up? Saul* replied: *I am sorely dis-*

* *I see* אלהים *Gods ascending out of the Earth*, viz. *Moses* and *Samuel*, according to *Jarchi*, in *loc.*. Mr. *Le Clerc* renders אלהים by *magistratum*, or magistrate, because *Samuel*, had been supream magistrate over the *Hebrews*; and censures the rendering it by θεοὺς, *Gods*, as the 70" have done, and our translators, because the witch pretended to see one person only. But this doth not appear from the words; and I know not whether *F. Houbigant*, who calls this opinion of *Le Clerc* ridiculous, and seems pleased with every opportunity of chastising him, hath given the true reason of the use of this plural word in the place before us, when he says; that it was the custom of idolaters to call the God they worshiped by a plural term, which they also applied to their Genii, or the spirits they raised up from beneath. I believe it will be difficult to produce any instance of a single genius, or spirit denoted by a plural term. I rather should apprehend, that in order to raise *Saul*'s attention, and opinion of her art and power, she pretends that she saw Gods rising out of the earth, as though she had brought up several ghosts by her enchantments, as the attendants of *Samuel*, whom *Saul* wanted to consult; and supposing him to be amongst them, he immediately asks her: *What is his form*, or manner of appearance and habit?

† *Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?* The original word הרגזתני signifies a violent commotion, such as that of the earth, when it shakes. *Job* ix. 6. or the trembling of a city or kingdom, thro' terrour. *Amos*. viii. 8. and plainly intimates, that *Samuel* was forcibly compelled, against his will, to make his appearance on this occasion. But what spirit, whether in heaven, or or hell, earth, or under the earth, can resist the all powerful enchantments of an old hag, with the assistance of her familiar imp!

tressed

treſſed, for the Philiſtines *make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore have I called thee, that thou mayſt make known to me what I ſhall do. Samuel* then ſaid to him: *Why then doſt thou aſk of me, ſince the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? For the Lord will now perform,* to ſhew that he hath not altered his purpoſe concerning thee, *what he formerly ſpake by me, and the Lord will rend the kingdom out of thy poſſeſſion, and will give it to thy neighbour, even to* David. *Becauſe thou didſt not hearken to the voice of* Jehovah, *nor execute the fierceneſs of his anger upon* Amalek, *therefore hath the Lord brought thee into this diſtreſs this day; and the Lord will deliver* Iſrael *with thee into the hand of the* Philiſtines, *and to morrow thou and thy ſons ſhall be with me. The camp alſo of* Iſrael *will the Lord deliver into the hand of the* Philiſtines. *Saul* was ſo terrified with this dreadful ſentence, that having received no ſuſtenance, either the day before, or that whole night, he immediatly fainted away, and fell all along flat upon the earth. But being perſuaded to refreſh himſelf with proper food, he recovered his ſtrength and ſpirits, and with his two attendants returned the ſame night to his army.

Different are the interpretations given of this tranſaction by different expoſitors. As for myſelf, the more thoroughly I conſider it, I am the more fully convinced, that there was no appearance of any kind of ſpirit, or phantom, at all; and that *Samuel* in particular was not conſulted, nor gave any anſwers; and that ſuch as were pretended to be given by him, were given only by this woman, ſpeaking out of her belly, and by her ſhrill tone imitating the manner, in which ſpirits or ghoſts were ſuppoſed to ſpeak.

—— *Alterna*

——— *Alterna loquentes*
Umbræ cum Sagana resonarent triste et acutum.
Hor. *Sat. l.* 1. *Sat.* 8. *v.* 40, 41.

Indeed there are so many marks of imposture and deceit, that may be observed throughout the whole relation, as that I have no doubt, but that this conference was intirely carried on by *Saul* and the old witch, without the help of any spirit whatsoever.

It may be observed that this affair was transacted by night *, the time most proper to manage deceptions of this kind; when persons are most liable to be impressed by fear, and imposed on by their own imaginations. This was the season always made use of by this sort of cheats, the better to conceal their frauds. A circumstance this of itself, which renders the account of *Samuel*'s apparition greatly suspicious.

Thus the *Maga Thessala* in *Lucan*, lib. 6. v. 570.

——————— *Alta*
Nocte poli, Titan medium quo tempore ducit
Sub nostra tellure diem.

Thus also the *Ægyptian* hag in *Heliodorus* performed νυκτερινὰς τινὰς ἁγισμὰς, certain mysteries or sacrifices by night, and she accordingly began her operations about midnight. *Æthiop.* p. 291, 292. And indeed the night is the general time, when ghosts love to make their appearance, and that is best fitted for all kind of magical entertainments.

Nox, ait, arcanis fidissima, quæque diurnis
Aurea cum luna succeditis ignibus astra,
Tuque triceps Hecate, quæ coeptis conscia nostris
Adjutrixque venis, cantusque artesque magarum,
Dique omnes nemorum, dique omnes noctis adeste.
Ovid. *Metam. l.* 6. *v.* 192, &c.

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 8.

It is very remarkable alſo, that even *Samuel* himſelf doth not ſeem to have known any thing of God's raiſing him from the dead; for he ſaith nothing about it; no, nor any thing about God's ſending him at all on this occaſion; but expreſly blames *Saul* for diſturbing him, and bringing him up. *Why haſt thou diſquieted me to bring me up?* He was therefore brought up, if at all brought up, by *Saul*, and not by God; i. e. by *Saul*, with the aid of the old woman's incantations. For if he had known that God had brought him up, he would not have complained of being diſquieted by *Saul*. Now as *Samuel* knew, as well as *Saul*, that conſulting the dead was abſolutely unlawful, ſurely it became the prophet to reprove him for doing it; and to let him know, that tho' he appeared, it was not by virtue of her art, but by the immediate power of God, who raiſed him up, and ſent him to pronounce judgment againſt him. Inſtead of this, he ſhews himſelf diſpleaſed with *Saul* for doing it, and thereby excludes God from having any hand in it.

It may be remarked, that *Saul*'s ſervants * were not admitted to be preſent at this ceremony, and that

* There is no probability of what a very learned and reverend writer, in *his Hiſtorical Account of the Life of* David, vol. 2. p. 217. edit. 4ta. ſuppoſes; that Saul's *two ſervants were preſent during the whole of this tranſaction.* The hiſtory plainly intimates the contrary, when it ſays, that upon *Saul*'s dying away with fear, *the woman came to him, and ſaid: Let me ſet a morſel of bread before thee*, &c. and that upon his refuſal, then *his ſervants, with the woman, compelled him to riſe up from the ground and refreſh himſelf*; he yielding to their united perſuaſions, after he had reſiſted the ſingle intreaties of the old woman. And in this the reverend author himſelf, p. 215. who ſuppoſes the two ſervants preſent, agrees with me. For he ſays, that Saul *fell at his full length on the floor, and that the woman ſeeing this ran up to him, and finding the diſtreſſed weak condition he was in, endeavoured to perſuade him, as well as ſhe could, to take ſome ſuſtenance, which he abſolutely refuſed. Then calling his ſervants to her aid, they all in a manner compelled him to conſent.* *Saul*'s ſervants therefore were not preſent with him at this intercourſe with *Samuel.*

Saul and the old woman had the whole converſation together, and that the affair was intirely tranſacted without any witneſs. It ſhould ſeem, that *Samuel* did not chooſe there ſhould be any proof of his being raiſed up to meet *Saul*, and was aſhamed of his company, and attending on ſuch an occaſion. Nor was it for the old woman's advantage, that there ſhould be any inſpectors of her conduct; who by their curioſity might have ſpoiled the force of her charms, prevented the ſpectre from riſing out of the ground, and ſo forced the oracle to ſilence.

Nay farther, *Saul* himſelf neither ſaw * *Samuel*, nor any of his attending ſpectres, and ſeems to have

Samuel. And though it is ſaid, that *Saul perceived* it was *Samuel*, there is nothing ſaid about his two ſervants perceiving it, as indeed they could not, if they were not with *Saul*, when he is ſaid to have ſeen him.

* There is not the leaſt intimation in the hiſtory, that *Saul* ever ſaw *Samuel*. 'Tis only ſaid the woman ſaw him, and that ſhe deſcribed him, and that on her deſcribing him, Saul *perceived it was* Samuel, *viz.* by the deſcription ſhe gave of him; for the reverend author himſelf allows, p. 213, that *Saul had not ſeen him, but only upon her deſcription believed it was him, and then immediately went to the cell.* So that all his perception was only his belief; and the aſſertion that *Saul* perceived him after he ran to the cell, is not the hiſtory, but an addition to it; which makes no mention of *Saul*'s twice perceiving him, therefore not of his perceiving him at all, any otherwiſe than by the old hag's deſcription of him. Yea, it is certain, that *Saul* and the witch were in two different places, when the oracle was delivered, and *Saul* almoſt ſtruck dead upon hearing it, and that he was not admitted to be preſent at the cavern from whence it proceeded. For as ſoon as the reſponſes were finiſhed, and *Samuel*'s ſoul was ſuppoſed to be laid ſafe under ground again, the woman appeared, and as it is expreſsly ſaid, *came to* Saul, *and found him ſore troubled.* 1 Sam. xxix. 21. They were therefore before this in ſeparate places from each other. So that the reverend author, when he aſſerts, p. 213, that *the king*, upon inquiry, hearing that it was an old man, with a mantle, believed it was *Samuel* ſhe ſaw, and *ſtraitway going to the cell, and perceiving the prophet*, did him obeiſance; aſſerts

have been in a separate place from her, where he could be witness to nothing that was done by her. When the woman pretended first to see him, *Saul* said: *What sawest thou?* She replies: *I saw Gods*, &c. *Saul* again asks her: *What form is he of? An old man*, she says, *with a mantle.* So that *Saul* saw neither the prophet, nor any phantom, and had not the conviction of his own eyes to assure him, that it was *Samuel*, or a ghost who conversed with him; and only perceived it was him, because the old witch described him according to his age and usual dress, which could not but be well known to almost every person in *Israel* *. The only evidence therefore we have of *Samuel*'s, or any ghosts appearance on this occasion, is only the assertion of this wretched woman, whose business and interest it was to deceive those, who were fools enough to consult her.

It deserves also to be remarked, that the old woman must have known *Samuel*, both as to his person and dress; for she describes him as an old

what the history seems plainly to contradict; though the proof of this fact, that *Saul* went to the cell, and saw *Samuel*, should have been very express and clear, as his whole account of this transaction at *Endor* depends upon the certainty of it. Nay, the reverend writer himself allows, p. 218, that *the text doth not say, that* Saul *saw* Samuel, *but only tells us something that plainly implies it; that he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.* But if *Saul* believed the witch, when she said she saw *Samuel*, he would naturally pay the same obeisance to him as though he saw him himself, as he was to consult him how to act against the forces of the *Philistines*.

* This *Josephus* expressly affirms, who after mentioning *Samuel*'s age, and his sacerdotal cloak or mantle, says: γνωρισαν εκ τουτων ο βασιλευς τον Σαμουηλον οντα, *by these things the king knew it to be* Samuel. *A. J.* l. 6. c. 14. §. 2. And that *Saul* did not see *Samuel*, is agreeable to what the Rabbinical writers report: That the person, who makes the dead arise, sees him, but doth not hear his voice; but that he who consults the dead, hears him indeed, but doth see him. The latter part I believe to be very true, *viz.* that he never sees him. See Jarchi *in loc.*

man,

man, with a mantle; and so could easily impose on *Saul*, who saw nothing, by giving him such an account of his age and dress, as was suitable to his character; for we read nothing of *Samuel*'s telling her who he was, nor of any information she received concerning him from her imp, nor of any revelation from above to satisfy her in this particular. And therefore she must have known him personally. The *Jewish* writers indeed solve * this matter in another way; who tell us, that she knew him, from the manner of his ascending, which was different from that of other people. For when any one makes the dead rise, as the expression is, *per* † *virilitatem suam*, they rise head downwards, and feet uppermost; whereas *Samuel*, they say, rose with his head upwards, in honour of *Saul*. So that it seems *Samuel* knew before whom he was to appear, though he was quite ignorant of the reasons of his sending for him. This is a difficulty that wants solving; as also how he came by his mantle, if it was really *Samuel*, and of what fabrick it was; since, as the revd. author before mentioned supposes, he took hold of his mantle, and shook it at *Saul*. This is truly marvellous.

We may also take notice of the crafty manner in which she managed *Saul* on this occasion. When he came to her, he says: *Divine to me, and bring up him whom I shall name to thee.* She, either having seen him before, or suspecting who he was by his stature, makes him a very cautious answer; neither granting nor refusing his request, till she had obtained from him an assurance of her safety. *Thou knowest what* Saul *hath done*, &c. *Why layest thou a snare for my life?* Saul immediately replies: *By the life of God, no punishment shall*

* *Vid.* R. S. Jarchi *in loc.* † *Vid.* Buxtorf. *Lex. Chald.* voce. זכורו.

happen to thee upon this account, and hereby plainly discovered who he was; since no one could have secured her from the punishment she deserved, but *Saul* himself; and by this artifice, if she had not known him before, she must certainly know now, and become better prepared for the answer she was to give him. And yet that *Saul* might not suspect her knowing him, she conceals it, till she had an opportunity of making him believe, that she knew † who he was by her art, or the

† The revd. writer beforementioned, supposes, p. 213. that *Saul, to prevent all delusion, would not tell the* Pythoness *whom he would have raised up, till he brought her to the very cell, or place of her incantation, and then told her, he would have* Samuel *called up to him.* This may pass for an ingenious imagination to support an hypothesis; but there is no proof can be produced for it, and it directly contradicts what he had before asserted, that, *upon her description of him*, which was after *Saul* told her whom he would have raised up, *he went immediately to the cell.* He farther adds, that *the instant* Saul *said this, and pronounced* Samuel's *name, she looking into the cell, saw* Samuel, *and seeing him so unexpectedly, and without the aid of her art, she was affrighted, and cried out. This cell*, or cavern, he supposes to be *under ground.* But if *Samuel* was really raised up by God, and to appear *in propria persona* to *Saul*, I cannot think he would have been raised up, and exhibited in an old witch's subterraneous cell by midnight, where *Saul* might be easily imposed on, and scarce ought to have believed his own eyes, had he imagined that he had even seen him there. For how could *Saul* know him in that situation, so as to be sure it was he? The underground cell must be in its nature dark, and the revd. author hath introduced no lamps or torches to illuminate it, and the moonlight, if there was any, could scarce reach into the recesses of the cavern, or at best afford but an indistinct, glimmering, imperfect view, of its inside, or any persons within it. And had *Saul* pretended to have seen any thing, as in fact he did not, I should be apt to think it only a spectre raised by his own imagination, as he had been long subject to melancholy, was now fatigued by his journey from the army, had fasted the whole day, declared he was sore distressed, and could not but feel something of horror rising in him from the appearance of the sorceress, the darkness of the night, and the subterraneous cavern, in which she is supposed to have practised her inchantments.

the discovery of *Samuel*, whom she pretended to have raised up. For when the woman saw *Samuel*, then she cried out to *Saul: Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art* Saul; an exclamation that would have been ridiculous, but upon the supposition of her being informed by the spectre who he was, and of the apprehension she had of being punished by *Saul*, as she knew she had deserved.

ments. And I frankly confess, that the supposition of God's raising up an eminent prophet from the dead, then concealing him in a dark underground magick chamber of a witch, and making him deliver oracles from that workshop of impiety, in his name, to a prince that he had forsaken, and destined to destruction, seems to me utterly incredible. Nothing can look more like conjuration and imposture than such a representation, and tho' it may do well enough in a pagan history, hath nothing in revelation to countenance and support it.

What the revd. author says of the witch's seeing *Samuel without her aid*, and that *this was the cause of her being frightned and crying out*, is, I think, plainly contradicted by the history. The reason which the history gives of her fright and exclamation was, her now pretending to know that it was *Saul*, and her danger upon the account of it, for dealing in an art that he had punished with death. When she saw *Samuel* she cried with a loud voice, and said to Saul: *Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art* Saul. If she had never called in the aid of her art, she would have had no reason to be frightned; neither by the appearance of *Samuel*, whom she knew she was to raise up, and who it seems appeared in no frightful shape, but only in his mantle; nor from *Saul*'s displeasure, since *Samuel*'s voluntary appearance prevented her making use of any magick arts. But that she did make use of these arts, and thereby knew she had forfeited her life, she herself confesses, and makes a merit of it to the king, when she tells him: *Behold thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in thy hand*, forfeited it by my practices, *and have hearkened unto thy words, which thou spakest to me*; i. e. if they mean any thing: *I have divined*, and brought up *Samuel*, as thou desiredst me. 1 *Sam.* xxix. 21. Now here is a thing extremely wonderful, that God should immediately raise up *Samuel* from the dead, and yet do it in such a manner, as that the sorceress should know nothing of the matter; and when all was over, should even venture to tell *Saul* to his face, that she had forfeited her life to him, by obeying his voice, and bringing up *Samuel* to an interview with him.

When the old woman had made *Saul* believe ſhe had brought *Samuel* out of the ground, the next thing was to get out of *Saul*, what was the errand he came on, that ſhe might know what anſwer was proper to return him; for now ſhe was to diſappear herſelf, and *Saul* and *Samuel* were the only perſons to be concerned in the future converſation. *Saul* very well knew, that *Samuel*, whilſt living, told him what was in his heart, by the prophetick ſpirit, without any information from *Saul* himſelf; and had *Samuel* now done the ſame, and told *Saul* what he came upon, without aſking what it was, and immediately pronounced his doom; this indeed would have been wonderful, and what we could ſcarce have accounted for by fraud and witchcraft. Inſtead of this, *Samuel* is repreſented as pumping *Saul*, and as if he was now at *Saul*'s command, humbly aſking, *why he ſent for him*. This is quite right in the old witch to aſk, becauſe ſhe could not give her oracle without it; but not ſo becoming the character of *Samuel*; who ought to have been firſt addreſſed by *Saul*; or rather, I ſhould apprehend, to have at once pronounced his doom, without aſking *Saul*, or permitting *Saul* to aſk him a ſingle queſtion. But after *Saul* had opened all his heart, and fully explained the nature and danger of his ſituation to *Samuel*, as he thought, but in reality to the old woman; ſhe had her reply ready, and there was nothing in it but what *Saul*'s account of himſelf would naturally lead her to.

Samuel's firſt queſtion to *Saul* is in the true ſpirit of conjuration, and not the language of a man who had any principles of religion in him; much leſs of the departed ſpirit of a good man, and one who had been a venerable prophet of the true God.

God. *Why hast thou* ‡ *disquieted me to bring me up?* The word means, violently shaken me, and by force brought me up against my will. It was extreamly proper for a *Thessalian* hag to boast, that she could, by her magick arts

—— *In actus*
Invitos præbere Deos.
Lucan, *l.* vi. *v.* 606, 607.

And it was the common pretence of these impostors, and what was believed by the vulgar, that they could

Sæpe animas imis excire sepulchris.
Virg. *Ecl.* viii.

Thus *Horace* describing *Canidia*'s tricks,

——— *cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde*
Manes elicerent animas responsa daturas.
Satyr. *l.* i.—Sat. viii. *v.* 28, 29.

‡ The revd. author beforementioned, says, that the original word we render, *disquieted*, should be rendered, *provoked: Why hast thou provoked me to bring me up?* and that Samuel's *disquiet plainly arose from* Saul's *hardened impenitence in the ways of irreligion.* p. 230. If it was this provoked his righteous spirit, 'tis much he did not reprove him for it, and particularly, that he did not reprove him for seeking to this witch, and enquiring by her of the dead; which *Samuel* knew was one of the greatest of all crimes, and punishable by the command of God with death. Instead of this, he only puts him in mind of his wrong conduct with regard to *Amalek*, as the cause of God's rejecting him, without mentioning a word of the real cause of his own disquiet. But the learned author is mistaken in his rendering of the word. It never denotes to provoke, but to *move and disturb by violence*; and when *Samuel* says, *why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up*, he more than intimates, that he was violently disturbed out of his rest, by being brought up to appear on that occasion. Besides, what will the revd. author get by his new version, suppose we render the words: *Why hast thou provoked me to bring me up?* For it is evident *Samuel* ascribes his being brought up to *Saul*'s provoking him, whatever was the manner of it, and not to the operation and power of God.

And

And *Tibullus*

Hæc cantu finditque solum, manesque sepulchris
Elicit, et tepido devocat ossa rogo.
Lib. i. eleg. 2. v. 45, 46.

And thus *Samuel* is made to submit to the same necessity; and tho' he had power with God to call down his thunder when alive, he had not power enough, in the other world, with God, to prevent the force of an old woman's spells, or his being made a party in a necromantick transaction.

It is of a piece with this, when upon being asked what she saw, she answers: *Elohim*, or Gods. She had brought up the infernal deities. This looks very suspicious. The *Dii Manes* of the *Pagans* are well known. But infernal Gods are wholly unknown in the true *Hebrew* theology, and departed spirits are never characterised by this sacred appellation. It was the proper language of magick, and what was borrowed from the profane rights of pagan superstition. For these wretched enchantresses boasted, that they had power over the Gods themselves, especially the infernal Gods, and could make them subservient to their commands. Thus *Lucan*'s Ericto threatens *Pluto*.

——*Tibi, pessime mundi*
Arbiter, immittam ruptis Titana cavernis,
Et subito feriere die.
Lib. vi. v. 742, 743.

So *Ovid*'s Medea.

Dique omnes nemorum, deique omnes noctis adeste.
Met. l. vii. v. 192.

Again,

Again, she saw Gods *ascending out of the earth*; *Inis exire sepulchris*, as a *pagan* witch would have expressed it; it being the almost universal opinion of the heathen world, that all departed spirits, whether of the good or bad, descended to subterraneous regions, and that the affairs relative to them were

Alta terra caligine mersæ.

Virg. Æn. 6.

Agreeable to this pagan notion, the old witch of *Endor* describes her Gods and *Samuel* as ascending out of the earth; but doth not tell us, whether the earth opened to let them out, or whether they came through a chink, or rose like a fog or exhalation, out of the ground. Nor are we informed how she knew that *Samuel* was really under ground. Probably he was in a better place. If he was, she could not see him ascending out of the earth, and therefore in reality saw him not at all; and her crying out, that she saw him come up from thence, was mere pretence and imposture; and therefore when the historian says, that *the woman saw* Samuel, he can only mean, that, according to the part she was to act in this conjuration, she saw him, or pretended to see him; not that she actually saw him, and saw him too rising out of the earth, as she positively, but I apprehend falsely, affirmed.

It deserves to be farther remarked, that the old woman deceived *Saul*, and dexterously avoided an answer to his principal inquiry, because it was out of her power to give him the proper one. *Saul* tells the supposed *Samuel*, that he had brought him up, that *he might make known to him, what he should do*; or how he was to act in his present critical situation; whether he should fight or retreat,

treat, or how he might extricate himself and forces from the danger that threatened them? Instead of this, the supposed prophet, taking occasion from an expression of *Saul*'s, *God is departed from me*, says to him: *Why then dost thou ask of me?* and hereby extricates himself from the difficulty and necessity of giving *Saul* the advice he wanted; at the same time putting it out of *Saul*'s power to renew the question, and insist upon the proper answer; because, as by his own confession, God was departed from him, he had no reason to expect, that God would now favour him, by his immediate direction. This hath all the air of evasion and artifice.

As to the answer *Samuel* is said to give to *Saul*, there is nothing in it, but what *Saul* naturally and directly led the old woman to make him. He says: *I am sore distressed. The* Philistines *make war against me. God is departed from me, and answers me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams. Therefore I have called* † *thee, that thou mayst make*

† The revd. author here makes *Saul* himself a sort of enchanter, for he persuades himself, that *Saul* invoked him, because he said to Samuel: *I have called to thee*, p. 214. Now in these invocations consisted one main and essential part of the magick art. *Virgil*'s Sibylla.

Voce vocans Hecaten, cœloque ereboque potentem.

Æn. vi. 247.

And *Canidia* in *Horace*.

——— *Hecaten vocat altera sævam,*
Altera Tisiphonem. Satyr. l. i. Sat. viii. v. 33, 34.

with many other instances that might be mentioned. I do not think however, that the words, on which the revd. author founds this charge against *Saul*, will fairly support it. However, 'tis altogether as incredible to me, that *Samuel* should be forced up by *Saul*'s invocations, as by the witch's; tho' if *Saul* did invoke him, *Samuel* had still greater cause to say to him: *Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up.*

known

known unto me, what I shall do. How natural the reply? *Why dost thou ask of me*, seeing by thy own confession, the *Lord is departed from thee, and is become thy enemy.* What follows, was partly what every one in *Israel* knew, and partly a conjecture founded on the highest probability. It was universally known, that God had rejected the family of *Saul* from the succession to the throne of *Israel*, and anointed *David* to be king in *Saul's* stead, because *Saul* had not executed the sentence against *Amalek*, as God had commanded him to do; and therefore she farther tells him, that as God was his enemy, and he could have no assistance from him in the battle he was going to engage in against the *Philistines*, they should obtain the victory, and his own army should be entirely defeated; a conjecture so easy, and almost certain, as that it scarce ought to be called a conjecture, and might be made, ανευ τριποδος διλ φικυ, by any person of common penetration and foresight. The remainder of the answer is ambiguous and indeterminate. *To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me, and the Lord shall deliver the camp of* Israel *into the hand of the* Philistines. The original word מחר means, either properly *to-morrow*, *i. e.* the next day; or, *some future time*, indefinitely, at whatever distance it may be. Thus we rightly render it, * *In time to come.* Hereby she artfully reserved to herself a way to come off, had *Saul* and his sons escaped alive out of the battle, or had the camp not been taken by the *Philistines*, after *Saul* had been defeated by their forces, by saying that she meant, not literally to-morrow, but some future time, which she did not particularly point out. Probably she thought that the battle would prove fatal to *Saul* and his family, as he confessed himself, that God had utterly forsaken him. However, to secure herself against the

* Gen. xxx. 33.

the charge of having predicted a falshood, she had a reply ready; that *Saul* had misinterpreted her words, and that he was mistaken, in the sense he had put on them, and not she, in what she had declared to him. And indeed there is no proof that the battle was fought, or *Saul* and his sons slain, the morrow after this transaction.

This answer will appear the more natural and necessary, if we reflect, that the old woman was to sustain the person and character of *Samuel*, and give out such an oracle, as was consistent with his former conduct and declarations to *Saul*. He himself absolutely prevented her from giving him a favourable answer, by telling her that God had deserted him; and therefore, in order to act the prophet well, she could only speak in his known language, and put *Saul* in mind. that the sentence he had pronounced against him formerly, should now be put in execution; that he would loose the battle, and his life in it, and so make way for the succession of *David* to the crown. Had the oracle she delivered, as from *Samuel*, been in *Saul*'s favour, the prophet would have been made to contradict himself, and *Saul* would naturally have suspected an imposition and fraud. Every circumstance concurred to force the woman to give a very discouraging answer, as personating *Samuel* ‡; but I imagine she might pro-

‡ The revd. writer so often named, says, p. 214. that after *Samuel* had told *Saul*, that the kingdom should be given to *David*; *then follows, what nothing but infinite and unerring prescience could predict, an exact minute precise account of all the circumstances of the then depending event*; and with great candor he adds: *I own, I am astonished at the inattention, shall I call it, or impiety, or both, of those criticks and commentators, who could ascribe this prediction to the sagacity of an impostor, or even of the devil.* I am not one of those, who have any thing to do with the devil in this transaction, because I think there is no need of his art, to say, what I apprehend, the old witch said upon this occa-

pronounce on him an heavier doom, than she would otherwise have done, in revenge for *Saul's* cutting off those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land.

If we consider this whole transaction between *Saul* and his witch, upon the foot of reason, or examine it by the principles of true religion, it will appear, in all the main parts of it, absurd and incredible. The great engine in this affair is an old woman, and she hath a familiar spirit, and by his means she hath such an absolute power over the dead, as that she can bring up what spirit she pleases; for this *Saul's* request to her implies: *Bring me up whom I shall name to thee.* No matter whose the spirit is, or where it dwells, or whether it be in heaven, or in hell, or under the earth; they must all come and go at her command, and give forth oracles to those who come to consult them. But can any man of common sense ever persuade him-

occasion. For what is this exact, minute, precise account of all the circumstances of this depending event, that he lays so much stress upon? There is only one single fact absolutely asserted, without any one circumstance attending it, and that is, that *Saul* should loose the battle. And this *Saul* himself constrained her to say, by telling her, that the *Philistines* made war against him, and God refused to counsel and assist him; the certain consequence of which *Saul* himself, as well as the old woman, knew, must be the defeat of his army. Surely something less than infinite prescience could draw such a conclusion from such premises. The other two facts, that the camp should be taken, and *Saul* and his sons should loose their lives in the engagement, were extremely probable, from what *Samuel* had predicted in his life time, and the old woman had repeated; that God had rent the kingdom out of *Saul's* hand, and given it to *David*; and from the loss of the battle, which she had told him would be the consequence of the engagement; the death of *Saul* certainly being necessary to *David's* advancement, and the death of his sons to his more easy and immediate advancement. Probability, in these respects, was on the side of the subtle old witch, tho', in both of them, the prediction was vague and undeterminate as to the time, and doth not appear to proceed from infinite and unerring prescience.

ſelf to believe, that ſuch an unlimited power over the dead is granted to any one perſon living? What, the ſouls of prophets and ſaints, and the greateſt and beſt of men, after they are departed from their labours, and entered into reſt, ſubject to the controul of a conjurer, or witch, or imp of the devil; and forced againſt their wills, by enchantments, and the dirty, diabolical, impious charms of ſorcery, to make a ſcandalous midnight appearance, and give moon-ſhine oracles, to ſatisfy the inquiries of ſuperſtitious men, deſerted of God, and worthy to be left to the conſequences of their own impieties and follies! The incantations they made uſe of were moſt execrably vile; as any one will be convinced, who will be at the trouble to look over thoſe of *Horace*'s Canidia, *Lucan*'s Witch of *Theſſaly*, Ovid's Medea, or the *Ægyptian* Hag in *Heliodorus*, and have no manner of connection with raiſing up ſpirits, or power and efficacy to force dead bodies to ſpeak; and are nothing but the horrid and villainous methods, which thoſe wretches made uſe of to inſpire terror, heighten men's opinion of their art and power, and the better to ſecure the cuſtom of the ſuperſtitious and credulous. But that God ſhould permit them to exerciſe ſuch a power, is a ſuppoſition to me ſubverſive of the great ends and order of providence, and never to be reconciled with any juſt ideas of the ſanctity and wiſdom of it.

The ſuppoſition of the real appearance of the ſoul or ſpirit of *Samuel* on this occaſion, is peculiarly incredible. Wizards, and dealers with familiar ſpirits, were liable to a capital puniſhment, by the expreſs order of God. God had, as *Saul* himſelf confeſſes, departed from him, and anſwered him, neither by prophets, nor by dreams. Now can any one perſuade himſelf to believe, that God

God would permit an old hag to bring up *Samuel's* soul; or, upon her attempt to raise him up by magick art, raise up himself the soul of *Samuel* from the dead by a miraculous power, and cloath it with such a vehicle, as that it should make a visible appearance to *Saul*, and then uncloath it again, and send it to its former abode, as the reverend author supposes, p. 226, only to give an impious prince, now practising what he knew God had forbidden him, that answer, which, as the very token of his displeasure, God had refused to give him by his living prophets? Where is the *Nodus Deo vindice dignus* in this account?

To solve this difficulty, the revd. author puts into the mouth of *Samuel* certain pious questions, which he asked *Saul*, p. 230. *Is God offended with you, and will you inquire what to do in a way that he hath forbidden? Will you go on still to offend him more and more?* I think these questions would have been very proper in the real *Samuel*. But the old woman's *Samuel* doth not ask one of them; nor was it for her purpose, and the credit of her art that he should, nor for the credit of her *Samuel*, that he did not. He only says: *Why then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee?* But not a word about his coming to the witch, or inquiring by a way that God had forbidden; so far from censuring him on this account, that he rather seems to intimate, that if *Saul* had not told him that God had departed from him, he would have very readily granted him the answer to his inquiry.

The reverend author farther makes *Samuel* say to *Saul*: *Know then, that I am now come to confirm the sentence, which God long since past upon you by my mouth, for disobeying his commandments.* I confess this was a very proper answer in the mouth of *Samuel* in the cell, because it was the only answer he could well give. But I think it

not ſo proper for the real *Samuel*, becauſe he had before pronounced the ſentence againſt him, and declared it abſolutely unalterable. * *The Lord hath rent the kingdom of* Iſrael *from thee, and given it to thy neighbour. And alſo the ſtrength of* Iſrael *will not lie, nor repent, for he is not a man that he ſhould repent.* Now I cannot think, that it was an end of providence important enough, to deſerve, or require, ſo great a miracle, as that of raiſing up *Samuel* from the dead, only to confirm a ſentence that *Samuel*, when living, had ſolemnly confirmed, by pronouncing it irrevocable, p. 226, 227. But as the revd. author ſeems to think ſuch ſort of reaſonings to be *the very infatuation of arrogance*, I ſhall add nothing more on this head. ‡

I muſt however farther obſerve, that the ſuppoſition of God's raiſing up *Samuel* from the dead, ordering him into a dark ſubterraneous cell, and then making him give out oracles, in conſequence of an old witch's attempt to bring him up, and to ſatisfy the inquiries of an impious wicked prince in the very uſe of thoſe arts, which he knew to be moſt offenſive to God, and without one word from the prophet of diſapprobation or cenſure of *Saul* for practiſing them; ſeems to me to be the higheſt encouragement to necromantick conſultations, and patronizing thoſe execrable ſuperſtitions, which he had expreſly ordered to be puniſhed with death. If God had refuſed to anſwer him, by the ordinary methods appointed by himſelf, how can we ſuppoſe that he would chuſe to anſwer him by a ſorcereſs in her cavern, or by a real prophet, cloſeted in ſuch an apartment? Doth not this look like favouring both the place and the art? Was it not an encouragement to others, in the time of their neceſſities, and when

* 1 Sam. xv. 28, 29.

‡ See the arts of theſe Ventriloqui in Van Dala *de Divinat.* p. 652, &c.

all

all other methods failed them, to make the like experiments? *Saul* had proved successful in this way, and tho' God would not answer him in any of the allowed methods of inquiry, yet he got his answer in a witch's den, even by a miraculous resurrection of a prophet, and did not receive the least rebuke for applying to the witch, either by God or by his prophet. The natural conclusion that might be drawn hence was; that tho' the consulting the dead ought not to be practised, till all other means appointed by God had been made use of; yet when these failed, God would be so far from being displeased with men's applying, in cases of extremity, to these dealers with the dead, as that he might be persuaded, some how or another, if for no other reasons, yet to prevent the use of these necromantick arts, as is supposed in the case of *Samuel*'s sudden appearance without the witch's aid, even to raise a prophet for their satisfaction in their inquiries into futurity; even when the very attempt to obtain her assistance, and the least appearance of encouraging the arts she made use of, might have been prevented by giving the answer in the more ordinary way. And indeed the revd. author saw and felt this difficulty, but I think hath not extricated us out of it. For in answer to the objection: *Is it likely that God should refuse to answer* Saul, *when he consulted him in ways appointed by himself, and yet should answer him in a forbidden way*, he replies: *What if it be not?* i. e. *What if my little understanding cannot reach the reasons of this conduct, must it follow that there was no such thing? Is not this the infatuation of arrogance?* Such an answer may, for ought I know, silence unbelievers, but will not be likely to convince them. For undoubtedly, if the thing itself be not likely, it is not likely, without any charge of arrogance, that a considerate man should believe it.

In a word, if this method of consulting the dead was forbidden by God as a capital offence; as no witch can, in the nature of the thing, by any incantations she can use, bring up the soul of any dead person, much less force the soul of a departed Saint to come at her call; it is impossible that the soul of *Samuel* could have any concern in this transaction, without God's immediately sending him; and that God did not send him, either to gratify *Saul*, or please the old witch, seems as evident to me, as that he cannot contradict himself, encourage those impious practices he hath forbidden, or do honour to the criminal incantations of a wretched wicked old woman, who deserved death by God's own law, for this very attempt to bring up *Samuel* from the dead, that *Saul* might thus know his destiny, which God had refused to inform him of any other way.

I do not think it worth while to enter into the consideration of the other scheme, that some have advanced, to account for this transaction we have been considering; that it was an evil spirit who was employed in it, and who personated *Samuel* on this occasion. For I do not think that the witch of *Endor* could conjure up a devil, any more than she could the soul of *Samuel*; or that God would order or permit the devil to appear for this purpose, and make him his messenger to satisfy *Saul*'s inquiry, and thereby seem to countenance such satanical delusions. Many absurdities might be pointed out, to shew the weakness of such a supposition, and the almost impossibility that it should be true. I have delivered my own sentiments with freedom, but blame none for differing from me; and submit the whole of what I have advanced to the judgment and candour of the intelligent reader.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

David's *dismission from the camp of the* Philistines.

THE situation of *Saul*'s mind, after this adventure, must have been very anxious and distressed, as he received no directions from *Samuel* how to behave in, or extricate himself out of the difficulties in which he found himself involved. Nor were *David*'s circumstances much easier, who had been pressed into the *Philistine* camp and service by *Achish*, whereby he was reduced to the greatest straits, and scarce knew how to behave himself, consistent with the confidence which that prince placed in him, the duty he owed to his own country, and his own interest and views, as an expectant of the crown and kingdom of *Israel*.

But happily for *David*, * providence extricated him from this embarrassment; for as the troops of the *Philistines* were passing in review before their principal officers, *David* also with his corps marched in the rear, under the command of *Achish* king of *Gath*. This gave great uneasiness to the *Philistine* princes, who immediately expostulated with *Achish*, and said: *What business have these* Hebrews *in our army? Achish* answered: *Is not this the gallant* David, *formerly the servant and officer of* Saul *the king of* Israel; who, to save himself from the persecution and cruelty of his ungrateful master, hath put himself under my protection, and of whose fidelity and attachment to my person and service, I have had long experience? For tho' he hath been with me now a considerable time, I have not had the least reason to suspect his integrity, or find fault with his conduct. But this was far from removing the jealousy of the *Philistine* officers,

* 1 Sam. xxix. 1, &c.

ficers, who, highly displeased with *Achish* for what they judged his ill placed confidence in *David*, said in great anger to him: *Command this man immediately to retire from the army*, and to go back to *Ziglag*, the place thou hast appointed for his residence. *We will not suffer him to go with us to the battle, least in the engagement he should turn his forces against us. For what more effectual method can he take to reconcile himself to his former master, than by lending his assistance to defeat and destroy our army? Is not this that very* David *whose praises were publickly celebrated in songs and dances?* And in honour of whom the *Israelitish* women cried out in triumph: Saul *hath slain his thousands, and* David *his ten thousands.* Such a man is too dangerous to trust in our present critical situation.

Achish finding the princes peremptorily fixed in their resolution not to permit *David* and his forces to go with them to the engagement, immediately sent for him, and said: "By the life of *Jehovah*, I "acknowledge thy integrity in the whole of thy "conduct towards me, and there is nothing that I "more intirely approve, or more sincerely wish, "than thy continuance in the army, and joining "with us in the engagement; for I have nothing to "reproach thee with, from the time thou first put-"test thyself under my protection, to the present "day. But the lords of the *Philistines* have not "that opinion of thy attachment to our interest "and cause that I have, so that I am forced to "dismiss thee from thy attendance. You must "therefore return peaceably, and are allowed by "them to do it in safety, to the town I have "given you; because your longer continuance with "us is disagreeable to them, and may be attend-"ed with very dangerous consequences." *David*, with seeming displeasure replied: "What have "I done to incur their displeasure, or what hast

"thou

"thou found in thy servant, ever since I have "been with thee, to forfeit thy confidence and "favour? However, since it is their pleasure, I "must submit, and will not, * in obedience to "their order, fight against the enemies of my "lord the king." *Achish* told him, that "he "was so far from entertaining any suspicion of "him, that he esteemed him for his integrity and "worth, and regarded him *as an Angel*, or messen-"ger from God, immediately sent to his assistance; "but that as the princes of the *Philistines* had re-"solved, that he should not go with them to the "battle, he could not but order him to march "away by day break with his master's servants to "the place he had appointed for him and his fol-"lowers." *David* accordingly returned with his troops into the territories of the *Philistines*, whilst their army penetrated farther into the dominions of *Saul*, and encamped at *Jezreel*.

It appears from the answer given by *David* to *Achish*, as I have rendered the words, that *David* was not in the least displeased at his being dismissed, but gladly took *Achish* at his word, and laid hold of the first opportunity of disengaging himself

* The original words will bear this interpretation that I have given them, without any wresting of, or violence offered to them. *What have I done, and what hast thou found in thy servant unto this day? viz.* that I should be thus dishonourably treated. כי, *however*, see *Nold.* §. 27. since I am thus distrusted and dismissed, I will obey your orders, withdraw my forces, and not engage with your enemies, but remove the jealousies you and they have harboured concerning me. In this view of the words, he vindicates his fidelity to *Achish*, by an appeal to him for the truth of it; and then shews his ready submission to his orders. *Achish* accordingly replies to both parts of *David*'s answer. To the first: *I know that thou art good in my sight.* To the latter: *The princes of the* Philistians *have said:* He shall not go with us to the battle.

from the service in which that prince expected his assistance. However, if we take *David*'s answer in that sense, which is given it in our version: *What have I done——that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?* It will appear to be a very prudent one, and such as became the circumstances in which he then found himself, by which he promised nothing, and laid himself under no manner of engagement. It was a general ambiguous and cautious one; in which he neither denies what the *Philistines* suspected, that he would fall off to *Saul* in the battle, nor makes the least mention of his readiness to fight with the *Philistines* against *Saul* and the *Hebrew* army. He only asks, why he should be refused to fight against the enemies of the king? If he had some obligations to him, to the *Philistines* he had none. Against the enemies of *Achish* he would have fought, where he could have done it with honour; where he could not, as a man of honour, he must have refused it. Against the enemies of the *Philistines*, neither his inclination, or duty, or interest would have permitted him to fight; and the *Philistines* themselves did not think his personal obligations to *Achish* a sufficient security for his assisting them; and even *Achish* himself seems to have been at last in some doubt, whether or no he could depend on him, when he says to him: *Rise up early in the morning*, with thy master's servants *that are come with thee*; hereby more than intimating, that he could not but consider *Saul* as *David*'s king and master, and all *David*'s forces as servants to *Saul*; and actually urging this as a reason for their immediate departure from him.

Had *David* made such a speech to *Achish*, previous to his dismission, or to the *Philistine* princes to prevent their dismissing him, it would have looked as though he had been uneasy at his not being

being suffered to assist them in the engagement. But as they had determined he should not go with them to battle, and *Achish* had peremptorily ordered him to march off; *David*, who could not but be highly pleased, that he was now wholly extricated from the difficulties he was involved in, artfully chose to express himself to *Achish* in such terms, which, though they implied a real truth, yet might lead *Achish* to put a farther meaning on them than *David* intended, in order to give *Achish* the highest opinion of his zeal for his service; by a general † assurance, that he was always ready to assist him against his enemies, though he was now dismissed by the lords of the *Philistines* in a very reproachful and dishonourable manner.

I would farther observe, that if there is any thing wrong in *David*'s ambiguous reply to *Achish*, we should make the proper allowances for the circumstances of the times, when morality was not carried to that noble heighth, as it is by the clearer light of the gospel Revelation. It appears from many instances in the Old Testament, that the

† Mr. *Bayle*'s censure of *David*'s conduct in this instance, seems to me to be void of all candor, and incapable of proof, when he asserts, that David *had resolved to contribute with all his might to the victory of the uncircumcised* Philistines, *over his own brethren, the people of God, and the professors of the true religion.* Had it been for *David*'s interest, or necessary to his gaining the crown, this charge, highly aggravated as it is, might have appeared more probable. But it was inconsistent both with his interest and duty, and he could not join with the uncircumcised *Philistines* against his own brethren, without making them his implacable enemies, and destroying his own hopes of succeeding to the kingdom by their affection and assistance; and therefore this charge against *David* is groundless, and hath nothing in the nature of the thing, the views of good policy, or *David*'s conversation with *Achish* to support it; and the question Mr. *B.* asks: *Were these sentiments worthy of a true* Israelite? answers itself: They were unworthy of such a one, and not the sentiments of *David*.

greatest

greateſt men did not think theſe ambiguous evaſive anſwers, in any great degree, or, as I apprehend, not at all criminal; eſpecially when the preſervation of life depended on it. Let it therefore be allowed, with all my heart, that *David*, in his equivocal anſwers, did what, according to our preſent ſentiments of morality, in this very inlightned and conſcientious age, was not ſo perfectly agreeable to the ſtricter rules of it; he might ſtill be an excellent man for the times he lived in; when ſuch equivocations were generally allowed of, almoſt univerſally practiſed, and by no means thought inconſiſtent with true religion and virtue, but rather in many caſes neceſſary and commendable.

CHAP. XVII.

David's *conduct on his return to* Ziglag.

WHILST * *David* and his corps were on their march towards *Ziglag*, he was joined by ſome brave officers of the tribe of *Manaſſeh*, all mighty men of valour, and who were very ſerviceable to him in the expedition he was forced to engage in, againſt the *Amalekites*; who, during his ſtay in the camp with *Achiſh*, had invaded and made great depredations in the territories of the *Philiſtines*, and the land of *Judah*; had taken *Ziglag* in the very dominions of *Achiſh*, ſmitten the town, burnt it with fire, taken the wives, the ſons and daughters of *David* and his people, captives, carried them off, and went their way with their whole booty. They were *Rovers*, clans of ſtragling free booters, that rambled from place to place, common enemies of mankind, like the *Arabian*

* 1 Chron. xii. 20, 21.

hords,

hords, living upon rapine and plunder where ever they came. This unexpected dreadful accident threw *David* into the greateſt perplexity and diſtreſs; and the more ſo, becauſe ſome of his people, in their rage and deſpair, threatened to ſtone him. In this unhappy ſituation the hiſtorian remarks, that David *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*, and with a firm dependence on his protection and favour, he ordered *Abiathar*, who was now high prieſt in the room of his father *Achimeleck*, whom *Saul* ſlew, to come to him with the Ephod; and with a true ſpirit of piety, *not to humour the weak ſide of his people*, he inquired of the Lord, ſaying: *Shall I purſue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?* The anſwer he received was: *Purſue, for thou ſhalt ſurely overtake them, and without fail recover all.* When he had received this poſitive order, and full aſſurance of ſucceſs, he immediately ſet out on the expedition with ſix hundred men, and continued his march with them to the brook *Bezor*, where he left two hundred of them, who were ſo fatigued and faint by the forced marches *David* made, as that they were not able to paſs the brook. With the remaining four hundred he continued his purſuit, not at all diſcouraged by the ſmallneſs of his numbers; becauſe he knew, that as God had promiſed him ſucceſs, the event was certain, notwithſtanding his forces were ſo greatly reduced.

In their march they found in a field a miſerable wretch, ready to periſh with hunger and thirſt, whom they brought to *David*; and when they had given him bread and water, ſome figs, and cluſters of raiſins, he ſoon revived; and upon *David*'s aſking him, to whom he belonged, and of what country he was, he told him that he was a young *Egyptian*, and ſlave to an *Amalekite*, and that three days ago he fell ſick, was left without

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any ſupplies by his maſter, and had not eaten or drank any thing for three days and three nights together paſt. He farther told him, that the *Amalekites* had invaded the ſouth of the *Cherethites*, the coaſts of *Judah*, the ſouth of *Caleb*, and had burnt *Ziglag* with fire. *David* immediately aſked him if he knew where they were, and whether he could bring him to their rendezvous? The poor wretch, who dreaded to fall into the hands of an *Amalekite* again, aſſured him, that upon condition that he would give him his life, and not deliver him up to his former maſter, he would conduct him to the place, where he ſhould certainly find them. *David* promiſed both, and the *Egyptian* conducted him ſafely within view of them. Elated with their ſucceſs, they were ſpread abroad at their eaſe through the country, and thinking themſelves ſecure from danger, were eating and drinking and dancing, becauſe of the great ſpoil they had taken out of the land of the *Philiſtines*, and from the country of *Judah*.

David took them at this diſadvantage, and immediately attacked them, and continued to ſmite them, from the evening of that day to the evening of the next, ſo that of their whole number, which muſt have been very conſiderable, four hundred young men only eſcaped, who ſaved themſelves by flight upon their camels. The happy effect of this victory was, that *David* and his men recovered all that the *Amalekites* had carried away, their wives and families and intire ſubſtance; ſo that there was nothing lacking to them, neither ſmall nor great, nor ſons nor daughters, neither ſpoil, nor any thing which theſe plunderers had carried away with them; and beſides this, they enriched themſelves with a very valuable booty, which they had taken from their invaders. *David* divided the flocks and herds into two parts, and the drove

that

that he ordered to go first, he appropriated to himself as general; resolving that the remainder should be distributed in equal proportions, between those who accompanied him in the expedition, and those whom he left behind at *Bezor*; who being fatigued with their march, were charged with the care of the baggage, till the return of their brethren. When they saw them come back victorious, they immediately went out to meet *David* and them, and to congratulate them on their success. *David* received them in the most friendly manner, inquired after their welfare, and assured them they should have their share in the booty, in an equal proportion with those who attended him on the service. This was violently opposed by some ill-minded factious persons amongst them, who declared, that as they went not with them in pursuit of the enemy, they should have no share in the booty they had recovered; only that they should have restored to them their wives and children. These they might take, and go their way, but that nothing more should be given them. But *David* soon repressed their insolence, and told them, that as it had pleased God to preserve them in safety, to deliver their enemies into their hand, and to enrich them with so valuable a booty; it should not be divided in that partial unjust manner which they talked of; that there were but few of his troops who would come into so unreasonable a proposal, and that all should share alike, those who went to the engagement, and those who were left behind to guard the baggage. And this determination, as it was just and equitable in itself, he past into a law, and ordered the perpetual observance of it in time to come.

When *David* was returned to *Ziglag*, he distributed his share of the spoil, partly to those of the elders of *Judah*, who were his friends, and desired

desired their acceptance of the present he made them *of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord*; and partly amongst the inhabitants of those towns, who had given refuge to himself and his men, during the time of their persecution by *Saul*; and hereby shewed his prudence, gratitude and justice.

With respect to this part of the history we may observe, how plain and express the answers were delivered by the high priest, cloathed with the pontifical ephod. It was God gave the answer: *Pursue, for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.* The *Amalekites* were greatly superior in number to *David* with all his six hundred followers; and two hundred even of these could not possibly assist him. It was an uncertainty what rout those free booters had taken, and had it not been for the poor slave, of whom the high priest knew nothing, it is highly improbable that *David* had ever found them out; especially as they had got three days march of him, and could easily have prevented his ever coming up with them. Had they been in a posture of fighting, and stood to their arms, when *David* attacked them, they would probably have overpowered him with their numbers; and it was their negligence, being off their guard, and dissolved into pleasure, that gave *David* the advantage, and secured him the victory; circumstances that the high priest could not be in the least acquainted with. And though *David* should have had some advantage over the *Amalekites*, yet the recovery of all that the *Amalekites* had taken was a very doubtful thing, as a party of them might have carried off many of the women and children, without *David*'s being in the least able to prevent them. And yet not withstanding all these disadvantages, and the great uncertainty of the event; the oracle is positive and full, and the success was answerable.

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I do not ſee any thing of oracular cunning and fraud in this tranſaction; nothing unbecoming his character, who *is great in power, and excellent in underſtanding*.

There looks ſomewhat like an over-ruling providence favouring *David* in this expedition, in his accidentally meeting with the poor *Egyptian* ſlave, ready to periſh with hunger; who, after proper care taken of him, could tell *David* where the enemy was to be found, on which the ſucceſs of the expedition, and the credit of the oracle intirely depended.

We may obſerve alſo, that *David*'s men were generally regular, well behaved perſons, and the number of bad ones extreamly few; of no account in compariſon of the others. For when the wicked men, and ſons of *Belial* had inſolently declared their reſolution, *David* peremptorily tells them, ye ſhall not do ſo, and in contempt of them, aſks them: *Who will hearken to you in this matter?* Plainly ſhewing them, that they had no power to inforce their demand; and almoſt none of their comrades that would ſupport them in ſo unrighteous a meaſure. He was an excellent commander, and kept all his people under the moſt regular diſcipline.

The humanity and juſtice of *David* ſhews itſelf alſo here to very great advantage, in the equitable diſtribution he made of the booty taken from the enemy; by ordering that thoſe, who were diſabled from accompanying him in the expedition, and could only be of uſe in guarding the baggage, ſhould have their ſhare in the prey as well as the others. A general thus tender of his people, and always ready to do them juſtice, cannot fail of their affection, and will always find them ready to aſſiſt him to the utmoſt of their power.

As to the expedition itſelf, there were two reaſons, excluſive of all religious conſiderations, that fully

fully justified *David* in this attack upon the *Amalekites*. He now resided amongst the *Philistines*, in whose country these *Amalekites* had made great depredations, whilst the *Philistines* themselves were engaged in war with the *Hebrews*; and incapable of defending their own frontiers. He was their ally, obliged to act in their favour, and behaved like a soldier of honour in avenging the injuries that had been done them. This *insult* of *David* therefore upon the Amalekites *was not unprovoked*, if we consider his connection with the *Philistines*; much less, if we add to this, the loss he himself and his men sustained. For surely the burning of the city were he dwelt, the leading captive into slavery his own wives, and the wives and children of above six hundered persons, and the making a booty of all their substance, must have been the highest provocation to men, that had any feeling of natural affection. *David* and his soldiers thought it so; and if it be lawful to put to death incendiaries, women and children stealers, thieves, robbers, and vagabonds; *David*'s executing this vengeance on the *Amalekites* for their treachery in making this invasion, and committing these unprovoked violences, whilst neither the *Philistines* nor *Hebrews* could defend their territories, was a deserved and necessary severity.

But *was not the moderation of these poor heathen* Amalekites, *who slew not any, great or small, but only took the women and children captive, greater than that of the enlightened* David, *who destroyed them all?* Wherein doth this great moderation consist? The men they could not slay, for there were none in the town. The women and children they spared and took captives; not out of compassion and moderation, but because, if they had put them to death, they would have lost the fruit of their successful invasion, and because they wanted slaves,

ſlaves, either for their own uſe, or to make money of them, by ſelling them for ſlaves, to any other that would purchaſe them; a circumſtance of all others this the moſt dreadful to ingenuous women, who have any ſenſe of honour. For though poſſibly, amongſt a large number of female captives, ſome few of them might become wives, or be treated kindly by thoſe who took, or purchaſed them; yet their condition in general was the moſt abject and miſerable; they being uſually condemned to the moſt ſervile employments, and frequently abuſed in their perſons, by their brutal enſlavers at pleaſure. There is not, I believe, an inſtance to be produced in hiſtory of women, taken captives in war, generally becoming the wives of thoſe who enſlaved them. It was a circumſtance alſo, that greatly enhanced the grief of *David* and his men, that their ſons and daughters were taken captives as well as their wives. This muſt have been a provocation the moſt ſenſibly felt, and deeply reſented; and the reducing them to perpetual ſlavery, and their becoming the prey of brutal banditti and robbers, to be abuſed, proſtituted, and cruelly uſed by them, I could never think of without the higheſt regret, and ſhould much rather chooſe to have them intirely cut off at once, and put out of their miſery, than preſerved alive for theſe vile and execrable purpoſes. I own the alternative is terrible, but ſurely a ſudden death is preferable to a long life, which itſelf is worſe than death.

But upon theſe premiſes, *would it not have been more merciful in* David *to have put the* Ammonites *to death, by the ſhocking methods of ſawing them aſunder, tearing them with harrows of iron, and ſcorching them in burning brick-kilns*, as ſome ſuppoſe he did, *than to have reduced them to ſlavery, and deſtined*

them to those servile employments? But *David* did not make war upon women and children, as the *Amalekites* did, but upon men; and who doth not see the infinite difference of the two cases? The generality of men are fit for, and born to labour, and much more capable of enduring it than women; and therefore as death is not accounted by the generality of men preferable to a life of labour, the sparing them for servile employments, hath been ever looked on as an act of mercy and generosity in a conqueror, and gratefully accepted as a favour by those who were spared. But women are more incapable of servile labours; and besides, there are peculiar circumstances to render captivity to them dreadful and intolerable, from which men are by nature intirely exempted. It was therefore an act of moderation in *David* to spare the *Ammonitish* men, though he condemned them to hard labour, whilst the sparing women for the drudgery of slaves, and the lusts of their enslavers, is real cruelty; and hath been more dreaded * by them than being actually put to the sword.

It should also be remarked, that the number of the *Amalekites* that fled was equal to all *David*'s

* *Caracalla*, having taken a great number of *German* women prisoners, who could not endure slavery, asked them, whether they chose to be put to death, or sold for slaves. They chose death. But the emperor condemning them to slavery, they many of them first killed their children, and all of them at last themselves. D. Cass. *l.* 77. *c.* 14. *edit.* Reim. Thus also the wives of the ancient *Cimbri*, after a brave resistance of the *Roman* forces, *quum missa ad Marium legatione, libertatem ac sacerdotium non impetrassent, suffocatis elisisque partim infantibus, aut mutuis concidere vulneribus, aut vinculo a crinibus suis facto, ab arboribus, jugisque plaustrorum pependerunt.* Flor. *l.* 3. *c.* 3. §. 17. Polyen. *Stratagem. l.* 7. *c.* 47. when they could not obtain their liberty from *Marius*, they first destroyed their children, then slew each other, or hung themselves upon trees, and the beams of their carriages, by a kind of ropes made with their own hair.

forces,

forces, and that out of self-preservation he was obliged to put as many of them to the sword as he could, to prevent his being surrounded and destroyed by a force so much superior to his own. I add lastly, that he did well in extirpating them, as they were proscribed by God himself, and as the enemies of the Lord condemned to be utterly cut off.

But *had* David *been at this time in a situation to put such decrees in execution, with respect both to character and ability, and had he urged this proscription to authorise the slaughter, and had not plunder been the sole actuating motive, though the massacre might be justified upon* Hebrew *principles*; yet can *these principles be urged in defence of* David, *in this transaction?* As to *David*'s situation, he had character enough to execute this decree, as he was anointed king of *Israel*, was the person injured by this incursion of the *Amalekites*, and an ally of the *Philistines*, whose country they had spoiled. That he had ability to do it is certain, because he actually did it. As to his urging their proscription to vindicate his cutting them off, there was no need of it; for he acted in this affair by an immediate express permission and order of God. For previous to the expedition, he enquired of God, whether he should pursue and overtake the *Amalekites?* He was bid to pursue them, and assured he should overtake them, and without fail recover all. And yet that he had the ancient proscription in view, appears from the message he sent, with the share of his spoil, to his friends: * *Behold a present for you, of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord*; referring undoubtedly to the old decree: *The Lord will have war with* Amalek *from generation to generation.* That plunder was the sole actuating motive to *David* in this expedition, is a supposition contrary to all the circumstances of this affair;

* 1 Sam. xxx. 26.

which makes the burning of *Ziglag*, the grief and and rage of his own people for their loſs, and the recovery of their wives and children and ſubſtance from the *Amalekites*, the immediate and real cauſe of his purſuing and deſtroying them; motives theſe generous and humane, worthy a father, huſband, general and prince, and that juſtify his conduct, and ſhew both his generoſity and virtue.

I ſhall only add, that this ſucceſsful expedition againſt the *Amalekites* was another very favourable incident for *David*, as it ſhewed his reſolution and courage, and his zeal in promoting the ſafety and welfare of his country, though he was in a ſtate of actual baniſhment from it, and forced to ſeek for ſhelter in the dominions of an enemy. He was farther enabled to ſecure, and ingratiate himſelf with his former friends, the elders of *Judah*, by the preſents which he reſpectfully ſent them; fortunate circumſtances theſe, as they happened juſt before the death of *Saul*, who with his three ſons were killed in battle againſt the *Philiſtines*, upon the mountains of *Gilboa*. *Saul* indeed, finding himſelf dangerouſly wounded by the arrows of the enemy, called upon his armour bearer to diſpatch him, to prevent his being taken and inſulted by the *Philiſtines*; and upon his refuſal, fell upon his own ſword and died. The day after the battle, when the *Philiſtines* came to ſtrip the dead bodies, they found thoſe of *Saul* and his three ſons upon mount *Gilboa*, and cutting off their heads, and ſtripping them of their armour, they ſent meſſengers throughout all their territories, to publiſh the good news, in the temples of their idols, and amongſt all their people. Their armour they hung up as trophies in the temple of their goddeſs *Aſhtaroth*, their heads they fixed on that of *Dagon*, and to inſult the vanquiſhed *Hebrews*, faſtned the dead bodies

to

to the wall of *Bethshan*, belonging to the tribe of *Manasseh*, which they had seised immediately after the battle. * *Thus* Saul *died for his transgression that he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking counsel of one, that had a familiar spirit to inquire of, and inquired not of the Lord. Therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom to* David.

CHAP. XVIII.

David's *return from banishment, and his behaviour on the death of* Saul.

THE third day, after *David*'s † return to *Ziglag*, from the slaughter of the *Amalekites*, he was informed by an *Amalekite* of the death of *Saul* and his sons; owning himself to be the person who killed him, and presenting *David* with *Saul*'s crown and bracelet. No doubt but this wretch intended *to make a merit of this affair, and to ingratiate himself with* David, by telling him, that he had destroyed *Saul*, and presenting him with the spoils of royalty, of which he stripped him. But, *alas, he knew not* David! He knew not that a crown would be unwelcome to him at the price of treason, and that a throne would not tempt him, if to be purchased by parricide. He, who himself thrice spared *Saul*'s life, when he had it absolutely in his power, could he endure the man, that boasted of having murthered him? No. He rent his cloaths, mourned and wept for him, and justly ordered the immediate execution of the boasting assassin, saying: *Thy blood be upon thy head, for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying: I have*

* 1 Chron. x. 13, 14. † 2 Sam. i. 1, &c.

slain the Lord's anointed. Had he embraced him, commended his zeal, and given him a reward for it, he would have shewn himself an extreamly bad man, deserved the severest censure, and stood condemned by the impartial suffrages of all, who are possessed of the least humanity or honour. But he behaved herein with that dignity and justice that sets him above all deserved * reproach.

Instead of receiving the news of *Saul*'s death with joy, David *and all his men mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for* Saul, *and for* Jonathan *his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of* Israel, *because they were fallen by the sword.* All these circumstances concurred to excite *David*'s grief, and not only the death of *Saul*; reasons these common to *David* and his men, who shared in his grief, and expressed it by the same tokens. *Saul* indeed was *David*'s enemy and persecutor; but he was his father and his king also; in whose service he had been employed, by whom he had been brought out of obscurity, and from whom he had formerly received considerable favours. How natural then that, on such an occasion, he should forget the enemy, and mourn over the loss of a man, that had been once his friend and patron! † Humanity

* But even this noble part of *David*'s conduct hath been imputed to hypocrisy, and every sign of sorrow that he expressed on this mournful occasion, reproached as mere grimace; because, as it hath been asserted, *he burst out into a sorrowful lamentation for the death of a man, to whose destruction he had so freely offered to lend his assistance but just before.* But as it hath not, and cannot be proved, that *David* ever offered his assistance to *Saul*'s destruction, or ever made, directly or indirectly, any offer of this kind; the reasons that are expressly mentioned of *David*'s sorrow are such, as justify all the expressions of it, and shew it to have been without dissimulation and hypocrisy.

† When the mangled body of *Darius* was brought to Alexander,

Humanity and natural affection owed this tribute of tears to him, especially as he died in the defence of his country; to *Jonathan*, his beloved friend, who fell

ander, and he had taken a view of it, his historians remark, that he openly expressed his sorrow for his misfortunes, and shed tears over a prince, that died in a manner so unworthy his former rank and dignity. Αλγων τε τω παθει φανερος ην. Plut. *vit.* Alex. p. 690. *Alexander ad corpus demortui veniens, tam indignam illo fastigio mortem lachrymis prosecutus est.* Q. Curt. *l.* 5. *cap. et sect. ult.* But these historians knew too much of the human heart themselves, to charge him with dissimulation and hypocrisy upon account of it, though the death of *Darius* eased his way to the possession of the whole *Persian* empire. In like manner, when *Cæsar* saw the head of his son-in-law *Pompey*, after it had been separated from his body, *oblitus hostis, soceri vultum induit, ac* Pompeio *tum proprias, tum etiam filiæ suæ lachrymas reddidit.* Valer. M. *l.* 5. *c.* 10. forgetting that he had been his enemy, he put on the countenance of a father-in-law, and paid the tribute of tears due to *Pompey*, and his own daughter. So also *Augustus*, when he heard of the death of *Antony*, Απεδακρυσεν ανδρα κηδεστην, γενομενον κ᾽ συναρχοντα, κ᾽ πολλων αγωνων και πραγματων κοινωνον. Plutar. *vit.* Anton. *p.* 952. B. C. He retreated into the innermost part of his tent, and wept over the man that had been his relation, fellow consul, and companion in many public affairs. M. Marcelli *clementia, quam clarum, quam memorabile exemplum haberi debet! qui captis a se Syracusis in arce earum constitit, ut urbis, modo opulentissimæ, tunc afflictæ, fortunam ex alto cerneret. Cæterum, casum ejus lugubrem intuens, fletum cohibere non potuit, quem si quis ignarus vir adspexisset, alterius victoriam esse credidisset.* Val. Max. *l.* 5. *c.* 1. §. 4. Liv. *Hist. l.* 25. *c.* 24. §. 15. *Marcellus* is celebrated for his clemency and great humanity, in that after he had taken *Syracuse* in *Sicily*, and from the citadel of it took a view of the miseries which that once fortunate, but then unhappy city, had undergone, could not refrain from weeping over her fate, though he himself had reduced her to that wretched condition by a severe siege; insomuch that one, ignorant of the affair, would have thought that it had been conquered, not by himself, but by another. *Scipio* also, after he had utterly destroyed *Carthage*; πολιν ορων——ποτε αρδην τελευτωσαν ες παντελεθριαν εσχατην, λεγεται μεν δακρυσαι, κ᾽ φανερος γενεσθαι κλαιων υπερ πολεμιων—συνιδων οτι κ᾽ πολεις, κ᾽ εθνη κ᾽ αρχας απασας δει μεταβαλειν. Ap. Alex. *de B. l.* Pun. c. 82. is reported to have wept over the ruins in which he had laid her, and openly cried over his enemies; reflecting that cities, nations and empires, are all of them subject to change, as well as the fortunes of

fell in the ſame glorious cauſe; and to the many brave men, who with them ſacrificed their lives for the public ſafety. Let any man but read over that admirable ode, which *David* penned on this occaſion, than which there is nothing more elegant and paſſionate in all antiquity, and he will find all the marks of a generous grief, and the utmoſt decency and propriety in the expreſſions of it. In the encomiums reſpectively paſſed on *Saul* and *Jonathan*, there is nothing but what became the character of both, and ſuited the ſituation of him that gave them. *Saul* he celebrates for his former victories, and ſheds a tear over him for his defeat, and the indignities offered to him after his death; but without the leaſt expreſſion of ſorrow for him upon his own account, and, what deſerves to be mentioned to his honour, without a ſingle reflection on his paſt injuſtice and cruelty towards himſelf. But as to *Jonathan* his friend, how tender and paſſionate is the ſorrow he expreſſes! But I am perſuaded my reader will pardon me, if I give him the ode intire, a little altered from what it is in our verſion, and in a rather more free tranſlation. I wiſh it was more in my power to do juſtice to the original.

particular men, and fearing what might ſooner or later prove the fate of his own country. So *Æneas*, when he had ſlain young *Lauſus* in battle,

—— Ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,
Ingemuit; miſerans graviter.—— Virg. Æn. 10.

I ſhall only add the character *Suetonius* gives *Veſpaſian: Cæterum neque cæde cujuſquam unquam lætatus, juſtis ſuppliciis illacrymavit etiam, et ingemuit. Vit.* Veſp. *c.* 15. He never took pleaſure in the death of any man, but wept and groaned over thoſe, who were juſtly puniſhed with it. And theſe are tears, not flowing from hypocriſy and villainy, but from the tendereſt emotions of the human heart, affected with the calamities of others, and which check for a while the joy that flows from the greateſt and moſt ſplendid victories. A man muſt have truly the *oculi pumicei*, who with ſuch views and reflections as theſe, cannot *lachrymam exorare ut exſpuant unam modo.* Plaut.

* 19 O thou glory of *Israel!* Slain upon thy mountains!
O how are the heroes fallen!

20 Tell it not in *Gath*,
Publish it not in the streets of *Askalon*:
Lest the daughters of the *Philistines* rejoice;
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

21 O ye mountains of *Gilboa*,
Let there be no dew, nor rain, fall on you:
Nor on you, O ye fertile fields around them.

For

* 2 Samuel, i. 19, &c.

Ver. 19. The original word צבי, which we render *beauty*, signifies also *Caprea, a Roe*; and several learned writers render the place before us, O *Caprea Israelis*. *O Roe of Israel*; to denote the great agility and swiftness of *Saul*. But as he is afterwards celebrated for this quality, by a nobler comparison with an eagle, and as there should be somewhat in the beginning of this ode to answer to the mighty men at the end of the verse, I can scarce think, that if the roe be intended, it can be with any view to represent his swiftness. The proper meaning of the word is *decus, splendor*, and is for that reason applied to *the roe*, because of its shining whiteness. On this account the roe is one of the names of the sun in the *Arabick* dialect, because as the roe, remarkable for his whiteness, shines and swiftly moves on the top of the high hills, so also the sun, in his course thro' the heavens, swiftly scatters his morning bright beams over the tallest mountains. *Vid.* Schult. *Harir. Confess. Sum.* p. 163. *Saul* therefore may well be called *the Roe of Israel*, from the glory and splendor of his majesty, as king; for *he that ruleth over men, is as the light of the morning when the sun riseth.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. or from the gracefulness and dignity of his form; for *there was none like him among all the people.* 1 Sam. x. 24.

21. ושדי תרומות. *The fields of Offerings.* The 70" αγροι απαρχων. *Fields of the first fruits.* They seem to have been the fruitful fields about *Gilboa*, which by the large increase they produced, afforded very liberally first fruits for offerings to the Lord. The words are capable of a somewhat different turn from that which I have given them; as in our version: *Let there be no rains upon you, or fruitful fields.* Let the fertile fields be condemned to perpetual barrenness. In this sense also the *Chaldee* Paraphrase takes the words, which, when rightly

For the ſhield of the mighty men was contemptuouſly thrown away:
The ſhield of *Saul*.
The anointed of the Lord is no more.
22 When *Jonathan* drew his bow, it never flew back again,
Without being tinged with the blood of the ſlain:
Without piercing the fat of the mighty men.
Nor did the ſword of *Saul* return from the blow without execution.
23 *Saul* and *Jonathan* were dear and delightful to each other whilſt they lived,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were ſwifter than eagles;
They were ſtronger than lions.
24 O ye daughters of *Iſrael*, weep ye over *Saul*.
From the ſpoil of his enemies he cloathed you with ſcarlet, and delicate ornaments,
And decorated your garments with gold.
25 O how are the heroes fallen in the midſt of the battle!
O how was *Jonathan* pierced through, O *Gilboa*, in thy high places!

rightly rendered, for they are very badly rendered in the *Polyglott*, run thus: *O ye mountains of* Gilboa, *let there deſcend no dew or rain upon you. Let there not be fruits ſufficient on you to make out of them a cake offering.*

21. בלי משיח בשימן. *As tho' he had not been anointed with oil.* So our verſion. *Saul* is frequently called *the Lord's anointed*, becauſe anointed with oil, by his order, to be king of *Iſrael*. And taking the words in this ſenſe, *David* mentions it with indignation; that the ſhield of *Saul* ſhould be ſo contemptuouſly treated by his enemies, as tho' he had not been anointed of the Lord. I have given the words a different turn. *He who was anointed with oil*, or the *anointed of the Lord, is no more.* בלי is a ſubſtantive, and denotes *abolition*, utter conſumption. שחת בלי. Iſai. xxxviii. 17. is, as we render it, *the pit of corruption*, or *utter deſtruction*. So in the place before us: The perdition, or deſtruction of the Lord's anointed! He put by his ſhield, and fell upon his ſword.

26 I

26 I am distressed for thee, O *Jonathan*, my brother:
Thou wast exceedingly delightful and dear to me:
Thy affection to me was more wonderful and constant,
Than the love of wives to their husbands.

27. O

26. *Than the love of women*; or, as the word is frequently rendered, *wives*. This figure hath been censured, as *not well chosen*, and insinuations dropped highly to the dishonour of the two noble friends. But the expression gives no countenance to it. It appears to me, that there was somewhat in the conduct of *Michal*, *David*'s wife, in too hastily consenting to be married to *Phalti*, that gave occasion to this comparison. 'Tis certain from her behaviour to him, at the bringing the ark to *Jerusalem*, that she had not that high esteem and affection for him, that she ought to have had, as she took this opportunity so bitterly to reproach him. 'Tis certain also, that her marriage to *Phalti* must have been preceeded by a divorce from *David*; otherwise her second marriage would have been real adultery; and her consenting to a divorce, tho' by her father's order, shewed great want of affection and fidelity to *David*. On this supposition, no comparison could be better chosen, nor more tenderly and delicately expressed. The brother's love to him, as a friend, was more generous and constant than the sister's, tho' a wife. The compliment to *Jonathan* was very high, and just; and the concealing the sister's name, was truly polite.

He, who can read this excellent composure without admiration and pleasure, must be totally destitute of all true taste. The lamentation over the slain heroes of *Israel*, in the beginning, and several times repeated; the manner in which he expresses his anguish, at the thought of the defeats being published in the cities of the *Philistines*, and the triumphs of the daughters of the uncircumcised upon account of it; his passionately wishing, that neither dews nor rains might ever fall on the mountains of *Gilboa*, and the fields surrounding them, in which the slaughter of the *Israelites* happened; his recounting the past victories of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, who never drew a bow, or brandished a sword, but it proved fatal to their enemies, to heighten the glory of their character, and set forth in a more lively manner the sad reverse of their condition; his comparing them, the one to an eagle for swiftness, the other to a lion

27 O how are the heroes fallen!
How are the warlike weapons destroyed!

CHAP. XIX.

David's *advancement to be king over* Judah.

David over Judah 1.

UPON the death of *Saul*, and his three sons, *David*, who built all his hopes of succeeding to the crown upon the promises of God, and his direction in this important affair, immediately inquired, by the high priest, of the Lord: *Shall I go up into any of the cities of* Judah? He was ordered by the oracle: *Go up*. And upon a second inquiry: *Whither shall I go up?* He was commanded *to go up to* Hebron. He accordingly went thither, with his wives, and his men, each with their respective houshold, and had all of them a peaceable reception in that city, and the adjacent towns and villages. Soon after his residence in this place, the tribe of *Judah* attended him, chose him, and anointed him king over their whole tribe.

Hebron seems to have been the capital city of the tribe of *Judah*; *Jerusalem*, or at least the fortress of *Mount Sion*, that commanded it, being at this time in the hands of the *Jebusites*. As the throne was now vacant by *Saul*'s death, his three eldest sons cut off at the battle of *Gilboa*, the

lion for strength and valour; the honourable mention of their mutual affection whilst they lived, and dying bravely together in the field of battle; the exclamation to the daughters of *Israel* to mourn over *Saul*, and the reasons he gives for it; his celebrating the mutual tender friendship between himself and *Jonathan*; in a word, this elegy, in every part of it, both in sentiment and expression, hath all the charms with which the spirit of poetry can adorn it; shews the richness of *David*'s genius, and will be a monument to his praise throughout all generations.

crown

crown never entailed upon his descendants, and his whole family rejected by God, who first advanced him to the kingdom; *David*, without injuring the rights of any person whatsoever, might have taken any just and honourable measures, to have gained over the tribes to his interest, and secured the succession, as the election of a new king now devolved upon the nation; even if he had not been designed previously by God the supreme governor of Israel, and anointed at his command by *Samuel*, to be captain over his people. But as this circumstance of his consecration by *Samuel* was known throughout the whole nation, it was natural for the tribe of *Judah* to seize the opportunity of *Saul's* death, and acknowledge him, whom God had pointed out to them, for their king; especially as he was of their own tribe, and had gained the general esteem by his personal virtues and military abilities.

David over Judah 1.

'Tis also highly probable that this tribe was farther induced to raise *David* to the throne over them, because they hoped that the antient prophecy of *Jacob* was now going to be accomplished; who, on his death-bed, had foretold; that ‡ *the scepter should be in the hand of* Judah, *and that from him the law-giver should proceed, and never depart from him, till* SHILOH *should come; and that to him should be the gathering, or obedience of the people.* This tribe was also the most powerful and respectable of all the twelve; and as they had a right to chuse their own prince, they might reasonably have expected, that the other tribes would have followed their example, and by uniting in *David*, quietly have submitted to the appointment of God, as they themselves had done. Had the tribe of *Judah* fixed on any other person

‡ Gen. xlix. 10.

than

David over Judah 1.

than *David*, the reſt of the nation might reaſonably have been diſpleaſed with their conduct, and rejected for their king a perſon arbitrarily impoſed on them without their conſent, and who had no other claim, but what the election of that ſingle tribe could have given him. But this objection could never be urged againſt *David*'s election, as the tribe of *Judah* herein followed the divine direction, which they all knew ought not to have been counteracted, and the not conforming to which involved them in the calamities of a ſeven years civil war.

David was now thirty years old, had in many inſtances ſhewn his courage, fortitude, moderation, and patience; had been inured by a long perſecution, and ſeries of diſappointments and diſtreſſes, to ſubmiſſion to God, and truſt in his power and goodneſs; and had experienced the care of the Almighty, in the protection afforded him, under the innumerable dangers, to which the jealouſy and enmity of *Saul* had expoſed him. As he had under all his difficulties ſtrengthened himſelf in God, left his fate to the divine diſpoſal, and was determined never to haſten his acceſſion to the throne by any acts of treaſon and violence; God now began to reward his ſingular virtue, and from a fugitive and exile he was made king over the moſt powerful of all the tribes, by their unſollicited and voluntary conſent; as an earneſt of what God had in farther reſerve for him; the kingdom over all his people.

From hence it appears, how unreaſonably it hath been alledged, that David *had no pretenſion to the ſovereignty, either by right of inheritance, which was claimed by* Iſhboſheth, *a remaining ſon of* Saul, *nor by popular election, but by the clandeſtine appointment of an old* Levite, *which inſpired him with hopes, of which by arms and intrigues he ob-*

obtained the fruition. Mr. *B.* alſo cenſures the conduct of *David*, in the meaſures he took to ſecure himſelf the crown. For he informs us, that David *had gained the principal men of the tribe of* Judah *by preſents; and that had not* Abner *prevented it, there is no doubt but he would have become king over all* Iſrael, *by the ſame method*, viz. by gaining the principal perſons by preſents.

David over Judah 1.

It is acknowledged that *David* had no pretenſion to the ſovereignty *by right of inheritance*; and in this reſpect *Saul* had no more right than *David*; nor *Iſhboſheth* than either of them; the hereditary right, if any ſuch there was, being veſted in *Mephiboſheth*, *Saul*'s grandſon, by his eldeſt ſon *Jonathan*.

And thus, I doubt not, *Mephiboſheth* himſelf thought; at leaſt *Saul*'s family certainly did. For when *David* aſked *Ziba* where *Mephiboſheth* was, *Ziba* anſwered: * *He abideth at* Jeruſalem; *for he ſaid, to day ſhall the houſe of* Iſrael *reſtore me the kingdom of my father.* Whether this charge was true or falſe, 'tis evident that *Mephiboſheth*, or his family, thought the right of ſucceſſion to the kingdom of *Iſrael* belonged to him, as it moſt unqueſtionably did, if the ſucceſſion had been made hereditary in *Saul*'s family. Beſides, if *Saul* himſelf, as ſome affirm, had *only the ſhew of a popular* election, he had no real popular election at all, and therefore no right to the crown, and therefore *Iſhboſheth* could derive no right from him to ſucceed him. *Iſhboſheth* farther doth not appear to have had, either the ſhew or reality of a popular election; no, nor *the clandeſtine appointment of the old* Levite, which both *Saul* and *David* had. He was the mere creature of *Abner*, the captain of *Saul*'s hoſt; who, ambitious of re-

* 2 Sam. xvi. 3.

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David over Judah 1.

taining the power in his own hand, took *Ishbosheth*, and, by military force, made him king over *Israel*; without, as far as appears, the choice or consent of the eleven tribes, and in direct opposition to the choice and consent of the tribe of *Judah*, the most considerable and powerful of all, and the inclination of the whole body of the people. *Ishbosheth* therefore was an usurper in every respect, in prejudice of the right heir; and *David*, and every man in *Israel*, had a natural right to oppose him, and prevent his establishment in the kingdom.

Mr. *B.* says, that David *did not pretend that* Ishbosheth *reigned by usurpation; for he allowed him to be a righteous man, and therefore a lawful king*. But this reasoning will not hold good, if Mr. *Bayle*'s own account of *David* be true. He allows *David* to have been *one of the greatest men in the world*, commends him for *his conspicuous piety, and extols him as a son of holiness in the church*. And yet he tells us, that David *acted like an infidel, and most ambitious prince; and that his policy and prudence were such, as he can never persuade himself to think, that the strict laws of equity, and the severe morals of a good servant of God can possibly approve; and that his actions were not those of a saint*. I therefore say, that according to Mr. *B.* a person may have a general character for a saint and a righteous man, and yet, in some particular actions, may act contrary to the character of both; and that therefore it doth not follow, that because *David* allowed *Ishbosheth* to be a righteous man, therefore he allowed him to be a lawful king. *Ishbosheth* was undoubtedly a righteous man, with respect to his murtherers, whom he had never injured; and probably in his private character he might be a man of virtue. But at the same time *David* could not but know, that he reigned in every

view

view by usurpation, and that consequently he was in this respect a very unrighteous man.

David over Judah I.

The right of *David* to the crown was indisputable, and the highest by which any man could claim it. When *Saul* was made king, the crown was not made hereditary in his family, and the same power that made him king, be that what it will, declared, that *his kingdom should not stand*, or be perpetuated in his family, but be transferred to his neighbour. Upon the death of *Saul* therefore, the throne became vacant, and the people were at full liberty, under the direction of God, to choose whom they pleased. The tribe of *Judah* unanimously chose *David* for their king, and it is highly probable, that the whole body of the nation would have fallen in with him, had they not been prevented by the influence of *Abner*. This *Abner* himself more than intimates, when in order to bring over the eleven tribes to *David*, he puts them in remembrance, saying *: *Ye sought for* David *in times past to be king over you*, viz. even in *Saul*'s time, who was abhorred and detested by many of the principal men for his tyranny. Nay, we are expressly informed, † that the princes, and captains of hundreds and thousands, and great parties from the *Benjaminites*, *Gibeonites*, *Gadites*, the tribe of *Judah* and *Manasseh* revolted to him, even before the battle, in which *Saul* was slain, day by day, *till it was a great host, like the host of God.* These were voluntary in the offer of the crown to *David*, and no kind of bribes or force employed by him to bring them to submission. The whole nation was in motion, and nothing prevented their unanimously declaring for him, but the opposition of *Abner* in favour of *Ishbosheth*.

* 2 Sam. iii. 17. † 1 Chron. xii.

David over Judah 1.

But did not *David* gain in particular the tribe of *Judah* by bribes or presents? Mr. *B.* affirms he did: *The whole tribe of* Judah, *of which he had gained the principal men by presents, acknowledged him for king.* The history only says, that he once made presents *to such of the elders of* Judah, *as were his friends*, consisting of part of the spoil he took from the *Amalekites*, after the recovery of the prey they had taken from *Ziglag*; and probably that very part which the *Amalekites* had taken from *Judah*, the south of which they had just invaded. But if these elders of *Judah* were his friends, before he sent them this present, then he did not gain them by sending them these presents, and their making him king was not, because he made them a present, but from the greatness of their affection for him before. When Mr. *B.* adds, *there is no doubt, had not* Abner *prevented it, but he would have been king of all* Israel, *by the same method of presents*; I think there is great reason to doubt of it; for *David* doth not appear to have been in circumstances to give such presents; nor did they seem to desire or want them; being led by their own inclinations and sense of interest and duty at last to submit to him. *David* was certainly a man of a generous disposition, and liberal in his favours; and this temper I never so much as suspected to be criminal, unworthy a great and good prince, or a real saint; and if by a prudent liberality he could secure his own rights, I think, he acted much more like a saint, than if he had recovered them by force, without ever first attempting to do it by the gentler methods of liberality and goodness.

The true reason of the tribe of *Judah*'s falling in with him, and the readiness of the other tribes to acknowledge him as king, was his excellent character as a brave and generous soldier, under whom

whom they themselves had formerly served; and especially his designation by God to the royal dignity, having been anointed king by *Samuel*, according to the express order of God. It was this latter consideration, that led him to ask the divine direction upon *Saul*'s death, what measures he should take to secure his succession. The very question: *Shall I go up to any of the cities of* Judah? would have been highly indecent, had he not had the divine promise and assistance to depend on. His claim, by virtue of *Samuel*'s unction, was his only claim, was universally known to the people of *Israel*, and the avowed reason why they at last advanced him to the throne. It was known to *Jonathan* his friend. *Saul* himself was no stranger to it. *I know, says he, that thou shalt be surely king, and that the kingdom of* Israel *shall be established in thy hand.* It was known even to private persons. *Nabal*'s wife confesses this appointment of God. *Abner* terrified *Ishbosheth* by putting him in mind of it *. *So do God to* Abner, *and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to* David, *even so I do to him, to translate the kingdom from the house of* Saul, *and to set up the throne of* David *over* Israel †. He declares the same in his message to the elders of *Israel*. *The Lord hath spoken of* David, *saying: By the hand of my servant* David *I will save my people* Israel *out of the hands of the* Philistines, *and out of the hand of all their enemies.* And when they came to make him king, this was the grand inducement to it ‡. *In time past, when* Saul *was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in* Israel, *and the Lord said to thee: Thou shalt feed my people* Israel, *and thou shalt be captain over* Israel; and they anointed *David* king over *Israel, according to the word of the Lord by* Samuel. So that this

David over Judah 1.

* 2 Sam. iii. 9, 10. † Ibid. ver. 18. ‡ 2 Sam. i. 2.

David over Judah 1.

was the foundation of his claim, was universally known, and justified his pretensions to, and contest for the crown after the death of *Saul*.

To this contest *David* was forced, by *Ishbosheth*'s usurpation, supported by the authority and influence of *Abner*, a near relation of *Saul*, and who had been his general. It lasted above seven years, and Mr. *B.* is extreamly displeased with poor *David*, and censures him very severely on this account. He says: * *That as* Abner *preserved by his fidelity eleven whole tribes for* Ishbosheth, *the same thing happened, as would have happened between two infidel and most ambitious princes.* David *and* Ishbosheth † *made incessant war on one another, to try which of the two could get the other's share, in order to enjoy the whole kingdom without division.* But the real question, by which *David*'s conduct is to be determined, is: Did the free election of the tribe of *Judah*, neither bought by bribes, nor forced by power, give *David* a right to be king over it; and did his appointment by God to succeed *Saul*, and rule over all *Israel*, give him a just claim to enjoy

* 2 Sam. v. 2.

† If Mr. *Bayle* had been called on to produce his proofs, that *David* and *Ishbosheth* made incessant wars on one another, like two ambitious and infidel princes, he would have been hard put to it to have found them; for tho' the historian says, that *there was long war between the house of* Saul, *and the house of* David; yet, it doth not appear, that it was carried on with any great vigour, or loss of lives on either side; and we have an account but of one single battle that was fought, and that rather a skirmish, comparatively few men only being lost in that engagement. *David* knew he should reign over all the tribes in the due season of providence, and was not over eager to push his fortune, and obtain by force of arms, what he hoped he should be put into possession of by methods, more agreeable to the natural humanity of his temper, and the affection he bare to all the children of *Israel*. Nor is there any reason to think, that *Abner* was hearty in the interest of *Ishbosheth*, or ever intended to dispossess *David* of the kingdom of *Judah*, who he very well knew was intended by God to be king over all *Israel*.

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the whole kingdom, without division? I think in both cases he had an indisputable right; and consequently he might, consistently even with the character of a saint, defend and maintain his right. *Ishbosheth* therefore, by keeping *David* out of part of the kingdom, and endeavouring by arms to dispossess him of the whole, might well enough deserve Mr. *Bayle*'s character of *an infidel and ambitious prince*; and *David*, endeavouring only to secure what he had, and to recover what he was unjustly kept out of, may still pass for a very good believer, and doth not seem to have had any more ambition in him, than what was honourable and virtuous. If wars are in their nature unlawful, *David*'s character *as a saint* will greatly suffer by his carrying on the war with *Ishbosheth*. But if wars are in any case lawful, it must be when waged for supporting those just and important rights, which cannot be secured without them. Such were certainly the rights of *David*, and therefore his maintaining the war against *Ishbosheth*, was both his interest and duty, and doth not in the least diminish the glory of *this sun of holiness* in the church.

David over Judah 1.

The promise of God to *David*, that he should be king of *Israel*, was not a promise to make him so, by extraordinary and miraculous methods, but in the use of all prudential and proper ones; and if he actually employed arms, when necessary to vindicate his just claims, and prudence and policy to turn every event to his advantage; it only shews that he was born for empire, worthy of a kingdom, and *a man after God's own heart*; or fit for the purposes for which God raised him to the throne. And though these methods should have been, to all appearance, like those which wicked men, or *infidel and most ambitious princes*, make use of to obtain their ends, they may for

David over Judah 1.

all that be very just and honourable. For infidel and wicked princes may sometimes persue lawful ends, and be forced to maintain their rights by policy and arms. And therefore unless the means which *David* used were base and criminal, or employed for wicked and unjustifiable purposes; they may be allowed to be, to external appearance, the same with what wicked, ambitious, infidel princes use, and yet be agreeable to the rules of justice and honour.

Soon after *David*'s * advancement to be king over the house of *Judah*, he was informed, of the friendship of the men of *Jabesh Gilead* to *Saul*. After he had been slain, with his three sons, in the fatal battle on mount *Gilboa*, the *Philistines*, when they came to strip the slain, found their bodies, and cutting off his head, and stripping him of his armour, they sent messengers throughout their territories, to publish the news in the house of their idols, and among all the people. His armour they hung up as a trophy in the temple † of *Ashtaroth*, and fastned his dead body, and those of his sons, to the wall of *Bethshan*. The

* 2 Sam. ii. 4, &c.

† It was customary amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans* to adorn the temples of their Gods with the spoils they had taken from their enemies in war. M. Junii *opera, dictatura rempublicam administrantis, spolia hostium affixa templis, Deorum numini consecrata, instrumenta militiæ futuræ, convellerentur*. Val. Max. l. 7. c. 6. §. 1.

Multaque præterea sacris in postibus arma,
Captivi pendent currus, curvæque secures,
Et cristæ capitum, et portarum ingentia claustra,
Spiculaque, clypeique, ereptaque rostra carinis.
Virg. Æn. 7. v. 183, &c.

Around the posts hung helmets, darts and spears,
And captive chariots, axes, shields and bars,
And broken beaks of ships, the trophies of their wars.
Dryden.

inhabi-

inhabitants of *Jabesh Gilead*, who had been delivered by *Saul* from *Nahash* king of the *Ammonites*, who resolved to thrust out the right eye of all of them, to lay a reproach on *Israel*, out of gratitude to the memory of *Saul*, and enraged at the indignity with which he and his sons were treated; went by night, and took their bodies from the wall to which they were affixed, brought them to *Jabesh*, burnt † them there, gathered up their bones, buried them under a tree at *Jabesh*, and in token of their sorrow and affection, fasted on this account ‡ seven days. *David* was so well pleased with this instance of respect and honour shewn by them to *Saul* and his sons, as that he was no sooner acquainted with it, but he sent messengers to acquaint them, that he approved their bravery and loyalty, and notify his own election by the house of *Judah*; and in his letter to them said: *Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewn this kindness unto your Lord, even unto* Saul, *and have buried him. And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you; and I will also requite you this kindness, because you have done this thing. Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye*

David over Judah 1.

† It was the custom of the *Hebrews*, not to burn, but bury their dead; and it is therefore highly probable, that the inhabitants of *Jabesh Gilead* burnt the bodies of *Saul* and his sons, lest the *Philistines*, when they found them taken away, should search after them, and digging them out of their graves, should afresh expose them, and hang them up publickly and contemptuously, to the reproach of *Israel*. It is plain from the history, that they did not utterly consume them by fire; for their bones were gathered, and buried under a tree near *Jabesh*. *Vid.* M. Geier. *de* Heb. *luct. c.* 6. §. 4. They were several years after this taken up by *David*, and buried in the sepulchre of *Kish*, *Saul*'s father.

‡ The *Hebrews* fasted on many occasions both public, and private, and their fasts continued a day, from morning to evening, or a week, or several weeks, as the occasion was more or less important. *Vid.* Geier *c.* 20. §. 7. 10.

David over Judah 1.

valiant, though your master Saul *is dead, for the house of* Judah *hath anointed me king over them.* *David*'s resentments all died with *Saul*, and such was the regard he had for him as his king and father, such his affection to *Jonathan* his deceased friend, as that he highly commends the inhabitants of *Jabesh* for this instance of their humanity, prays God to reward it, and assures them of his own protection and favour, as he was anointed king over *Judah*; and what is an argument of his really approving what they had done was, that he himself afterwards imitated their conduct.

CHAP. XX.

War between David *and* Ishbosheth.

ABNER, upon the death of *Saul*, had little or no prospect of military preferment under *David*; as he had commanded *Saul*'s troops, when they pursued *David*, and sought to destroy him; and as he knew *Joab* was *David*'s near relation and general, and likely to be continued such upon *David*'s advancement to the throne. And therefore unwilling to be wholly turned out of employment, he resolved to support, as long as he could, the interests of *Saul*'s house, till he could find a proper opportunity of reconciling himself to *David*, and, by the merit of his services, of securing to himself an interest in his favour, and satisfying his own ambition.

This is evident by what he says to *Asahel*, whom he would feign have spared, could he have done it with safety to himself: *How can I hold up my face to* Joab *thy brother?* Hereby plainly intimating, that he hoped the time would come, when there would be a reconciliation between them; and by his taking occasion at last, from a very trifling

trifling affront from *Ishbosheth*, to bring over the whole body of the *Israelites* to *David*.

David over Judah 2.

Had he acted upon principles of justice and honour, and as a faithful friend to the succession in *Saul*'s house, he would have advanced *Mephibosheth* to the crown, who was the son of *Jonathan*, *Saul*'s eldest son; to whom, if the crown was to descend by hereditary right, it certainly belonged. But *Abner*, without any regard to *Mephibosheth*'s claim, set him aside, because he was but about five years old at *Saul*'s death *; when his nurse, upon hearing the news of the victory of the *Philistines*, fled with him to prevent his falling into their hands, and in her flight dropped him out of her arms; by which accident he either broke, or so hurt his legs, as that he remained a cripple all the days of his life.

Abner therefore after the battle of *Gilboa* retreated with the remains of the vanquished army, over *Jordan* to *Mahanaim*, and chose *Ishbosheth*, *Saul*'s youngest son, in prejudice of *Mephibosheth*, the true heir, as a more proper person to bear the name of king; intending at the same time to keep all the power in his own hands, by retaining the command of the army, and to manage *Ishbosheth*, to whom he left only the name and shew of royalty, as should suit his own conveniency and advantage; and that he might be able, upon better terms, to make his peace with *David*, when the time should come, that the Lord was to advance him to be ruler over all *Israel*. He accordingly made him king first over the *Gileadites*, the tribes of *Gad* and *Ruben*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*, who had their inheritance on that side of *Jordan*; and then over the *Ashurites*, and *Jezreel*, to whom at length the tribes of *Ephraim* and *Benjamin*, and

* 2 Sam. i. 4.

all

David over Judah 2.

all *Israel* submitted; the tribe of *Judah* excepted, who faithfully adhered to *David*.

For the two first years every thing seems to have continued quiet between the two princes, without any action of consequence happening between them; each seeming desirous rather to retain his own share peaceably, than to dispossess the other, at the expence of the lives of their respective subjects, and by involving them in the calamities of a civil war. It was happy for the *Hebrews*, that during this division of the nation under two kings, the *Philistines* gave them no disturbance; thinking themselves probably in no danger of being invaded by a people, who were wholly employed by their own intestine disturbances, and who they knew were necessarily weakening themselves, and so gradually preparing the way for their being more easily subdued by them, when ever they should think it for their interest to attempt it.

This division continued seven years and an half; during which season, *David*, who had hitherto no child, had the pleasure to see himself the father of a large family, and that God began to *build up his house*, according to the promise he had made to him. His first born was * *Amnon*, by *Ahinoam* the *Jezreelitess*; his next, *Chileab*, by *Abigail* the widow of *Nabal*; the third *Absalom*, by *Maacah*, the daughter of *Talmai*, king of *Geshur*; the fourth, *Adonijah*, the son of *Haggith*; the next, *Shephatiah*; and the sixth, *Ithream*; all born to him in *Hebron*; where he seems to have spent his time in regulating his new kingdom, in forming his army, and preparing himself for any future emergencies, either for the securing the kingdom he had obtained, or for

* 2 Sam. iii. 1, &c.

bringing

bringing over all the tribes of *Israel* to submit to his authority and government.

The first act of open hostility was in the third year of *David*'s reign in *Hebron*, and was began by *Abner* the general of *Ishbosheth*; who leading out a party of his troops from *Mahanaim*, passed over *Jordan*, and encamped on one side of the pool† of *Gibeon*, in the tribe of *Benjamin*. *Joab*, general of *David*'s army, hearing of this march of *Abner*, came with his forces, and encamped on the other side of the same pool. Neither of the generals seemed forward for an engagement, and only watched for a while each others motions. At length *Abner* sent a message to *Joab*, to desire that a set number on each side *might play* *, i. e. skirmish, and try their fortune in single combat, that hereby they might have some proof who were the better men, and the worthier to give a prince to *Israel*; the tribe of *Judah*, or that of *Benjamin*. *Joab* immediately agreed to the proposal, and accordingly twelve *Benjaminites* of *Ishbosheth*'s soldiers, and twelve of *David*'s tribe and servants, voluntarily offered themselves to decide this controversy. The dispute was obstinate, but not decisive; for the combatants on both sides, determined to maintain the honour of their respective tribe, took hold each man of the beard of his adversary, and plunging their swords into each others bowels, all fell down dead upon the spot; giving the field where they fought a new name from the event, *Helkath Hazzurim*, or, the field of the brave ones, in *Gibeon*.

David over Judah 3.

This naturally brought on a battle between the two parties, when *Abner* and his forces were totally

† 2 Sam. ii. 13.

* So *Ludo* is used by the *Roman* authors to denote a sort of previous trial of skill, as preparatory to some farther action. *Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis.* Hor. *A. P.* v. 379.

David over Judah 3.

tally defeated, and warmly purſued by *Joab* and *Abiſhai* his brother, to the wilderneſs of *Gibeon*. *Aſahel*, another of *Joab*'s brothers, who was as *ſwift-footed as a wild roe*, ambitious of honour, and hoping to adorn himſelf with the ſpoils of *Abner*, followed him in his flight, and at laſt overtook him. *Abner* perceiving *Aſahel*'s deſign, turns round to him, and aſks him: *Art thou* Aſahel? He replied: *I am*. *Abner* ſaid to him: "Ceaſe "thy purſuit, and don't hazard thyſelf by fol- "lowing me farther. If thou art deſirous of "ſpoil, attack one of the young men that is "near us, and take his armour as a proof of "thy bravery." *Aſahel* ſcorned the advice, and preſſed nearer upon *Abner*; who, unwilling to deſtroy the brave but raſh youth, ſaid to him again: "Forbear any farther purſuit of me. Why wilt "thou force me to deſtroy thee?

Quo moriture ruis, majoraque viribus audes?
Virg. *Æn.* x.

"How then ſhall I be able to vindicate and re- "concile myſelf to *Joab* thy brother?" But *Aſahel* remained obſtinate; and *Abner*, finding that one or other of them muſt fall, in his own defence, with a back puſh thruſt his ſpear into *Aſahel*'s body with ſuch violence, as that it pierced him through; the point coming out behind him. He left his dead body on the ſpot, and went and joined the remainder of his troops.

He at laſt collected them into one body, and poſted them on the top of an hill; where they reſolved, undoubtedly, in ſo advantageous a ſituation, to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity, ſhould they be attacked by *Joab*'s men. *Joab* and *Abiſhai* ſoon came up with them, when *Abner*, to prevent any farther ſlaughter on either ſide, cries

cries out to *Joab*: "Will you never be satisfied with the destruction of the sword? Push your victory no farther, nor force us to such an obstinate defence of ourselves, as may at last cause you to repent of having made us desperate, and obliged us to revenge ourselves by the death of your own men. How long will it be before you sound a retreat, and forbid your people to pursue their brethren any farther:" *Joab* immediately replied: "It is owing to you that there hath been any engagement at all; for had it not been for your challenge, all this loss would have been prevented, and the people had all of them quietly departed in the morning." He immediately gave the signal of retreat, leaving *Abner* to repass *Jordan*, who went to *Mahanaim*; whilst he and his men took the rout to *Hebron*, and marching all night arrived there in the morning by break of day. The loss on *Abner*'s side were three hundred and threescore men; whereas of *David*'s people there were killed but nineteen, besides *Asahel*; whom his brethren carried to *Bethlehem*, and there buried him in the sepulchre of his father.

David over Judah 3.

'Tis evident from this account, that the contest between *David* and *Ishbosheth* was managed with great temper and moderation on both sides, that the generals were unwilling to push things to extremity, were sparing of the lives of their soldiers, and that they all regarded each other as brethren. Though the contest continued several years, because *Abner* had no immediate cause for abandoning the interest of *Ishbosheth*, whom he advanced to the throne over *Israel*, and might not for several years find a proper opportunity for reconciling himself to *David*; yet it was carried on by small detachments and parties, without ever, as for any thing that appears, coming with their

David over Judah 4, 5.

David over Judah 4, 5.

their forces to a general engagement, to decide the contest between the two competitors for the crown. This was not what *David* desired, nor did it suit the purposes and views of *Abner*, who adhered to *Ishbosheth*'s fortune; that by supporting him for several years he might increase his own importance, and make *David* at last think it worth his while to receive him upon his own terms.

CHAP. XXI.

Abner's *reconciliation with* David.

David over Judah 6, 7.

THO' *Abner*, with the eleven tribes, asserted *Ishbosheth*'s cause for several years, yet he saw that his interest greatly declined, and that he should not long be able to support him, as his forces were worsted in every rencounter; whilst *David* prospered in all his affairs, his party was continually increasing, and every thing seemed to conspire to crown his wishes, and soon put him in possession of the kingdom over all *Israel*. This was the opportunity that *Abner* had waited for, to bring about that revolution in favour of *David*, which he had continually in his view, and was determined to effect, upon the first occasion that presented itself. He soon found one, that he immediately closed with.

Saul had a concubine, whose name was *Rispah*, and *Ishbosheth*, having found out that *Abner* had been too intimate with her, took an opportunity to reproach him on that affair, and with an air of displeasure said to him: *Why hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?* *Abner*, enraged to be thus called to an account, said to *Ishbosheth* with indignation: "What, am I to be used in so "contemptuous and disagreeable a manner, as "tho'

"tho' I were as insignificant as a dog's head, "and thus haughtily questioned, as tho' I had "been guilty of an heinous crime, concerning this "woman, which you reprove me for having been "too free with! What this to me, who, in op- "position to the tribe of *Judah*, have advanced "you to the throne, have been so firm and "faithful a friend to the house of *Saul* thy "father, his brethren, and adherents, and have "not delivered thee, as I could easily have done, "into the hands of *David!* Too long have I al- "ready resisted the appointment of God, and may I "fall under his heaviest curse, except I perform "to *David*, what the Lord hath sworn to "*David*; even to translate the kingdom from the "house of *Saul*, and to establish his throne over "all *Israel* and *Judah*, from *Dan* even to *Beer-* "*sheba!*"

David over Judah 6, 7.

This threatning so terrified the unhappy prince, that he could not answer him a word, as he knew he was absolutely in *Abner*'s power, and had too much reason to fear that he would put his threatning too soon in execution. He did it without delay, and sent private messengers to *David* to offer him his service, and say to him: "To whom doth the "government over the country of *Israel* belong? "Even to thyself. Enter therefore into an "agreement with me, and I will lend thee my "assistance, to bring over all the tribes of *Israel* "to thy interest?"

David, in return to his message, sent him word, he was willing to enter into a treaty; but would have no interview with him, but upon condition, that he should bring *Michal*, *Saul*'s daughter, with him, when he admitted him to an audience. He sent at the same time messengers to *Ishbosheth*, to demand that *Michal*, his wife, whom he purchased for an hundred foreskins of the

David over Judah 6,7.

the *Philistines*; *i. e.* at the hazard of his life, should be immediately delivered to him; who had by force been taken from him, and married to *Phaltiel*, the son of *Laish*.

Here *David* also falls under censure, *as manifesting, in this instance, a too sensual disposition*; and Mr. *B.* speaks of this affair in such a manner, as shews that he greatly disapproved it. For he says, that *Michal, Saul's daughter, was* David's *first wife, that she was taken from him during his disgrace, that he successively married several others, and yet demanded the first again*; adding, to enhance *David*'s offence, that *to restore her to him, they were obliged to force her from an husband, who loved her greatly, and followed her as far as he could, weeping like a child.* I confess I cannot help smiling at this last observation, nor perceive what it is to the purpose; for I can never imagine, that because one man loves another man's wife very dearly, that therefore the husband has no right to reclaim her; or should relinquish her, because the man cries like a child at parting with her. I think *David* was most certainly in the right to demand her; for whatever may be said as to his other wives, he had certainly the strongest claim to this; for he had purchased her for an hundred foreskins of the *Philistines*. And supposing there was nothing of a sensual disposition that influenced *David* in this instance, there might be other very substantial reasons to induce him to insist upon her being sent to him. He purchased her at the hazard of his life, and she was a living proof of his military valour and ability. She was his predecessor's daughter, and he did not probably chuse to loose the honour and advantage of the alliance. It might conciliate some of *Saul*'s family and tribe to his interest, when they saw one of his daughters owned and treated as *David*'s wife, and that

that he did not purſue his reſentment to *Saul*, to the injury or diſgrace of any of the branches of his family. There was alſo a real generoſity in the thing, both to her and *Saul*; in that he received her after ſhe had been another man's; remembring probably how once he owed his life to her affection, and knowing that ſhe was partly ſeparated from him by her father's authority; whereas many princes, for much leſs provocations of a wive's father, would have turned off their conſorts in revenge of them, and even put them to death for having been married to another.

David over Judah 6, 7.

In conſequence of this demand made to *Abner* and *Iſhboſheth*, ſhe was immediately put into *Abner*'s hands; who, to prepare things for an accommodation with *David*, went and aſſembled all the elders of *Iſrael*, and ſaid to them: "You have "formerly oftentimes expreſſed your deſire, that "*David* might be king over you. You have now "an opportunity to gratify your own inclinations "in this reſpect; and what ſhould engage you "to advance him to the throne is, that God him-"ſelf hath pointed out to you the man, as he "hath declared: *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 ene-*"*mies*;" intimating hereby the incapacity of *Iſhboſheth*, and that it was both their intereſt and duty to transfer the kingdom and government to *David*; would be happy for themſelves, and an inſtance of obedience to their God. He went alſo and applied himſelf particularly to the tribe of *Benjamin*, to which *Saul*'s family belonged, and perſuaded them, by the ſame kind of arguments, to fall in with the general ſenſe of all the other tribes, and concur with them in advancing *David* to the throne.

David over Judah 6,7.

Having settled this important point to his mind, he took *Michal*, and waited with her on *David* at *Hebron*, attended with twenty persons of rank in his retinue, whom *David* favourably received, and for whom he made a royal entertainment; and having fixed the terms of accommodation between them, *Abner* took his leave, and at parting told the king: "*I will go and assemble all* Israel *together to my Lord*, whom I now acknowledge for my sovereign and king, that they may all of them submit to thine authority and government, upon such terms as shall be judged honourable on both sides, and that, according to the utmost wishes of thy heart, thou mayest reign over us all, and the kingdom may be established in thy house and family." *Abner* then took his leave, and went away pleased and happy, to bring about the revolution he had projected and promised.

Here Mr. *B.* is out of all patience, and after having told us, that Abner, *being discontented with the king his master, resolved to dispossess him of his dominions, and deliver them up to* David, adds: David *gives ear to the traitor, and is willing to gain a kingdom by intrigues of this nature. Can it be said that these are the actions of a Saint? I own, there is nothing in all this, but what is agreeable to the precepts of policy, and the methods of human prudence; but I shall never be persuaded, that the strict laws of equity, and the severe morals of a good servant of God, can approve such conduct.* There are some persons whom it is extremely difficult to please. In a former note Mr. *B.* heavily censures *David*, that *he had made incessant war on* Ishbosheth, *like a very ambitious and even infidel prince*; and now, *he ceases even to be a saint*, and shews *he is destitute of the severe morals of a good servant of God*; because he took the first opportunity, and

and the only means that were in his power, to put a ſtop to the war, and prevent the farther effuſion of blood, by a general and ſolid peace. David over Judah 6, 7.

What, I wonder, would Mr. *B.* have had *David* to have done, when *Abner* ſent his firſt propoſals for an accommodation? Ought he to have immediately rejected them, reproached *Abner* as a traitor to his prince, told him he would enter into no terms of peace with him, nor his maſter, but reduce them both, with all the eleven tribes that adhered to them, by force of arms? Had *David* done this, would not all the world have reproached him for folly, thus to hazard, by continuing the war, what he could ſo certainly and eaſily obtain by the voluntary offer of *Abner*? Would he not have been juſtly cenſured for delighting in blood, for purſuing by the ſword, what he could ſecure by treaty and accommodation? Or, would Mr. *Bayle* have had *David* ſent to *Iſhboſheth*, and informed him of *Abner*'s treachery, and adviſed him to the proper methods for preventing it? This, perhaps, Mr. *B.* might have commended as an act of exceeding great generoſity, and *Iſhbosheth* might have thought himſelf greatly obliged to *David* for ſuch an inſtance of friendſhip. But how would the tribe of *Judah* have ſtood affected to him? Would they not have concluded him unworthy to be their prince, who no better underſtood his own intereſt or theirs, by his rejecting a meaſure, which every prudential conſideration, which humanity, and the love that he owed to his people, obliged him immediately and thankfully to embrace? *David* had no other choice left him, but either to fall in with *Abner*'s offer, or prolong the calamities of the civil war; except Mr. *B.* thought he was obliged, upon diſcovering *Abner*'s treachery, to have informed *Ishbosheth* of it, and ſent him at the ſame time an offer of reſigning the crown of *Judah* to him, and

David over Judah 6, 7.

all his pretensions to be king over all *Israel*. 'Tis plain *David* was not of this sentiment, but thought his own right was better than *Ishbosheth*'s, and therefore made use of that method to secure it, which he was *persuaded, that the strict laws of equity, and the severe morals of a good servant of God*, did not in the least prohibit and condemn.

And I confess, I do not see any just reason for this censure of Mr. *Bayle*'s, or in what *David* acted, by accepting *Abner*'s proposals, contrary to the strictest laws of equity, or the severe morals of a good servant of God. To *David* belonged the throne by the appointment of God; and *Abner*, by advancing *Ishbosheth*, and beginning a civil war in the kingdom, acted contrary to his duty to God, the allegiance he owed *David*, the laws of hereditary succession, and the peace and happiness of his country. Here *Abner* was extreamly criminal, and every moment he continued to support *Ishbosheth*, he supported an unnatural rebellion, and acted contrary to his own conviction, by keeping *David* out of the possession of the kingdom, which he knew and confessed God had sworn to give him.

Through a regard to *Saul*'s family, and more to his own ambition, he determined to defer *David*'s possession as long as he could; till at length, finding that *Ishbosheth* was unworthy of the throne, and incapable of government; that *David* would finally prevail, probably tired out with the calamities of the civil war, and, I doubt not, willing to make some good terms for himself; he took hold of the first opportunity to break with *Ishbosheth*, and reconcile himself, and the whole nation to *David*. In this *Abner* certainly acted as right a part, as he, who having supported an usurpation and real rebellion, at length returns to his duty, deserts the pretender, and submits himself

to

to his lawful prince. Though the motives to such an alteration of conduct may not be altogether quite honourable, the conduct itself is certainly right; and the only possible means, by which such a person can attone for his past guilt, is to lay down his arms, put an end to the usurpation, and thereby restore the public peace.

David over Judah 6, 7.

Mr. *B.* with great indignation, calls Abner, *the traitor*. But did ever any one imagine, that the deserting an usurper, and submitting to a man's lawful prince, really constituted him a traitor to his lawful prince? Rather, doth he not cease to be a traitor to him, when he declares for his rightful sovereign? Ishbosheth *was* Abner's *king*, as Mr. *B.* tells us; but it was a king he had treasonably made, and whom he had supported by violence, in opposition to the order of God, and without any pretence of right and justice. If therefore the making him king was wrong, the deserting him, and bringing over the tribes to *David*, was right. And the easy method by which *Abner* effected this revolution, and the cordial manner, in which the whole nation submitted to *David*, is a demonstration that they approved *Abner*'s change, and were glad to accept *David* for their king. For no sooner had *Abner* a conference with the elders of *Israel*, and put them in mind that they had formerly desired *David* for their king, and that the Lord had resolved to deliver them from the *Philistines*, and the hand of their enemies, by the hand of *David*; but instantly all the tribes came to *Hebron*, all the men of war, *with a perfect heart*, and all Israel *with one heart to make him king*, and accordingly anointed him king over *Israel*

In this whole affair, *David*'s conduct to me seems perfectly honourable. He received a rebel general to his favour upon his submission, agrees,

David over Judah 6,7.

with him, that he ſhould bring in all the tribes to do what they deſired to do, and were bound by the order of God to do, even to make him king over them, that hereby he might have the peaceable poſſeſſion of the whole kingdom. *Abner* had openly told *Iſhboſheth* of his deſign. *Abner* ſent meſſengers to *David*, and not *David* to *Abner* on the affair. It was *Abner* who conferred with the princes of *Iſrael*, and came openly to *David* at *Hebron* to agree upon proper meaſures. *David* carried on no ſecret intrigues to bring over *Abner*, and the eleven tribes to his party. He only conſented to a juſt propoſal that was made him of recovering his own right, without invading the real right of a ſingle perſon; and indeed it was the only method he could take, and he would not have acted like a ſaint, or a wiſe and juſt prince, had he not hereby put an end to the civil war, ſecured his own rights, and reſtored and eſtabliſhed the peace and proſperity of his people.

CHAP. XXII.

Abner's *murther*, *and* David's *reſentment of it.*

SOON after *Abner*'s diſmiſſion from *David*, *Joab*, with the detatchment under him, returns to *Hebron*, from a ſucceſsful expedition againſt ſome hords, that infeſted the country; and brought back his men loaded with the ſpoils of his enemies. Soon after his arrival he was informed by ſome of his friends, that *Abner* had an interview with the king, been in ſecret conference with, and peaceably diſmiſſed by him. *Joab* immediately waited on *David*, and inſolently ſaid to him: "What "haſt thou done, in thus permitting *Abner*, when "thou hadſt him in thy power, to eſcape with "ſafety

"safety out of thy hands? Who, whatever friend-
"ship he might pretend, or whatever fair offers
"he might make thee, came only to deceive thee,
"to pry into thy measures, to learn thy secrets,
"and thereby to have it more effectually in his
"power to supplant and ruin thee."

David over Judah 6, 7.

Having thus insulted his prince, he took leave of him, resolved *Abner*'s destruction, and immediately, without even acquainting the king with his intentions, sent messengers after *Abner*, requesting his return to *Hebron*; as there were some affairs of importance, in which he wanted to consult him. *Abner*, without any suspicion of foul play, readily complied with the message he received, and came back to the city; where being led by *Joab*, under the pretence of a friendly conference, under one of the gates, he was treacherously and cowardly murthered by him; *Abishai* his brother being with him, when the assassination was perpetrated; or being privy to the murther, and consenting to it. *Joab*'s pretence for this villanous action, was to revenge the death of his brother *Asabel*, whom *Abner* slew through necessity, and after once and again desiring *Asabel* not to persue him to his own destruction. Probably *Joab* might have resolved *Abner*'s death on this account; but undoubtedly the principal reason why he now stabbed him, was, as *Josephus* * assures us, because he was afraid of loosing the first post of honour under the king, and being dismissed from the command of the army, by *Abner*'s being advanced, as the reward of his important services, to both in his room. And this murther of *Abner* by *Joab* is allowed to be *a base piece of treachery, thus to assassinate a man in*

* He killed *Abner*, ως μεν αυτος ελεγε, τιμωρησαντος Ασαηλω τω αδελφω——ως δε τ'αληθες ειχε, δεισαντος περι της ηρατηγιας, και της παρα τω βασιλει τιμης, μη τυτων αυτος αφαιρεθειη, λαβοι δε παρα Δαυιδ την πρωτην ταξιν Αβνηρος. Jos. *Ant. l.* 7. *c.* 1. §. 5.

David over Judah 6, 7.

cool blood, in revenge for an action committed in the heat of battle, in self-defence, and after fair warning given. However, *David* was so evidently free from all share in this base and bloody assassination, as that I do not find, that there are any who attempt to charge him with the guilt of it.

When he was afterwards informed of it, he cried out from his abhorrence of the fact, and a detestation of the baseness of it: * *I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of* Abner, *the son of* Ner. *Let it long and heavily rest on the head of* Joab, *and on all his father's family; and let there not be one of* Joab's *house, who shall be without an issue, or fail of being leprous, or who doth not want the support of a staff, or doth not die by the sword, or who is not reduced to the want of bread.* When he had pronounced this heavy curse, in the first heat of his resentment, he ordered *Joab*, and all the people that were with him, to rend their cloaths, and gird themselves with sack cloth, and mourn over the dead body of *Abner*; and thus bitterly mortified the man he could not punish; and when *Abner* was carried to the grave, he himself followed the bier as chief mourner, and when they buried him in *Hebron*, he wept loudly over his grave, and all the people who attended were dissolved also into tears. He then made the following short lamentation over him, but such a one as was highly suitable to the occasion, and which must have stung his murtherer to the heart, as it contained a charge on him of cowardise, treachery, and wickedness.

"Shall † *Abner* die, as a worthless vile ‡ fel-
"low

* 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

† *Shall* Abner *die!* A manner of expression that argues the heighth of indignation and resentment.

‡ *As a fool dieth:* נבל. The word doth not signify what we commonly mean by *a fool*, but a worthless wretch, who, whatever

"low dies! Thou waſt not taken captive in bat-
"tle, nor with thy § hands bound, or thy feet
"thruſt into fetters, ſlain by an enemy! Thou
"felleſt by treachery, as one that falleth before
"the ſons of violence and iniquity."

David over Judah 6, 7.

This excited afreſh the compaſſion of thoſe that were preſent, and they again wept over the murthered general. When *Abner* was interred, and *David*'s ſervants put him in mind, that the uſual time of food was come, he bound himſelf by an oath, in token of his great concern, not to taſte bread, or any thing elſe, till the ſun was down.

Theſe expreſſions of grief for the loſs of *Abner* appeared ſo natural and genuine ‖ to the people, as

ever his natural abilities may be, is deſtitute of all great and valuable qualities. He is deſcribed by *Iſaiah*, in the ſtrongeſt characters. *The vile perſon* נבל *will ſpeak villany* נבלה ידבר *and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocriſy, and to utter errour againſt the Lord, to make empty the ſoul of the hungry, and cauſe the drink of the thirſty to fail.* Iſai. xxxii. 6. He is an unprincipled, falſe, injurious, mean, and worthleſs wretch. Hard that a prince and a great man ſhould ſo die, as though he was one of thoſe inſignificant and infamous perſons!

§ *Thy hands were not bound*, &c. He was not taken priſoner in war, nor led away and put to death by an enemy, but by fraud and treachery, under the pretence of a friendly conference, without the opportunity of defending himſelf; circumſtances that aggravated the baſeneſs of the murther, and but ill ſuited with the rank and character of the noble perſonage, that was thus cruelly ſacrificed.

‖ The reflection that hath been made on the concern that *David* expreſſed for *Abner*'s death, will, I believe, be thought, from what hath been ſaid, not to be conſiſtent with that candor, which ſhould ever be preſerved, in the judgment we form concerning the reaſons and motives of other men's conduct; and eſpecially when we allow ourſelves to cenſure ſuch actions, as are apparently virtuous and honourable, and for which we can aſſign cauſes juſtifiable and worthy in their nature. Thoſe, which *David* himſelf alledges for his grief on this occaſion, were the baſeneſs and treachery of the murther, the heinous guilt contracted by it, and the rank, character, and worth of the man aſſaſſinated, without a ſingle mention of any diſadvantage, which, in his circumſtances, ſuch an affair might have occaſioned to himſelf. And theſe reaſons were ſuch, as would affect, and

David over Judah 6,7.

as that they were extreamly pleased with it; and indeed his whole conduct was so amiable and obliging,

and make any generous mind relent into tears, and abhor and curse the cruel hand that destroyed him. But what will not prejudice suggest on such an occasion? Can there be a more forced, unnatural construction put upon this part of *David*'s conduct, than saying: *Though* David's *mourning for* Abner *had greater probability of being sincere, than when he grieved for the unhappy* Saul; *yet that it was self-interested, because the false* Abner *was preparing to do him essential service, and he had much to expect from him: but when his expectation had been answered, it is far from being improbable, when we consider his treatment of the* Amalekite, *and of* Rechab *and* Baanah, *that he would have found an opportunity himself to have got rid of a man, on whom he could have placed no reliance.* For how can it be made appear, that his grief was self-interested? when the principal service, that *Abner* was capable of doing *David*, he had already done him; having actually brought over the tribes of *Israel* and *Benjamin* to his interest. For after *Abner* had consulted with them, and found they all concurred in transferring the crown to *David*, 2 *Sam.* iii. 19, 21. he waited on him in their name at *Hebron*, and told him, what *seemed good to* Israel, *and the whole house of* Benjamin, *i. e.* the unanimous resolution they had come to in his favour; and that there was now nothing more to be done, but to gather them together, agree upon terms with them, and take the intire government upon himself. So that self-interest, or the views of any future service that *Abner* might do him is improperly alledged, as the reason of *David*'s sorrow for *Abner*; and it is plain by the event that the tribes were determined on the choice of *David*; in that after *Abner*'s death, who headed them in their opposition to him, and their being intirely left to their own inclinations, as he was really the man they wanted to govern them, *they* soon *came with one heart* to *Hebron* to anoint *David* king over them. And though the murther of *Abner*, was a very unfortunate accident, and might have been attended with very unhappy circumstances to him at that critical conjuncture; yet as they knew *David* had no hand in it, it made no change in their resolutions to advance him; and upon the whole it was rather a favourable event for him, as hereby an ambitious man was removed out of the way; who upon any future disgust, might have excited, by his interest in the tribes, a revolt from *David*, as he had lately done from *Ishboseth*, and on whom the objection itself declares, David *could have placed no reliance.*

As to the probability, that *David* would have soon got rid of *Abner*, there is nothing in his preceeding or after-conduct to support

liging, as that he gained their universal affection and esteem. They were fully convinced, that the king had no hand in *Abner*'s murther, and it highly became him to give them the fullest assurances of it; because had they suspected, that he either contrived or authorised it, it might, in that critical season, have utterly ruined all his affairs, and caused an universal defection amongst the tribes; as they could have little good to expect from the

David over Judah 6, 7.

support it. For surely he, who could thrice spare his avowed enemy *Saul*, who used all the methods of treachery and force to cut him off, when he could have killed him; who could spare *Shimei*, when, I had almost said, he ought to have destroyed him; and could not only give *Amasa* his life, who had been general of the rebel army, but put so noble a confidence in him, as to make him his own general: He, I say, who could thus spare and forgive his bitterest enemies, could have no secret purpose of revenge against *Abner*, nor intention of destroying him, as soon as ever he should find an opportunity, after the promises *David* had made him, and the real obligations *Abner* had conferred upon him. *David* was certainly a generous enemy, and an affectionate and constant friend. Perfidy, fraud and cruelty were not the characteristicks of his temper, and had *Abner* lived, and behaved with fidelity and honour, it is more than probable he would have continued safe under the royal favour and protection.

His treatment of the *Amalekite*, who boasted of his murthering *Saul*, and of *Rechab* and *Baanah*, who had actually murthered *Ishboseth*, and made a merit of their villany, doth not in the least render it probable, that he would have wickedly and treacherously got rid of *Abner*, as soon as he had found a convenient opportunity; unless his doing a right thing makes it probable that he would have done a very wrong one; or his executing justice on three wretches, who confessed themselves guilty of assassination and murther, renders it likely, that he would have have turned assassin himself, and cut off the man, who put an end to the calamities of a civil war, and helped to bring *David* into possession of the kingdom, which as *Abner* himself declares, *God had sworn to translate to him from the house of* Saul. Surely equity and candor would rather infer the contrary, that he who so greatly regretted *Abner*'s death, cursed the cruel author of it, and executed in so exemplary a manner vengeance on the three infamous regicides, had himself a natural disposition to justice, and would never have violated his engagements with *Abner*, had he preserved his faith and loyalty to *David*.

govern-

David over Judah 6, 7.

government of a man, who, whilst *Abner* was preparing to settle him peaceably on the throne, could order him, in so base and infamous a manner, to be privately murthered. *David* appears to have had a great regard and esteem for *Abner*; for he said publicly to his servants: "Know ye not that "there is a prince, and a great man fallen this "day in *Israel*; who is a public loss, and deserves "to be lamented by the nation. And though "anointed king over the tribe of *Judah*, I am "this day in a very unsettled state, am little able "to exert my royal power, and dare not punish "the sons of *Zeruiah* as they deserve, who have "too much authority in their hands, and influ-"ence over the army, for me now to call them "to an account. However the time will come, "when the Lord will reward the principal actor "in this bloody scene, according to his wicked-"ness." The reader will remark, and remember here, that *David*, though *Joab* was now too powerful a subject to be at that time called to an account, did not forgive him the assassination of *Abner*; but hoped that God would sooner or later afford him an opportunity of executing justice on him according to his deserts; and that it was his firm resolution to do it, appears from the charge he gave concerning him, to *Solomon* his successor, which shall be considered in its proper place.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ishbosheth's *death, and* David's *treatment of his murtherers.*

David over Judah 7.

WHEN * *Abner*'s death was known to *Ishbosheth*, and the *Israelites* of his party, Ishbosheth's *hands were feeble*; he despaired of his cause, knew he had no strength to support his interest, no general to conduct his counsels and forces, had neither

* 2 Sam. iv. 1.

neither courage nor conduct himself to maintain his usurpation, and gave up all for lost; and the *Israelitish* army *were also troubled*; as they knew not how to act, having lost the man they had trusted with the management of their affairs, and under whose conduct they had supported *Ishbosheth*; and their distress was the greater, as they knew not whom to fix on for their general, in the room of *Abner* they had lost. But the death of *Ishbosheth* himself immediately pointed out to them the only measure they could take, and fixed their resolution to make their submission to *David*.

David over Judah 7.

Two brothers who were captains, each of a company in *Ishbosheth*'s guards, knowing the unhappy situation of their master, and hoping for preferment under *David*, if they could do him any substantial service, imagined that nothing could be more acceptable to him, than the ridding him at once of his competitor for the kingdom; and they accordingly performed and executed the bloody resolution. Their names were *Baanah* and *Rechab*, of the tribe of *Benjamin*. About noon-day, as *Ishbosheth* was reposing himself on his bed, according to the custom of those warmer countries, they came under a pretence of fetching corn, into his house, entered his bed-chamber, stabbed him thro' the body, took off his head, and made their escape with it to *Hebron*, and there presenting it to *David*, said to him: "Behold the head of *Ishbosheth*, the son of *Saul* "thine enemy, who sought thy life. And now "the Lord hath avenged my lord the king, by "our hands, of *Saul* and of his seed, for all the "injuries they have done, and their various at-"tempts to destroy thee." How did *David* receive this present? As became a prince of honour and justice. He immediately said to the two assassins: "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my "soul from all adversity; when I was informed "by a certain person, that *Saul* was dead, and

"that

David over Judah 7.

"that he himself had slain him, imagining that I "should have rejoiced in, and rewarded him for "the good tidings; I immediately ordered him "to be seised, and, instead of the reward he pro-"mised himself, put to death in *Ziglag*. But how "much more due is the severest vengeance to "those wicked men, who have treacherously slain "a righteous person, who had never injured them, "or sought their destruction, in his own house, and "when reposing himself on his bed? Am I not "therefore bound to revenge his blood, which "your hands have thus cruelly shed, and take "away from the earth two such wretches, who "are unworthy to live any longer on the face of "it?" And having thus pronounced their doom, he ordered them to be immediately executed, and to shew his abhorrence of their treason, their hands and feet to be cut off, and to be hung up, *interrorem*, over the pool in *Hebron*. As to *Ishbosheth*'s head, it was buried, by his command, in the sepulchre of *Abner*, in that city.

Let this conduct of *David* towards *Ishbosheth*, in mourning over his death, executing his murtherers, and ordering his head to be honourably buried, be contrasted with that of *M. Antony*'s to *Cicero**, and in how amiable a light will it appear! *Cicero* was cruelly murthered by *Antony*'s order, who commanded his head and right hand to be cut off, and both laid before him. When they were brought to him, he beheld them with pleasure, and frequently broke out into loud laughter for joy. After he was fully satiated with the sight, he ordered them to be placed on

* Κικερωνος δε σφαγεντος, εκελευσεν Αντωνιος την τε κεφαλην αποκοπηναι και την χειρα την δεξιαν—και κομισθεντων, ιδεατο γεγηθως, και ανακαγχαζων υπο χαρας πολλακις. Ειτα εμπλησθεις, εκελευσεν υπερ τε βηματος εν αγορα τεθηναι, καθαπερ εις τον νεκρον υβριζων.

Plutar. *vit.* M. Anton. *p.* 924. c.

the

the *Rostra* in the *Forum*, to insult him after his death.

David over Judah 7.

David's behaviour, in this treatment of the murtherers of *Ishbosheth*, appears to me highly commendable and praise worthy; not only as the putting them to death was an act of great and necessary justice * in itself, but as it was publickly declaring,

* The censure thrown upon *David* for the execution of these two wretches is very undeserved, and the reasons to support it are weak and insignificant. It hath been said, that *he ought to have been ashamed to punish the immediate instruments in perpetrating a crime, of which he, the usurper of part of the unfortunate king's dominions, and a pretender to the whole, was the remote, though efficient cause.* But in reality, *Ishbosheth* was the usurper of part of *David*'s dominions, and a pretender to the whole, and not *David* of *Ishbosheth*'s; and therefore, according to this reasoning, *Ishbosheth* was *the near and efficient* cause of his own death; and *David* was just as much the efficient cause of *Ishbosheth*'s murther, as *Alexander* was of killing *Darius*, because he invaded *Persia*, to revenge the wrongs of *Greece*, who was nevertheless assassinated by *Bessus*, without *Alexander*'s knowledge and consent, presuming on his gratitude, the better to ingratiate himself into his favour, and that he might be able, as he pretended, more effectually to deliver up the kingdom of *Persia* to him. *Alexander* however was not ashamed of calling *Bessus* to account, and when he was brought into his presence sternly said to him: *Cujus feræ rabies occupavit animum tuum, quum regem, de te optime meritum, prius vincire, deinde occidere sustinuisti?* With the rage of what wild beast was thy mind possessed, who daredst first to bind, and then murther a king, to whom thou wast under the greatest obligations? And though *Bessus*, by way of apology for his treason, said to *Alexander*, *regis titulum se usurpare, ut gentem suam tradere ipsi possit; qui si cessasset, alium fuisse regnum occupaturum*; that he took on him the title of king, that he might deliver up his country to him, and that if he had not, another would have seised on the kingdom. *Curt. l. 7. c. 5. §. 38.* yet *Alexander* would not suffer the wretch to live, but delivered him up, as he richly deserved, to the torture and death of the cross; without once suspecting, that he himself was in any real sense the efficient cause of *Darius*'s death, though it is extreamly probable, that if *Alexander* had continued in *Macedonia*, *Darius* would never have been murthered by *Bessus*; or imagining that he did an infamous action, by punishing the execrable traitor and assassin with death.

David over Judah 7.

ing, that he would never be ſerved by treachery and murther, nor ever forgive ſuch crimes, tho' the pretence of committing them might be for his own intereſt and ſervice. The concern he expreſſed for *Ishbosheth*'s death, eſpecially the manner of it, argued humanity, compaſſion, juſtice, honour, and an utter abhorrence of villans and their crimes; and ſurely he did not over act his part, in the ſorrow he manifeſted, when recounting all the circumſtances of the murther, he thus tenderly expreſſed himſelf: *How much more, when wicked men have ſlain a righteous perſon, in his own houſe, upon his bed!* Circumſtances, enough to make an enemy relent, and which, as they influenced *David*'s conduct, muſt heighthen the glory of his character; unleſs the putting off humanity be a virtue, and treachery and parricide deſerve to be openly approved, rewarded and gloried in.

'Tis true, the death of *Ishbosheth*, removed the only remaining formidable obſtacle to *David*'s advancement to the throne of *Iſrael*; and unqueſtionably was a very fortunate accident for him, and he could not but be pleaſed to find all circumſtances concurring to his ſpeedy and peaceable ac-

'Tis true, that *had* David *aſpired to no other ſcepter than his ſhepherd's crook, and had not the villans preſumed on* David's *gratitude,* Iſhboſheth *might have reigned long, an honour to himſelf and his country.* This no body will deny. But it is as true, that had not *Iſhboſheth* uſurped a kingdom, he had no manner of claim to, he might have long lived peaceably and happily, and eſcaped the treachery of *Rechab* and *Baanah*; and though they like villans preſumed on *David*'s gratitude, yet he was certainly in the right to ſhew that their preſumption was ill grounded, and to recompence the injury they did to his honour, by ſuppoſing him capable of approving their wickedneſs and cruelty to their prince, whom they had baſely murthered, not as they expected, but in a manner more agreeable to juſtice, and the heinous crimes of which they had been guilty. O what exclamations would Mr. *Bayle* and others have made, had *David* ſpared theſe aſſaſſins, commended them for their zeal to him, and advanced them to honours and dignities in his court or army!

ceſſion

cession to the kingdom. But may not a person be really glad to obtain his just wishes, and yet as really regret the means by which he obtains them? May not a man be sorry for the death of a person, by which he is consequentially a gainer? An affectionate son may mourn over a father's death, whose life stood between him and the estate he comes to the possession of; especially if killed by fraud and violence; and if *David* possessed *the least spark* of *grace*, or had the common feelings of a man, he could not but sincerely lament the unhappy fate of a murthered prince, even by whose death his advancement to the throne became more easy and certain.

David over Judah 7.

CHAP. XXIV.

David's character of *a man after God's own heart* explained.

IN the foregoing history we have seen the various steps, by which providence brought *David* to the quiet possession of the throne of *Israel*; an event, that, to all human probability, seemed the most unlikely, as the family of *Saul*, his predecessor, was very numerous, all the forces of the kingdom under his command, and large bodies of them frequently employed by him to accomplish *David*'s destruction. But *God's purposes must stand, and he will do all his pleasure.* He had assured *Saul*, by the mouth of *Samuel* his prophet, that he had sought him * A MAN AFTER HIS OWN HEART, *and commanded him to be captain over his people.* This character hath been thought, by some writers, to denote *the highest degree of moral purity*, and that therefore it could not, with truth or justice, be ascribed to *David*, who was

* 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

David certainly guilty of ſome very great offences, and
Ch. 7. hath been plentifully loaded with others, which he was intirely free from the guilt of. Every one knows, that in a literal tranſlation of words from one language to another, the original and the literal verſion may convey very different ideas; and ſhould any one aſſert, that what the verſion properly imports is the genuine meaning of the original, he would betray his ignorance and want of learning, and all his reaſonings from ſuch an aſſertion would be inconcluſive and falſe. *A good man*, upon the exchange of *London*, means, a reſponſible and wealthy man, who is able to anſwer his pecuniary obligations, and whoſe credit is every way unexceptionable, tho' his character for morals may be extreamly bad. But this is not the meaning of the *Greek* word αγαθος, and but ſeldom, or ever, of the *Latin* word *bonus*; and ſhould any one argue, that ſuch a man was αγαθος, or *bonus*, according to the common acceptation of thoſe words in *Greek* and *Latin*, becauſe in the *Engliſh* phraſe he is called a good man, he would expoſe himſelf for his ignorance and ſimplicity. *A man after God's own heart*, in *Engliſh*, if we interpret the expreſſion in the ſtricteſt and higheſt ſenſe, undoubtedly denotes a character irreproachable and pure, without ſpot or blemiſh. But doth it follow that this is the meaning of the *Hebrew* expreſſion, and that *David*, becauſe he is ſo called, was intended to be repreſented as a man of the higheſt purity? This is preſuming on a meaning, that the expreſſion by no means neceſſarily conveys, and taking for granted what ought to be proved, and what every man, who underſtands the original language, knows to be miſtaken.

The immediate occaſion of theſe words of *Samuel* to *Saul* was, *Saul*'s diſobedience in ſacrificing,

ficing, contrary to the expreſs orders he had received from God by this great prophet, not to offer ſacrifices till he ſhould come, and give him the proper directions for his behaviour. The pretence was piety, but the real cauſe was impatience, pride, and contempt of the prophet; who not coming juſt at the time *Saul* expected, he thought it beneath him to wait any longer for him; and imagined, that as king, all the rites of religion, and the miniſters of it, were to be ſubject to his direction and pleaſure. But when *Samuel* came, notwithſtanding his plea of devotion, and *the force* he put upon himſelf, *Samuel* plainly tells him: * *Thou haſt done fooliſhly, thou haſt not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have eſtabliſhed thy kingdom upon* Iſrael *for ever. But now thy kingdom ſhall not continue. The Lord hath ſought him* איש כלבבו a man after his own heart; *he ſhall be captain over his people, becauſe thou haſt not kept that which the Lord hath commanded thee.*

Da[illegible] over [illegible] dah [illegible]

It is evident here, that *the man after God's own heart* ſtands in oppoſition to the character of *Saul*, who is deſcribed as acting fooliſhly, by breaking the commandment of God by his prophet, and rejected by him, *i. e.* deprived of the ſucceſſion to the crown in his family, on account of his folly, preſumption, and diſobedience. And it therefore means one who ſhould act prudently, and obey the commandments of God delivered him by his prophets, and whom therefore God would *thus far* approve and continue to favour. Thus the expreſſion is actually interpreted by the *Chaldee* paraphraſe: גבר עבד רעותיה *The man who doth my will*; and by St. *Paul* to the *Jews* at

* 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14.

David over Judah 6, 7.

Antioch, who ſays, that *when God had removed* Saul, *he raiſed them up* David *to be their king*; *to whom he gave teſtimony, and ſaid:* ‡ *I have found* David, *the ſon of* Jeſſe, *a man after my own heart*, who ſhall execute my will.

There are therefore two ſenſes, which are evidently implied in this character of *the man after God's own heart*; a man, who ſhould faithfully execute the will of God according as he was commanded, and who, on that account, and ſo far, ſhould be the object of his approbation. And in one or other, or both theſe ſenſes, we find the expreſſion always uſed. Thus *David*, recounting the ſingular favours of God towards himſelf, ſays: *For thy word's ſake*, וכלבך *according to thy heart*, *i. e.* thy will and pleaſure, *haſt thou done all theſe great things.* In another place God ſaith to the *Jews:* † *I will give you paſtors* כלבי *according to my heart*; paſtors who ſhall anſwer thepurpoſes for which I ſent them, and act agreeable to their office, as the words immediately following explain it: ‖ *Who ſhall feed you with knowledge and underſtanding.* Thus alſo the Pſalmiſt: *The Lord grant thee* כלבבך *according to thy heart*, i. e. as the next words explain it: *Fulfill all thy counſel*; give thee thy wiſhes, and by his favour proſper all thy deſigns. In like manner, when *Jonathan* ſaid to his armour bearer: § *Come, let us go over to the garriſon of theſe uncircumciſed*, his armour bearer ſaid to him: *Do all that is* בלבבך *in thy heart.* Do what ever thou deſireſt and approveſt. *Turn thee. Behold I am with thee* כלבבך *according to thy heart*; in every thing in which thou canſt deſire, or command my concurrence.

Theſe remarks may be confirmed by ſome other forms of expreſſion of the like nature. Thus

‡ Acts xiii. 22. * 2 Sam. vii. 21. † Jer. iii. 15.
‖ Pſ. xx. 4. § 1 Sam. xiv. 7.

God

God tells *Eli*: ‖ *I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do* כאשר בלבבי *according to what is in my heart and my soul, i. e.* what I command, and what I approve. When *Jehu*, king of *Israel*, had cut off the whole house and family of *Ahab*, whom God for his numerous crimes had doomed to destruction, God said to him: * *Thou hast done well, in executing that which is right in my eyes, and hast done unto the house of* Ahab, ככל אשר בלבבי *according to all that was in my heart, i. e.* every thing I proposed, and commanded thee to do. And yet in the very next verse, *Jehu* is described as a very bad prince; for *he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of* Israel *with all his heart, nor departed from the sins of* Jeroboam, *who made* Israel *to sin.* So *Moses* tells the people: † *By this ye shall know, that the Lord hath said to me to do all these things, and that they are not* מלבי *from my own heart*; *i. e.* that I have not acted by my own suggestions, and according to my own pleasure; and he commands them: *Ye shall remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them, and not seek* ראחרי לבבכם ואחי עיניכם *after your own heart, and your own eyes*, what is agreeable to your passions, and pleasing to your vanity.

David over Judah 7.

Many more places might be mentioned to the same purpose; but from those already alledged, the reader will see, that *David* is characterised as *a man after God's own heart*, not to denote the utmost heighth of purity in his moral character, as a private man, which by no means enters into the meaning of the expression, and which in no one single instance is intended by it; but to represent him as one, who in his public character, as king of *Israel*, was fit for the purposes, to which God advanced him, and who he knew would faithfully

‖ 1 Sam. ii. 35. * 2 Kin. x. 30, 31. † Numb. xvi. 28. ‡ Ibid. xv. 39.

execute

David over Judah 7.

execute the commands he ſhould give him by his prophets; and who on this account ſhould be favoured and approved of God, and eſtabliſhed, himſelf and family, on the throne of *Iſrael.* He was, I doubt not, upon the whole, a really virtuous and religious man, according to the diſpenſation he was under; and he certainly was a wiſe, a juſt, a munificent and proſperous prince; but yet he had his faults, and thoſe great ones, in his private character; and theſe faults were not inconſiſtent with his character of being a man *according to God's heart*; for if he was ſuch a prince as God intended him to be, by faithfully executing his orders, and bringing to paſs thoſe great events, which he was raiſed up by God to be the inſtrument of accompliſhing; he thus far acted *according to the heart, i. e.* the purpoſe and will of God, and thereby, in this reſpect, rendered himſelf well pleaſing and acceptable to him.

The particular purpoſes for which God advanced him to the throne were, that by his ſteady adherence to the one true God, and the religion which he was pleaſed to eſtabliſh by *Moſes*, he might be an illuſtrious example to all his poſterity that ſhould reign after him: And here he was abſolutely without blemiſh, and *a man*, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, *after God's own heart*; as he never departed from his God, by introducing the deities of other nations, or permitting and incouraging the impious rites which they performed in honour of them. On this account * *his heart is ſaid to be perfect with the Lord his God*, becauſe his heart was never turned away after other gods; and 'tis ſpoken to the honour of the good princes of his houſe, who reigned after him, that *they did that which was right in the eyes*

* 1 King. xi. 4.

of

of the Lord, as did David *their father*; and of the idolatrous princes, it is mentioned as the greatest reproach to them, that *their hearts were not perfect with the Lord their God, as the heart of* David *their father*.

David over Judah 7

During the reign of *Saul*, little regard was shewn by him to the institutions of religion, and he acted as though he was independent on the God of *Israel*, and therefore seldom or ever † enquired of him, how he was to act in the affairs of government, at the ark, from whence God, as peculiarly present in it, had promised to give the proper answers to those who rightly consulted him. As the ark itself had no fixed residence, and some of the principal services of religon could not, for that reason, be regularly and statedly performed; *David* was raised up to be king over God's people, that he might provide a rest for his ark, where it should perpetually continue, to which all the people might resort, where all the solemn festivals might be celebrated, and the whole worship of God might be constantly performed, according to the prescriptions of the law of *Moses*. *David* fully answered this purpose by fixing the ark at *Jerusalem*, settling all the necessary ceremonies and forms of worship for perpetual observance, and composing sacred hymns and psalms, that should be sung in honour of the true God, providing the expences, and many of the costly materials, that were necessary to build and adorn the house of God, which he himself had proposed to erect, but which God reserved for his son and successor to raise up; and regulating the order, that was to be observed amongst all the various persons, that were to be employed in the daily services of the ark and temple; a full and ample account of

† 1 Chron. xiii. 3

which

David over Judah 7.

which is transmited to us in the first book of *Chronicles*.

It must not be omitted also, that there was yet another end of providence, in *David*'s appointment to be king over *Israel*; that, according to God's § promise, concerning him, he might *save his people* Israel *out of the hand of the* Philistines, *and out of the hand of all their enemies*; and farther, that by him he might accomplish the more ancient promises † which God had made to *Abraham*, in their full extent, of giving to his seed *the whole country, from the river of* Egypt, *unto the great river, the river* Euphrates. Here also *David* answered the intentions of providence in his advancement, as he subdued the *Philistines*, and made them tributary to his crown; as he cleared his kingdom of all the remains of the nations that had formerly possessed it, or reduced them into intire subjection, or made them proselytes to his religion; and as the consequence of just and necessary wars, conquered all the neighbouring nations, garrisoned them by his victorious troops, and put it out of their power to disturb his people for many years, ‡ and left to his son and successor a forty years peace, and dominion over all the kingdoms, from the river *Euphrates*, unto the land of the *Philistines*, and unto the border of *Egypt, who brought presents, and served* Solomon *all the days of his life.*

And finally, God raised him up to exalt the glory of his people *Israel*, and render them a flourishing and happy people, by the wisdom and justice of his government. * *He chose* David *his servant—to feed* Jacob *his people, and* Israel *his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity*

§ 2 Sam. iii. 10. † Gen. xv. 18. ‡ 1 Kin. iv. 21.
* Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72.

of

of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands, i. e. he governed them with integrity, prudence and courage; for * he reigned over all *Israel*, and *executed judgment and justice among all his people.* David over Judah 7.

See here, reader, the true portrait of *the man after God's own heart*, who fulfilled all his pleasure! A prince, who amidst all the idolatries of the nations around him, never wickedly apostatised from the worship of his God, and was an amiable example of a steady adherence to those forms of religion, which God had prescribed, to all the princes his successors; who, though king, subjected himself to God the supreme king of *Israel*, and faithfully executed the commands he received from him; who made his people triumph in the numerous victories he obtained, by the directions, and under the conduct of God himself; who enlarged their dominions, and put them into possession of all the territories God had promised to their forefathers; and who amidst all the successes that were granted him, the immense riches he had gathered from the spoils of his conquered enemies, and the sovereign power with which he was invested, never degenerated into despotism and tyranny, never oppressed his people; but governed them with integrity, ruled over them with moderation and prudence, impartially distributed justice, left an established durable peace, and fixed the whole administration, both civil and religious, upon the most substantial and durable foundation. In these instances he was the true vicegerent of God, on whose throne he sat, and all whose pleasure, in these great instances, he faithfully performed. If therefore *David*'s private moral character was worse than it will be ever proved to be, he might be still

* 1 Chron. xviii. 14.

David over Judah 7.

a man after God's own heart, in the proper original sense of the expression; and the attempt to prove that he was not possessed of *the height of moral purity*, is an impertinent attempt to prove *David* not to be, what the sacred history never asserted him to be.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.