
1SAMUEL 1: 1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite:

This and the three following books were formerly termed the first, second, third, and fourth books of Kings, and the two books of Samuel made in ancient times but one; the separation which has taken place seems to have been done without reason or necessity. These books are, properly speaking, a continuation of the book of Judges, as they give us an account of the remaining judges of Israel, down to the election of Saul; and of all the kings of Israel and Judah to the Babylonish captivity.

Of this book, called the first book of Samuel, the following are the contents: The birth and education of Samuel; the high priesthood of Eli; the Philistines attack the Israelites, overthrow them with a terrible slaughter, take the ark of the Lord, and set it up in the temple of their god Dagon; they are visited with Divine judgments, and are obliged to send back the ark with offerings and presents; Samuel, long acknowledged as a prophet of the Lord, takes the government of the people. Under his wise and pious administration, the affairs of Israel become re-established, and the Philistines are subdued. The sons of Samuel, who principally administered the secular concerns of the kingdom, acting unworthily, the people desire to have a king, who should be supreme, both in civil and military affairs. Samuel, after exhortations, yields to their entreaties; and, under the direction of God, Saul the son of Kish, whilst seeking the lost asses of his father, is met by the prophet, and anointed king over Israel. This man, not conducting himself in the government according to the direction of God, is rejected, and David the son of Jesse anointed king in his place, though Saul continues still in the government. This person soon becomes advantageously known to Israel by his single combat with a gigantic Philistine chief, called Goliath, whom he slays; on which the Israelites attack the Philistines, and give them a total overthrow. Saul, envious of David's popularity, seeks his destruction; he is in consequence obliged to escape for his life, and take refuge sometimes among the Moabites, sometimes among the Philistines, and sometimes in the caves of the mountains of Judah, everywhere pursued by Saul, and everywhere visibly protected by the Lord. At last Saul, being pressed by the Philistines, and finding that the Lord had forsaken him, had recourse to a witch that dwelt at En-dor, whom he consulted relative to the issue of the present war with the Philistines; he loses the battle, and being sorely wounded, and his three sons slain, he falls on his own sword, and expires on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines find his body, and the bodies of his three sons, among the slain; they cut off Saul's head, and affix the bodies to the walls of Beth-shan. The men of Jabesh-gilead, hearing this, go by night, and take the bodies from the walls of Beth-shan, bring them to Jabesh, burn them there, bury the bones, and mourn over their fallen king, fasting seven days. Thus concludes the first book of Samuel.

Concerning the author of these books there have been various conjectures. Because, in most of the Hebrew copies, they bear the name of Samuel, as a running title, it has been generally supposed that he was the author. But his name does not appear to have been anciently prefixed to these books, at least in those copies used by the Greek interpreters, commonly called the Septuagint, as they simply term each βασιλειῶν. The History or Book of Kingdoms. The Chaldee has no inscription. The Syriac and Arabic call each The Book of Samuel the Prophet; and the Vulgate, The Book of Samuel, simply. The Jews, in general, believe that Samuel is the author of the first twenty-seven chapters of this book, which contain the history of his own life and government, and what respects Saul and David

during that time. The remaining four chapters they suppose were added by the prophets Gad and Nathan. This opinion is founded on what is said 1Chr 29:29 : Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer. Others suppose the books to be more recent than the persons already named, but that they were compiled out of their memoirs.

But who was the compiler? Some of the most learned among the Jews suppose it to have been Jeremiah the prophet, and that the style bears a near resemblance to his prophecies. That they were the work of a more recent author than Samuel, etc., Grotius thinks evident from this circumstance, that the names of the months are comparatively modern, and were not known among the ancient Jews. Others have attributed them to David; others, to Hezekiah; and others, to Ezra the scribe, on his return from the Babylonish captivity.

Calmet's opinion is as probable as any, viz., "That these books were written by the same hand, though composed out of the memoirs left by persons of that time; and that the compiler has generally used the same terms he found in those memoirs, adding here and there something of his own by way of illustration." The equality of the style, the frequent eulogiums on the character of Samuel, the connection of the materials, particular quotations, and remarks on certain events, are, he thinks, proofs sufficiently clear of what he assumes. These books contain remarks or expressions which could only proceed from a contemporary author, and others which are evidences of a much later age.

1. For instance, we read, 1Sam 3:1, The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision; i.e., in the days of Eli, the high priest: hence it is evident that the author lived in times in which prophecy was more common; which, in fact, it was after Samuel, under David, and the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah.
2. Again, in the time of the author of this book, Beth-el was called Beth-aven, 1Sam 13:5, which name was given to it in derision after Jeroboam had placed there his golden calves.
3. Again, it is said, 1Sam 6:18, that the ark of the Lord was set down in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite, where it remained to the time of this author; and yet, in 1Sam 7:15, he speaks of Samuel as being already dead: And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.
4. It is not natural to suppose that Samuel would have spoken of himself as is done 1Sam 2:26 : And the child Samuel grew, and was in favor both with the Lord and with men; but if he were dead when this book was written, any author might have added this with the strictest propriety.
5. In 1Sam 27:6, it is said that Achish gave Ziklag to David, Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth to the kings of Judah unto this day. This is a proof that when this book was written the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were separated; and that, although the tribe of Simeon belonged to the kings of Israel, yet Ziklag, which was in that tribe, remained in the hands of the kings of Judah.

Here, therefore, are proofs that this book contains matters which must have been written by a contemporary author; and others which could not have been inserted but in times much posterior. These seeming contradictions are reconciled by the hypothesis that the books were compiled, by a comparatively recent author, out of materials of a much earlier date, the author not changing many of the expressions which he found in those ancient documents.

Several other proofs might be here adduced to support this opinion; but as the reader will find them noticed in the places where they occur, it is not necessary to repeat them here. Those who wish to see the subject farther discussed, may consult Calmet. We may rest satisfied with these three things:

1. That the books of Samuel were constructed out of original and authentic documents.
2. That the compiler was not contemporary with the facts he narrates. And,
3. That both the author and time in which he compiled his history, though comparatively more recent than the facts themselves, are nevertheless both uncertain.

Some account of Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah, 1Sam 1:1, 1Sam 1:2. His annual worship at Shiloh and the portions he gave at such times to his wives, 1Sam 1:3-5. Hannah, being barren, is reproached by Peninnah, especially in their going up to Shiloh; at which she is sorely grieved, 1Sam 1:6, 1Sam 1:7. Elkanah comforts her, 1Sam 1:8. Her prayer and vow in the temple, that if God would give her a son, she would consecrate him to His service, 1Sam 1:9-11. Eli, the high priest, indistinctly hearing her pray, charges her with being drunk, 1Sam 1:12-14. Her defense of her conduct, 1Sam 1:15, 1Sam 1:16. Eli, undeceived, blesses her; on which she takes courage, 1Sam 1:17, 1Sam 1:18. Hannah and Elkanah return home; she conceives, bears a son, and calls him Samuel, 1Sam 1:19, 1Sam 1:20. Elkanah and his family go again to Shiloh to worship; but Hannah stays at home to nurse her child, purposing, as soon as he is weaned, to go and offer him to the Lord, according to her vow, 1Sam 1:21-23. When weaned, she takes him to Shiloh, presents her child to Eli to be consecrated to the Lord, and offers three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, for his consecration, 1Sam 1:24-28.

Verse 1

Ramathaim-zophim - Literally, the two high places of the watchman; these were, no doubt, two contiguous hills, on which watchtowers were built, and in which watchmen kept continual guard for the safety of the country and which afterwards gave name to the place.

1SAMUEL 1: 2 and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Verse 2

He had two wives - The custom of those times permitted polygamy; but wherever there was more than one wife, we find the peace of the family greatly disturbed by it.

The name of the one was Hannah - חַנָּה Channah, which signifies fixed or settled, and the other פִּנְנָה Peninnah, which signifies a jewel or pearl.

1SAMUEL 1: 3 This man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of Armies in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests to the LORD, were there.

Verse 3

Went up out of his city yearly to worship - As the ark was at Shiloh, there was the temple of God, and thither all the males were bound by the law to go once a year, on each of the great national festivals: viz., the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles.

The Lord of hosts - יהוה צבאות Yehovah tsebaoth, Jehovah of armies. As all the heavenly bodies were called the hosts of heaven, צבא השמים tseba hashshamayim, Jehovah being called Lord of this host showed that he was their Maker and Governor; and consequently He, not they, was the proper object of religious worship. The sun, moon, planets, and stars, were the highest objects of religious worship to the heathens in general. The Jewish religion, teaching the knowledge of a Being who was the Lord of all these, showed at once its superiority to all that heathenism could boast. This is the first place where Lord of hosts is mentioned in the Bible; and this is so much in the style of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., that it gives some weight to the supposition that this book was written by a person who lived in or after the times of these prophets. See the preface.

1SAMUEL 1: 4 When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

Verse 4

He gave - portions - The sacrifices which were made were probably peace-offerings, of which the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar; the fat was burnt on the fire; the breast and right shoulder were the portion of the priest, and the rest belonged to him who made the offering; on it he and his family feasted, each receiving his portion; and to these feasts God commands them to invite the Levite, the poor, the widow, and the orphan, Deu 16:11.

1SAMUEL 1: 5 but to Hannah he gave a double portion; for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had shut up her womb.

Verse 5

Unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion - The Hebrew here is very obscure, יתן מנה אחת אפים yitten manah achath appayim; he gave her one portion of two faces; which the Syriac renders, he gave her one Double Part; and the Chaldee, he gave her one Chosen part; the Arabic is nearly the same; the Vulgate Annae autem dedit unam partem tristis, but to Anna he being sorrowful gave one part. As the shew-bread that was presented to the Lord was called לחם פנים lechem panim, the bread of faces, because it was placed before the face or appearances of the Lord; probably this was called מנה אפים manah appayim, because it was the portion that belonged to, or was placed before, the person who had offered the sacrifice. On this ground it might be said that Elkanah gave Hannah his own portion or a part of that which was placed before himself. Whatever it was, it was intended as a proof of his especial love to her; for, it is added, he loved Hannah.

1SAMUEL 1: 6 Her rival provoked her severely, to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

Verse 6

And her adversary - That is, Peninnah.

Provoked her sore - Was constantly striving to irritate and vex her, to make her fret - to make her discontented with her lot, because the Lord had denied her children.

1SAMUEL 1: 7 As he did so year by year, when she went up to the LORD's house, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and didn't eat.

Verse 7

And as he did so year by year - As the whole family went up to Shiloh to the annual festivals, Peninnah had both sons and daughters to accompany her, 1Sam 1:4, but Hannah had none; and Peninnah took this opportunity particularly to twit Hannah with her barrenness, by making an ostentatious exhibition of her children.

Therefore she wept - She was greatly distressed, because it was a great reproach to a woman among the Jews to be barren; because, say some, every one hoped that the Messiah should spring from her line.

1SAMUEL 1: 8 Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why don't you eat? Why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

Verse 8

Am not I better to thee than ten sons? - Ten, a certain for an uncertain number. Is not my especial affection to thee better than all the comfort thou couldst gain, even from a numerous family?

1SAMUEL 1: 9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.

Verse 9

Eli - sat upon a seat - על הכסא al hakkisse, upon the throne, i.e., of judgment; for he was then judge of Israel.

By a post of the temple of the Lord - I think this is the first place where היכל יהוה heychal Yehovah, "temple of Jehovah," is mentioned. This gives room for a strong suspicion that the books of Samuel were not compiled till the first temple was built, or after the days of Solomon. After this the word temple is frequent in the books of Kings, Chronicles, and in the prophets. Perhaps those Psalms in which this word occurs were, like many others in the Psalms, not of David's composition; some of them were evidently made long after his time.

1SAMUEL 1: 10 She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly.

1SAMUEL 1: 11 She vowed a vow, and said, "The LORD of Armies, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget your handmaid, but will give to your handmaid a boy, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come on his head."

Verse 11

I will give him unto the Lord - Samuel, as a descendant of the house of Levi, was the Lord's property from twenty-five years of age till fifty; but the vow here implies that he should be consecrated to the Lord from his infancy to his death, and that he should not only act as a Levite, but as a Nazarite, on whose head no razor should pass.

1SAMUEL 1: 12 As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli saw her mouth.

1SAMUEL 1: 13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart. Only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

Verse 13

Spake in her heart; only her lips moved - She prayed; her whole heart was engaged: and though she spake not with an audible voice, yet her lips formed themselves according to the pronunciation of the words which her heart uttered.

1SAMUEL 1: 14 Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you."

1SAMUEL 1: 15 Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before the LORD.

Verse 15

I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink - Neither wine nor inebriating drink has been poured out unto me; but I have poured out my soul unto the Lord. There is a great deal of delicacy and point in this vindication.

1SAMUEL 1: 16 Don't count your handmaid for a wicked woman; for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation."

Verse 16

Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial - אל תתן את אמתך לפני בת בליעל - al titten eth amathecha liphney bath Beliyael; 'Put not thy handmaiden before the faces of a daughter of Belial.' "If I am a drunkard, and strive by the most execrable hypocrisy (praying in the house of God) to cover my iniquity, then I am the chief of the daughters of Belial." Or, "Give not thy handmaid (to

reproach) before the faces of the daughters of Belial." Several of these probably attended there for the purposes of prostitution and gain; for it is said, 1Sam 2:22, that Eli's sons lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle, though this may refer to the women who kept the door.

1SAMUEL 1: 17 Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him."

Verse 17

Grant thee thy petition - He was satisfied he had formed a wrong judgment, and by it had added to the distress of one already sufficiently distressed.

The fact that Eli supposed her to be drunken, and the other of the conduct of Eli's sons already mentioned, prove that religion was at this time at a very low ebb in Shiloh; for it seems drunken women did come to the place, and lewd women were to be found there.

1SAMUEL 1: 18 She said, "Let your handmaid find favour in your sight." So the woman went her way, and ate; and her facial expression wasn't sad any more.

Verse 18

Let thine handmaid find grace - Continue to think favorably of me, and to pray for me.

1SAMUEL 1: 19 They rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

1SAMUEL 1: 20 When the time had come, Hannah conceived, and bore a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."

Verse 20

Called his name Samuel - As she gave this name to her son because she had asked him of the Lord, the word שמואל Shemuel must be here considerably contracted; if it express this sentiment, the component parts of it are the following: שאול מאל shaul meEl, "asked of God." This name would put both the mother and the son in continual remembrance of the Divine interposition at his birth. See on 1Sam 1:28 (note).

1SAMUEL 1: 21 The man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

Verse 21

The man Elkanah and all his house - He and the whole of his family, Hannah and her child excepted, who purposed not to go up to Shiloh till her son was old enough to be employed in the Divine service.

And his vow - Probably he had also made some vow to the Lord on the occasion of his wife's prayer and vow; in which, from his love to her. he could not be less interested than herself.

1SAMUEL 1: 22 But Hannah didn't go up; for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and stay there forever."

1SAMUEL 1: 23 Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him; only may the LORD establish his word." So the woman waited and nursed her son, until she weaned him.

Verse 23

Until thou have weaned him - On the nature of this weaning, and the time in which it was usually done, the reader will be pleased to refer to the note on Gen 21:8.

The Lord establish his word - Or, may the Lord establish his word - preserve the child, cause him to grow up, and make him a blessing to Israel.

1SAMUEL 1: 24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him to the LORD's house in Shiloh. The child was young.

Verse 24

With three bullocks - The Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Arabic, read, a bullock of three years old; and this is probably correct, because we read, 1Sam 1:25, that they slew את הפר eth happar, The bullock. We hear of no more, and we know that a bullock or heifer of three years old was ordinarily used, see Gen 15:9.

One ephah of flour - Seven gallons and a half.

A bottle of wine - נבל יין nebel yayin, a skin full of wine. Their bottles for wine and fluids in general were made out of skins of goats, stripped off without being cut up; the places whence the legs were extracted sewed up, as also the lower part; and the top tied. See the notes on Gen 21:14, and Mat 9:17. These three things, the ox, the flour, and the wine, probably constituted the consecration-offering.

1SAMUEL 1: 25 They killed the bull, and brought the child to Eli.

1SAMUEL 1: 26 She said, "Oh, my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD.

Verse 26

As thy soul liveth - As sure as thou art a living soul, so surely am I the person who stood by thee here praying.

1SAMUEL 1: 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of him.

1SAMUEL 1: 28 Therefore also I have granted him to the LORD. As long as he lives he is granted to the LORD." He worshipped the LORD there.

Verse 28

Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord - There is here a continual reference to her vow, and to the words which she used in making that vow.

The word Samuel, as we have already seen, is a contraction of the words שאול מאל Shaul meEl, that is, asked or lent of God; for his mother said, 1Sam 1:27, The Lord hath given me my petition, which שאלתי Shaalti, I Asked of him. In 1Sam 1:28 she says: הוא ששול ליהוה hu Shaul layhouah, he shall be Lent unto the Lord: here we find the verb is the same; and it is remarked by grammarians that שאל shaal, he asked, making in the participle שאל shaul, Asked, in the conjugation hiphil signifies to lend; therefore, says his mother, 1Sam 1:28, השאלתיהו ליהוה Hishiltihu layhovah, I have Lent him to the Lord. This twofold meaning of the Hebrew root is not only followed by our translators, but also by the Vulgate, Septuagint, and Syriac.

And he worshipped the Lord there - Instead of וישתחו vaiyishtachu, He worshipped, וישתחוו vaiyishtachavu, and They worshipped, is the reading of six of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., of some copies of the Septuagint, and of the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic.

This and the following chapter are connected in most copies of the Septuagint and Vulgate thus: And Anna worshipped, and said, My soul is strengthened in the Lord, etc. It is very likely that the whole passage, from the beginning of 1Sam 1:26 to the end of 1Sam 2:10 of the ensuing chapter, contains the words of Hannah alone; and that even the clause, He worshipped the Lord there, should be, And she worshipped the Lord there, and prayed, and said, etc. Indeed this latter clause is wanting in the Polyglot Septuagint, as I have stated above.

1SAMUEL 2: 1 Hannah prayed, and said: "My heart exults in the LORD! My horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth is enlarged over my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.

Hannah's prophetic hymn, 1Sam 2:1-10. Samuel ministers to the Lord, 1Sam 2:11. The abominable conduct of Eli's sons, 1Sam 2:12-17. Farther account of Samuel, and of the Divine blessing on Elkanah and Hannah, 1Sam 2:18-21. Eli's reprehensible remissness towards his sons in not restraining them in their great profligacy, 1Sam 2:22-26. The message of God to Eli, and the prophecy of the downfall of his family, and slaughter of his wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas, 1Sam 2:27-36.

Verse 1

And Hannah prayed, and said - The Chaldee very properly says, And Hannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy; for indeed the whole of this prayer, or as it may be properly called oracular declaration, is a piece of regular prophecy, every part of it having respect to the future, and perhaps not a little - of it declaratory of the Messiah's kingdom.

Dr. Hales has some very good observations on this prophetic song. "This admirable hymn excels in simplicity of composition, closeness of connection, and uniformity of sentiment; breathing the pious effusions of a devout mind, deeply impressed with a conviction of God's mercies to herself in particular, and of his providential government of the world in general; exalting the poor in spirit or the humble-minded, and abasing the rich and the arrogant; rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked. Hannah was also a prophetess of the first class, besides predicting her own fruitfulness, 1Sam 2:5, (for she bore six children in all, 1Sam 2:21), she foretold not only the more immediate judgments of God upon the Philistines during her son's administration, 1Sam 2:10, but his remoter judgments 'upon the ends of the earth,' 1Sam 2:10, in the true spirit of the prophecies of Jacob, Balaam, and Moses. Like them, she describes the promised Savior of the world as a King, before there was any king in Israel; and she first applied to him the remarkable epithet Messiah in Hebrew, Christ in Greek, and Anointed in English, which was adopted by David, Nathan, Ethan, Isaiah, Daniel, and the succeeding prophets of the Old Testament; and by the apostles and inspired writers of the New. And the allusion thereto by Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, in his hymn, Luk 1:69, where he calls Christ a 'horn of salvation,' and the beautiful imitation of it by the blessed Virgin throughout in her hymn, Luk 1:46-55, furnishing the finest commentary thereon, clearly prove that Hannah in her rejoicing had respect to something higher than Peninnah her rival, or to the triumphs of Samuel, or even of David himself; the expressions are too magnificent and sublime to be confined to such objects. Indeed the learned rabbi, David Kimchi, was so struck with them that he ingenuously confessed that 'the King of whom Hannah speaks is the Messiah,' of whom she spake either by prophecy or tradition; for, continues he, 'there was a tradition among the Israelites, that a great king should arise in Israel; and she seals up her song with celebrating this King who was to deliver them from all their enemies.' The tradition, as we have seen, was founded principally on Balaam's second and third prophecies, Num 24:7-17; and we cannot but admire that gracious dispensation of spiritual gifts to Hannah (whose name signifies grace) in ranking her among the prophets who should first unfold a leading title of the blessed Seed of the woman."

In the best MSS. the whole of this hymn is written in hemistich or poetic lines. I shall here produce it in this order, following the plan as exhibited in Kennicott's Bible, with some trifling alterations of our present version: - 1Sam 2:1. My heart exulteth in Jehovah; My horn is exalted in Jehovah. My mouth is incited over mine enemies, For I have rejoiced in thy salvation. 1Sam 2:2. There is none holy like Jehovah, For there is none besides thee; There is no rock like our God. 1Sam 2:3. Do not magnify yourselves, speak not proudly, proudly. Let not prevarication come out of your mouth; For the God of knowledge is Jehovah, And by him actions are directed. 1Sam 2:4. The bows of the heroes are broken, And the tottering are girded with strength. 1Sam 2:5. The full have hired out themselves for bread, And the famished cease for ever. The barren hath borne seven, And she who had many

children is greatly enfeebled. 1Sam 2:6. Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 1Sam 2:7. Jehovah maketh poor, and maketh rich; He bringeth down, and he even exalteth. 1Sam 2:8. He lifteth up the poor from the dust; From the dunghill he exalteth the beggar, To make him sit with the nobles, And inherit the throne of glory. For to Jehovah belong the pillars of the earth, And upon them he hath placed the globe. 1Sam 2:9. The foot of his saints he shall keep, And the wicked shall be silent in darkness; For by strength shall no man prevail. 1Sam 2:10. Jehovah shall bruise them who contend with him; Upon them shall be thunder in the heavens. Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth; And he shall give strength to his King. And shall exalt the horn of his Messiah.

It is not particularly stated here when Hannah composed or delivered this hymn; it appears from the connection to have been at the very time in which she dedicated her son to God at the tabernacle, though some think that she composed it immediately on the birth of Samuel. The former sentiment is probably the most correct.

Mine horn is exalted in the Lord - We have often seen that horn signifies power, might, and dominion. It is thus constantly used in the Bible, and was so used among the heathens. The following words of Horace to his jar are well known, and speak a sentiment very similar to that above: -

Tu spem reducis mentibus anxiiis,

Viresque et addis Cornua pauperi.

Hor. Odar. lib. iii., Od. 21, v. 18.

Thou bringest back hope to desponding minds; And thou addest strength and horns to the poor man.

Paraphrastically expressed by Mr. Francis: - "Hope, by thee, fair fugitive,

Bids the wretched strive to live.

To the beggar you dispense

Heart and brow of confidence."

In which scarcely any thing of the meaning is preserved.

My mouth is enlarged - My faculty of speech is incited, stirred up, to express God's disapprobation against my adversaries.

1SAMUEL 2: 2 There is no one as holy as the LORD, For there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God.

Verse 2

None holy - Holiness is peculiar to the God of Israel; no false god ever pretended to holiness; it was no attribute of heathenism, nor of any religion ever professed in the world before or since the true revelation of the true God.

There is none beside thee - There can be but one unoriginated, infinite, and eternal Being; that Being is Jehovah.

Any rock like our God - Rabbi Maimon has observed that the word צור tsur, which we translate rock, signifies, when applied to Jehovah, fountain, source, spring. There is no source whence continual help and salvation can arise but our God.

1SAMUEL 2: 3 “Talk no more so exceeding proudly. Don’t let arrogance come out of your mouth, For the LORD is a God of knowledge. By him actions are weighed.

Verse 3

A God of knowledge - He is the most wise, teaching all good, and knowing all things.

Actions are weighed - נתכנו nithkenu, they are directed; it is by his counsel alone that we can successfully begin, continue, or end, any work.

1SAMUEL 2: 4 “The bows of the mighty men are broken. Those who stumbled are armed with strength.

Verse 4

The bows of the mighty - The Targum considers the first verse as including a prophecy against the Philistines; the second verse, against Sennacherib and his army; the third, against Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; the fourth, against the Greeks; the fifth, against Haman and his posterity; and the tenth, against Magog, and the enemies of the Messiah.

1SAMUEL 2: 5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread. Those who were hungry are satisfied. Yes, the barren has borne seven. She who has many children languishes.

Verse 5

They that were full - All the things mentioned in these verses frequently happen in the course of the Divine providence; and indeed it is the particular providence of God that Hannah seems more especially to celebrate through the whole of this simple yet sublime ode.

1SAMUEL 2: 6 “The LORD kills, and makes alive. He brings down to Sheol, and brings up.

Verse 6

The Lord killeth - God is the arbiter of life and death; he only can give life, and he only has a right to take it away.

He bringeth down to the grave - The Hebrew word **שְׁאוֹל** sheol, which we translate grave, seems to have the same meaning in the Old Testament with **ᾠδης**, hades in the New, which is the word generally used by the Septuagint for the other. It means the grave, the state of the dead, and the invisible place, or place of separate spirits. Sometimes we translate it hell, which now means the state of perdition, or place of eternal torments; but as this comes from the Saxon, to cover or conceal, it means only the covered place. In some parts of England the word helling is used for the covers of a book, the slating of a house, etc. The Targum seems to understand it of death and the resurrection. "He kills and commands to give life; he causes to descend into Sheol, that in the time to come he may bring them into the lives of eternity," i.e., the life of shame and everlasting contempt, and the life of glory.

1SAMUEL 2: 7 The LORD makes poor, and makes rich. He brings low, he also lifts up.

Verse 7

The Lord maketh poor - For many cannot bear affluence, and if God should continue to trust them with riches, they would be their ruin.

Maketh rich - Some he can trust, and therefore makes them stewards of his secular bounty.

1SAMUEL 2: 8 He raises up the poor out of the dust. He lifts up the needy from the dunghill, To make them sit with princes, and inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's. He has set the world on them.

Verse 8

To set them among princes - There have been many cases where, in the course of God's providence, a person has been raised from the lowest and most abject estate to the highest; from the plough to the imperial dignity: from the dungeon to the throne; from the dunghill to nobility. The story of Cincinnatus is well known; so is that of the patriarch Joseph; but there is one not less in point, that of Roushen Akhter, who was brought out of a dungeon, and exalted to the throne of Hindustan. On this circumstance the following elegant couplet was made: - "He was a bright star, but now is become a moon,

Joseph is taken from prison, and is become a king."

There is a play here on Roushen Akhter, which signifies a bright star; and there is an allusion to the history of the patriarch Joseph, because of the similarity of fortune between him and the Mohammedan prince.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's - He is almighty, and upholds all things by the word of his power.

1SAMUEL 2: 9 He will keep the feet of his holy ones, but the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness; for no man shall prevail by strength.

 Verse 9

He will keep the feet of his saints - He will order and direct all their goings, and keep them from every evil way.

The wicked shall be silent in darkness - The Targum understands this of their being sent to the darkness of hell; they shall be slain.

By strength shall no man prevail - Because God is omnipotent, and no power can be successfully exerted against him.

1SAMUEL 2: 10 Those who strive with the LORD shall be broken to pieces. He will thunder against them in the sky. "The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

Verse 10

The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken - Those who contend with him, מריביו meribaiu, by sinning against his laws, opposing the progress of his word, or persecuting his people.

Shall judge the ends on the earth - His empire shall be extended over all mankind by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, for to this the afterpart of the verse seems to apply: He shall give strength unto his king, and shall exalt the horn of his Christ, or, as the Targum says, וירבי מלכות משיחיה, viribbey malcuth Meshicheyh, "he shall multiply the kingdom of the Messiah." Here the horn means spiritual as well as secular dominion.

After the clause, The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces, the Septuagint add the following words: Μη καυχασθω ὁ φρονιμος εν τη φρονησει αυτου, κ. τ. λ. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom and let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glorieth rather glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth the Lord; and that he executeth judgment and righteousness in the midst of the earth. This is a very long addition, and appears to be taken from Jer 9:23, but on collating the two places the reader will find the words to be materially different. This clause is wanting in the Complutensian Polyglot, but it is in the edition of Aldus, in that of Cardinal Caroffa, and in the Codex Alexandrinus.

1SAMUEL 2: 11 Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. The child served the LORD before Eli the priest.

Verse 11

And Elkanah went to Ramah - Immediately after the 10th verse, the Septuagint add, Και κατελιπεν αυτον εκει ενωπιον Κυριου· και απηλθεν εις Αραματαια, And she left him there before the Lord, and went unto Arimathea. Thus the Septuagint suppose that the song of Hannah was composed when she brought Samuel to present him to the Lord; and as soon as she had completed this fine ode, she delivered him into the hands of Eli the high priest, and the child entered immediately on his ministration, under the direction and instructions of Eli.

1SAMUEL 2: 12 Now the sons of Eli were base men; they didn't know the LORD.

Verse 12

The sons of Eli were sons of Belial - They were perverse, wicked, profligate men; devil's children. They knew not the Lord. "They know! nor would an angel show Him; They would not know, nor choose to know Him."

These men were the principal cause of all the ungodliness of Israel. Their most execrable conduct, described 1Sam 2:13-17, caused the people to abhor the Lord's offering. An impious priesthood is the grand cause of the transgressions and ruin of any nation; witness France, Germany, Spain, Ac., from 1792 to 1814.

1SAMUEL 2: 13 The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a fork of three teeth in his hand;

Verse 13

When any man offered sacrifice - That is, when a peace-offering was brought, the right shoulder and the breast belonged to the priest, the fat was burnt upon the altar, and the blood was poured at the bottom of the altar; the rest of the flesh belonged to the offerer. Under pretense of taking only their own part, they took the best of all they chose, and as much as they chose.

1SAMUEL 2: 14 and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest took therewith. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

Verse 14

Kettle - caldron, or pot - We know not what these were, nor of what capacity; nor is it of any consequence.

1SAMUEL 2: 15 Yes, before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat to roast for the priest; for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but raw."

Verse 15

Before they burnt the fat - They would serve themselves before God was served! This was iniquity and arrogance of the first magnitude.

He will not have sodden flesh - He chooses roast meat, not boiled; and if they had it in the pot before the servant came, he took it out that it might be roasted.

1SAMUEL 2: 16 If the man said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take as much as your soul desires"; then he would say, "No, but you shall give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force."

1SAMUEL 2: 17 The sin of the young men was very great before the LORD; for the men despised the offering of the LORD.

Verse 17

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great - That is, Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli.

Men abhorred the offering - As the people saw that the priests had no piety, and that they acted as if there was no God; they despised God's service, and became infidels.

A national priesthood, when the foundation is right, may be a great blessing; but if the priesthood becomes corrupt, though the foundation itself stand sure, the corruption of the national manners will be the unavoidable consequence.

1SAMUEL 2: 18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, clothed with a linen ephod.

Verse 18

Girded with a linen ephod - This the Targum translates אסיר כרדוט דבוץ asir cardut debuts, "Girded with a cardit of byssus, or fine linen." The word cardut they seem to have borrowed from the Greek χειριδωτος, a tunic, having χειριδας, i.e., sleeves that came down to, or covered, the hands. This was esteemed an effeminate garment among the Romans. See Buxtorf's Talmudic Lexicon.

1SAMUEL 2: 19 Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

Verse 19

Made him a little coat - מעיל קטן meil katon, a little cloak, or surtout, an upper garment: probably intended to keep him from the cold, and to save his other clothes from being abused in his meaner services. It is probable that she furnished him with a new one each year, when she came up to one of the annual sacrifices.

1SAMUEL 2: 20 Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, "The LORD give you seed of this woman for the petition which was asked of the LORD." They went to their own home.

Verse 20

Eli blessed Elkanah - The natural place of this verse seems to be before the 11th; after which the 21st should come in; after the 21st, perhaps the 26th should come in. The subjects in this chapter seem very much entangled and confused by the wrong position of the verses.

1SAMUEL 2: 21 The LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bore three sons and two daughters. The child Samuel grew before the LORD.

1SAMUEL 2: 22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did to all Israel, and how that they lay with the women who served at the door of the Tent of Meeting.

Verse 22

They lay with the women that assembled - It is probable that these were persons who had some employment about the tabernacle. See the note on Exo 38:8, where the Hebrew text is similar to that in this place.

1SAMUEL 2: 23 He said to them, "Why do you do such things? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people.

Verse 23

Why do ye such things! - Eli appears to have been a fondly affectionate, easy father, who wished his sons to do well, but did not bring them under proper discipline, and did not use his authority to restrain them. As judge, he had power to cast them immediately out of the vineyard, as wicked and unprofitable servants; this he did not, and his and their ruin was the consequence.

1SAMUEL 2: 24 No, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: you make the LORD's people disobey.

1SAMUEL 2: 25 If one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?" Notwithstanding, they didn't listen to the voice of their father, because the LORD intended to kill them.

Verse 25

If one man sin against another - All differences between man and man may be settled by the proper judge; but if a man sin against the Supreme Judge, God himself, who shall reconcile him to his Maker? Your sin is immediately against God himself, and is the highest insult that can be offered, because it is in the matter of his own worship, therefore ye may expect his heaviest judgments.

But if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? - This was a question of the most solemn importance under the old covenant, especially after the death of Moses, the mediator. The law had determined what sins should be punished with death; and it was supposed that there was not any appeal from the decision there pronounced. 1Jn 2:1 is an answer to this question; but it is an

answer which the Gospel alone can give: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Because the Lord would slay them - The particle כִּי ki, which we translate because, and thus make their continuance in sin the effect of God's determination to destroy them, should be translated therefore, as it means in many parts of the sacred writings. See Noldius's Particles, where the very text in question is introduced: Sed non ausculturunt, etc., Ideo voluit Jehova eos interficere; "But they would not hearken, etc.; Therefore God purposed to destroy them." It was their not hearkening that induced the Lord to will their destruction.

1SAMUEL 2: 26 The child Samuel grew on, and increased in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

1SAMUEL 2: 27 A man of God came to Eli, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I reveal myself to the house of your father, when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?'"

Verse 27

There came a man of God - Who this was we know not, but the Chaldee terms him נביא דיי nebiya daya, a prophet of Jehovah.

Unto the house of thy father - That is, to Aaron; he was the first high priest; the priesthood descended from him to his eldest son Eleazar, then to Phinehas. It became afterwards established in the younger branch of the family of Aaron; for Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. From Eli it was transferred back again to the family of Eleazar, because of the profligacy of Eli's sons.

1SAMUEL 2: 28 Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? Did I give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire?

Verse 28

And did I choose him - The high priesthood was a place of the greatest honor that could be conferred on man, and a place of considerable emolument; for from their part of the sacrifices they derived a most comfortable livelihood.

1SAMUEL 2: 29 Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, and honour your sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel my people?'

Verse 29

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice - They disdained to take the part allowed by law; and would take for themselves what part they pleased, and as much as they pleased, 1Sam 2:13-16 : thus they kicked at the sacrifices.

Honourest thy sons above me - Permitting them to deal, as above, with the offerings and sacrifices, and take their part before the fat, etc., was burnt unto the Lord: thus they were first served. At this Eli connived, and thus honored his sons above God.

1SAMUEL 2: 30 "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'I said indeed that your house, and the house of your father, should walk before me forever.' But now the LORD says, 'Be it far from me; for those who honour me I will honour, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Verse 30

Should walk before me for ever - See Exo 29:9; Exo 40:15; Num 25:10-13, where it is positively promised that the priesthood should be continued in the family of Aaron For Ever. But although this promise appears to be absolute, yet we plainly see that, like all other apparently absolute promises of God, it is conditional, i.e., a condition is implied though not expressed.

But now - be it far from me - You have walked unworthily; I shall annul my promise, and reverse my ordinance. See Jer 18:9, Jer 18:10.

For them that honor me - This is a plan from which God will never depart; this can have no alteration; every promise is made in reference to it; "they who honor God shall be honored; they who despise him shall be lightly esteemed."

1SAMUEL 2: 31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off your arm, and the arm of your father's house, that there shall not be an old man in your house.

Verse 31

I will cut off thine arm - I will destroy the strength, power, and influence of thy family.

1SAMUEL 2: 32 You shall see the affliction of my habitation, in all the wealth which I shall give Israel; and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.

Verse 32

Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation - Every version and almost every commentator understands this clause differently. The word צר tsar, which we translate an enemy, and the Vulgate aemulum, a rival, signifies calamity; and this is the best sense to understand it in here. The calamity which he saw was the defeat of the Israelites, the capture of the ark, the death of his wicked sons, and the triumph of the Philistines. All this he saw, that is, knew to have taken place, before he met with his own tragical death.

In all the wealth which God shall give Israel - This also is dark. The meaning may be this: God has spoken good concerning Israel; he will, in the end, make the triumph of the Philistines their own confusion; and the capture of the ark shall be the desolation of their gods; but the Israelites shall first be sorely pressed with calamity. Or, the affliction of the tabernacle, for all the wealth which God would have given Israel.

There shall not be an old man - This is repeated from the preceding verse, all the family shall die in the flower of their years, as is said in the following verse.

1SAMUEL 2: 33 The man of yours, whom I shall not cut off from my altar, shall consume your eyes, and grieve your heart; and all the increase of your house shall die in the flower of their age.

Verse 33

And the man of thine - Of this passage Calmet observes: "The posterity of Eli possessed the high priesthood to the time of Solomon; and even when that dynasty was transferred to another family, God preserved that of Eli, not to render it more happy, but to punish it by seeing the prosperity of its enemies, to the end that it might see itself destitute and despised. This shows the depth of the judgments of God and the grandeur of his justice, which extends even to distant generations, and manifests itself to sinners both in life and death; both in their own disgrace, and in the prosperity of their enemies."

1SAMUEL 2: 34 "This shall be the sign to you, that shall come on your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall both die.

Verse 34

They shall die both of them - Hophni and Phinehas were both killed very shortly after in the great battle with the Philistines in which the Israelites were completely routed, and the ark taken. See 1Sam 4:1-11.

1SAMUEL 2: 35 I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind. I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before my anointed forever.

Verse 35

A faithful priest - This seems to have been spoken of Zadok, who was anointed high priest in the room of Abiathar, the last descendant of the house of Eli; see 1Kgs 2:26, 1Kgs 2:27. Abiathar was removed because he had joined with Adonijah, who had got himself proclaimed king; see 1Kgs 1:7.

I will build him a sure house - I will continue the priesthood in his family.

He shall walk before mine Anointed - He shall minister before Solomon, and the kings which shall reign in the land. The Targum says, "He shall walk **קדם משיחי** kodam Meshichi, before my Messiah,"

and the Septuagint expresses it, ἐνώπιον Χριστου μου, "before my Christ;" for, in their proper and more extended sense, these things are supposed to belong to our great High Priest and the Christian system: but the word may refer to the Israelitish people. See the note on Heb 9:26.

1SAMUEL 2: 36 It shall happen, that everyone who is left in your house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, "Please put me into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread."""

Verse 36

Shall come and crouch to him - Shall prostrate himself before him in the most abject manner, begging to be employed even in the meanest offices about the tabernacle, in order to get even the most scanty means of support.

A piece of silver - כֶּסֶף אַגֹּרַת keseph, translated by the Septuagint, ὀβόλου αργυρίου, an obolus of silver. The Targum translates it מַעָא mea, which is the same as the Hebrew gerah, and weighed about sixteen grains of barley.

A morsel of bread - A mouthful; what might be sufficient to keep body and soul together. See the sin and its punishment. They formerly pampered themselves, and fed to the full on the Lord's sacrifices; and now they are reduced to a morsel of bread. They fed themselves without fear; and now they have cleanness of teeth in all their dwellings. They wasted the Lord's heritage, and now they beg their bread!

In religious establishments, vile persons, who have no higher motive, may and do get into the priest's office, that they may clothe themselves with the wool, and feed themselves with the fat, while they starve the flock. But where there is no law to back the claims of the worthless and the wicked, men of piety and solid merit only can find support; for they must live on the free-will offerings of the people. Where religion is established by law, the strictest ecclesiastical discipline should be kept up, and all hireling priests and ecclesiastical drones should be expelled from the Lord's vineyard. An established religion, where the foundation is good, as is ours, I consider a great blessing; but it is liable to this continual abuse, which nothing but careful and rigid ecclesiastical discipline can either cure or prevent. If our high priests, our archbishops and bishops, do not their duty, the whole body of the clergy may become corrupt or inefficient. If they be faithful, the establishment will be an honor to the kingdom, and a praise in the earth.

The words pillars of the earth, מַצְעָי אֶרֶץ metsukey erets, Mr. Parkhurst translates and defends thus: "The compressors of the earth; i.e., the columns of the celestial fluid which compress or keep its parts together." This is all imaginary; we do not know this compressing celestial fluid; but there is one that answers the same end, which we do know, i.e., the Air, the columns of which press upon the earth in all directions; above, below, around, with a weight of fifteen pounds to every square inch; so that a column of air of the height of the atmosphere, which on the surface of the globe measures one square inch, is known by the most accurate and indubitable experiments to weigh fifteen pounds. Now as a square foot contains one hundred and forty-four square inches, each foot must be compressed with a weight of incumbent atmospheric air equal to two thousand one hundred and sixty pounds. And as the earth is known to contain a surface of five thousand five hundred and seventy-five billions of square feet; hence, allowing two thousand one hundred and sixty pounds to each square foot, the whole surface of the globe must sustain a pressure of

atmospheric air equal to twelve trillions and forty-one thousand billions of pounds; or six thousand and twenty-one billions of tons. This pressure, independently of what is called gravity, is sufficient to keep all the parts of the earth together, and perhaps to counteract all the influence of centrifugal force. But adding to this all the influence of gravity or attraction, by which every particle of matter tends to the center, these compressors of the earth are sufficient to poise, balance, and preserve the whole terraqueous globe. These pillars or compressors are an astonishing provision made by the wisdom of God for the necessities of the globe. Without this, water could not rise in fountains, nor the sap in vegetables. Without this, there could be no respiration for man or beast, and no circulation of the blood in any animal. In short, both vegetable and animal life depend, under God, on these pillars or compressors of the earth; and were it not for this compressing power, the air contained in the vessels of all plants and animals would by its elasticity expand and instantly rupture all those vessels, and cause the destruction of all animal and vegetable life: but God in his wisdom has so balanced these two forces, that, while they appear to counteract and balance each other, they serve, by mutual dilations and compressions, to promote the circulation of the sap in vegetables, and the blood in animals.

1SAMUEL 3: 1 The child Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. the LORD's word was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision.

Samuel ministers to the Lord before Eli, 1Sam 3:1. He is thrice called by the Lord; who informs him of the evils which shall be brought on the house of Eli, 1Sam 3:2-15. Eli inquires of Samuel what the Lord had said, 1Sam 3:16, 1Sam 3:17. He gives a faithful reunion of the whole, which Eli receives with great submission, 1Sam 3:18. Samuel prospers; is established as a prophet in Israel; and the Lord reveals himself to him to Shiloh, 1Sam 3:19-21.

Verse 1

Samuel ministered unto the Lord - He performed minor services in the tabernacle, under the direction of Eli, such as opening the doors, etc. See 1Sam 3:15.

The word of the Lord was precious - There were but few revelations from God; and because the word was scarce, therefore it was valuable. The author of this book probably lived at a time when prophecy was frequent, See the preface.

There was no open vision - There was no public accredited prophet; one with whom the secret of the Lord was known to dwell, and to whom all might have recourse in cases of doubt or public emergency.

1SAMUEL 3: 2 At that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see),

Verse 2

Eli was laid down in his place - It is very likely that as the ark was a long time at Shiloh, they had built near to it certain apartments for the high priest and others more immediately employed about the tabernacle. In one of these, near to that of Eli, perhaps under the same roof, Samuel lay when he was called by the Lord.

1SAMUEL 3: 3 and the lamp of God hadn't yet gone out, and Samuel had laid down in the LORD's temple, where the ark of God was;

Verse 3

Ere the lamp of God went out - Before sunrise; for it is likely that the lamps were extinguished before the rising of the sun. See Exo 27:21; Lev 24:3.

1SAMUEL 3: 4 the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am."

Verse 4

The Lord called Samuel - The voice probably came from the holy place, near to which Eli and Samuel were both lying.

1SAMUEL 3: 5 He ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." He said, "I didn't call; lie down again." He went and lay down.

1SAMUEL 3: 6 The LORD called yet again, "Samuel!" Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." He answered, "I didn't call, my son; lie down again."

1SAMUEL 3: 7 Now Samuel didn't yet know the LORD, neither was the LORD's word yet revealed to him.

Verse 7

Samuel did not yet know the Lord - He had not been accustomed to receive any revelation from him. He knew and worshipped the God of Israel; but he did not know him as communicating especial revelation of His will.

1SAMUEL 3: 8 The LORD called Samuel again the third time. He arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me." Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

1SAMUEL 3: 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, the LORD; for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Verse 9

Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth - This was the usual way in which the prophets spoke, when they had intimations that the Lord was about to make some especial revelation.

1SAMUEL 3: 10 The LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak; for your servant hears."

Verse 10

The Lord came, and stood - He heard the voice as if it was approaching nearer and nearer; till at last, from the sameness of the tone, he could imagine that it ceased to approach: and this is what appears to be represented under the notion of God standing and calling.

1SAMUEL 3: 11 The LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone who hears it shall tingle.

Verse 11

The Lord said to Samuel - He probably saw nothing, and only heard the voice; for it was not likely that any extraordinary representation could have been made to the eyes of a person so young. He heard a voice, but saw no similitude.

The ears - shall tingle - It shall be a piercing word to all Israel; it shall astound them all; and, after having heard it, it will still continue to resound in their ears.

1SAMUEL 3: 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even to the end.

Verse 12

I will perform - all things which I have spoken - That is, what He had declared by the prophet, whose message is related 1Sam 2:27, etc.

When I begin, I will also make an end - I will not delay the execution of my purpose: when I begin, nothing shall deter me from bringing all my judgments to a conclusion.

1SAMUEL 3: 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves, and he didn't restrain them.

Verse 13

I will judge his house for ever - I will continue to execute judgments upon it till it is destroyed.

His sons made themselves vile - See 1Sam 2:12-17, 1Sam 2:22-25.

He restrained them not - He did not use his parental and juridical authority to curb them, and prevent the disorders which they committed. See at the conclusion of the chapter, 1Sam 3:21 (note).

1SAMUEL 3: 14 Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be removed with sacrifice nor offering forever."

Verse 14

Shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering - That is, God was determined that they should be removed by a violent death. They had committed the sin unto death; and no offering or sacrifice could prevent this. What is spoken here relates to their temporal death only.

1SAMUEL 3: 15 Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the LORD's house. Samuel feared to show Eli the vision.

Verse 15

Samuel feared to show Eli - He revered him as a father, and he feared to distress him by showing what the Lord had purposed to do. It does not appear that God had commanded Samuel to deliver this message: he, therefore, did not attempt it till adjured by Eli, 1Sam 3:17.

1SAMUEL 3: 16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, "Samuel, my son!" He said, "Here I am."

1SAMUEL 3: 17 He said, "What is the thing that he has spoken to you? Please don't hide it from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that he spoke to you."

Verse 17

God do so to thee, and more also - This was a very solemn adjuration: he suspected that God had threatened severe judgments, for he knew that his house was very criminal; and he wished to know what God had spoken. The words imply thus much: If thou do not tell me fully what God has threatened, may the same and greater curses fall on thyself.

1SAMUEL 3: 18 Samuel told him every bit, and hid nothing from him. He said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

Verse 18

Samuel told him every whit - Our word whit, or wid, comes from the Anglo-Saxon, which signifies person, thing, etc.; every whit is every thing. The Hebrew **את כל הדברים** et col haddebarim, "all these words."

It is the Lord - He is Sovereign, and will do what he pleases; he is righteous, and will do nothing but what is just.

Let him do what seemeth him good - There is much of a godly submission, as well as a deep sense of his own unworthiness, found in these words. He also had sinned, so as to be punished with temporal death; but surely there is no evidence that the displeasure of the Lord against him was extended to a future state.

1SAMUEL 3: 19 Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground.

Verse 19

Samuel grew - Increased to manhood.

The Lord was with him - Teaching him, and filling him with grace and holiness.

None of his words fall - Whatever prediction he uttered, God fulfilled it; and his counsels were received as coming from the Lord.

1SAMUEL 3: 20 All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

Verse 20

All Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba - Through the whole extent of Palestine; Dan being at the northern, Beer-sheba at the southern extremity.

Was established to be a prophet - The word **נאמן** neeman, which we translate established, signifies faithful: The faithful Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

1SAMUEL 3: 21 The LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the LORD's word.

Verse 21

The Lord appeared again - **וַיֹּסֶף יְהוָה לְהִרְאוֹת** vaiyoseph Yehovah leheraoh, "And Jehovah added to appear;" that is, he continued to reveal himself to Samuel at Shiloh.

By the word of the Lord - By the spirit and word of prophecy.

In this chapter we read again of the fearful consequences of a neglected religious education. Eli's sons were wicked: their father knew the Lord; but he neither taught his children, nor restrained them by his parental authority. I have already had occasion to remark, that were a proper line of conduct pursued in the education of children, how few profligate sons and daughters, and how few broken-hearted parents should we find! The neglect of early religious education, connected with a wholesome and affectionate restraint, is the ruin of millions. Many parents, to excuse their indolence and most criminal neglect, say, "We cannot give our children grace." What do they mean by this? That God, not themselves, is the author of the irregularities and viciousness of their children. They may shudder at this imputation: but when they reflect that they have not given them right precepts, have not brought them under firm and affectionate restraint; have not showed them, by their own spirit, temper, and conduct, how they should be regulated in theirs; when either the worship of God has not been established in their houses, or they have permitted their children, on the most trifling pretenses, to absent themselves from it; when all these things are considered, they will find that, speaking after the manner of men, it would have been a very extraordinary miracle indeed if the children had been found preferring a path in which they did not see their parents conscientiously tread. Let those parents who continue to excuse themselves by saying, "We cannot give grace to our children," lay their hand on their conscience, and say whether they ever knew an instance where God withheld his grace, while they were, in humble subserviency to him, performing their duty. The real state of the case is this: parents cannot do God's work, and God will not do theirs; but if they use the means, and train up the child in the way he should go, God will not withhold his blessing.

It is not parental fondness, nor parental authority, taken separately, that can produce this beneficial effect. A father may be as fond of his offspring as Eli, and his children be sons of Belial; he may be as authoritative as the grand Turk, and his children despise and plot rebellion against him. But let parental authority be tempered with fatherly affection; and let the rein of discipline be steadily held by this powerful but affectionate hand; and there shall the pleasure of God prosper; there will he give his blessing, even life for evermore. Many fine families have been spoiled, and many ruined, by the separate exercise of these two principles. Parental affection, when alone, infallibly degenerates into foolish fondness; and parental authority frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny when standing by itself. The first sort of parents will be loved without being respected; the second sort will be dreaded, without either respect or esteem. In the first case obedience is not exacted, and is therefore felt to be unnecessary, as offenses of great magnitude pass without punishment or reprehension: in the second case, rigid exaction renders obedience almost impossible; and the smallest delinquency is often punished with the extreme of torture, which, hardening the mind, renders duty a matter of perfect indifference.

Parents, lay these things to heart: remember Eli and his sons; remember the dismal end of both! Teach your children to fear God, use wholesome discipline, be determined, begin in time, mingle severity and mercy together in all your conduct, and earnestly pray to God to second your godly discipline with the power and grace of his Spirit.

Education is generally defined that series of means by which the human understanding is gradually enlightened, and the dispositions of the heart are corrected, formed, and brought forth, between early infancy and the period when a young person is considered as qualified to take a part in active life. Whole nations have been corrupted, enfeebled, and destroyed, through the want of proper education: through this multitudes of families have degenerated; and a countless number of individuals have come to an untimely end. Parents who neglect this, neglect the present and eternal interests of their offspring.

1SAMUEL 4: 1 The word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and encamped beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines encamped in Aphek.

A battle between Israel and the Philistines, in which the former are defeated, with the loss of four thousand men, 1Sam 4:1, 1Sam 4:2. They resolve to give the Philistines battle once more, and bring the ark of the Lord, with Hophni and Phinehas the priests, into the camp, 1Sam 4:3, 1Sam 4:4. They do so, and become vainly confident, 1Sam 4:5. At this the Philistines are dismayed, 1Sam 4:6-9. The battle commences; the Israelites are again defeated, with the loss of thirty thousand men; Hophni and Phinehas are among the slain; and the ark of the Lord is taken, 1Sam 4:10, 1Sam 4:11. A Benjamite runs with the news to Eli; who, hearing of the capture of the ark, falls from his seat, and breaks his neck, 1Sam 4:12-18. The wife of Phinehas, hearing of the death of her husband, and father-in-law, and of the capture of the ark, is taken in untimely travail, brings forth a son, calls him I-chabod, and expires, 1Sam 4:19-22.

Verse 1

The word of Samuel came to all Israel - This clause certainly belongs to the preceding chapter, and is so placed by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic.

Pitched beside Eben-ezer - This name was not given to this place till more than twenty years after this battle, see 1Sam 7:12; for the monument called האבן העזר haeben haezer, the "Stone of Help," was erected by Samuel in the place which was afterwards from this circumstance, called Eben-ezer, when the Lord had given the Israelites a signal victory over the Philistines. It was situated in the tribe of Judah, between Mizpeh and Shen, and not far from the Aphek here mentioned. This is another proof that this book was compiled after the times and transactions which it records, and probably from memoranda which had been made by a contemporary writer.

1SAMUEL 4: 2 The Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was struck before the Philistines; and they killed of the army in the field about four thousand men.

Verse 2

Put themselves in array - There is no doubt that both the Philistines and Israelites had what might be called the art of war, according to which they marshalled their troops in the field, constructed their camps, and conducted their retreats, sieges, etc.; but we know not the principles on which they acted.

They slew of the army in the field about four thousand men - This must have been a severe conflict, as four thousand were left dead on the field of battle. The contest also must have lasted some considerable time, as these were all slain hand to hand; swords and spears being in all probability the only weapons then used.

1SAMUEL 4: 3 When the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD struck us today before the Philistines? Let us get the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh to us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies."

Verse 3

Let us fetch the ark - They vainly supposed that the ark could save them, when the God of it had departed from them because of their wickedness. They knew that in former times their fathers had been beaten by their enemies, when they took not the ark with them to battle; as in the case of their wars with the Canaanites, Num 14:44, Num 14:45; and that they had conquered when they took this with them, as in the case of the destruction of Jericho, Jos 6:4. From the latter clause they took confidence; but the cause of their miscarriage in the former they laid not to heart. It was customary with all the nations of the earth to take their gods and sacred ensigns with them to war. The Persians, Indians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Philistines, etc., did so. Consecrated crosses, blessing and hallowing of colors and standards, are the modern remains of those ancient superstitions.

1SAMUEL 4: 4 So the people sent to Shiloh; and they brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of Armies, who sits above the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

Verse 4

The Lord of hosts - See on 1Sam 1:3 (note).

Dwelleth between the cherubims - Of what shape the cherubim were, we know not; but there was one of these representative figures placed at each end of the ark of the covenant; and between them, on the lid or cover of that ark, which was called the propitiatory or mercy-seat, the shechinah, or symbol of the Divine presence, was said to dwell. They thought, therefore, if they had the ark, they must necessarily have the presence and influence of Jehovah.

1SAMUEL 4: 5 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

Verse 5

All Israel shouted - Had they humbled themselves, and prayed devoutly and fervently for success, they would have been heard and saved. Their shouting proved both their vanity and irreligion.

1SAMUEL 4: 6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" They understood that the LORD's ark had come into the camp.

1SAMUEL 4: 7 The Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." They said, "Woe to us! For there has not been such a thing before."

Verse 7

God is come into the camp - They took for granted, as did the Israelites, that his presence was inseparable from his ark or shrine.

1SAMUEL 4: 8 Woe to us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.

Verse 8

These mighty Gods - מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הַאֲדָרִים miyad haelohim haaddirim, from the hand of these illustrious Gods. Probably this should be translated in the singular, and not in the plural: Who shall deliver us from the hand of this illustrious God?

1SAMUEL 4: 9 Be strong, and behave like men, O you Philistines, that you not be servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Strengthen yourselves like men, and fight!"

Verse 9

Be strong, etc. - This was the address to the whole army, and very forcible it was. "If ye do not fight, and acquit yourselves like men, ye will be servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you; and you may expect that they will avenge themselves of you for all the cruelty you have exercised towards them."

1SAMUEL 4: 10 The Philistines fought, and Israel was struck, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

1SAMUEL 4: 11 The ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Verse 11

Hophni and Phinehas were slain - They probably attempted to defend the ark, and lost their lives in the attempt.

1SAMUEL 4: 12 There ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn, and with earth on his head.

Verse 12

Came to Shiloh the same day - The field of battle could not have been at any great distance, for this young man reached Shiloh the same evening after the defeat.

With his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head - These were signs of sorrow and distress among all nations. The clothes rent, signified the rending, dividing, and scattering, of the people; the earth, or ashes on the head, signified their humiliation: "We are brought down to the dust of the earth; we are near to our graves." When the Trojan fleet was burnt, Aeneas is represented as tearing his robe from his shoulder, and invoking the aid of his gods: -

Tum pius Aeneas humeris abscindere vestem,

Auxilioque vocare Deos, et tendere palmas.

Virg. Aen. lib. v., ver. 685. "The prince then tore his robes in deep despair,

Raised high his hands, and thus address'd his prayer."

Pitt.

We have a remarkable example in the same poet, where he represents the queen of King Latinus resolving on her own death, when she found that the Trojans had taken the city by storm: -

Purpueros moritura manu discindit amictus.

Aen. lib. xii., ver. 603.

She tears with both her hands her purple vest.

But the image is complete in King Latinus himself, when he heard of the death of his queen, and saw his city in flames: - - It scissa veste Latinus, Conjugis attonitus fati, urbisque ruina,

Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans.

Ib., ver. 609.

Latinus tears his garments as he goes.

Both for his public and his private woes:

With filth his venerable beard besmears,

And sordid dust deforms his silver hairs.

Dryden.

We find the same custom expressed in one line by Catullus: -

Canitiem terra, atque infuso pulvere foedans.

Epith. Pelei et Thetidos, ver. 224.

Dishonoring her hoary locks with earth and sprinkled dust.

The ancient Greeks in their mourning often shaved off their hair: - Τουτο νυ και γερας οιον οϊζυροισι βροτοιισι, Κειρασθαι τε κομην, βαλειειν τ' απο δακρυ παρειων.

Hom. Odyss. lib. iv., ver. 197. "Let each deplore his dead: the rites of wo

Are all, alas! the living can bestow
 O'er the congenial dust, enjoin'd to shear
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear."

Pope.

And again: - Κατθεμεν εν λεχεεσσι καθηραντες χροα καλον'Υδατι τε λιαρω και αλειφατι· πολλα δε σ' αμφις Δακρυα θερμα χεον Δαναοι, κειροντο τε χαιτας.

Ib., lib. xxiv., ver. 44. "Then unguents sweet, and tepid streams, we shed;

Tears flow'd from every eye; and o'er the dead

Each clipp'd the curling honors of his head."

Pope.

The whole is strongly expressed in the case of Achilles, when he heard of the death of his friend Patroclus: - Ως φατο· τον δ' αχεος νεφεος νεφελη εκαλυψε μελαινα Αμφοτερησι δε χερσιν ελων κονιν αοθαλοεσσαν, Χευατο κακ κεφαλης, χαριεν δ' ησχυνε προσωπον· Ν ε κ τ α ρ ε ω δε χιτωνι μελαιν' αμφιζανε τεφρη.

Iliad, lib. xviii., ver. 22. "A sudden horror shot through all the chief,

And wrapp'd his senses in the cloud of grief.

Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread

The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head:

His purple garments, and his golden hairs.

Those he deforms with dust, and these with tears."

Pope.

It is not unusual, even in Europe, and in the most civilized parts of it, to see grief expressed by tearing the hair, beating the breasts, and rending the garments; all these are natural signs, or expression of deep and excessive grief, and are common to all the nations of the world.

1SAMUEL 4: 13 When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

Verse 13

His heart trembled for the ark of God - He was a most mild and affectionate father, and yet the safety of the ark lay nearer to his heart than the safety of his two sons. Who can help feeling for this aged, venerable man?

1SAMUEL 4: 14 When Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, "What does the noise of this tumult mean?" The man hurried, and came and told Eli.

1SAMUEL 4: 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see.

1SAMUEL 4: 16 The man said to Eli, "I am he who came out of the army, and I fled today out of the army." He said, "How did the matter go, my son?"

1SAMUEL 4: 17 He who brought the news answered, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

Verse 17

And the messenger answered - Never was a more afflictive message, containing such a variety of woes, each rising above the preceding, delivered in so few words.

1. Israel is fled before the Philistines.

This was a sore evil: that Israel should turn their backs upon their enemies, was bad; and that they should turn their backs on such enemies as the

Philistines, was yet worse; for now they might expect the chains of their slavery to be strengthened and riveted more closely.

2. There hath also been a great slaughter among the people.

A rout might have taken place without any great previous slaughter; but in this case the field was warmly contested, thirty thousand were laid dead on the spot. This was a deeper cause of distress than the preceding; as if he had said, "The flower of our armies is destroyed; scarcely a veteran now to take the field."

3. Thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead.

This was still more afflictive to him as a father, to lose both his sons, the only hope of the family; and to have them taken away by a violent death when there was so little prospect of their having died in the peace of God, was more grievous than all.

4. The ark of God is taken.

This was the most dreadful of the whole; now Israel is dishonored in the sight of the heathen, and the name of the Lord will be blasphemed by them. Besides, the capture of the ark shows that God is departed from Israel; and now there is no farther hope of restoration for the people, but every prospect of the destruction of the nation, and the final ruin of all religion! How high does each wo rise on the back of the preceding! And with what apparent art is this very laconic message constructed! And yet, probably, no art at all was used, and the messenger delivered the tidings just as the facts rose up in his own mind.

How vapid, diffused, and alliterated, is the report of the messenger in the Persae of Aeschylus, who comes to the queen with the tremendous account of the destruction of the whole naval power of the Persians, at the battle of Salamis? I shall give his first speech, and leave the reader to compare the two accounts. Ω γης άπασης Ασιδος πολισματα, Ω Περσις αια, και πολυς πλουτου λιμην, Ως εν

μια πληγη κατεφθαρται πολυς Ολβος, το Περσων δ' ανθος οιχται πεσον. Ωμοι, κακον μεν πρωτον αγγελειν κακα· Περσαις, στρ α τ ο ς γαρ πας αλωλε βαρβαρων.

Of which I subjoin the following translation by Mr. Potter: -

Wo to the towns through Asia's peopled realms!

Wo to the land of Persia, once the port

Of boundless wealth! how is thy glorious state

Vanish'd at once, and all thy spreading honors

Fallen, lost! Ah me! unhappy is his task

That bears unhappy tidings; but constraint

Compels me to relate this tale of wo:

Persians! the whole barbaric host is fallen.

This is the sum of his account, which he afterwards details in about a dozen of speeches.

Heroes and conquerors, ancient and modern, have been celebrated for comprising a vast deal of information in a few words. I will give three examples, and have no doubt that the Benjamite in the text will be found to have greatly the advantage.

1. Julius Caesar having totally defeated Pharnaces, king of Pontus, wrote a letter to the Roman senate, which contained only these three words: -

Veni, Vidi, Vici;

I came, I saw, I conquered.

This war was begun and ended in one day.

2. Admiral Hawke having totally defeated the French fleet, in 1759, off the coast of Brittany, wrote as follows to King George II.: - "Sire, I have taken, burnt, and destroyed all the French fleet, as per margin. - Hawke."

3. Napoleon Buonaparte, then general-in-chief of the French armies in Italy, wrote to Josephine, his wife, the evening before he attacked Field Marshal Alvinzi, the imperial general: - "Demain j'attaquerai l'ennemie; je le battrai; et j'en finirai." "To-morrow I shall attack the enemy; I shall defeat them, and terminate the business."

He did so: the imperialists were totally defeated, Mantua surrendered, and the campaign for that year (1796) was concluded.

In the above examples, excellent as they are in their kind, we find little more than one idea, whereas the report of the Benjamite includes several; for, in the most forcible manner, he points out the general and particular disasters of the day, the rout of the army, the great slaughter, the death of the priests, who were in effect the whole generals of the army, and the capture of the ark; all that, on such an occasion, could affect and distress the heart of an Israelite. And all this he does in four simple assertions.

1SAMUEL 4: 18 When he made mention of the ark of God, Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck broke, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

Verse 18

When he made mention of the ark of God - Eli bore all the relation till the messenger came to this solemn word; he had trembled before for the ark, and now, hearing that it was captured, he was transfixed with grief, fell down from his seat, and dislocated his neck! Behold the judgments of God! But shall we say that this man, however remiss in the education of his children, and criminal in his indulgence towards his profligate sons, which arose more from the easiness of his disposition than from a desire to encourage vice, is gone to perdition? God forbid! No man ever died with such benevolent and religious feelings, and yet perished.

He had judged Israel forty years - Instead of forty years, the Septuagint has here εικοσι ετη, twenty years. All the other versions, as well as the Hebrew text, have forty years.

1SAMUEL 4: 19 His daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered. When she heard the news that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth; for her pains came on her.

Verse 19

And his daughter-in-law - This is another very affecting story; the defeat of Israel, the capture of the ark, the death of her father-in-law, and the slaughter of her husband, were more than a woman in her circumstances, near the time of her delivery could bear. She bowed, travailed, was delivered of a son, gave the child a name indicative of the ruined state of Israel, and expired!

1SAMUEL 4: 20 About the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Don't be afraid; for you have given birth to a son." But she didn't answer, neither did she regard it.

Verse 20

But she answered not - She paid no attention to what the women had said concerning her having borne a son; that information she regarded not.

1SAMUEL 4: 21 She named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

Verse 21

She named the child I-chabod - The versions are various on the original words כְּבוֹד I-chabod; the Septuagint, οὐαιβραχραβωθ ouaibrachaboth; the Syriac, yochobor; the Arabic, yochabad. But none of these give us much light on the subject. It is pretty evident they did not know well what signification to give the name; and we are left to collect its meaning from what she says afterwards, The glory is departed from Israel; the words literally mean, Where is the glory? And indeed where was it, when the armies of Israel were defeated by the Philistines, the priests slain, the supreme magistrate dead, and the ark of the Lord taken?

This is a very eventful, interesting, and affecting chapter, and prepares the reader for those signal manifestations of God's power and providence by which the ark was restored, the priesthood re-established, an immaculate judge given to Israel, the Philistine yoke broken, and the people of the Most High caused once more to triumph. God humbled them that he might exalt them; he suffered his glory for a time to become eclipsed, that he might afterwards cause it to break out with the greater effulgence.

1SAMUEL 4: 22 She said, "The glory has departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken."

1SAMUEL 5: 1 Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

The Philistines set up the ark in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod; whose image is found next morning prostrate before it, broken in pieces, 1Sam 5:1-5. The Philistines are also smitten with a sore disease, 1Sam 5:6. The people of Ashdod refuse to let the ark stay with them; and the lords of the Philistines, with whom they consulted, order it to be carried to Gath, 1Sam 5:7, 1Sam 5:8. They do so; and God smites the inhabitants of that city, young and old, with the same disease, 1Sam 5:9. They send the ark to Ekron, and a heavy destruction fags upon that city, and they resolve to send it back to Shiloh, 1Sam 5:10-12.

Verse 1

Brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod - Ashdod or Azotus was one of the five satrapies or lordships of the Philistines.

1SAMUEL 5: 2 The Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Verse 2

The house of Dagon - On this idol, which was supposed to be partly in a human form, and partly in that of a fish, see the note on Jdg 16:23. Some think that this idol was the same with Dirceto, Attergatis, the Venus of Askelon, and the Moon. - See Calmet's Dissertation on the gods of the Philistines.

The motive which induced the Philistines to set up the ark in the temple of Dagon, may be easily ascertained. It was customary, in all nations, to dedicate the spoils taken from an enemy to their gods:

1. As a gratitude-offering for the help which they supposed them to have furnished; and,
2. As a proof that their gods, i.e., the gods of the conquerors, were more powerful than those of the conquered.

It was, no doubt, to insult the God of Israel, and to insult and terrify his people, that they placed his ark in the temple of Dagon. When the Philistines had conquered Saul, they hung up his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, 1Sam 31:10. And when David slew Goliath, he laid up his sword in the tabernacle of the Lord, 1Sam 21:8, 1Sam 21:9. We have the remains of this custom in the depositing of colors, standards, etc., taken from an enemy, in our churches; but whether this may be called superstition or a religious act, is hard to say. If the battle were the Lord's, which few battles are, the dedication might be right.

1SAMUEL 5: 3 When they of Ashdod arose early on the next day, behold, Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground before the LORD's ark. They took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

Verse 3

They of Ashdod arose early on the morrow - Probably to perform some act of their superstition in the temple of their idol.

Dagon was fallen upon his face - This was one proof, which they little expected, of the superiority of the God of Israel.

Set him in his place again - Supposing his fall might have been merely accidental.

1SAMUEL 5: 4 When they arose early on the next day morning, behold, Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground before the LORD's ark; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso was intact.

Verse 4

Only the stump of Dagon was left - Literally, Only דָּגוֹן dagon (i.e., the little fish) was left. It has already been remarked that Dagon had the head, arms and hands of a man or woman, and that the rest of the idol was in the form of a fish, to which Horace is supposed to make allusion in the following words: -

Desinat in piscem mulisr formosa superne "The upper part resembling a beautiful woman; the lower, a fish."

All that was human in his form was broken off from what resembled a fish. Here was a proof that the affair was not accidental; and these proofs of God's power and authority prepared the way for his judgments.

1SAMUEL 5: 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any who come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, to this day.

Verse 5

Tread on the threshold - Because the arms, etc., of Dagon were broken off by his fall on the threshold, the threshold became sacred, and neither his priests nor worshippers ever tread on the threshold. Thus it was ordered, in the Divine providence, that, by a religious custom of their own, they should perpetuate their disgrace, the insufficiency of their worship, and the superiority of the God of Israel.

It is supposed that the idolatrous Israelites, in the time of Zephaniah, had adopted the worship of Dagon: and that in this sense 1Sam 1:9 is to be understood: In the same day will I punish all those who leap upon the threshold. In order to go into such temples, and not tread on the threshold, the people must step or leap over them; and in this way the above passage may be understood. Indeed, the thresholds of the temples in various places were deemed so sacred that the people were accustomed to fall down and kiss them. When Christianity became corrupted, this adoration of the thresholds of the churches took place.

1SAMUEL 5: 6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy on them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and struck them with tumours, even Ashdod and its borders.

Verse 6

Smote them with emerods - The word עפלים apholim, from עפל aphal, to be elevated, probably means the disease called the bleeding piles, which appears to have been accompanied with dysentery, bloody flux, and ulcerated anus.

The Vulgate says, Et percussit in secretiori parte natium; "And he smote them in the more secret parts of their posteriors." To this the psalmist is supposed to refer, Psa 78:66, He smote all his enemies in the Hinder Parts; he put them to a perpetual reproach. Some copies of the Septuagint have εξεξεσεν αυτοις εις τας ναυς, "he inflamed them in their ships;" other copies have εις τας εδρας, "in their posteriors." The Syriac is the same. The Arabic enlarges: "He smote them in their posteriors, so that they were affected with a dysentery." I suppose them to have been affected with enlargements of the haemorrhoidal veins, from which there came frequent discharges of blood.

The Septuagint and Vulgate make a very material addition to this verse: Και μεσον της χωρας αυτης ανεφυσεν μυες· και εγενετο συγχυσις θανατου μεγαλη εν τη πολει; Et ebullierunt villae et agri in medio regionis illius; et nati sunt mures, et facta est confusio mortis magnae in civitate: "And the

cities and fields of all that region burst up, and mice were produced, and there was the confusion of a great death in the city." This addition Houbigant contends was originally in the Hebrew text; and this gives us the reason why golden mice were sent, as well as the images of the emerods, (1Sam 6:4), when the ark was restored.

1SAMUEL 5: 7 When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel shall not stay with us; for his hand is severe on us, and on Dagon our god."

Verse 7

His hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god - Here the end was completely answered: they now saw that they had not prevailed against Israel, on account of their god being more powerful than Jehovah; and they now feel how easily this God can confound and destroy their whole nation.

1SAMUEL 5: 8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried over to Gath." They carried the ark of the God of Israel there.

Verse 8

The lords of the Philistines - The word סרני sarney, which we translate lords, is rendered by the Chaldee טורני turenay, tyrants. The Syriac is the same. By the Vulgate and Septuagint, satrapae, satraps. Palestine was divided into five satrapies: Ashdod, Ekron, Askalon, Gath, and Gaza. See Jos 13:8. But these were all federates and acted under one general government, for which they assembled in council.

Let the ark - be carried about - They probably thought that their affliction rose from some natural cause; and therefore they wished the ark to be carried about from place to place, to see what the effects might be. If they found the same evil produced wherever it came, then they must conclude that it was a judgment from the God of Israel.

1SAMUEL 5: 9 It was so, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great confusion: and he struck the men of the city, both small and great; and tumours broke out on them.

Verse 9

The hand of the Lord was against the city - As it was at Ashdod, so it was at Gath. The Vulgate says, Et computrescebant prominenter extales eorum; which conveys the idea of a bloody flux, dysentery, and ulcerated anus; and it adds, what is not to be found in the Hebrew text, nor many of the versions, except some traces in the Septuagint, Et fecerunt sibi sedes pelliceas, "And they made unto themselves seats of skins;" for the purpose of sitting more easy, on account of the malady already mentioned.

1SAMUEL 5: 10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. As the ark of God came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people."

1SAMUEL 5: 11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

Verse 11

Send away the ark - It appears that it had been received at Ekron, for there was a deadly destruction through the whole city. They therefore concluded that the ark should be sent back to Shiloh.

1SAMUEL 5: 12 The men who didn't die were struck with the tumours; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Verse 12

The men that died not - Some it seems were smitten with instant death; others with the haemorrhoids, and there was a universal consternation; and the cry of the city went up to heaven - it was an exceeding great cry.

It does not appear that the Philistines had any correct knowledge of the nature of Jehovah, though they seemed to acknowledge his supremacy. They imagined that every country, district, mountain, and valley, had its peculiar deity; who, in its place, was supreme over all others. They thought therefore to appease Jehovah by sending him back his ark or shrine: and, in order to be redeemed from their plagues, they send golden mice and emerods as telesms, probably made under some particular configurations of the planets. See at the end of 1Sam 6:21 (note).

1SAMUEL 6: 1 the LORD's ark was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

After the ark had been seven months in the land of the Philistines, they consult their priests and diviners about sending it to Shiloh, 1Sam 6:1, 1Sam 6:2. They advise that it be sent back with a trespass-offering of five golden emerods, and five golden mice, 1Sam 6:3-6. They advise also that it be sent back on a new cart, drawn by two milch kine from whom their calves shall be tied up; and then conclude that if these cows shall take the way of Beth-shemesh, as going to the Israelitish border, then the Lord had afflicted them, if not, then their evils were accidental, 1Sam 6:7-9. They do as directed; and the kine take the way of Beth-shemesh, 1Sam 6:10-13. They stop in the field of

Joshua; and the men of Beth-shemesh take them, and offer them to the Lord for a burnt-offering, and cleave the wood of the cart to burn them, and make sundry other offerings, 1Sam 6:14, 1Sam 6:15. The offerings of the five lords of the Philistines, 1Sam 6:16-18. For too curiously looking into the ark, the men of Beth-shemesh are smitten of the Lord, 1Sam 6:19, 1Sam 6:20. They send to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, that they may take away the ark, 1Sam 6:21.

1SAMUEL 6: 2 The Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the LORD's ark? Show us with which we shall send it to its place."

Verse 2

The diviners - כֹּסֵמִים kosemim, from כֹּסַם kasam, to presage or prognosticate. See Deu 18:10. In what their pretended art consisted, we know not.

1SAMUEL 6: 3 They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, don't send it empty; but by all means return him a trespass offering: then you shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you."

Verse 3

Send it not empty - As it appears ye have trespassed against him, send him an offering for this trespass.

Why his hand is not removed - The sense is, If you send him a trespass-offering, and ye be cured, then ye shall know why his judgments have not been taken away from you previously to this offering.

It is a common opinion, says Calmet, among all people, that although the Supreme Being needs nothing of his creatures, yet he requires that they should consecrate to him all that they have; for the same argument that proves his independence, infinitude, and self-sufficiency, proves our dependence, and the obligation we are under to acknowledge him by offering him due marks of our gratitude and submission. Such sentiments were common among all people; and God himself commands his people not to appear before him without an offering, Exo 23:15 : None shall appear before me empty.

1SAMUEL 6: 4 Then they said, "What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him?" They said, "Five golden tumours, and five golden mice, for the number of the lords of the Philistines; for one plague was on you all, and on your lords."

Verse 4

Five golden emerods, and five golden mice - One for each satrapy. The emerods had afflicted their bodies; the mice had marred their land. Both, they considered, as sent by God; and, making an image of each, and sending them as a trespass-offering, they acknowledged this. See at the end.

1SAMUEL 6: 5 Therefore you shall make images of your tumours, and images of your mice that mar the land; and you shall give glory to the God of Israel: perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

Verse 5

He will lighten his hand from off you - The whole land was afflicted; the ground was marred by the mice; the common people and the lords afflicted by the haemorrhoids, and their gods broken in pieces.

1SAMUEL 6: 6 Why then do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had worked wonderfully among them, didn't they let the people go, and they departed?

Verse 6

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts - They had heard how God punished the Egyptians, and they are afraid of similar plagues. It appears that they had kept the ark long enough.

Did they not let the people go - And has he not wrought wonderfully among us? And should we not send back his ark?

1SAMUEL 6: 7 "Now therefore take and prepare yourselves a new cart, and two milk cows, on which there has come no yoke; and tie the cows to the cart, and bring their calves home from them;

Verse 7

Make a new cart - It was indecent and improper to employ in any part of the worship of God any thing that had before served for a common purpose. Every thing in the worship of God is said to be sanctified: now the general meaning of that word is, to separate a thing from all earthly and common uses, and devote it solely to the service of God.

When David removed the ark from the house of Abinadab, he put it on a new cart, 2Sam 6:3.

Bring their calves home from them - So it appears that their calves had been with them in the fields. This was a complete trial: unless they were supernaturally influenced, they would not leave their calves; unless supernaturally directed, they would not leave their home, and take a way unguided, which they had never gone before.

1SAMUEL 6: 8 and take the LORD's ark, and lay it on the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which you return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by its side; and send it away, that it may go.

Verse 8

The jewels of gold - The word קלי keley, which our translators so often render jewels, signifies vessels, implements, ornaments, etc. A jewel of gold has an odd sound to those who always attach the idea of a precious stone to the term.

1SAMUEL 6: 9 Behold; if it goes up by the way of its own border to Beth Shemesh, then he has done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it was a chance that happened to us."

Verse 9

A chance that happened to us - The word מקרה mikreh, from קרה karah, to meet or coalesce, signifies an event that naturally arises from such concurring causes as, in the order and nature of things, must produce it.

Thus a bad state of the atmosphere, putrid exhalations, bad diet, occasioned by any general scarcity, might have produced the disease in question; and to something of this kind they would attribute it, if the other evidences did not concur. This gives us the proper notion of chance; and shows us that it is a matter as dependent upon the Divine providence, as any thing can be: in short, that these occurrences are parts of the Divine government.

The word chance, though often improperly used to signify such an occurrence as is not under the Divine government, is of itself, not only simple, but expressive; and has nearly the meaning of the Hebrew word: it comes from the French cheoir, or escheoir, to fall out, to occur, to fall to. Hence our law-term escheat, any lands that fall to the lord of the manor by forfeiture, or for want of heirs: i.e., these are the occurrences which naturally throw the lands into the hands of the lord.

1SAMUEL 6: 10 The men did so, and took two milk cows, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home;

1SAMUEL 6: 11 and they put the LORD's ark on the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their tumours.

1SAMUEL 6: 12 The cows took the straight way by the way to Beth Shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and didn't turn aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

Verse 12

Lowing as they went - Calling for their calves.

To the right hand or to the left - Some think they were placed where two roads met; one going to Ekron, the other to Beth-shemesh. It is possible that they were put in such circumstances as these for the greater certainty of the affair: to have turned from their own homes, from their calves and known pasture, and to have taken the road to a strange country, must argue supernatural influence.

The lords of the Philistines went after - They were so jealous in this business that they would trust no eyes but their own. All this was wisely ordered, that there might be the fullest conviction of the being and interposition of God.

1SAMUEL 6: 13 They of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

1SAMUEL 6: 14 The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they split the wood of the cart, and offered up the cows for a burnt offering to the LORD.

Verse 14

They clave the wood of the cart - Both the cart and the cattle having been thus employed, could no longer be devoted to any secular services; therefore the cattle were sacrificed, and the cart was broken up for fuel to consume the sacrifice.

1SAMUEL 6: 15 The Levites took down the LORD's ark, and the coffer that was with it, in which the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day to the LORD.

Verse 15

The Levites took down - It appears there were some of the tribe of Levi among the people of Beth-shemesh: to them appertained the service of the tabernacle.

1SAMUEL 6: 16 When the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

1SAMUEL 6: 17 These are the golden tumours which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering to the LORD: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

Verse 17

These are the golden emerods - Each of these cities, in what may be called its corporate capacity, sent a golden emerod.

1SAMUEL 6: 18 and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages, even to the great stone, whereon they set down the LORD's ark. That stone remains to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

Verse 18

And the golden mice - The desolation that had been made through the land by these animals had excited a general concern; and it appears from the text, that all the cities of the Philistines, as well fenced as without walls, sent a golden mouse as a trespass-offering.

Remaineth unto this day - Some think the ark is intended, which continued on the stone of Abel for some considerable time after it was placed there; and that the memoranda from which this book was afterwards compiled, were made before it was removed: but it is not likely that it remained any time exposed in the open field. Therefore it is most natural to suppose that it is the stone of Abel which is here intended; and so our translators have understood the place, and have used supplementary words to express this sentiment: "Which stone remaineth unto this day."

1SAMUEL 6: 19 He struck of the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the LORD's ark, he struck of the people fifty thousand seventy men; and the people mourned, because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

Verse 19

He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men - The present Hebrew text of this most extraordinary reading stands thus: *ויך באנשי בית־שמש - ויך בעם שבעים איש חמשים אלף איש* vaiyach beanshey Beith-shemesh - vaiyach baam shibim ish, chamishshim eleph ish; "And he smote among the men of Beth-shemesh, (because they looked into the ark of Jehovah), and he smote among the people Seventy men, Fifty Thousand men."

From the manner in which the text stands, and from the great improbability of the thing, it is most likely that there is a corruption in this text, or that some explanatory word is lost, or that the number fifty thousand has been added by ignorance or design; it being very improbable that such a small village as Beth-shemesh should contain or be capable of employing fifty thousand and seventy men in the fields at wheat harvest, much less that they could all peep into the ark on the stone of Abel, in the corn-field of Joshua.

That the words are not naturally connected in the Hebrew text, is evident; and they do not stand better in the versions.

1. The Vulgate renders it thus: - Et percussit de populo Septuaginta viros; et Quinquaginta Milla plebis; "And he smote of the (chief) people Seventy men, and Fifty Thousand of the (common) people." This distinction, I suppose, St. Jerome intended between plebis and populus; which he might think was warranted by the *אנשים* anashim, and *איש* ish, of the Hebrew text.

2. The Targum of Jonathan is something similar to the Vulgate: - "And he smote *בסבי עמא* besabey amma, of the elders of the people Seventy men; *ובקהלא* ubekahala, and of the congregation Fifty Thousand men."

3. The Septuagint follow the Hebrew text: Και επαταξεν εν αυτοις εβδομηκοντα ανδρας, και πεντηκοντα χιλιαδας ανδρων; "And he smote of them Seventy men; and Fifty Thousand men." εκ του λαου, of the people, is added by some copies.
4. The Syriac has forty-five thousand less! It is as follows: wamacho Morio beamo chamesho alapin weshabein gabrin; "And the Lord smote among the people Five thousand and Seventy men."
5. The Arabic is nearly similar: "And the Lord smote among the people; and there died of them Five thousand and Seventy men." We have no other versions from which we can receive any farther light.
6. Josephus is different from all the rest, and has fifty thousand less, for he renders the place thus, Antiq. Jud. libe. vi., cap. i., sect. 4: Θργη δε και χολος του Θεου μετεισιw, ωστε εβδομηκοντα των εκ της Βηθσαμης κωμησ-βαλων απεκτεινεν "But the displeasure and wrath of God pursued them so, that Seventy men of the village of Beth-shemesh, approaching the ark, which they were not worthy to touch, (not being priests), were struck with lightning." Here we find the whole fifty thousand is omitted.
7. Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, giving the opinion of other rabbins as well as his own, says, "Our rabbins say Seventy men, and each of them was worth fifty thousand men; or fifty thousand, every one of whom was worth the seventy of the Sanhedrin." This only shows embarrassment, but gives very little light.

All these discordances, together with the utter improbability of the thing, lead us to suppose there must be a corruption in this place, either by adding or omitting.

Dr. Kennicott has found three very reputable MSS. in which the words **יש אלהים** chamishshim eleph ish, fifty thousand men, are wanting. The 1st, No. 84, a MS. from Holland; the 2d, No. 210, one of the Parisian MSS.; the 3d, No. 418, a MS. belonging to Milan; all three written about the beginning of the twelfth century, and numbered as above in Dr. K's Bible.

Perhaps the omission in these MSS. was occasioned by a mistake of the transcriber, which might have easily happened, because of the word **יש** ish, which occurs both after **שבעים** shibim and after **אלה** eleph; for, having written the first, and taking his eye off, when he recommenced he might have supposed he had written the latter, and so proceed, leaving the words in question out of his copy. Two, three, or more persons might have been thus deceived, and so produce the above MSS.; or the mistake once made, all the MSS. copied from that would show the same omission. The common reading may be defended, if we only suppose the omission of a single letter, the particle of comparison **כ** ke, like, as, or equal to, before the word **יש** chamishshim: thus **כמשים** kechamishshim; the passage would then read: "And he smote of the people Seventy men, equal to Fifty Thousand men;" that is, they were the elders or governors of the people.

Some solve the difficulty by translating, "He slew Seventy men Out Of fifty thousand men." There are various other methods invented by learned men to remove this difficulty, which I shall not stop to examine; all, however, issue in this point, that only Seventy Men were slain; and this is, without doubt the most probable. The Fifty Thousand, therefore, must be an interpolation, or be understood in some such way as that mentioned above. But the omission of the particle of similitude solves every difficulty; and this would account for the reading in Josephus, who in his recital would naturally leave out such an explanation of the worth of the seventy men, as his Roman readers could not easily comprehend such comparisons.

With a great slaughter - Seventy men slain, out of an inconsiderable village in a harvest day, was certainly a great slaughter.

1SAMUEL 6: 20 The men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? To whom shall he go up from us?"

Verse 20

Who is able to stand - Why this exclamation? They knew that God had forbidden any to touch his ark but the priests and Levites; but they endeavored to throw that blame on God, as a Being hard to be pleased, which belonged solely to themselves.

1SAMUEL 6: 21 They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the LORD's ark. Come down, and bring it up to yourselves."

Verse 21

To the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim - They wished the ark away out of their village, but why they sent to this city instead of sending to Shiloh, does not appear: probably Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines, after the late defeat of Israel. This is most likely, as the ark was never more taken back to that place.

It was a very ancient usage, when a plague or other calamity infested a country, city, etc. for the magicians to form an image of the destroyer, or of the things on which the plague particularly rested, in gold, silver, ivory, wax, clay, etc., under certain configurations of the heavens; and to set this up in some proper place, that the evils thus represented might be driven away. These consecrated images were the same that are called talismans, or rather telesms, among the Asiatics. Mr. Locke calls the diviners talismans, but this is a mistake; the image, not the fabricator, was called by this name.

I have seen several of these talismans, of different countries; and such images were probably the origin of all the forms of gods which, in after times, were the objects of religious worship. It is well known that Ireland is not infested with any venomous creature; no serpent of any kind is found in it: - "No poison there infects, no scaly snake

Lurks in the grass, nor toads annoy the lake."

This has been attributed to a telesm, formed with certain rites under the sign Scorpio. Such opinions have been drawn from very ancient pagan sources: e.g.: A stone engraved with the figure of a scorpion, while the moon is in the sign Scorpio, is said to cure those who are stung by this animal. Apollonius Tyaneus is said to have prevented flies from infesting Antioch, and storks from appearing in Byzantium, by figures of those animals formed under certain constellations. A brazen scorpion, placed on a pillar in the city of Antioch, is said to have expelled all such animals from that country. And a crocodile of lead is also said to have preserved Cairo from the depredations of those monsters. See Calmet.

Virgil refers to this custom, Eclogue viii., ver. 80, where he represents a person making two images or telesms, one of wax, another of clay, which were to represent an absent person, who was to be alternately softened or hardened, as the wax or clay image was exposed to the fire: -

Limus ut hic durescit, et haec ut cera liquescit

Uno et eodem igni: sic nostro Daphnis amore. "As this clay hardens, and this wax softens, by one and the same fire, so may Daphnis by my love."

This thought is borrowed from Theocritus, Idyl. ii., ver. 28.

A beautiful marble figure of Osiris, about four inches and a quarter high, now stands before me, entirely covered with hieroglyphics; he is standing, and holds in each hand a scorpion and a snake by the tails, and with each foot he stands on the neck of a crocodile. This I have no doubt was a telesm, formed under some peculiar configuration of the heavens, intended to drive away both scorpions and crocodiles. This image is of the highest antiquity, and was formed probably long before the Christian era.

Tavernier observes that something like what is mentioned in the text is practiced among the Indians; for when a pilgrim goes to one of the idol temples for a cure, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his circumstances, which he offers to his god. This custom was common among the heathens, and they consecrated to their gods the monuments of their deliverance. From heathenism it was adopted by corrupt Christianity; and Theodoret informs us that in his time there might be seen about the tombs of the martyrs figures of eyes, hands, feet, and other parts of the body, which represented those of the offerers which they supposed had been healed by the intercession of those holy persons! This degrading superstition is continued among the papists to the present day: I have seen at St. Winifred's well, in Holywell, Flintshire several staves, crutches, and handbarrows, hung up in different places, which were reported to be the votive offerings of the maimed, the halt, the withered, etc., who had received their cure by the virtue of the saint! It is true the crutches are such as no man or woman could ever walk with; and the barrows are such as most evidently never carried any human being. But they serve the purpose of superstition, and keep up an idolatrous reverence for the well and the legendary virgin.

After all, I need not say that the system of judicial astrology is vain, unfounded, absurd, and wicked. It in effect presumes to take the government of the world out of the hand of an all-wise God, and to abandon it to the most fortuitous and unconnected occurrences of life; for the stars have their influences according to this pretended science, conformably to the occurrences here below: e.g., if a child be born but one hour sooner or later than a particular configuration of the heavens, his destiny will be widely different from what it otherwise would have been; and as an almost infinite number of casualties may accelerate or retard a birth, consequently the whole destiny of man is influenced and ruled by these casualties: to say nothing of the absurdity, that those omnipotent stars ever can affect the infant while invested with a thin covering of flesh in the womb of its parent. But the whole science is a tissue of absurdities.

1SAMUEL 7: 1 The men of Kiriath Jearim came, and took the LORD's ark, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the LORD's ark.

The men of Kirjah-jearim bring the ark from Beth-shemesh, and consecrate Eleazar, the son of Abinadab, to keep it; and there it continued twenty years, 1Sam 7:1, 1Sam 7:2. Samuel reproves and exhorts the people, and gathers them together at Mizpeh, where they fast and pray, and confess their sins, 1Sam 7:3-6. The Philistines go up against them; the Israelites cry unto the Lord for help; Samuel offers sacrifices; and the Lord confounds the Philistines with thunder; Israel discomfits and pursues them to Beth-car, 1Sam 7:7-11. Samuel erects a stone for a memorial, and calls it Eben-ezer, 1Sam 7:12. The Philistines are totally subdued, and Israel recovers all its lost cities, 1Sam 7:13, 1Sam 7:14. Samuel acts as an itinerant judge in Israel, 1Sam 7:15-17.

Verse 1

Fetches up the ark - When these people received the message of the Beth-shemites, they probably consulted Samuel, with whom was the counsel of the Lord, and he had encouraged them to go and bring it up, else they might have expected such destruction as happened to the Beth-shemites.

Sanctified Eleazar - Perhaps this sanctifying signifies no more than setting this man apart, simply to take care of the ark.

1SAMUEL 7: 2 From the day that the ark stayed in Kiriath Jearim, the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

Verse 2

It was twenty years - This chapter contains the transactions of at least twenty years, but we know not the date of each event.

1SAMUEL 7: 3 Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you do return to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts to the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

Verse 3

And Samuel spake - We have heard nothing of this judge since he served in the tabernacle. He was now grown up, and established for a prophet in the land of Israel.

If ye do return - From your backsliding and idolatry.

With all your hearts - For outward services and professions will avail nothing.

Put away the strange gods - Destroy their images, altars, and groves: they are strange; you do not know them as helpers, saviours, or defenders.

Prepare your hearts - Let your hearts be straight and steady.

And serve him only - Have no other religious service but his, and obey his laws.

He will deliver you - Vain are your own exertions; he will deliver you in such a way as to show that the excellence of the power is of himself alone.

1SAMUEL 7: 4 Then the children of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

Verse 4

Put away Baalim and Ashtaroth - These were not two particular deities, but two genera of idols; the one masculine, Baalim; the other feminine, Ashtaroth; both the words are in the plural number, and signify all their gods and goddesses.

1SAMUEL 7: 5 Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you to the LORD."

Verse 5

Gather all Israel to Mizpah - This appears to have been an armed assembly, though probably collected principally for religious and political purposes; but Samuel knew that an unarmed multitude could not safely be convened in the vicinity of the Philistines.

1SAMUEL 7: 6 They gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

Verse 6

Drew water, and poured it out - It is not easy to know what is meant by this; it is true that pouring out water, in the way of libation, was a religious ordinance among the Hebrews, (Isa 12:3), and among most other nations, particularly the Greeks and Romans, who used, not only water, but wine, milk, honey, and blood, as we find by Homer, Virgil, Euripides, Sophocles, Porphyry, and Lucian. Our Lord seems to allude to this ceremony, Joh 7:37-38 (note), where see the note.

The Chaldee Paraphrast understands the place differently, for he translates: "And they poured out their hearts in penitence, as Waters, before the Lord." That deep penitential sorrow was represented under the notion of pouring out water, we have a direct proof in the case of David, who says, Psa 22:14, I am Poured Out like Water, my heart is like wax; it is Melted in the midst of my bowels. And to repentance, under this very similitude, the prophet exhorts fallen Jerusalem: Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches Pour Out thine Heart Like Water before the face of the Lord; Lam 2:19. David uses the same image, Psa 62:8 : Trust in him at all times, ye people; Pour Out your hearts before him. The same figure is used by Hannah in 1Sam 1:15 of this book; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have Poured Out my soul before the Lord. Perhaps the drawing and pouring out of water mentioned in the text was done emblematically, to represent the contrition of their hearts.

And Samuel judged - He gave them ordinances, heard and redressed grievances, and taught them how to get reconciled to God. The assembly, therefore, was held for religio-politico-military purposes.

1SAMUEL 7: 7 When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

Verse 7

The Philistines went up against Israel - They went to give them battle before that, by continual accessions of numbers, they should become too powerful.

1SAMUEL 7: 8 The children of Israel said to Samuel, "Don't cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."

Verse 8

Cease not to cry unto the Lord - They had strong confidence in the intercession of Samuel, because they knew he was a holy man of God.

1SAMUEL 7: 9 Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD: and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel; and the LORD answered him.

Verse 9

Samuel took a sucking lamb - This sucking lamb must have been eight days under its mother before it could be offered, as the law says, Lev 22:27.

Though Samuel was not a priest, yet he offered this sacrifice; or he might have ordered Eleazar to offer it, and still be said to have done it himself: Qui facit per alterum, facit per se; "He who procures a thing to be done, may be said to do it himself." His not sacrificing at the tabernacle was justified by the necessity of the case; neither tabernacle nor ark was at hand.

1SAMUEL 7: 10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day on the Philistines, and confused them; and they were struck down before Israel.

Verse 10

The Lord thundered with a great thunder - Literally, The Lord thundered with a great voice - he confounded them with a mighty tempest of thunder and lightning, and no doubt slew many by the lightning.

1SAMUEL 7: 11 The men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and struck them, until they came under Beth Kar.

Verse 11

Under Beth-car - We know not where this place was; the Septuagint have Beth-chor; the Targum, Beth-saron; and the Syriac and Arabic, Beth-jasan.

1SAMUEL 7: 12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "The LORD helped us until now."

Verse 12

Called the name of it Eben-ezer - אבן העזר Eben haezer, "The Stone of Help;" perhaps a pillar is meant by the word stone.

1SAMUEL 7: 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel. The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Verse 13

They came no more into the coast of Israel - Perhaps a more signal victory was never gained by Israel; the Lord had brought them low, almost to extermination; and now, by his miraculous interference, he lifts them completely up, and humbles to the dust their proud oppressors. God often suffers nations and individuals to be brought to the lowest extremity, that he may show his mercy and goodness by suddenly rescuing them from destruction, when all human help has most evidently failed.

1SAMUEL 7: 14 The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel recovered its border out of the hand of the Philistines. There was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Verse 14

The cities which the Philistines had taken - We are not informed of the particulars of these reprisals, but we may rest assured all this was not done in one day: perhaps the retaking of the cities was by slow degrees, through the space of several years.

There was peace between Israel and the Amorites - That is, all the remaining Canaanites kept quiet, and did not attempt to molest the Israelites, when they found the Philistines, the most powerful of the ancient inhabitants of the land, broken and subdued before them.

1SAMUEL 7: 15 Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

Verse 15

Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life - Samuel is supposed to have lived one hundred years; he did not begin to judge Israel till he was about forty years of age; and if he was one hundred years of age when he died, he must have been a judge sixty years, and consequently filled that office during the whole of Saul's reign. But that he had been dead before Saul's last battle, is evident from the transactions of that king with the witch of En-dor, and probably not long before. Samuel was the prophet of that time; declared the will of the Lord, and frequently directed both the civil and military transactions of the kingdom. Samuel seems, in many respects, to have been considered the governor of the people, while Saul was only looked on as the general of the armies.

1SAMUEL 7: 16 He went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places.

Verse 16

He went from year to year in circuit - When he was at Beth-el, the tribe of Ephraim, and all the northern parts of the country, could attend him; when at Gilgal, the tribe of Benjamin, and those beyond Jordan, might have easy access to him; and when at Mizpeh, he was within reach of Judah, Simeon, and Gad; but Ramah was the place of his ordinary abode; and there he held his court, for there he judged Israel; and, as it is probable that Shiloh was destroyed, it is said, 1Sam 7:17, that there (viz., at Ramah) he built an altar unto the Lord. This altar, being duly consecrated, the worship performed at it was strictly legal. Ramah, which is said to be about six miles from Jerusalem, was the seat of prophecy during the life of Samuel; and there it is probable all Israel came to consult him on matters of a spiritual nature, as there was the only altar of God in the land of Israel.

1SAMUEL 7: 17 His return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar to the LORD.

1SAMUEL 8: 1 When Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel.

Samuel, grown old, makes his sons judges in Beer-sheba, 1Sam 8:1, 1Sam 8:2. They pervert judgment; and the people complain, and desire a king, 1Sam 8:3-5. Samuel is displeased, and inquires of the Lord, 1Sam 8:6. The Lord is also displeased; but directs Samuel to appoint them a king, and to show them solemnly the consequences of their choice, 1Sam 8:7-9. Samuel does so; and shows them what they may expect from an absolute monarch, and how afflicted they should be under his administration, 1Sam 8:10-18. The people refuse to recede from their demand; and Samuel lays the matter before the Lord, and dismisses them, 1Sam 8:19-22.

Verse 1

When Samuel was old - Supposed to be about sixty.

He made his sons judges - He appointed them as his lieutenants to superintend certain affairs in Beer-sheba, which he could not conveniently attend to himself. But they were never judges in the proper sense of the word; Samuel was the last judge in Israel, and he judged it to the day of his death. See 1Sam 7:16.

1SAMUEL 8: 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah: they were judges in Beersheba.

1SAMUEL 8: 3 His sons didn't walk in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice.

Verse 3

His sons walked not in his ways - Their iniquity is pointed out in three words:

1. They turned aside after lucre; the original (בצטע batsa) signifies to cut, clip, break off; and therefore Mr. Parkhurst thinks that it means nearly the same with our clipping of coin. It however expresses here the idea of avarice, of getting money by hook or by crook. The Targum says, "They looked after ממון דשקר mamon dishkar, the mammon of unrighteousness;" of which they did not make unto themselves friends but enemies; see the note on Mat 6:24.

2. They took bribes; תנש shochad, gifts or presents, to blind their eyes.

3. They perverted judgment - they turned judgment aside; they put it out of its regular path; they sold it to the highest bidder: thus the wicked rich man had his cause, and the poor man was oppressed and deprived of his right.

This was the custom in our own country before Magna Charta was obtained; he that would speed in the king's court must bribe all the officers, and fee both the king and queen! I have found in our ancient records the most barefaced and shameful examples of this kind; but it was totally abolished, invito rege, by that provision in the above charter which states, Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus ant differemus rectum aut iudicium; "To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or defer, justice and right." It was customary in those inauspicious times, for judgment to be delayed in banco regis, in the king's court, as long as there was any hope that more money would be paid in order to bring it to issue. And there were cases, where the king did not like the party, in which he denied justice and judgment entirely! Magna Charta brought them to book, and brought the subject to his right.

Of those times it might well be said, as Homer did, Iliad xvi., ver. 387. Οἱ βίη ἀγορῆ σκολίας κρινῶσι θεμιστας, Ἐκ δὲ δικῆν ἐλασῶσι, θεῶν σπιν οὐκ ἀλεγόντες. "When guilty mortals break the eternal laws,

Or judges, bribed, betray the righteous cause." "When the laws are perverted by force; when justice is expelled from her seat; when judges are swayed from the right, regardless of the vengeance of Heaven." Or, in other words, these were times in which the streams of justice were poisoned in their source, and judges neither feared God nor regarded man.

1SAMUEL 8: 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah;

1SAMUEL 8: 5 and they said to him, "Behold, you are old, and your sons don't walk in your ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Verse 5

Make us a king - Hitherto, from the time in which they were a people, the Israelites were under a theocracy, they had no other king but God. Now they desire to have a king like the other nations around them, who may be their general in battle; for this is the point at which they principally aim.

1SAMUEL 8: 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." Samuel prayed to the LORD.

Verse 6

The thing displeased Samuel - Because he saw that this amounted to a formal renunciation of the Divine government.

Samuel prayed unto the Lord - He begged to know his mind in this important business.

1SAMUEL 8: 7 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they tell you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them.

Verse 7

They have rejected me - They wish to put that government in the hands of a mortal, which was always in the hands of their God. But hearken unto their voice - grant them what they request. So we find God grants that in his displeasure which he withholds in his mercy.

1SAMUEL 8: 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also to you.

1SAMUEL 8: 9 Now therefore listen to their voice: however you shall protest solemnly to them, and shall show them the way of the king who shall reign over them."

Verse 9

Show them the manner of the king - The word מִשְׁפָּט mishpat, which we here render manner, signifies simply what the king would and might require, according to the manner in which kings in general ruled; all of whom, in those times, were absolute and despotic.

The whole of this manner of the king is well illustrated by Puffendorf. "Hitherto," says he, "the people of Israel had lived under governors raised up of God, who had exacted no tribute of them, nor put them to any charge; but, little content with this form of government. they desire to have a king like other nations, who should live in magnificence and pomp, keep armies, and be able to resist any invasion. Samuel informs them what it was they desired; that when they understood it, they might consider whether they would persist in their choice. If they would have a king splendidly attended, he tells them that he would take their sons for his chariots, etc.; if they would have him keep up constant forces, then he would appoint them for colonels and captains, and employ those in his wars who were accustomed to follow their family business; and since, after the manner of other kings, he must keep a stately court, they must be content that their daughters should serve in several offices, which the king would think below the dignity of his wives and daughters, 1Sam 8:13. Many ministers also, in several departments, both of war and peace, must have salaries to support them, which must be paid out of their fields and vineyards, 1Sam 8:14. In one word, that to sustain his dignity their king would exact the tenth of all they possessed, and be maintained in a royal manner out of their estates."

It is perfectly vain in Grotius, or any one else, to state that this shows what a king, as king, may any where in virtue of his office, claim and exact; and that he can take the property and persons of his subjects, and dispose of them as he may judge necessary for the exigence of the state. This was the manner of Saul, but Saul was not a king of God's choosing: "He gave him in his wrath, and took him away in his displeasure;" and the manner of such a king should not be arrogated by any potentate who affects to rule jure divino, by Divine right. The manner of the king of God's choice is distinctly detailed, Deu 17:15-20, to which the reader will do well to refer, that he may have an impartial statement of the subject.

1SAMUEL 8: 10 Samuel told all the LORD's words to the people who asked of him a king.

1SAMUEL 8: 11 He said, "This will be the way of the king who shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them to him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots;

1SAMUEL 8: 12 and he will appoint them to him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will assign some to plough his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots.

1SAMUEL 8: 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

1SAMUEL 8: 14 He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, even their best, and give them to his servants.

1SAMUEL 8: 15 He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

1SAMUEL 8: 16 He will take your male servants, and your female servants, and your best young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

1SAMUEL 8: 17 He will take the tenth of your flocks: and you shall be his servants.

1SAMUEL 8: 18 You shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

1SAMUEL 8: 19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No; but we will have a king over us,

Verse 19

The people refused to obey - They would have the king, his manner and all, notwithstanding the solemn warning which they here receive.

1SAMUEL 8: 20 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.”

Verse 20

May judge us - This appears to be a rejection of Samuel.

Go out before us - Be in every respect our head and governor.

And fight our battles - Be the general of our armies.

1SAMUEL 8: 21 Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

Verse 21

Rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord - He went to the altar, and in his secret devotion laid the whole business before God.

1SAMUEL 8: 22 The LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice, and make them a king.” Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Every man go to his city.”

Verse 22

Hearken unto their voice - Let them have what they desire, and let them abide the consequences.

Go ye every man unto his city - It seems the elders of the people had tarried all this time with Samuel, and when he had received his ultimate answer from God, he told them of it and dismissed them.

On this account we may observe:

1. That God did not change the government of Israel; it was the people themselves who changed it.
2. That though God permitted them to have a king, yet he did not approve of him.
3. That, notwithstanding he did not suffer them to choose the man, he ordered his servant Samuel to choose him by lot, he disposing of that lot.
4. That God never gave up the supreme government; he was still King in Israel, and the king, so called, was only the vicegerent or deputy of the Lord.
5. That no king of Judah attempted to be supreme, therefore they never made new laws, nor altered the old; which was a positive confession that God was the supreme Legislator.
6. That an absolute monarchy is always an evil, and is contrary to all the rights, civil and religious, of mankind; a mode of government that all people should avoid, as pregnant with evils to mankind.
7. That although it was a sin in the Israelites to desire a king, that is, to change a constitution of which God was the author, yet kingly government, properly understood, is a good of the first magnitude to the civil happiness of mankind.
8. That by kingly government, properly understood, I mean such a monarchical government as that of Great Britain, where the king, the nobles, and the people, are duly mixed, each having his proper part in the government, and each preventing the other from running to excess, and all limited by law.
9. That the three grand forms of government which have obtained among mankind, viz., monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, have each certain advantages without which no state can be well preserved; but they have evils by which any state may be injured.
10. That, from a proper mixture of these, the advantages of the whole may be reaped without any of their attendant evils, and that this is the British constitution; which, not merely the wisdom of our ancestors, but the providence of God has given unto us, and of which no other state has had common sense enough to avail themselves, though they see that because of this the British empire is the most powerful and the most happy in the universe, and likely at last to give laws to the whole world.

The manner of our king is constitutional, widely different from that of Saul, and from that of any other potentate in the four quarters of the globe. He is the father of his people, and the people feel and love him as such. He has all the power necessary to do good; they have all the liberty necessary to their political happiness, had they only a diminution of taxes, which at present are too heavy for any nation to bear.

1SAMUEL 9: 1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor.

Saul's lineage and description; he is sent by his father to seek some lost asses, 1Sam 9:1-5. Not finding them, he purposes to go and consult Samuel concerning the proper method of proceeding, 1Sam 9:6-14. The Lord informs Samuel that he should anoint Saul king, 1Sam 9:15, 1Sam 9:16. Samuel invites Saul to dine with him, and informs him that the asses are found; and gives him an intimation that he is to be king, 1Sam 9:17-21. Saul dines with Samuel, and afterwards he is taken to the house-top, where both commune together, 1Sam 9:22-27.

Verse 1

A mighty man of power - Literally, a strong man; this appears to be the only power he possessed; and the physical strength of the father may account for the extraordinary size of the son. See 1Sam 9:2.

1SAMUEL 9: 2 He had a son, whose name was Saul, an impressive young man; and there was not among the children of Israel a better person than he. From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

Verse 2

From his shoulders and upwards - It was probably from this very circumstance that he was chosen for king; for, where kings were elective, in all ancient times great respect was paid to personal appearance.

1SAMUEL 9: 3 The donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. Kish said to Saul his son, "Take now one of the servants with you, and arise, go seek the donkeys."

Verse 3

The asses of Kish - were lost - What a wonderful train of occurrences were connected in order to bring Saul to the throne of Israel! Every thing seems to go on according to the common course of events, and yet all conspired to favor the election of a man to the kingdom who certainly did not come there by the approbation of God.

Asses grow to great perfection in the East; and at this time, as there were no horses in Judea, they were very useful; and on them kings and princes rode.

1SAMUEL 9: 4 He passed through the hill country of Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they didn't find them: then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they weren't there: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they didn't find them.

1SAMUEL 9: 5 When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, lest my father stop caring about the donkeys, and be anxious for us."

Verse 5

Were come to the land of Zuph - Calmet supposes that Saul and his servant went from Gibeah to Shalisha, in the tribe of Dan; from thence to Shalim, near to Jerusalem; and thence, traversing the tribe of Benjamin, they purposed to return to Gibeah; but passing through the land of Zuph, in which Ramatha, the country of Samuel, was situated, they determined to call on this prophet to gain some directions from him; the whole of this circuit he supposes to have amounted to no more than about twenty-five leagues, or three days' journey. We do not know where the places were situated which are here mentioned: the Targum translates thus: "And he passed through the mount of the house of Ephraim, and went into the southern land, but did not meet with them. And he passed through the land of Mathbera, but they were not there; and he passed through the land of the tribe of Benjamin, but did not find them; then they came into the land where the prophet of the Lord dwelt. And Saul said to his servant," etc.

1SAMUEL 9: 6 He said to him, "See now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man who is held in honour. All that he says comes surely to pass. Now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go."

1SAMUEL 9: 7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

Verse 7

There is not a present to bring to the man of God - We are not to suppose from this that the prophets took money to predict future events: Saul only refers to an invariable custom, that no man approached a superior without a present of some kind or other. We have often seen this before; even God, who needs nothing, would not that his people should approach him with empty hands. "It is very common in Bengal for a person, who is desirous of asking a favor from a superior, to take a present of fruits or sweetmeats in his hand. If not accepted, the feelings of the offerer are greatly wounded. The making of presents to appease a superior is also very common in Bengal." - Ward's Customs.

1SAMUEL 9: 8 The servant answered Saul again, and said, "Behold, I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way."

Verse 8

The fourth part of a shekel of silver - We find from the preceding verse, that the bread or provisions which they had brought with them for their journey was expended, else a part of that would have been thought a suitable present; and here the fourth part of a shekel of silver, about ninepence of

our money, was deemed sufficient: therefore the present was intended more as a token of respect than as an emolument.

1SAMUEL 9: 9 (In earlier times in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was before called a Seer.)

Verse 9

Beforetime in Israel - This passage could not have been a part of this book originally: but we have already conjectured that Samuel, or some contemporary author, wrote the memoranda, out of which a later author compiled this book. This hypothesis, sufficiently reasonable in itself, solves all difficulties of this kind.

Was beforetime called a seer - The word seer, *הַרֹאֵה* roeh, occurs for the first time in this place; it literally signifies a person who Sees; particularly preternatural sights. A seer and a prophet were the same in most cases; only with this difference, the seer was always a prophet, but the prophet was not always a seer. A seer seems to imply one who frequently met with, and saw, some symbolical representation of God. The term prophet was used a long time before this; Abraham is called a prophet, Gen 20:7, and the term frequently occurs in the law. Besides, the word seer does not occur before this time; but often occurs afterwards down through the prophets, for more than three hundred years. See Amo 7:12; Mic 3:7.

All prophets, false and true, profess to see God; see the case of Balaam, Num 24:4, Num 24:16, and Jer 14:14. All diviners, in their enthusiastic flights, boasted that they had those things exhibited to their sight which should come to pass. There is a remarkable account in Virgil which may serve as a specimen of the whole; the Sibyl professes to be a seer: - - *Bella, horrida bella,*

Et Tyberim molto spumantem sanguine

Cerno. Aen. lib. vi., ver. 86.

Wars, horrid wars, I View; a field of blood;

And Tyber rolling with a purple flood.

I think the 9th verse comes more naturally in after the 11th.

1SAMUEL 9: 10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said. Come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

1SAMUEL 9: 11 As they went up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

Verse 11

Young maidens going out to draw water - So far is it from being true, that young women were always kept closely shut up at home, that we find them often in the field, drawing and carrying water, as here.

1SAMUEL 9: 12 They answered them, and said, "He is. Behold, he is before you. Hurry now, for he has come today into the city; for the people have a sacrifice today in the high place.

Verse 12

He came to - day to the city - Though Samuel lived chiefly in Ramah, yet he had a dwelling in the country, at a place called Naioth, where it is probable there was a school of the prophets. See 1Sam 19:18-24.

A sacrifice of the people - A great feast. The animals used were first sacrificed to the Lord; that is, their blood was poured out before him; and then all the people fed on the flesh. By high place probably Samuel's altar is alone meant; which no doubt was raised on an eminence.

1SAMUEL 9: 13 As soon as you have come into the city, you shall immediately find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat; for the people will not eat until he come, because he blesses the sacrifice. Afterwards those who are invited eat. Now therefore go up; for at this time you shall find him."

Verse 13

He doth bless the sacrifice - He alone can perform the religious rites which are used on this occasion.

Afterwards they eat that be bidden - Among the Arabs, often a large feast is made of sacrificed camels, etc., and then the people of the vicinity are invited to come and partake of the sacrifice. This is the custom to which allusion is made here.

1SAMUEL 9: 14 They went up to the city. As they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out toward them, to go up to the high place.

Verse 14

Come out against them - Met them.

1SAMUEL 9: 15 Now the LORD had revealed to Samuel a day before Saul came, saying,

Verse 15

Now the Lord had told Samuel - How this communication was made, we cannot tell.

1SAMUEL 9: 16 “Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked on my people, because their cry has come to me.”

Verse 16

Thou shalt anoint him to be captain - Not to be king, but to be **Τῆγν** nagid or captain of the Lord's host. But in ancient times no king was esteemed who was not an able warrior. Plutarch informs us that Alexander the Great esteemed the following verse the most correct, as to its sentiment, of any in the whole Iliad of Homer: - Ουτος γ' Ατρειδης ευρυκρειων Αγαμεμνων, Αμφοτερον βασιλευς τ' αγαθος, κρατερος τ' αιχμητης. "The king of kings, Atrides, you survey;

Great in the war, and great in acts of sway."

Pope.

1SAMUEL 9: 17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, “Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! this same shall have authority over my people.”

Verse 17

Behold the man whom I spake to thee of - What an intimate communion must Samuel have held with his God! A constant familiarity seems to have existed between them.

1SAMUEL 9: 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, “Please tell me where the seer’s house is.”

1SAMUEL 9: 19 Samuel answered Saul, and said, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. In the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is in your heart.

Verse 19

I am the seer - This declaration would prepare Saul for the communications afterwards made.

1SAMUEL 9: 20 As for your donkeys who were lost three days ago, don’t set your mind on them; for they are found. For whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you, and for all your father’s house?”

Verse 20

As for thine asses - Thus he shows him that he knew what was in his heart, God having previously revealed these things to Samuel.

And on whom is all the desire of Israel? - Saul understood this as implying that he was chosen to be king.

1SAMUEL 9: 21 Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me like this?"

Verse 21

Am not I a Benjamite - This speech of Saul is exceedingly modest; he was now becomingly humble; but who can bear elevation and prosperity? The tribe of Benjamin had not yet recovered its strength, after the ruinous war it had with the other tribes, Judges 20:29-46.

1SAMUEL 9: 22 Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest room, and made them sit in the best place among those who were invited, who were about thirty persons.

Verse 22

Brought them into the parlour - It might as well be called kitchen; it was the place where they sat down to feast.

1SAMUEL 9: 23 Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'"

Verse 23

Said unto the cook - טבבך tabbach, here rendered cook; the singular of טבבחות tabbachoth, female cooks, 1Sam 8:13, from the root טבבח, to slay or butcher. Probably the butcher is here meant.

1SAMUEL 9: 24 The cook took up the thigh, and that which was on it, and set it before Saul. Samuel said, "Behold, that which has been reserved! Set it before yourself and eat; because for the appointed time has it been kept for you, for I said, 'I have invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

Verse 24

The shoulder, and that which was upon it - Probably the shoulder was covered with a part of the caul, that it might be the better roasted. The Targum has it the shoulder and its thigh; not only the shoulder merely, but the fore-leg bone to the knee; perhaps the whole fore-quarter. Why was the shoulder set before Saul? Not because it was the best part, but because it was an emblem of the government to which he was now called. See Isa 9:6 : And the government shall be upon his Shoulder.

1SAMUEL 9: 25 When they had come down from the high place into the city, he talked with Saul on the housetop.

Verse 25

Upon the top of the house - All the houses in the East were flat-roofed; on these people walked, talked, and frequently slept, for the sake of fresh and cooling air.

1SAMUEL 9: 26 They arose early: and about daybreak, Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

Verse 26

Called Saul to the top of the house - Saul had no doubt slept there all night; and now, it being the break of day, "Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away." There was no calling him to the house-top a second time he was sleeping there, and Samuel called him up.

1SAMUEL 9: 27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant pass on before us" (and he passed on), "but stand still first, that I may cause you to hear the word of God."

Verse 27

As they were going down - So it appears that Saul arose immediately, and Samuel accompanied him out of the town, and sent the servant on that he might show Saul the word, the counsel or design, of the Lord. What this was we shall see in the following chapter, 1 Samuel 10 (note).

1SAMUEL 10: 1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it on his head, and kissed him, and said, "Isn't it that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his inheritance?"

Samuel anoints Saul captain of the Lord's inheritance, 1Sam 10:1. Instructs him concerning his return home, whom he should meet, and what he should do, 1Sam 10:2-8. Saul meets a company of prophets, the Spirit of the Lord comes on him, and he prophesies among them, 1Sam 10:9-13. He meets his uncle, and converses with him, 1Sam 10:14-16. Samuel calls the people together to Mizpeh, and upbraids them for having rejected the Lord as their king, 1Sam 10:17-19. Lots are cast

to find out the person proper to be appointed king; Saul is chosen, 1Sam 10:20-24. Samuel shows the manner of the king, and writes it in a book, 1Sam 10:25. Saul goes to Gibeah; and certain persons refuse to acknowledge him as king, 1Sam 10:26, 1Sam 10:27.

Verse 1

Took a vial of oil - The reasons of this rite the reader will find largely stated in the note on Exo 29:7. The anointing mentioned here took place in the open field. See the preceding chapter, 1Sam 9:26-27 (note). How simple was the ancient ceremony of consecrating a king! A prophet or priest poured oil upon his head, and kissed him; and said, Thus the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance. This was the whole of the ceremony. Even in this anointing, Saul is not acknowledged as king, but simply נָגִיד *nagid*, a captain - one who goes before and leads the people.

1SAMUEL 10: 2 When you have departed from me today, then you shall find two men by Rachel's tomb, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will tell you, 'The donkeys which you went to seek have been found; and behold, your father has stopped caring about the donkeys, and is anxious for you, saying, "What shall I do for my son?"'

Verse 2

Rachel's sepulcher - This was nigh to Bethlehem. See Gen 35:19.

At Zelzah - If this be the name of a place, nothing is known of it.

The Hebrew בצלצח *betseltsach* is translated by the Septuagint ἀλλομενους μεγαλα, dancing greatly: now this may refer to the joy they felt and expressed on finding the asses, or it may refer to those religious exultations, or playing on instruments of music, mentioned in the succeeding verses.

1SAMUEL 10: 3 "Then you shall go on forward from there, and you shall come to the oak of Tabor; and three men shall meet you there going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

Verse 3

Three men going up to God to Bethel - Jacob's altar was probably there still, Gen 28:19. However this might be, it was still considered, as its name implies, the house of God; and to it they were now going, to offer sacrifice.

The three kids were for sacrifice; the three loaves of bread to be offered probably as a thank-offering; and the bottle or skin full of wine, for a libation. When the blood was poured out before the Lord, then they feasted on the flesh and on the bread; and probably had a sufficiency of the wine left for their own drinking.

1SAMUEL 10: 4 and they will greet you, and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive of their hand.

 Verse 4

And they will salute thee - וְשָׂאֲלוּ לְךָ לְשָׁלוֹם veshaalū lecha leshalom, "And they will inquire of thee concerning peace," i.e., welfare. In the East, if this salutation be given, then the person or persons giving it may be reckoned friends; if the others return it, then there is friendship on both sides. Salaam alicum, Peace to you! is the mode of compellation: Alicum essalaam, To you be peace! is the return. If you give the former and receive not the latter, you may expect hostility. The meaning of the prophet is, When you come to the plain of Tabor, ye shall meet three men; you need not be afraid of them, for they are friends; and they will show this friendship, not only by bidding you good speed, but by giving you two loaves of bread, a provision which you will need for the remaining part of your journey.

1SAMUEL 10: 5 "After that you shall come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall happen, when you have come there to the city, that you shall meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tambourine, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying:

Verse 5

The hill of God - The Targum says, "The hill on which the ark of the Lord was. Calmet supposes it to be a height near Gibeah.

The garrison of the Philistines - Probably they kept a watch on the top of this hill, with a company of soldiers to keep the country in check.

A company of prophets - A company of scribes, says the Targum. Probably the scholars of the prophets; for the prophets seem to have been the only accredited teachers, at particular times, in Israel; and at this time there does not appear to have been any other prophet besides Samuel in this quarter. Probably the teacher of this school was not an inspired man, but one acting under the direction of Samuel. Mr. Harmer thinks that the following custom among the Mohammedans greatly illustrates this obscure place: "When the children have gone through the Koran, their relations borrow a fine horse and furniture, and carry them about the town in procession, with the book in their hand, the rest of their companions following, and all sorts of music of the country going before. Dr. Shaw, in p. 195, mentions the same custom; adding the acclamations of their school-fellows, but taking no notice of the music. We have no reason, however, to doubt the fact on account of the doctor's silence; especially as it relates to another part of Barbary, and is given us by those who resided some years in that country. The doctor makes no use of this circumstance relating to the education of youth in Barbary; but the account of the procession above given seems to be a lively comment on that ancient Jewish custom mentioned in these verses. That the word prophet often signifies sons or scholars of the prophets, and that prophesying often implies singing, has been already remarked; but no author that I know of has given any account of the nature of this procession, or its design. We are sometimes told that high places were used for sacrifices; and in one case music, it is certain, played before them when they went up to worship, Isa 30:29. But did they not also return from sacrifice with it? We are told that music was used by the prophets to calm and compose them, and to invite the Divine influences; which is indeed very true. But is it to the purpose? Did they go forth in this manner from their college into the noise and interruptions of the

world, to call down the prophetic impulse? But if we consider them as a company of the sons of the prophets, going in procession with songs of praise and music playing before them, and recollect that it is usual in this day for young scholars to go in procession with acclamations and music, the whole mystery seems to be unravelled. To which may be added, that Saul was to meet them, and find himself turned into another man; into a man, perhaps, who is instantaneously made as knowing in the law of God as the youth to whom they were doing the above honors, or any of his convoy; which acquaintance with the law of God was very necessary for one who was to judge among his brethren as their king. For this reason the Jewish kings were to write out a copy of the law of God, and read it continually, that they might be perfect masters of it, Deu 17:18, Deu 17:20, which accomplishment some youth had gained whom Saul met with, and who was honored with the solemnity the sacred historian speaks of, if the customs of South Barbary may be supposed to be explanatory of those of Judea."

On the word prophet, and the general account given here, I shall introduce the following illustrations from another work: - "The word prophet generally conveys the idea of a person so far acquainted with futurity as to discern some purpose of the Divine Being relative to his government of the natural and moral world, but which is not sufficiently matured by the economy of Providence to make, as yet, its public appearance among men, and to prophesy is usually understood to imply the foretelling such an event, the time of its appearance, and the place of its operation, with some preceding and subsequent circumstances. But that this was the original and only meaning of the word prophet or prophesy, is very far from being clear. The first place the word occurs in is Gen 20:7, where the Lord says of Abraham to Abimelech, He is a prophet, (נביא הוא nabi hu), and will pray (ויתפלל veyith-pallel, will make earnest intercession) for thee. In the common acceptation of the word it is certain Abraham was no prophet; but here it seems to signify a man well acquainted with the Supreme Being, capable of teaching others in Divine things, and especially a man of prayer - one who had great influence with the God he worshipped, and whose intercessions were available in the behalf of others. And in this sense the original word נביא nabi is used in several places in the Old Testament. "It was through inattention to this meaning of the word, which appears to me to be the true, original, and ideal one, that all the commentators and critics that I have met with have been so sadly puzzled with that part of the history of Saul which is related 1Sam 10:9-13; 1Sam 19:20-24. In these passages the sacred historian represents Saul, who was neither a prophet nor the son of one, associating with the prophets, and prophesying among them, to which he was led by the Spirit of the Lord which came upon him. "That this can mean no more here than prayer and supplication to God, accompanied probably with edifying hymns of praise and thanksgiving, (for they had instruments of music, 1Sam 10:5), needs, in my opinion, little proof. If Saul had prophesied in the common acceptation of the word, it is not likely that we should have been kept absolutely in the dark concerning the subject and design of his predictions, of which, by the way, not one syllable is spoken in the oracles of God. The simple fact seems to have been this: God, who had chosen this man to govern Israel, designed to teach him that the Most High alone is the fountain of power, and that by him only kings could reign so as to execute justice properly, and be his ministers for good to the people. To accomplish this gracious purpose, he gave him another heart (1Sam 10:9)-a disposition totally different from what he had ever before possessed, and taught him to pray. "Coming among the sons of the prophets, on whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, and who were under the instruction of Samuel, (1Sam 19:20), while they worshipped God with music and supplication, Saul also was made a partaker of the same Divine influence, and prophesied, i.e., made prayer and supplication among them. To see one who did not belong to the prophetic school thus incorporated with the prophets, pouring out his soul in prayer and supplication, was an unusual sight, which could not pass unnoticed, especially by those of Saul's acquaintance who probably knew him in times past to have

been as careless and ungodly as themselves, (for it was only now he got that other good Spirit from God, a sufficient proof that he had it not before). These companions of his, being unacquainted with that grace which can in a moment influence and change the heart, would, according to an invariable custom, express their astonishment with a sneer: Is Saul also among the prophets? That is, in modern language, 'Can this man pray or preach? He whose education has been the same as our own, employed in the same secular offices, and formerly companion with us in what he now affects to call folly and sin? Can such a person be among the prophets?' Yes, for God may have given him a new heart; and the Spirit of God, whose inspiration alone can give sound understanding in sacred things, may have come upon him for this very purpose, that he might announce unto you the righteousness of the Lord, and speak unto your ruined souls to edification, and to exhortation, and to comfort. "The history of Elijah and the priests of Baal, mentioned in 1 Kings 18:17-40, throws farther light on this subject. In 1Kgs 18:26 it is said, 'They (the priests of Baal) took a bullock and dressed it, and called on the name of Baal, from morning to noon, saying, O Baal, hear us! And they leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and they prophesied (וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ va'yithnabbeu, and they made supplication) until the time of the evening sacrifice.' From the whole context it is plain that earnest, importunate prayer, is alone what is meant by prophesying in this text. See also 1Cor 14:3 (note). "And as all the prophets of God, whose principal business it was to instruct the people in the way of righteousness, were men of prayer, who were continually interceding with God in behalf of those to whom they ministered, the term נָבִיא nabi became their proper appellative; and thus a part of their office, intercessors for the people, might have given rise to that name by which the Spirit of God thought proper in after times to distinguish those whom he sent, not only to pray for and instruct the people, but also to predict those future events which concerned the punishment of the incorrigible and the comfort and exaltation of his own servants." See a sermon which I have printed on 1Cor 14:3, entitled, "The Christian Prophet and his Work;" and see the note on Gen 20:7.

A psaltery - נֶבֶל nebel. As the word signifies in other places a bottle or flagon, it was probably something like the utricularia tibia or Bag-Pipe. It often occurs both with the Greeks and Romans, and was evidently borrowed from the Hebrews.

A tabret - תֹּפֵיף toph; a sort of drum or cymbal.

A pipe - חָלִיל chalil, from חָלַל chal, to make a hole or opening; a sort of pipe, flute, hautboy, clarionet, or the like.

A harp - כִּנּוֹר kinnor; a stringed instrument similar to our harp, or that on the model of which a harp was formed. On these different instruments I shall have occasion to speak more at large when I come to the Psalms.

1SAMUEL 10: 6 and the Spirit of the LORD will come mightily on you, and you shall prophesy with them, and shall be turned into another man.

1SAMUEL 10: 7 Let it be, when these signs have come to you, that you do as occasion shall serve you; for God is with you.

Verse 7

Thou do as occasion serve thee - After God has shown thee all these signs that thou art under his especial guidance, fear not to undertake any thing that belongs to thy office, for God is with thee.

What a number of circumstances thus precisely foretold! Does not this prove that Samuel was under the continual inspiration of the Almighty?

1SAMUEL 10: 8 "You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: you shall wait seven days, until I come to you, and show you what you shall do."

Verse 8

Seven days shalt thou tarry - I will come to thee within seven days, offer sacrifices, receive directions from the Lord, and deliver them to thee. It is likely that these seven days referred to the time in which Samuel came to Saul to Gilgal, offered sacrifices, and confirmed the kingdom to him, after he had defeated the Ammonites. See 1Sam 11:14, 1Sam 11:15.

1SAMUEL 10: 9 It was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs happened that day.

1SAMUEL 10: 10 When they came there to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came mightily on him, and he prophesied among them.

Verse 10

Behold, a company of prophets - See on 1Sam 10:5 (note), etc.

1SAMUEL 10: 11 When all who knew him before saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, "What is this that has come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

1SAMUEL 10: 12 One of the same place answered, "Who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Verse 12

But who is their father? - The Septuagint, in its principal editions, adds *ou Kεις*; is it not Kish? This makes the sense more complete.

1SAMUEL 10: 13 When he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

Verse 13

He came to the high place - I suppose this to mean the place where Saul's father lived; as it is evident the next verse shows him to be at home.

1SAMUEL 10: 14 Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" He said, "To seek the donkeys. When we saw that they were not found, we came to Samuel."

Verse 14

Saul's uncle - The word $\pi\tau\tau$ dod signifies a beloved one, love, a lover, friend, etc.; and is the same as David. It is supposed to mean uncle here; but I think it means some familiar friend.

1SAMUEL 10: 15 Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

1SAMUEL 10: 16 Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys were found." But concerning the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel spoke, he didn't tell him.

1SAMUEL 10: 17 Samuel called the people together to the LORD to Mizpah;

1SAMUEL 10: 18 and he said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you:'

Verse 18

I brought up Israel out of Egypt - These are similar to the upbraidings in 1Sam 8:7, etc.

1SAMUEL 10: 19 but you have this day rejected your God, who himself saves you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said to him, 'No! Set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."

Verse 19

Present yourselves - by your tribes - It appears that, in order to find out the proper person who should be made their king, they must determine by lot:

1. The tribe.
2. The thousands or grand divisions by families.
3. The smaller divisions by families. And,
4. The individual.

When the lot was cast for the tribe, Benjamin was taken; when for the thousand, the division of Matri was taken; when for the family, the family of Kish was taken; when for the individual, Saul, the son of Kish, was taken.

1SAMUEL 10: 20 So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

1SAMUEL 10: 21 He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found.

Verse 21

When they sought him, he could not be found - Through modesty or fear he had secreted himself.

1SAMUEL 10: 22 Therefore they asked of the LORD further, "Is there yet a man to come here?" The LORD answered, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

Verse 22

The Lord answered - What a continual access to God! and what condescension in his attention to all their requests!

The stuff among which he had secreted himself may mean the carts, baggage, etc., brought by the people to Mizpeh.

1SAMUEL 10: 23 They ran and fetched him there; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

1SAMUEL 10: 24 Samuel said to all the people, "You see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?" All the people shouted, and said, "Let the king live!"

Verse 24

God save the king - There is no such word here; no, nor in the whole Bible; nor is it countenanced by any of the versions. The words which we thus translate here and elsewhere are simply יחי המלך yechi hammelech, "May the king live;" and so all the versions, the Targum excepted, which says, May the king prosper! The French Vive le roi! is a proper version of the Hebrew.

1SAMUEL 10: 25 Then Samuel told the people the regulations of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

Verse 25

The manner of the kingdom - It is the same word as in 1Sam 8:9; and doubtless the same thing is implied as is there related. But possibly there was some kind of compact or covenant between them

and Saul; and this was the thing that was written in a book, and laid up before the Lord, probably near the ark.

1SAMUEL 10: 26 Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the army, whose hearts God had touched.

Verse 26

A band of men - Not a military band, as I imagine, but some secret friends, or companions, who were personally attached to him. Others think that all the men fit to bear arms are intended; but this seems inconsistent with the life that Saul led for some time afterwards; for he appears to have gone into his agricultural concerns, and waited for a call from the Divine providence. See 1Sam 11:5.

1SAMUEL 10: 27 But certain worthless fellows said, "How shall this man save us?" They despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

Verse 27

Brought him no presents - They gave him no proofs that they acknowledged either the Divine appointment or his authority. The Arab chiefs are, to this day, when on a march or excursion of any kind, supplied with every necessary by the free-will offerings or presents of the people in the villages or places where they encamp. Saul was now a public character, and had a right to support from the public. These sons of Belial refused to bear their part; they brought him no presents. He marked it, but at present held his peace; he was as if he were deaf: so says the text. He was prudent, and did not immediately assume all the consequence to which his office entitled him. It is probable, however, that tribute is meant by the word present. The people in general finding they had now a king, took it for granted that they must pay tribute or taxes to him. This was a part of the manner of the king which Samuel had shown them; the great majority had done so, but certain refractory people refused to pay any thing, on the pretense that such a person as Saul could not be a deliverer of Israel. How, say they, shall this man save us?

1SAMUEL 11: 1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh Gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."

Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieges Jabesh-gilead; and proposes to its inhabitants the most degrading conditions of peace, 1Sam 11:1, 1Sam 11:2. They apply to their brethren for help, 1Sam 11:3, 1Sam 11:4. Saul hears of their distress; takes a yoke of oxen, hews them in pieces, and sends them throughout the coasts of Israel, with the threat that all who did not come to his standard should have his cattle served in like manner; in consequence of which he is soon at the head of an

army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, 1Sam 11:5-8. He sends to Jabesh-gilead, and promises help, 1Sam 11:9, 1Sam 11:10. Saul attacks the Ammonites next morning, and gives them a total overthrow, 1Sam 11:11. The people are greatly encouraged, and propose to put to death those who are opposed to Saul's government: but this he prevents, 1Sam 11:12, 1Sam 11:13. Samuel leads the people to Gilgal: they offer sacrifices, and renew the kingdom to Saul, 1Sam 11:14, 1Sam 11:15.

Verse 1

Nahash the Ammonite - In the Vulgate this chapter begins thus: Et factum est quasi post mensem, "And it came to pass about a month after." This addition appears also in the principal copies of the Septuagint; though it is wanting in the Complutensian edition, both in the Greek and Latin, and is not acknowledged by any of the Oriental versions. But it is in Josephus, and probably was inserted from him into some copies of the Septuagint, and thence into the Vulgate. It appears to be of very little authority.

We know little about Nahash; there was a king of this name among the Ammonites in the time of David, 2Sam 10:2, but probably not the same person. Nahash might have been a common name of the Ammonitish kings.

Make a covenant with us - They found they were in no condition to risk a war; and they wish to have peace, and desire to know his conditions.

1SAMUEL 11: 2 Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach on all Israel."

Verse 2

I may thrust out all your right eyes - This cruel condition would serve at once as a badge of their slavery, and a means of incapacitating them from being effective warriors. Theodore observes, "He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye; he therefore who plucks out that right eye makes men useless in war." Josephus gives the same reason.

1SAMUEL 11: 3 The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days, that we may send messengers to all the borders of Israel; and then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you."

Verse 3

Give us seven days respite - Such promises are frequently made by besieged places: "We will surrender if not relieved in so many days;" and such conditions are generally received by the besiegers.

1SAMUEL 11: 4 Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, and spoke these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

Verse 4

Then came the messengers to Gibeah - It does not appear that the people of Jabesh-gilead knew any thing of Saul's appointment to the kingdom, for the message is not directed to him but to the people.

The people lifted up their voices and wept - They saw no hope of deliverance, and they expected that their reproach would be laid on all Israel.

1SAMUEL 11: 5 Behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, "What ails the people that they weep?" They told him the words of the men of Jabesh.

Verse 5

Saul came after the herd - He had been bred up to an agricultural life, and after his consecration he returned to it, waiting for a call of Divine providence, which he considered he had now received in the message from Jabesh-gilead.

It has often been remarked, that mighty kings and accomplished generals have been chosen from among those who were engaged in agricultural concerns. In these observations one fact is lost sight of, viz., that in ancient times agriculture was the only employment. Trade and commerce were scarcely known; therefore all descriptions of official dignities must be chosen out of this class, there being no other to choose them from. We need not wonder at these words of the poet: -

Jura dabat populis posito modo consul aratro; Pascebatque suas ipse senator oves. "The consul, having now laid aside his plough, gives laws to the people; And the senator himself feeds his own sheep."

Ovid, *Fast.* lib. i., v. 204-207.

1SAMUEL 11: 6 The Spirit of God came mightily on Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly.

Verse 6

The Spirit of God came upon Saul - He felt himself strongly excited to attempt the relief of his brethren.

And his anger was kindled greatly - I believe this means no more than that his courage was greatly excited, he felt himself strong for fight, and confident of success.

1SAMUEL 11: 7 He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever doesn't come out after Saul and after

Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen." The dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man.

Verse 7

He took a yoke of oxen - The sending the pieces of the oxen was an act similar to that of the Levite, Jdg 19:29 (note), where see the note. And both customs are similar to the sending about of the bloody cross, to call the clans to battle, practiced by the ancient Highlanders of Scotland. See at the end of this chapter, 1Sam 11:15 (note).

1SAMUEL 11: 8 He numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

Verse 8

The children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand - This was a vast army, but the Septuagint make it even more: "All the men of Israel were ἑξακοσιας χιλιαδας, Six Hundred thousand; and the men of Judah ἑβδομηκοντα χιλιαδας, Seventy thousand." Josephus goes yet higher with the number of the Israelites: "He found the number of those whom he had gathered together to be ἑβδομηκοντα μυριαδας Seven Hundred thousand." Those of the tribe of Judah he makes seventy thousand, with the Septuagint. These numbers are not all right; and I suspect even the Hebrew text to be exaggerated, by the mistake or design of some ancient scribe.

1SAMUEL 11: 9 They said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall tell the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance.'" The messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

1SAMUEL 11: 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you shall do with us all that seems good to you."

Verse 10

To-morrow we will come out unto you - They concealed the information they had received of Saul's promised assistance. They did come out unto them; but it was in a different manner to what the Ammonites expected.

1SAMUEL 11: 11 On the next day, Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and struck the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who remained were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

Verse 11

Put the people in three companies - Intending to attack the Ammonites in three different points, and to give his own men more room to act.

In the morning watch - He probably began his march in the evening, passed Jordan in the night, and reached the camp of the Ammonites by daybreak.

That two of them were not left together - This proves that the rout was complete.

1SAMUEL 11: 12 The people said to Samuel, "Who is he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring those men, that we may put them to death!"

Verse 12

Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign - Now, flushed with victory and proud of their leader, they wished to give him a proof of their attachment by slaying, even in cool blood, the persons who were at first averse from his being intrusted with the supreme power! The common soldier is scarcely ever inspired by his victory to acts of magnanimity; he has shed blood - he wishes to shed more!

1SAMUEL 11: 13 Saul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for today the LORD has worked deliverance in Israel."

Verse 13

There shall not a man be put to death - This was as much to Saul's credit as the lately proposed measure was to the discredit of his soldiers.

1SAMUEL 11: 14 Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there."

Verse 14

Renew the kingdom - The unction of Saul, in the first instance, was a very private act; and his being appointed to be king was not known to the people in general. He had now shown himself worthy to command the people; and Samuel takes advantage of this circumstance to gain the general consent in his favor. Josephus says that Saul was anointed a second time at this convocation.

1SAMUEL 11: 15 All the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Verse 15

There they made Saul king - It is likely, from these words, that Saul was anointed a second time; he was now publicly acknowledged, and there was no gainsayer. Thus far Saul acted well, and the kingdom seemed to be confirmed in his hand; but soon through imprudence he lost it.

On the custom referred to in 1Sam 11:7 I am favored with the following observations by a learned correspondent: - "It is considered that the authenticity of records respecting a peculiar people cannot be better illustrated, or the fidelity of the historian more clearly ascertained, than by proving that the manners and customs recorded are in unison with, or bear a resemblance to, the manners and customs of other nations of the same antiquity; or, what may be more correct, in a similar state of improvement; and the records of such rites and customs may possibly acquire an additional mark of authenticity, when the similarity is not so exact as to admit a presumption that the customs of one nation were merely copied from the other. "Sir Walter Scott, in the third canto of the *Lady of the Lake*, describes the rites, incantations, and imprecations, used prior to the fiery cross being circulated, to summon the rough warriors of ancient times to the service of their chief; and in the first note of this canto he alludes to this ancient custom which, in comparatively modern times, has been used in Scotland, and proves that a similar punishment of death or destruction of the houses for disobeying the summons was inflicted by the ancient Scandinavians, as recorded by Olaus Magnus, in his history of the Goths. A custom still more in point than the one cited may be found to have existed in a more ancient nation, whose history is supposed the most, if not the only authentic narrative of deeds of ancient times, and which also records the sanguinary manners of uncultivated nations; see the preceding chapter, 1Sam 10:1-8 (note). The similarity of the custom is to be found in the seventh verse; with the Highlanders a goat was slain; with the Israelites, an ox. The exhibition of a cross stained with the blood of the sacrificed animal was the summons of the former, while part of the animal was the mandate of the latter. Disobedience in the one nation was punished with the death of the parties, and burning of their dwellings; in the other, the punishment was more simple, and more allusive to the sacrificed emblem, the forfeiture or destruction of their oxen. It is not difficult to judge whether the comparison be correct. "The first verses record the sanguinary practices of ancient times, which to many appear merely as the gratification of revenge, or as proofs of victory; yet when it is considered that the right eye must chiefly aid the warrior in aiming at his adversary, whether the weapon be of ancient or modern warfare, here arises a military reason, corroborative of the truth of history, for the deprivation, and in some degree lessening the cruelty of the mutilation, which would be increased if it were caused by revenge or wantonness; though Nahash declares it to be a reproach upon all Israel."

1SAMUEL 12: 1 Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you."

Samuel, grown old, testifies his integrity before the people, which they confirm, 1Sam 12:1-5. He reproves them for their ingratitude and disobedience; and gives a summary of the history of their fathers, 1Sam 12:6-12. He exhorts them to future obedience, and calls for a sign from heaven to confirm his authority, and to show them their disobedience: God sends an extraordinary thunder

and rain, 1Sam 12:13-19. He warns them against idolatry, and exhorts to obedience, and promises to intercede for them, 1Sam 12:20-23. Sums up their duty, and concludes with a solemn warning, 1Sam 12:24, 1Sam 12:25.

Verse 1

And Samuel said - It is very likely that it was at this public meeting Samuel delivered the following address; no other time seems to be given for it, and this is the most proper that could be chosen.

1SAMUEL 12: 2 Now, behold, the king walks before you; and I am old and gray-headed; and behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth to this day.

Verse 2

My sons are with you - It is generally agreed that these words intimate that Samuel had deprived them of their public employ, and reduced them to a level with the common people.

Have walked before you from my childhood - He had been a long, steady, and immaculate servant of the public.

1SAMUEL 12: 3 Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind my eyes therewith? I will restore it to you."

Verse 3

Witness against me - Did ever a minister of state, in any part of the world, resign his office with so much self-consciousness of integrity, backed with the universal approbation of the public? No man was oppressed under his government, no man defrauded! He had accumulated no riches for himself; he had procured none for his friends; nor had one needy dependant been provided for out of the public purse. He might have pardoned his own sons, who had acted improperly, before he quitted the government; but though he was the most tender of parents, he would not, but abandoned them to national justice, with only a tacit solicitation of mercy: Behold, my sons are with you! They have acted improperly; I deprived them of their authority; they are amenable to you for their past conduct; I have walked uprightly and disinterestedly among you; they have not followed my steps: but can you forgive them for their father's sake? As a minister of justice, he abandons them to their fate; as a tender father, he indirectly and modestly pleads for them on the ground of his own services. Had he not acted thus in both these relations, he would have been unworthy of that character which he so deservedly bears.

1SAMUEL 12: 4 They said, "You have not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither have you taken anything of any man's hand."

Verse 4

They said, Thou hast not defrauded - Of what minister or governor can any nation under heaven say such things?

1SAMUEL 12: 5 He said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand."

They said, "He is witness."

1SAMUEL 12: 6 Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

1SAMUEL 12: 7 Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Verse 7

Now therefore stand still - I have arraigned myself before God and you; I now arraign you before God.

1SAMUEL 12: 8 "When Jacob had come into Egypt, and your fathers cried to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in this place.

Verse 8

The Lord sent Moses and Aaron - He shows them that through all their history God had ever raised them up deliverers, when their necessities required such interference.

1SAMUEL 12: 9 "But they forgot the LORD their God; and he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them.

Verse 9

The hand of Sisera - See these transactions in the book of Judges, Jdg 4:2 (note).

1SAMUEL 12: 10 They cried to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you.'

1SAMUEL 12: 11 The LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you lived in safety.

Verse 11

Jerubbaal - That is, Gideon. And Bedan: instead of Bedan, whose name occurs nowhere else as a judge or deliverer of Israel, the Septuagint have Barak; the same reading is found in the Syriac and Arabic. The Targum has Samson. Many commentators are of this opinion; but Calmet thinks that Jair is intended, who judged Israel twenty-two years, Jdg 10:3. Instead of Samuel the Syriac and Arabic have Samson; and it is most natural to suppose that Samuel does not mention himself in this place. St. Paul's authority confirms these alterations: The time would fail me, says he, to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephthah, of David, etc.

1SAMUEL 12: 12 "When you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us;' when the LORD your God was your king.

Verse 12

When ye saw that Nahash - This was not the first time they had demanded a king; see before, 1Sam 8:5. But at the crisis mentioned here they became more importunate; and it was in consequence of this that the kingdom was a second time confirmed to Saul. Saul was elected at Mizpeh, he was confirmed at Gilgal.

1SAMUEL 12: 13 Now therefore see the king whom you have chosen, and whom you have asked for: and behold, the LORD has set a king over you.

1SAMUEL 12: 14 If you will fear the LORD, and serve him, and listen to his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you are followers of the LORD your God.

Verse 14

If ye will fear the Lord, etc. - On condition that ye rebel no more, God will take you and your king under his merciful protection, and he and his kingdom shall be confirmed and continued.

1SAMUEL 12: 15 But if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then will the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.

1SAMUEL 12: 16 "Now therefore stand still and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

Verse 16

This great thing - This unusual occurrence.

1SAMUEL 12: 17 Isn't it wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain; and you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for a king."

Verse 17

Is it not wheat harvest to-day? - That is, This is the time of wheat harvest. According to St. Jerome, who spent several years in the promised land, this harvest commenced about the end of June or beginning of July, in which he says he never saw rain in Judea: *Nunquam enim in fine mensis Junii, sive in mense Julio, in his provinciis, maximeque in Judea, pluvias vidimus.* - Hier. in Amo 4:7; where he refers to this very history. What occurred now hardly ever occurs there but in the winter months.

1SAMUEL 12: 18 So Samuel called to the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

Verse 18

The Lord sent thunder and rain that day - This was totally unusual; and, as it came at the call of Samuel, was a most evident miracle.

Greatly feared the Lord - They dreaded His terrible majesty; and they feared Samuel, perceiving that he had so much power with God.

1SAMUEL 12: 19 All the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we not die; for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask us a king."

Verse 19

Pray for thy servants - that we die not - As they knew they had rebelled against God, they saw that they had every thing to fear from his justice and power.

We have added unto all our sins this evil - It is no sin to have a king; a good king is one of the greatest blessings of God's providence; but it is a sin to put a man in the place of God. Is it not strange that they did not now attempt to repair their fault? They might have done it, but they did not; they acknowledged their sin, but did not put it away. This is the general way of mankind. "God help us, we are all sinners!" is the general language of all people: but though to be a sinner is to be in the most solemn and awful circumstances, yet they are contented to bear the character, heedless of the consequences!

1SAMUEL 12: 20 Samuel said to the people, "Don't be afraid. You have indeed done all this evil; yet don't turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

Verse 20

Ye have done all this wickedness - That is, although ye have done all this wickedness: what was past God would pass by, provided they would be obedient in future.

1SAMUEL 12: 21 Don't turn aside to go after vain things which can't profit nor deliver, for they are vain.

Verse 21

After vain things - That is, idols; which he calls here התהו hattohu, the same expression found Gen 1:2. The earth was תהו tohu; it was waste, empty, and formless: so idols; they are confusion, and things of naught, for an idol is nothing in the world, it is not the representative of any intelligent being.

1SAMUEL 12: 22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people to himself.

Verse 22

The Lord will not forsake his people - He will not as yet cast you off, though you have deserved it. His purpose in preserving them in their land and religion was not yet accomplished. It was not however for their sake that he would not cast them off, but for his own great name's sake. He drew his reasons from himself.

1SAMUEL 12: 23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

Verse 23

God forbid that I should sin - They had earnestly begged him, 1Sam 12:19, to pray to God for them, that they might not die; and he tells them that he should consider himself a sinner, should he cease to be their intercessor.

But I will teach you the good and the right way - I will show you, as long as I am with you, what true religion is; it is the way to happiness and heaven. It is right - there is no crookedness in it; it is good - there is no evil in it.

1SAMUEL 12: 24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he has done for you.

Verse 24

Only fear the Lord - Know, respect, and reverence him.

Serve him - Consider him your Lord and Master; consider yourselves his servants.

In truth - Be ever honest, ever sincere; with all your heart - have every affection engaged in the work of obedience; act not merely from a principle of duty, but also from a pious, affectionate sense of obligation. Act towards your God as an affectionate child should act towards a tender and loving parent.

Consider how great things - Review the history of your fathers, review your own life; see what interpositions of power, mercy, goodness, and truth, God has displayed in your behalf! Has he not daily loaded you with his benefits?

1SAMUEL 12: 25 But if you shall still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your king.”

Verse 25

Ye shall be consumed - If ye do wickedly you shall be destroyed, your kingdom destroyed, and your king destroyed. Here they had set before them life and good, death and evil. Never was a people more fully warned, and never did a people profit less by the warning; and they continue to this day monuments of God's justice and forbearance. Reader, What art thou? Perhaps a similar monument. Consider therefore what great things God has done for thee.

1SAMUEL 13: 1 Saul reigned a year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

Saul chooses a body of troops, 1Sam 13:1, 1Sam 13:2. Jonathan smites a garrison of the Philistines, 1Sam 13:3, 1Sam 13:4. The Philistines gather together an immense host against Israel, 1Sam 13:5. The Israelites are afraid; and some hide themselves in caves, and others flee over Jordan, 1Sam 13:6, 1Sam 13:7. Samuel delaying his coming, Saul offers sacrifice, 1Sam 13:8, 1Sam 13:9. Samuel comes and reproves him, and Saul excuses himself, 1Sam 13:10-12. Samuel shows him that God has rejected him from being captain over his people, 1Sam 13:13, 1Sam 13:14. Samuel departs; and Saul and Jonathan, with six hundred men abide in Gibeah, 1Sam 13:15, 1Sam 13:16. The Philistines send out foraging companies, and waste the land, 1Sam 13:17, 1Sam 13:18. Desolate state of the Israelitish army, having no weapons of defense against their enemies, 1Sam 13:19-23.

Verse 1

Saul reigned one year - A great deal of learned labor has been employed and lost on this verse, to reconcile it with propriety and common sense. I shall not recount the meanings put on it. I think this clause belongs to the preceding chapter, either as a part of the whole, or a chronological note added

afterwards; as if the writer had said, These things (related in 1 Samuel 12:1-25) took place in the first year of Saul's reign: and then he proceeds in the next place to tell us what took place in the second year, the two most remarkable years of Saul's reign. In the first he is appointed, anointed, and twice confirmed, viz., at Mizpeh and at Gilgal; in the second, Israel is brought into the lowest state of degradation by the Philistines, Saul acts unconstitutionally, and is rejected from being king. These things were worthy of an especial chronological note.

And when he had reigned - This should begin the chapter, and be read thus: "And when Saul had reigned two years over Israel, he chose him three thousand," etc. The Septuagint has left the clause out of the text entirely, and begins the chapter thus: "And Saul chose to himself three thousand men out of the men of Israel."

1SAMUEL 13: 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel, of which two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the Mount of Bethel, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

Verse 2

Two thousand were with Saul - Saul, no doubt, meditated the redemption of his country from the Philistines; and having chosen three thousand men, he thought best to divide them into companies, and send one against the Philistine garrison at Michmash, another against that at Beth-el, and the third against that at Gibeah: he perhaps hoped, by surprising these garrisons, to get swords and spears for his men, of which we find, (1Sam 13:22), they were entirely destitute.

1SAMUEL 13: 3 Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba: and the Philistines heard of it. Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

Verse 3

Jonathan smote - He appears to have taken this garrison by surprise, for his men had no arms for a regular battle, or taking the place by storm. This is the first place in which this brave and excellent man appears; a man who bears one of the most amiable characters in the Bible.

Let the Hebrews hear - Probably this means the people who dwelt beyond Jordan, who might very naturally be termed here העברים haibrim, from עבר abar, he passed over; those who are beyond the river Jordan: as Abraham was called עברי Ibri because he dwelt beyond the river Euphrates.

1SAMUEL 13: 4 All Israel heard that Saul had struck the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel was had in abomination with the Philistines. The people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.

Verse 4

The people were called together - The smiting of this garrison was the commencement of a war, and in effect the shaking off of the Philistine yoke; and now the people found that they must stand together, and fight for their lives.

1SAMUEL 13: 5 The Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude: and they came up, and encamped in Michmash, eastward of Beth Aven.

Verse 5

Thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen - There is no proportion here between the chariots and the cavalry. The largest armies ever brought into the field, even by mighty emperors, never were furnished with thirty thousand chariots.

I think שלשים sheloshim, Thirty, is a false reading for שלש shalosh, Three. The Syriac has telotho alpin, and the Arabic thalathato alf, both signifying Three thousand; and this was a fair proportion to the horsemen. This is most likely to be the true reading.

1SAMUEL 13: 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in coverts, and in pits.

Verse 6

The people did hide themselves - They, being few in number, and totally unarmed as to swords and spears, were terrified at the very numerous and well-appointed army of the Philistines. Judea was full of rocks, caves, thickets, etc., where people might shelter themselves from their enemies. While some hid themselves, others fled beyond Jordan: and those who did cleave to Saul followed him trembling.

1SAMUEL 13: 7 Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

1SAMUEL 13: 8 He stayed seven days, according to the time set by Samuel: but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

Verse 8

He tarried seven days according to the set time - Samuel in the beginning had told Saul to wait seven days, and he would come to him, and show him what to do, 1Sam 10:8. What is here said cannot be understood of that appointment, but of a different one. Samuel had at this time promised to come to him within seven days, and he kept his word, for we find him there before the day was ended; but as Saul found he did not come at the beginning of the seventh day, he became impatient,

took the whole business into his own hand, and acted the parts of prophet, priest, and king; and thus he attempted a most essential change in the Israelitish constitution. In it the king, the prophet, and the priest, are in their nature perfectly distinct. What such a rash person might have done, if he had not been deprived of his authority, who can tell? But his conduct on this occasion sufficiently justifies that deprivation. That he was a rash and headstrong man is also proved by his senseless adjuration of the people about food, 1Sam 14:24, and his unfeeling resolution to put the brave Jonathan, his own son, to death, because he had unwittingly acted contrary to this adjuration, 1Sam 14:44. Saul appears to have been a brave and honest man, but he had few of those qualities which are proper for a king, or the governor of a people.

1SAMUEL 13: 9 Saul said, "Bring here the burnt offering to me, and the peace offerings." He offered the burnt offering.

Verse 9

And he offered the burnt-offering - This was most perfectly unconstitutional; he had no authority to offer, or cause to be offered, any of the Lord's sacrifices.

1SAMUEL 13: 10 It came to pass that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

Verse 10

Behold, Samuel came - Samuel was punctual to his appointment; one hour longer of delay would have prevented every evil, and by it no good would have been lost. How often are the effects of precipitation fatal!

1SAMUEL 13: 11 Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you didn't come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves together at Michmash;

Verse 11

And Saul said - Here he offers three excuses for his conduct:

1. The people were fast leaving his standard.
2. Samuel did not come at the time, למועד lemoed; at the very commencement of the time he did not come, but within that time he did come.
3. The Philistines were coming fast upon him.

Saul should have waited out the time; and at all events he should not have gone contrary to the counsel of the Lord.

1SAMUEL 13: 12 therefore I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down on me to Gilgal, and I haven't entreated the favour of the LORD.' I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt offering."

Verse 12

I forced myself - It was with great reluctance that I did what I did. In all this Saul was sincere, but he was rash, and regardless of the precept of the Lord, which precept or command he most evidently had received, 1Sam 13:13. And one part of this precept was, that the Lord should tell him what he should do. Without this information, in an affair under the immediate cognizance of God, he should have taken no step.

1SAMUEL 13: 13 Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you; for now the LORD would have established your kingdom on Israel forever.

1SAMUEL 13: 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for himself a man after his own heart, and the LORD has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept that which the LORD commanded you."

Verse 14

The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart - That this man was David is sufficiently clear from the sequel. But in what sense was he a man after God's own heart? Answer:

1. In his strict attention to the law and worship of God.
 2. In his admitting, in the whole of his conduct, that God was King in Israel, and that he himself was but his vicegerent.
 3. In never attempting to alter any of those laws, or in the least change the Israelitish constitution.
 4. In all his public official conduct he acted according to the Divine mind, and fulfilled the will of his Maker: thus was he a man after God's own heart. In reference to his private or personal moral conduct, the word is never used. This is the sense alone in which the word is used here and elsewhere; and it is unfair and wicked to put another meaning on it in order to ridicule the revelation of God, as certain infidels have done.
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1SAMUEL 13: 15 Samuel arose, and went from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

Verse 15

And Samuel arose - Though David, in the Divine purpose, is appointed to be captain over the people, yet Saul is not to be removed from the government during his life; Samuel therefore accompanies him to Gibeah, to give him the requisite help in this conjuncture.

About six hundred men - The whole of the Israelitish army at this time, and not one sword or spear among them!

1SAMUEL 13: 16 Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people who were present with them, stayed in Geba of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

1SAMUEL 13: 17 The raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned to the way that leads to Ophrah, to the land of Shual;

Verse 17

The spoilers came out - The Philistines, finding that the Israelites durst not hazard a battle, divided their army into three bands, and sent them in three different directions to pillage and destroy the country. Jonathan profited by this circumstance, and attacked the remains of the army at Michmash, as we shall see in the succeeding chapter, 1 Samuel 14 (note).

1SAMUEL 13: 18 and another company turned the way to Beth Horon; and another company turned the way of the border that looks down on the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

1SAMUEL 13: 19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears";

Verse 19

Now there was no smith found - It is very likely that in the former wars the Philistines carried away all the smiths from Israel, as Porsenna did in the peace which he granted to the Romans, not permitting any iron to be forged except for the purposes of agriculture: "Ne ferro, nisi in agricultura, uterentur." The Chaldeans did the same to the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar; they carried away all the artificers, 2Kgs 24:14; Jer 24:1; Jer 29:2. And in the same manner did Cyrus treat the Lydians, Herod. lib. i., c. 145. See several examples in Calmet.

1SAMUEL 13: 20 but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his ploughshare, mattock, axe, and sickle;

Verse 20

But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines - We find from this that they did not grant them as much as Porsenna did to the Romans; he permitted the people to manufacture the implements of husbandry.

1SAMUEL 13: 21 yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the ploughshares, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to set the goads.

Verse 21

Yet they had a file - The Hebrew פצירה petsirah, from פצר patsar, to rub hard, is translated very differently by the versions and by critics. Our translation may be as likely as any: they permitted them the use of files, (I believe the word means grindstone), to restore the blunted edges of their tridents, axes, and goads.

1SAMUEL 13: 22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

Verse 22

In the day of battle - these was neither sword nor spear - But if the Israelites enjoyed such profound peace and undisturbed dominion under Samuel, how is it that they were totally destitute of arms, a state which argues the lowest circumstances of oppression and vassalage? In answer to this we may observe, that the bow and the sling were the principal arms of the Israelites; for these they needed no smith: the most barbarous nations, who have never seen iron, have nevertheless bows and arrows; the arrow heads generally made of flint. Arrows of this kind are found among the inhabitants of the South Sea islands; and even axes, and different implements of war, all made of stone, cut and polished by stone, are frequent among them. The arms of the aboriginal Irish have been of this kind. I have frequently seen heads of axes and arrows of stone, which have been dug up out of the ground, formed with considerable taste and elegance. The former the common people term thunderbolts; the latter, elf-stones. Several of these from Ireland, from Zetland, and from the South Sea islands, are now before me.

Now it is possible that the Israelites had still bows and arrows: these they could have without the smith; and it is as likely that they had slings, and for these they needed none. But then these were missiles; if they came into close fight, they would avail them nothing: for attacks of this kind they would require swords and spears; of these none were found but with Saul and Jonathan.

We see, in this chapter, Israel brought to as low a state as they were under Eli; when they were totally discomfited, their priests slain, their ark taken, and the judge dead. After that, they rose by the strong hand of God; and in this way they are now to rise, principally by means of David, whose history will soon commence.

1SAMUEL 13: 23 The garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

1SAMUEL 14: 1 Now it fell on a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armour, "Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side." But he didn't tell his father.

Jonathan and his armor-bearer purpose to attack a garrison of the Philistines, 1Sam 14:1. Saul and his army, with Ahiah the priest, tarry in Gibeah, 1Sam 14:2, 1Sam 14:3. Jonathan plans his attack of the Philistine garrison, 1Sam 14:4-10. He and his armor-bearer climb over a rock: attack and rout the garrison, 1Sam 14:11-15. Saul and his company, seeing confusion on the Philistine host, come out against them; as did the men who had hidden themselves; and the Philistines are defeated, 1Sam 14:16-23. Saul lays every man under a curse who shall eat food until the evening; in consequence of which the people are sorely distressed, 1Sam 14:24-26. Jonathan, not hearing the adjuration, eats a little honey, which he found on the ground, 1Sam 14:27-30. The Philistines being defeated, the people seize on the spoil, and begin to eat flesh without previously bleeding the animals, which Saul endeavors to prevent, 1Sam 14:31-34. He builds an altar there, 1Sam 14:35. Inquires of the Lord if he may pursue the Philistines by night, but receives no answer, 1Sam 14:36, 1Sam 14:37. Attributes this to some sin committed by some unknown person: makes inquiry by lot; and finds that Jonathan had tasted the honey, on which he purposes to put him to death, 1Sam 14:38-44. The people interpose, and rescue Jonathan, 1Sam 14:45. Saul fights against the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, 1Sam 14:46-48. An account of the family of Saul, 1Sam 14:49-52.

Verse 1

Come, and let us go over - This action of Jonathan was totally contrary to the laws of war; no military operation should be undertaken without the knowledge and command of the general. But it is likely that he was led to this by a Divine influence.

The armor-bearer is the origin of what we call esquire, from escu, old French, a shield; armiger is the Latin, from arma, weapons, and gero, I bear. In the times of chivalry, the armiger, or esquire, was the servant of the knight who went after him, and carried his lance, shield, etc. It is now (strange to tell!) a title of honor.

1SAMUEL 14: 2 Saul stayed in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people who were with him were about six hundred men;

Verse 2

Under a pomegranate tree - Under Rimmon, which not only signifies a pomegranate tree, but also a strong rock, in which six hundred Benjamites took shelter, Jdg 20:45. Probably it was in this very rock that Saul and his six hundred men now lay hidden.

1SAMUEL 14: 3 and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. The people didn't know that Jonathan was gone.

Verse 3

Ahiah, the son of Ahitub - Phinehas, son of Eli the high priests had two sons, Ahitub and I-chabod; the latter was born when the ark was taken, and his mother died immediately after. Ahiah is also called Ahimelech, 1Sam 22:9.

Wearing an ephod - That is, performing the functions of the high priest. This man does not appear to have been with Saul when he offered the sacrifices, 1Sam 13:9, etc.

1SAMUEL 14: 4 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

Verse 4

The name of the one was Bozez - Slippery; and the name of the other Seneh, treading down. - Targum.

1SAMUEL 14: 5 The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

1SAMUEL 14: 6 Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armour, "Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us; for there is no restraint on the LORD to save by many or by few."

Verse 6

Let us go over - Moved, doubtless, by a Divine impulse.

There is no restraint to the Lord - This is a fine sentiment; and where there is a promise of defense and support, the weakest, in the face of the strongest enemy, may rely on it with the utmost confidence.

1SAMUEL 14: 7 His armour bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Turn and, behold, I am with you according to your heart."

Verse 7

Behold, I am with thee - I shall accompany thee whithersoever thou goest, and share all thy dangers.

1SAMUEL 14: 8 Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will pass over to the men, and we will reveal ourselves to them.

1SAMUEL 14: 9 If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you!' then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up to them.

Verse 9

If they say thus unto us - Jonathan had no doubt asked this as a sign from God; exactly as Eliezer the servant of Abraham did, Gen 24:12.

1SAMUEL 14: 10 But if they say this, 'Come up to us!' then we will go up; for the LORD has delivered them into our hand. This shall be the sign to us."

1SAMUEL 14: 11 Both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, "Behold, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they had hidden themselves!"

1SAMUEL 14: 12 The men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour bearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something!"

Jonathan said to his armour bearer, "Come up after me; for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

Verse 12

Come up to us, and we will show you a thing - This was the favorable sign which Jonathan had requested. The Philistines seem to have meant, Come, and we will show you how well fortified we are, and how able to quell all the attacks of your countrymen.

1SAMUEL 14: 13 Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armour bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour bearer killed them after him.

Verse 13

Jonathan climbed up - It seems he had a part of the rock still to get over. When he got over he began to slay the guards, which were about twenty in number, these were of a sort of outpost or advanced guard to the garrison.

Slew after him - Jonathan knocked them down, and the armor-bearer despatched them. This seems to be the meaning.

1SAMUEL 14: 14 That first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

Verse 14

A half acre of land - The ancients measured land by the quantum which a yoke of oxen could plough in a day. The original is obscure, and is variously understood. It is probably a proverbial expression for a very small space.

1SAMUEL 14: 15 There was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and the raiders, they also trembled; and the earth quaked: so there was an exceeding great trembling.

Verse 15

There was trembling in the host - They were terrified and panic-struck; the people in general round about, those in the garrison, the spoilers, and the whole country, were struck with terror; the commotion was universal and most extraordinary. The trembling of the earth is probably not to be taken literally, but as a metaphor for a great commotion in the country, though God might have interposed in an extraordinary manner, and produced a real earthquake; but their being panic-struck was sufficient to produce all the requisite confusion and dismay.

1SAMUEL 14: 16 The watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and behold, the multitude melted away, and scattered.

Verse 16

The watchmen of Saul - Those who were sent out as scouts to observe the motions of the army.

Melted away - There was no order in the Philistine camp, and the people were dispersing in all directions. The Vulgate has, *Et ecce multitudo prostrata*, "And behold the multitude were prostrate;" many lay dead upon the field, partly by the sword of Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and partly by the swords of each other, 1Sam 14:20.

1SAMUEL 14: 17 Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count now, and see who is missing from us." When they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armour bearer were not there.

Verse 17

Number now - Saul perceived that the Philistines were routed, but could not tell by what means; supposing that it must be by some of his own troops, he called a muster to see who and how many were absent.

1SAMUEL 14: 18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was with the children of Israel at that time.

Verse 18

Bring hither the ark of God - He wished to inquire what use he should make of the present favorable circumstances, and to proceed in the business as God should direct.

1SAMUEL 14: 19 While Saul talked to the priest, the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand!"

Verse 19

While Saul talked unto the priest - Before he had made an end of consulting him, the increasing noise of the panic-struck Philistines called his attention; and finding there was no time to lose, he immediately collected his men and fell on them.

1SAMUEL 14: 20 Saul and all the people who were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle: and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow: a very great confusion.

1SAMUEL 14: 21 Now the Hebrews who were with the Philistines as before, and who went up with them into the camp, from all around, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

Verse 21

The Hebrews that were with the Philistines - We may understand such as they held in bondage, or who were their servants. Instead of Hebrews the Septuagint read, οἱ δούλοι, the slaves; from which it is evident that, instead of עִבְרִים Ibrim, Hebrews, they found in their text עֲבָדִים abadim, servants. But this reading is not countenanced by any other version, nor by any MS. yet discovered.

1SAMUEL 14: 22 Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

Verse 22

The men - which had hid themselves - See 1Sam 13:6.

The Vulgate and the Septuagint add here, And there were with Saul about ten thousand men; but this is supported by no other authority.

1SAMUEL 14: 23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over by Beth Aven.

1SAMUEL 14: 24 The men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul had adjured the people, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until it is evening, and I am avenged of my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

Verse 24

Saul had adjured the people - He was afraid, if they waited to refresh themselves, the Philistines would escape out of their hands, and therefore he made the taking any food till sunset a capital crime. This was the very means of defeating his own intention; for as the people were exhausted for want of food, they could not continue the pursuit of their enemies: had it not been for this foolish adjuration, there had been a greater slaughter of the Philistines, 1Sam 14:30.

1SAMUEL 14: 25 All the people came into the forest; and there was honey on the ground.

Verse 25

There was honey upon the ground - There were many wild bees in that country, and Judea is expressly said to be a land flowing with milk and honey.

1SAMUEL 14: 26 When the people had come to the forest, behold, the honey dropped: but no man put his hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath.

Verse 26

The honey dropped - It seems to have dropped from the trees on the ground. Honey dews, as they are called, are not uncommon in most countries; and this appears to have been something of this kind. I have seen honey in considerable quantity on the trees and long grass in the fields, and have often eaten of it.

1SAMUEL 14: 27 But Jonathan didn't hear when his father commanded the people with the oath: therefore he put out the end of the rod who was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

Verse 27

His eyes were enlightened - Hunger and fatigue affect and dim the sight; on taking food, this affection is immediately removed. This most people know to be a fact.

1SAMUEL 14: 28 Then one of the people answered, and said, "Your father directly commanded the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day.'" The people were faint.

1SAMUEL 14: 29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Please look how my eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

1SAMUEL 14: 30 How much more, if perhaps the people had eaten freely today of the plunder of their enemies which they found? For now has there been no great slaughter among the Philistines."

1SAMUEL 14: 31 They struck of the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. The people were very faint;

Verse 31

They smote the Philistines - from Mishmash to Aijalon - The distance Calmet states to be three or four leagues.

1SAMUEL 14: 32 and the people flew on the plunder, and took sheep, and cattle, and calves, and killed them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood.

Verse 32

The people did eat them with the blood - They were faint through hunger, and did not take time to bleed the cattle on which they fed. This was another bad effect of Saul's rash adjuration.

1SAMUEL 14: 33 Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD, in that they eat meat with the blood."

He said, "You have dealt treacherously. Roll a large stone to me this day!"

Verse 33

Roll a great stone unto me - Probably this means that they should set up an altar to the Lord, on which the animals might be properly slain, and the blood poured out upon the earth; and a large stone was erected for an altar.

1SAMUEL 14: 34 Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and tell them, 'Bring me here every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and kill them here, and eat; and don't sin against the LORD in eating meat with the blood.'" All the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and killed them there.

1SAMUEL 14: 35 Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

Verse 35

Saul built an altar - And this we are informed was the first he had built; Samuel, as prophet had hitherto erected the altars, and Saul thought he had sufficient authority to erect one himself without the prophet, as he once offered sacrifice without him.

1SAMUEL 14: 36 Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and take plunder among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." They said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near here to God."

Verse 36

Then said the priest - It is evident that Ahiah doubted the propriety of pursuing the Philistines that night; and as a reverse of fortune might be ruinous after such a victory, he wished to have specific directions from the Lord.

1SAMUEL 14: 37 Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But he didn't answer him that day.

Verse 37

He answered him not that day - Why was this answer delayed? Surely Jonathan's eating the honey was no sin. This could not have excited God's displeasure. And yet the lot found out Jonathan! But did this argue that he had incurred guilt in the sight of God? I answer: It did not; for Jonathan was delivered, by the authority of the people, from his father's rash curse; no propitiation is offered for his supposed transgression to induce God to pardon it; nor do we find any displeasure of God manifested on the occasion. See below.

1SAMUEL 14: 38 Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people; and know and see in which this sin has been this day.

1SAMUEL 14: 39 For, as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.

1SAMUEL 14: 40 Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

1SAMUEL 14: 41 Therefore Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Show the right." Jonathan and Saul were chosen; but the people escaped.

Verse 41

Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot - Both the Vulgate and Septuagint add much to this verse: And Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, Lord God of Israel, give judgment. Why is it that thou hast not answered thy servant to-day? If the iniquity be in me, or Jonathan my son, make it manifest. Or if this iniquity be in thy people, give sanctification.

1SAMUEL 14: 42 Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." Jonathan was selected.

Verse 42

And Jonathan was taken - The object of the inquiry most evidently was, "Who has gone contrary to the king's adjuration today?" The answer to that must be Jonathan. But was this a proof of the Divine displeasure against the man? By no means: the holy oracle told the truth, but neither that oracle nor the God who gave it fixed any blame upon Jonathan, and his own conscience acquits him. He seeks not pardon from God, because he is conscious he had not transgressed. But why did not God answer the priest that day? Because he did not think it proper to send the people by night in pursuit of the vanquished Philistines. Saul's motive was perfectly vindictive: Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them unto the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them; that is, Let us burn, waste, destroy, and slay all before us! Was it right to indulge a disposition of this kind, which would have led to the destruction of many innocent country people, and of many Israelites who resided among the Philistines? Besides, was there not a most manifest reason in the people why God could not be among them? Multitudes of them were defiled in a very solemn manner; they had eaten the flesh with the blood; and however sacrifices might be offered to atone for this transgression of the law, they must continue unclean till the evening. Here were reasons enough why God would not go on with the people for that night.

1SAMUEL 14: 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done!" Jonathan told him, and said, "I certainly did taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand; and behold, I must die."

1SAMUEL 14: 44 Saul said, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

Verse 44

And Saul answered - thou shalt surely die, Jonathan - To save thy rash oath! So must John Baptist's head be taken off at the desire of an impure woman, because a Herod had sworn to give her whatever she might request! Unfeeling brute! However, the king was Judge. But what said the people, who were the Jury?

1SAMUEL 14: 45 The people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he has worked with God this day!" So the people rescued Jonathan, that he didn't die.

Verse 45

And the people said - "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground." Here was a righteous and impartial jury, who brought in a verdict according to the evidence: No man should die

but for a breach of the law of God; but Jonathan hath not broken any law of God; therefore Jonathan should not die. And because he should not, therefore he shall not.

He hath wrought with God this day - God has been commander-in-chief; Jonathan has acted under his directions.

So the people rescued Jonathan - And God testified no displeasure; and perhaps he permitted all this that he might correct Saul's propensity to rashness and precipitancy.

1SAMUEL 14: 46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

1SAMUEL 14: 47 Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and wherever he turned himself, he defeated them.

Verse 47

So Saul took the kingdom - The Targum appears to give the meaning of this expression: "Saul prospered in his government over Israel." And the proofs of his prosperity are immediately subjoined.

Fought against all his enemies - Of the wars which are mentioned here we have no particulars; they must have endured a long time, and have been, at least in general, successful.

1SAMUEL 14: 48 He did valiantly, and struck the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

Verse 48

Smote the Amalekites - This war is mentioned in the following chapter.

1SAMUEL 14: 49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishvi, and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

Verse 49

Now the sons of Saul - We do not find Ishbosheth here. Calmet says it was "because he was too young, and did not go with him to the war, for he mentions only those who were with him." Why then mention his daughters and his wife? Did they go with him to the war?

1SAMUEL 14: 50 and the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

1SAMUEL 14: 51 Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

1SAMUEL 14: 52 There was severe war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him to him.

Verse 52

When Saul saw any strong man - This was very politic. He thus continued to recruit his army with strong and effective men.

1SAMUEL 15: 1 Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you to be king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore listen to the voice of the LORD's words.

Samuel sends Saul to destroy the Amalekites, and all their substance, 1Sam 15:1-3. Saul collects an immense army and comes against their city, 1Sam 15:4, 1Sam 15:5. He desires the Kenites to remove from among the Amalekites, 1Sam 15:6. He smites the Amalekites, and takes their king, Agag, prisoner, and saves the best of the spoil, 1Sam 15:7-9. The Lord is displeased, and sends Samuel to reprove him, 1Sam 15:10, 1Sam 15:11. The conversation between Samuel and Saul, in which the latter endeavors to justify his conduct, 1Sam 15:12-23. He is convinced that he has done wrong, and asks pardon, 1Sam 15:24-31. Samuel causes Agag to be slain; for which he assigns the reasons, 1Sam 15:32-35.

Verse 1

The Lord sent me to anoint thee - This gave him a right to say what immediately follows.

1SAMUEL 15: 2 Thus says the LORD of Armies, 'I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way, when he came up out of Egypt.

Verse 2

I remember that which Amalek did - The Amalekites were a people of Arabia Petraea, who had occupied a tract of country on the frontiers of Egypt and Palestine. They had acted with great cruelty towards the Israelites on their coming out of Egypt. (See Exo 17:8 (note), and the notes there). They came upon them when they were faint and weary, and smote the hindermost of the people - those who were too weak to keep up with the rest. (See Deu 25:18). And God then purposed that Amalek, as a nation, should be blotted out from under heaven; which purpose was now fulfilled by Saul upwards of four hundred years afterwards!

1SAMUEL 15: 3 Now go and strike Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and don't spare them; but kill both man and woman, infant and nursing baby, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

Verse 3

Slay both man and woman - Nothing could justify such an exterminating decree but the absolute authority of God. This was given: all the reasons of it we do not know; but this we know well, The Judge of all the earth doth right. This war was not for plunder, for God commanded that all the property as well as all the people should be destroyed.

1SAMUEL 15: 4 Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

Verse 4

Two hundred thousand - and ten thousand - The Septuagint, in the London Polyglot, have Four Hundred thousand companies of Israel, and Thirty thousand companies of Judah. The Codex Alexandrinus has Ten thousand of each. The Complutensian Polyglot has Two Hundred thousand companies of Israel, and Ten thousand of Judah. And Josephus has Four Hundred thousand of Israel, and Thirty thousand of Judah. All the other versions are the same with the Hebrew text; and there is no difference in the MSS.

1SAMUEL 15: 5 Saul came to the city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

Verse 5

Saul came to a city of Amalek - I believe the original should be translated, and Saul came to the city Amalek; their capital being called by the name of their tribe.

1SAMUEL 15: 6 Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

Verse 6

Said unto the Kenites - The Kenites were an ancient people. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a Kenite. Hobab his son (if the same person be not meant) was guide to the Hebrews through the wilderness. They had a portion of the promised land, near to the city Arad. See Jdg 1:16; and for more particulars concerning them and the Amalekites, see the notes on Num 26:20-21 (note).

1SAMUEL 15: 7 Saul struck the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, that is before Egypt.

Verse 7

From Havilah - to Shur - From Pelusium in Egypt, unto the Red Sea. - Josephus. But Havilah lay eastward from the Red Sea; the Amalekites lay between this and the way to Egypt towards Shur.

1SAMUEL 15: 8 He took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

1SAMUEL 15: 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the cattle, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and wouldn't utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

1SAMUEL 15: 10 Then the LORD's word came to Samuel, saying,

1SAMUEL 15: 11 "It grieves me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments." Samuel was angry; and he cried to the LORD all night.

Verse 11

It repenteth me that I have set up Saul - That is, I placed him on the throne; I intended, if he had been obedient, to have established his kingdom. He has been disobedient; I change my purpose, and the kingdom shall not be established in his family. This is what is meant by God's repenting - changing a purpose according to conditions already laid down or mentally determined.

1SAMUEL 15: 12 Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal."

Verse 12

He set him up a place - Literally, a hand, τ' yad. Some say it was a monument; others, a triumphal arch: probably it was no more than a hand, pointing out the place where Saul had gained the victory. Absalom's pillar is called the hand of Absalom, 2Sam 18:18.

1SAMUEL 15: 13 Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said to him, "You are blessed by the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

1SAMUEL 15: 14 Samuel said, "Then what does this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the cattle which I hear mean?"

1SAMUEL 15: 15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the cattle, to sacrifice to the LORD your God. We have utterly destroyed the rest."

Verse 15

The people spared the best of the sheep - It is very likely that the people did spare the best of the prey; and it is as likely that Saul might have restrained them if he would. That they might not love war, God had interdicted spoil and plunder, so the war was undertaken merely from a sense of duty, without any hope of enriching themselves by it.

1SAMUEL 15: 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stay, and I will tell you what the LORD has said to me last night." He said to him, "Say on."

1SAMUEL 15: 17 Samuel said, "Though you were little in your own sight, weren't you made the head of the tribes of Israel? the LORD anointed you king over Israel;

Verse 17

Little in thine own sight - Who can bear prosperity? Is it not of the Lord's great goodness that the majority of the inhabitants of the earth are in comparative poverty?

1SAMUEL 15: 18 and the LORD sent you on a journey, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

1SAMUEL 15: 19 Why then didn't you obey the voice of the LORD, but took the plunder, and did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

1SAMUEL 15: 20 Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

1SAMUEL 15: 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and cattle, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

Verse 21

To sacrifice unto the Lord - Thus he endeavors to excuse the people. They did not take the spoil in order to enrich themselves by it, but to sacrifice unto the Lord; and did not this motive justify their conduct?

1SAMUEL 15: 22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

 Verse 22

Hath the Lord as great delight, etc. - This was a very proper answer to, and refutation of Saul's excuse. Is not obedience to the will of God the end of all religion, of its rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices?

1SAMUEL 15: 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because you have rejected the LORD's word, he has also rejected you from being king."

Verse 23

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry - This is no translation of those difficult words, **כִּי חַטָּאת קֶסֶם מְרִי וְאוֹן וְתַרְפִּים הַפְצָר** ki chattath kesem meri veaven uthraphim haphstar. It appears to me that the three nouns which occur first in the text refer each to the three last in order. Thus, **חַטָּאת** chattath, Transgression, refers to **אוֹן** aven, Iniquity, which is the principle whence transgression springs. **קֶסֶם** kesem, Divination, refers to **תַּרְפִּים** teraphim, consecrated images or telesms, vulgarly talismans, used in incantations. And **מְרִי** meri, Rebellion, refers evidently to **הַפְצָר** haphstar, Stubbornness, whence rebellion springs. The meaning therefore of this difficult place may be the following: As transgression comes from iniquity, divination from teraphim, and rebellion from stubbornness, so, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. All the versions are different.

1SAMUEL 15: 24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and your words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

Verse 24

I have sinned - because I feared the people - This was the best excuse he could make for himself; but had he feared God more, he need have feared the People less.

1SAMUEL 15: 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD."

Verse 25

Pardon my sin - Literally, bear my sin; take it away; forgive what I have done against thee, and be my intercessor with God, that he may forgive my offense against him; turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

1SAMUEL 15: 26 Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the LORD's word, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

Verse 26

I will not return with thee - I cannot acknowledge thee as king, seeing the Lord hath rejected thee.

1SAMUEL 15: 27 As Samuel turned about to go away, Saul grabbed the skirt of his robe, and it tore.

1SAMUEL 15: 28 Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you.

1SAMUEL 15: 29 Also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent."

Verse 29

The Strength of Israel will not lie - What God has purposed he will bring to pass, for he has all power in the heavens and in the earth; and he will not repent - change his purpose - concerning thee.

We may say it was some extenuation of Saul's fault that the people insisted on preserving the best of the prey; for who could resist the demands of a victorious mob? But his crime was in consenting; had he not, the crime would have been theirs alone.

1SAMUEL 15: 30 Then he said, "I have sinned: yet please honour me now before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and come back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."

1SAMUEL 15: 31 So Samuel went back with Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

1SAMUEL 15: 32 Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites!" Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

Verse 32

Agag came unto him delicately - The Septuagint have τρεμων, trembling; the original, מעדנת, maadannoth, delicacies; probably איש ish, man, understood; a man of delights, a pleasure-taker: the Vulgate, pinguissimus et tremens, "very fat and trembling."

Surely the bitterness of death is past - Almost all the versions render this differently from ours. Surely death is bitter, is their general sense; and this seems to be the true meaning.

1SAMUEL 15: 33 Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless among women!" Samuel cut Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Verse 33

As thy sword hath made women childless - It appears that Agag had forfeited his life by his own personal transgressions, and that his death now was the retribution of his cruelties.

And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces -

1. What Samuel did here he did in his magisterial capacity; and,
2. It is not likely he did it by his own sword, but by that of an executioner. What kings, magistrates, and generals do, in an official way, by their subjects, servants, or soldiers, they are said to do themselves; *qui facit per alterum, facit per se*.

1SAMUEL 15: 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.

1SAMUEL 15: 35 Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Verse 35

And Samuel came no more to see Saul - But we read, 1Sam 19:22-24, that Saul went to see Samuel at Naioth, but this does not affect what is said here. From this time Samuel had no connection with Saul; he never more acknowledged him as king; he mourned and prayed for him, and continued to perform his prophetic functions at Ramah, and at Naioth, superintending the school of the prophets in that place.

1SAMUEL 16: 1 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided a king for myself among his sons."

Samuel is sent from Ramah to Bethlehem, to anoint David, 1Sam 16:1-13. The Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit comes upon him, 1Sam 16:14. His servants exhort him to get a skillful harper to play before him, 1Sam 16:15, 1Sam 16:16. He is pleased with the counsel, and desires them to find such a person, 1Sam 16:17. They recommend David, 1Sam 16:18. He is sent for, comes, plays before Saul, and finds favor in his sight, 1Sam 16:19-23.

Verse 1

Fill thine horn with oil - Horns appear to have been the ancient drinking vessels of all nations; and we may suppose that most persons who had to travel much, always carried one with them, for the purpose of taking up water from the fountains to quench their thirst. Such a horn had Samuel; and on this occasion he was commanded to fill it with oil, for the purpose of consecrating a king over Israel from among the sons of Jesse.

1SAMUEL 16: 2 Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, I have come to sacrifice to the LORD."

Verse 2

Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice - This was strictly true; Samuel did offer a sacrifice; and it does not appear that he could have done the work which God designed, unless he had offered this sacrifice, and called the elders of the people together, and thus collected Jesse's sons. But he did not tell the principal design of his coming; had he done so, it would have produced evil and no good: and though no man, in any circumstances, should ever tell a lie, yet in all circumstances he is not obliged to tell the whole truth, though in every circumstance he must tell nothing but the truth, and in every case so tell the truth that the hearer shall not believe a lie by it.

1SAMUEL 16: 3 Call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. You shall anoint to me him whom I name to you."

Verse 3

Call Jesse to the sacrifice - The common custom was, after the blood of the victim had been poured out to God, and the fat burnt, to feast on the flesh of the sacrifice. This appears to have been the case in all, except in the whole burnt-offering; this was entirely consumed.

1SAMUEL 16: 4 Samuel did that which the LORD spoke, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"

Verse 4

The elders of the town trembled at his coming - They knew he was a prophet of the Lord, and they were afraid that he was now come to denounce some judgments of the Most High against their city.

1SAMUEL 16: 5 He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." He sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

Verse 5

Sanctify yourselves - Change your clothes, and wash your bodies in pure water, and prepare your minds by meditation, reflection, and prayer; that, being in the spirit of sacrifice, ye may offer acceptably to the Lord.

1SAMUEL 16: 6 When they had come, he looked at Eliab, and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."

1SAMUEL 16: 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't look on his face, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for I see not as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Verse 7

Man looketh on the outward appearance - And it is well he should, and confine his looks to that; for when he pretends to sound the heart, he usurps the prerogative of God.

In what way were these communications made from God to Samuel? It must have been by direct inspirations into his heart. But what a state of holy familiarity does this argue between God and the prophet! I believe Moses himself was not more highly favored than Samuel.

1SAMUEL 16: 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

1SAMUEL 16: 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

1SAMUEL 16: 10 Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."

Verse 10

Seven of his sons - This certainly was not done publicly; Samuel, Jesse, and his children, must have been in a private apartment, previously to the public feast on the sacrifice; for Samuel says, 1Sam 16:11, We will not sit down till he (David) come.

1SAMUEL 16: 11 Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your children here?" He said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is keeping the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

1SAMUEL 16: 12 He sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful face, and goodly to look on. The LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."

Verse 12

He was ruddy - I believe the word here means red-haired, he had golden locks. Hair of this kind is ever associated with a delicate skin and florid complexion.

1SAMUEL 16: 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily on David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Verse 13

The Spirit of the Lord came upon David - God qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity.

1SAMUEL 16: 14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Verse 14

The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul - He was thrown into such a state of mind by the judgments of God, as to be deprived of any regal qualities which he before possessed. God seems to have taken what gifts he had, and given them to David; and then the evil spirit came upon Saul; for what God fills not, the devil will.

An evil spirit from the Lord - The evil spirit was either immediately sent from the Lord, or permitted to come. Whether this was a diabolic possession, or a mere mental malady, the learned are not agreed; it seems to have partaken of both. That Saul had fallen into a deep melancholy, there is little doubt; that the devil might work more effectually on such a state of mind, there can be but little question. There is an old proverb, Satan delights to fish in troubled waters; and Saul's situation of mind gave him many advantages.

The theory of Dr. Scheuchzer, in his *Physica Sacra*, on the malady of Saul, is allowed to be very ingenious. It is in substance as follows: Health consists in a moderate tension of the fibres, which permits all the fluids to have an entire freedom of circulation, and to the spirits, that of diffusing themselves through all the limbs; on the contrary, disease consists in tensions of the fibres morbidly weak or morbidly strong. This latter seems to have been the case of Saul; and as the undulations of the air which convey sound communicate themselves to and through the most solid bodies, it is easy to suppose that by the modulations of music all the fibres of his body, which were under the influence of the morbidly increased tension, might be so relaxed as to be brought back into their natural state, and thus permit the re-establishment of a free and gentle circulation of the fluids, and consequently of the animal spirits, and thus induce calmness and tranquillity of mind. I believe this theory to be correct, and I should find no difficulty to amplify and to illustrate the subject. Even a skillful playing upon the harp was one means to bring a disordered state of the nervous and fibrous system into a capacity of affording such uninterrupted tranquillity to the mind as to render it capable of receiving the prophetic influence; see the case of Elisha, 2Kgs 3:14, 2Kgs 3:15. It has been said: - "Music hath charms to sooth the savage breast."

This has been literally proved: a musician was brought to play on his instrument while they were feeding a savage lion in the tower of London; the beast immediately left his food, came towards the grating of his den, and began to move in such a way as to show himself affected by the music. The musician ceased, and the lion returned to his food; he recommenced, and the lion left off his prey,

and was so affected as to seem by his motions to dance with delight. This was repeatedly tried, and the effects were still the same.

1SAMUEL 16: 15 Saul's servants said to him, "See now, an evil spirit from God troubles you.

1SAMUEL 16: 16 Let our lord now command your servants who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skilful player on the harp. It shall happen, when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play with his hand, and you shall be well."

1SAMUEL 16: 17 Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me."

1SAMUEL 16: 18 Then one of the young men answered, and said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skilful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a comely person; and the LORD is with him."

Verse 18

I have seen a son of Jesse - Dr. Warburton supposes the story is anticipated from 1Sam 16:14-23, and that the true chronology of this part of David's life is the following: -

1. David is anointed by Samuel;
2. Carries provisions to his brethren in the army;
3. Fights with and kills Goliath;
4. Is received into the king's court,
5. Contracts a friendship with Jonathan;
6. Incurs Saul's jealousy;
7. Retires to his father's house;
8. Is after some time sent for by Saul to sooth his melancholy with his harp;
9. Again excites Saul's jealousy, who endeavors to smite him with his javelin.

This anticipation between the 14th and 23d verse comes in, in the order of time, between 1Sam 16:9 and 1Sam 16:10, 1Sam 18:9, 1Sam 18:10, where the breach is apparent.

1SAMUEL 16: 19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep."

1SAMUEL 16: 20 Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by David his son to Saul.

Verse 20

Took an ass laden with bread - He must send a present to Saul to introduce his son, and this was probably the best he had. Dr. Warburton pleads still farther on the propriety of his rectification of the chronology in this place. David had at this time vanquished the Philistine, was become a favourite with the people, had excited Saul's jealousy, and retired to shun its effects. In the interim Saul was seized with the disorder in question, and is recommended by his servants to try the effects of music. They were acquainted with David's skill on the harp, and likewise with Saul's bad disposition towards him; the point was delicate, it required to be managed with address, and therefore they recommend David in this artful manner: "As you must have one constantly in attendance, both in court and on your military expeditions; to be always at hand on occasion, the son of Jesse will become both stations well; he will strengthen your camp and adorn your court, for he is a tried soldier and of a graceful presence. You have nothing to fear from his ambition, for you saw with what prudence he went into voluntary banishment when his popularity had incurred your displeasure." Accordingly Saul is prevailed on, David is sent for, and succeeds with his music; this dissipates all former umbrage, and, as one who is ever to be in attendance, he is made Saul's armour-bearer. This sunshine still continued till his great successes awakened Saul's jealousy afresh, and then the lifted javelin was to strike off all obligations. Thus we see what light is thrown upon the whole history by the supposition of an anticipation in the latter part of this chapter; an anticipation the most natural, proper, and necessary, for the purpose of the historian. Thus reasons Bishop Warburton, and with very considerable plausibility, though the intelligent reader may still have his doubts.

1SAMUEL 16: 21 David came to Saul, and stood before him. He loved him greatly; and he became his armour bearer.

1SAMUEL 16: 22 Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me; for he has found favour in my sight."

1SAMUEL 16: 23 When the spirit from God was on Saul, David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Verse 23

The evil spirit from God - The word evil is not in the common Hebrew text, but it is in the Vulgate, Septuagint, Targum, Syriac, and Arabic, and in eight of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., which present the text thus: רוח אלהים רעה ruach Elohim raah, spiritus Domini malus, the evil spirit of God. The Septuagint leave out Θεου, of God, and have πνευμα πονηρον, the evil spirit. The Targum says, The evil spirit from before the Lord; and the Arabic has it. The evil spirit by the permission of God; this is at least the sense.

And the evil spirit departed from him - The Targum says, And the evil spirit descended up from off him. This considers the malady of Saul to be more than a natural disease.

There are several difficulties in this chapter; those of the chronology are pretty well cleared, in the opinion of some, by the observations of Bishop Warburton; but there is still something more to be done to make this point entirely satisfactory. Saul's evil spirit, and the influence of music upon it, are not easily accounted for. I have considered his malady to be of a mixed kind, natural and diabolical; there is too much of apparent nature in it to permit us to believe it was all spiritual, and there is too much of apparent supernatural influence to suffer us to believe that it was all natural.

1SAMUEL 17: 1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle; and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

The Philistines gather together against Israel at Ephes-dammim, and Saul and his men pitch their camp near the valley of Elah, 1Sam 17:1-3. Goliath of Gath, a gigantic man, whose height was six cubits and a span, defies the armies of Israel, and proposes to end all contests by single combat; his armor is described, 1Sam 17:4-11. Saul and his host are greatly dismayed, 1Sam 17:12. David, having been sent by his father with provisions to his brethren in the army, hears the challenge, inquires into the circumstances, thinks it a reproach to Israel that no man can be found to accept the challenge, is brought before Saul, and proposes to undertake the combat, vv. 13-32. Saul objects to his youth and inexperience, 1Sam 17:33. David shows the grounds on which he undertakes it, 1Sam 17:34-37. Saul arms him with his own armor: but David, finding them an encumbrance, puts them off, and takes his staff, his sling, and five stones out of the brook, and goes to meet Goliath, 1Sam 17:38-40. The Philistine draws near, despises, defies, and curses him, 1Sam 17:41-44. David retorts his defiance, 1Sam 17:45-47. They draw near to each other, and David slings a stone, hits Goliath in the forehead, slays him, and cuts off his head with his own sword, 1Sam 17:48-51. The Philistines flee, and are pursued by the Israelites, 1Sam 17:52, 1Sam 17:53. David brings the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, 1Sam 17:54. Conversation between Saul and Abner concerning David, who is in consequence brought before Saul, 1Sam 17:55-58.

Verse 1

Now the Philistines gathered together - Calmet thinks that this war happened eight years after the anointing of David, and ten or twelve years after the war with the Amalekites. We have already seen that there was war between Saul and the Philistines all his days. See 1Sam 14:52.

Shochoh and Azekah - Places which lay to the south of Jerusalem and to the west of Bethlehem; about five leagues from the former. Ephes-dammim was somewhere in the vicinity, but it is not known where. See Calmet.

1SAMUEL 17: 2 Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped in the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

Verse 2

The valley of Elah - Some translate this the turpentine valley, or the valley of the terebinth trees; and others, the valley of oaks. The situation of this valley is well known.

1SAMUEL 17: 3 The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

Verse 3

The Philistines stood on a mountain - These were two eminences or hills, from which they could see and talk with each other.

1SAMUEL 17: 4 There went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

Verse 4

There went out a champion - Our word champion comes from campus, the field; Campio est enim ille qui pugnat in campo, hoc est, in castris, "Champion is he, properly, who fights in the field; i.e., in camps." A man well skilled in arms, strong, brave, and patriotic.

But is this the meaning of the original איש הבנים ish habbenayim, a middle man, the man between two; that is, as here, the man who undertakes to settle the disputes between two armies or nations. So our ancient champions settled disputes between contending parties by what was termed camp fight, hence the campio or champion. The versions know not well what to make of this man. The Vulgate calls him sir spurius, "a bastard;" the Septuagint, ανηρ δυνατος, "a strong or powerful man;" the Targum, גברא מביניהון gabra mibbeyneyhon, "a man from between them;" the Arabic, rujil jibar, "a great or gigantic man;" the Syriac is the same; and Josephus terms him ανηρ παμμεγεθιστατος, "an immensely great man." The Vulgate has given him the notation of spurius or bastard, because it considered the original as expressing a son of two, i.e., a man whose parents are unknown. Among all these I consider our word champion, as explained above, the best and most appropriate to the original terms.

Whose height was six cubits and a span - The word cubit signifies the length from cubitus, the elbow, to the top of the middle finger, which is generally rated at one foot six inches. The span is the distance from the top of the middle finger to the end of the thumb, when extended as far as they can stretch on a plain; this is ordinarily nine inches. Were we sure that these were the measures, and their extent, which are intended in the original words, we could easily ascertain the height of this Philistine; it would then be nine feet nine inches, which is a tremendous height for a man.

But the versions are not all agreed in his height. The Septuagint read τεσσαρων πηχεων και σπιθαμης, four cubits and a span; and Josephus reads the same. It is necessary however to observe that the Septuagint, in the Codex Alexandrinus, read with the Hebrew text. But what was the length of the ancient cubit? This has been variously computed; eighteen inches, twenty inches and a half, and twenty-one inches. If we take the first measurement, he was nine feet nine; if the second, and read palm instead of span, with the Vulgate and others, he was ten feet seven inches and a half; if we take the last, which is the estimate of Graevius, with the span, he was eleven feet three inches; or if we go to the exactest measurement, as laid down in Bishop Cumberland's tables, where he computes the cubit at 21.888 inches, the span at 10.944 inches, and the palm at 3.684 inches, then the six cubits and the span will make exactly 11 feet 10.272 inches. If we take the palm instead of

the span, then the height will be 11 feet 3.012 inches. But I still think that the nine feet nine inches is the most reasonable.

1SAMUEL 17: 5 He had a helmet of brass on his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

Verse 5

He was armed with a coat of mail - The words in the original, שרון קשקשים shiryon kaskassim, mean a coat of mail formed of plates of brass overlapping each other, like the scales of a fish, or tiles of a house. This is the true notion of the original terms.

With thin plates of brass or iron, overlapping each other, were the ancient coats of mail formed in different countries; many formed in this way may be now seen in the tower of London.

The weight - five thousand shekels - Following Bishop Cumberland's tables, and rating the shekel at two hundred and nineteen grains, and the Roman ounce at four hundred and thirty-eight grains, we find that Goliath's coat of mail, weighing five thousand shekels, was exactly one hundred and fifty-six pounds four ounces avoirdupois. A vast weight for a coat of mail, but not all out of proportion to the man.

1SAMUEL 17: 6 He had brass shin armour on his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders.

Verse 6

Greaves of brass upon his legs - This species of armor may be seen on many ancient monuments. It was a plate of brass (though perhaps sometimes formed of laminae or plates, like the mail) which covered the shin or fore part of the leg, from the knee down to the instep, and was buckled with straps behind the leg. From ancient monuments we find that it was commonly worn only on one leg. Vegetius, de Re Militari, says, *Pedites Scutati etiam ferreas ocreas in dextris cruribus copebantur accipere.* "The foot soldiers, called Scutati, from their particular species of shield, were obliged to use iron greaves on their right legs." One of these may be seen in the monument of the gladiator Buto, in Montfaucon; and another in the Mosaic pavement at Bognor, in Surrey.

A target of brass between his shoulders - When not actually engaged, soldiers threw their shields behind their back, so that they appeared to rest or hang between the shoulders.

There are different opinions concerning this piece of armor, called here כידון kidon. Some think it was a covering for the shoulders; others, that it was a javelin or dart; others, that it was a lance; some, a club; and others, a sword. It is certainly distinguished from the shield, 1Sam 17:41, and is translated a spear, Jos 8:18.

1SAMUEL 17: 7 The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and his shield bearer went before him.

 Verse 7

The staff on his spear was like a weaver's beam - Either like that on which the warp is rolled, or that on which the cloth is rolled. We know not how thick this was, because there were several sorts of looms, and the sizes of the beams very dissimilar. Our woollen, linen, cotton, and silk looms are all different in the size of their beams; and I have seen several that I should not suppose too thick, though they might be too short, for Goliath's spear.

His spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron - That is, his spear's head was of iron, and it weighed six hundred shekels; this, according to the former computation, would amount to eighteen pounds twelve ounces.

And one bearing a shield - הצננה hatstsinnah, from צן tsan, pointed or penetrating, if it do not mean some kind of a lance, must mean a shield, with what is called the umbo, a sharp protuberance, in the middle, with which they could as effectually annoy their enemies as defend themselves. Many of the old Highland targets were made with a projecting dagger in the center. Taking the proportions of things unknown to those known, the armor of Goliath is supposed to have weighed not less than two hundred and seventy-two pounds thirteen ounces! Plutarch informs us that the ordinary weight of a soldier's panoply, or complete armor, was one talent, or sixty pounds; and that one Alcimus, in the army of Demetrius, was considered as a prodigy, because his panoply weighed two talents, or one hundred and twenty pounds.

1SAMUEL 17: 8 He stood and cried to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

 Verse 8

I a Philistine - The Targum adds much to this speech. This is the substance: "I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests; and led into captivity the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and placed it in the temple of Dagon my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army, and we conquered and cut down men, and laid them as low as the dust of the earth; and to this day the Philistines have not granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men. And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me."

1SAMUEL 17: 9 If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then you will be our servants, and serve us."

 Verse 9

Then will we be your servants - Of this stipulation we hear nothing farther.

1SAMUEL 17: 10 The Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day! Give me a man, that we may fight together!"

Verse 10

I defy - אני חרפתי ani cheraphti, "I strip and make bare," the armies of Israel; for none dared to fight him. From the Dhunoor Veda Shastra it appears that, among the Hindoos, it was common, before the commencement of an engagement, to challenge the enemy by throwing out some terms of abuse, similar to those used by Goliath. We find this also in Homer: his heroes scold each other heartily before they begin to fight. See on 1Sam 17:43 (note).

1SAMUEL 17: 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

Verse 11

Saul and all Israel - were dismayed - They saw no man able to accept the challenge.

1SAMUEL 17: 12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken among men.

Verse 12

The 12th verse, to the 31st inclusive, are wanting in the Septuagint; as also the 41st verse; and from the 54th to the end; with the first five verses of 1 Samuel 18, and the 9th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of the same.

All these parts are found in the Codex Alexandrinus; but it appears that the MS. from which the Codex Alexandrinus was copied, had them not. See observations at the end of this chapter, 1Sam 17:58 (note). Dr. Kennicott has rendered it very probable that these portions are not a genuine part of the text.

Notwithstanding what Bishop Warburton and others have done to clear the chronology of the present printed Hebrew, it is impossible to make a clear consistent sense of the history, unless these verses are omitted. Let any one read the eleventh verse in connection with the thirty-second, leave out the forty-first, and connect the fifty-fourth with the sixth of 1 Samuel 18, and he will be perfectly convinced that there is nothing wanting to make the sense complete; to say nothing of the other omissions noted above. If the above be taken in as genuine, the ingenuity of man has hitherto failed to free the whole from apparent contradiction and absurdity. I must confess that where every one else has failed, I have no hope of succeeding: I must, therefore, leave all farther attempts to justify the chronology; and refer to those who have written for and against the genuineness of this part of the common Hebrew text. At the end of the chapter I shall introduce some extracts from Kennicott and Pilkington: and leave the whole with the unprejudiced and discerning reader.

1SAMUEL 17: 13 The three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

1SAMUEL 17: 14 David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul.

1SAMUEL 17: 15 Now David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

1SAMUEL 17: 16 The Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

1SAMUEL 17: 17 Jesse said to David his son, "Now take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers;

1SAMUEL 17: 18 and bring these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers are doing, and bring back news."

Verse 18

Carry these ten cheeses - Cheeses of milk, says the margin. In the East they do not make what we call cheese: they press the milk but slightly, and carry it in rush baskets. It is highly salted, and little different from curds.

1SAMUEL 17: 19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

Verse 19

Fighting with the Philistines - See at the end of the chapter, 1Sam 17:58 (note).

1SAMUEL 17: 20 David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the place of the wagons, as the army which was going out to the fight shouted for the battle.

1SAMUEL 17: 21 Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army.

1SAMUEL 17: 22 David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers.

1SAMUEL 17: 23 As he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke according to the same words: and David heard them.

1SAMUEL 17: 24 All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were terrified.

1SAMUEL 17: 25 The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? He has surely come up to defy Israel. It shall be, that the man who kills him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

1SAMUEL 17: 26 David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

1SAMUEL 17: 27 The people answered him in this way, saying, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

1SAMUEL 17: 28 Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride, and the naughtiness of your heart; for you have come down that you might see the battle."

1SAMUEL 17: 29 David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

Verse 29

Is there not a cause? - הלא דבר הוא halo dabar hu. I believe the meaning is what several of the versions express: I have spoken but a word. And should a man be made an offender for a word?

1SAMUEL 17: 30 He turned away from him toward another, and spoke like that again; and the people answered him again the same way.

1SAMUEL 17: 31 When the words were heard which David spoke, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him.

1SAMUEL 17: 32 David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Verse 32

And David said - This properly connects with the eleventh verse.

1SAMUEL 17: 33 Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

Verse 33

Thou art but a youth - Supposed to be about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

1SAMUEL 17: 34 David said to Saul, "Your servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb out of the flock,

Verse 34

Thy servant kept his father's sheep - He found it necessary to give Saul the reasons why he undertook this combat; and why he expected to be victorious.

1. I have courage to undertake it, and strength to perform it.
2. Both have been tried in a very signal manner: (1). A lion came upon my flock, and seized a lamb; I ran after him, he attacked me, I seized hold of him by his shaggy locks, smote and slew him, and delivered the lamb. (2). A bear came in the same way, and I attacked and slew him.
3. This, with whom I am to fight, is a Philistine, an uncircumcised man; one who is an enemy to God: God therefore will not be on his side. On that ground I have nothing to fear.
4. He has defied the armies of the Lord; and has in effect defied Jehovah himself: therefore the battle is the Lord's, and he will stand by me.
5. I have perfect confidence in his protection and defense; for they that trust in him shall never be confounded.
6. I conclude, therefore, that the Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.

1SAMUEL 17: 35 I went out after him, and struck him, and rescued it out of his mouth. When he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and struck him, and killed him.

Verse 35

The slaying of the lion and the bear mentioned here, must have taken place at two different times; perhaps the verse should be read thus: I went out after him, (the lion). and smote him, etc. And when he (the bear) rose up against me, I caught him by the beard and slew him.

1SAMUEL 17: 36 Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."

1SAMUEL 17: 37 David said, "The LORD who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go; and the LORD shall be with you."

Verse 37

Go, and the Lord be with thee - Saul saw that these were reasonable grounds of confidence, and therefore wished him success.

1SAMUEL 17: 38 Saul dressed David with his clothing. He put a helmet of brass on his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail.

Verse 38

Saul armed David - He knew that although the battle was the Lord's, yet prudent means should be used to secure success.

1SAMUEL 17: 39 David strapped his sword on his clothing, and he tried to move; for he had not tested it. David said to Saul, "I can't go with these; for I have not tested them." David took them off.

Verse 39

I cannot go with these - In ancient times it required considerable exercise and training to make a man expert in the use of such heavy armor; armor which in the present day scarcely a man is to be found who is able to carry; and so it must have been then, until that practice which arises from frequent use had made the proprietor perfect. I have not proved them says David: I am wholly unaccustomed to such armor and it would be an encumbrance to me.

1SAMUEL 17: 40 He took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet. His sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

Verse 40

He took his staff - What we would call his crook.

Five smooth stones -

1. Had they been rough or angular, they would not have passed easily through the air, and their asperities would, in the course of their passage, have given them a false direction.
2. Had they not been smooth, they could not have been readily despatched from the sling.

A shepherd's bag - That in which he generally carried his provisions while keeping the sheep in the open country.

And his sling - The sling, both among the Greeks and Hebrews, has been a powerful offensive weapon. See what has been said on Jdg 20:16 (note). It is composed of two strings and a leathern strap; the strap is in the middle, and is the place where the stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; that on the left is held between the thumb and middle joint of the fore finger. It is then whirled two or three times round the head; and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go their hold of the left end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap, where the bullet lies, from the shoulder joint. Hence the ancient Baleares, or inhabitants of Majorca and Minorca, are said to have had three slings of different lengths, the longest they used when the enemy was at the greatest distance; the middle one, on their nearer approach; and the shortest, when they came into the ordinary fighting distance in the field. The shortest is the most certain, though not the most powerful. The Balearians are said to have had one of their slings constantly bound about their head, to have used the second as a

girdle, and to have carried the third always in their hand. See Diod. Sic. lib. v., c. 18, p. 286, edit. Bipont.

In the use of the sling it requires much practice to hit the mark; but when once this dexterity is acquired, the sling is nearly as fatal as the musket or bow; see on 1Sam 17:49 (note). David was evidently an expert marksman; and his sling gave him greatly the advantage over Goliath; an advantage of which the giant does not seem to have been aware. He could hit him within any speaking distance, if he missed once, he had as many chances as he had stones; and after all, being unencumbered with armor, young, and athletic, he could have saved his life by flight. Against him the Philistine could do but little, except in close fight; it is true he appears to have had a javelin or missile spear, (see on 1Sam 17:6 (note)), but David took care to prevent the use of all such weapons, by giving him the first blow.

1SAMUEL 17: 41 The Philistine came on and drew near to David; and the man who bore the shield went before him.

Verse 41

The man that bare the shield - See on 1Sam 17:7 (note).

1SAMUEL 17: 42 When the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair face.

Verse 42

He disdained him - He held him in contempt; he saw that he was young, and from his ruddy complexion supposed him to be effeminate.

1SAMUEL 17: 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" The Philistine cursed David by his gods.

Verse 43

Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? - It is very likely that Goliath did not perceive the sling, which David might have kept coiled up within his hand.

Cursed David by his gods - Prayed his gods to curse him. This long parley between David and Goliath is quite in the style of those times. A Hindoo sometimes in a fit of anger says to his enemy, The goddess Kalee shall devour thee! May Doorga destroy thee! Homer's heroes have generally an altercation before they engage; and sometimes enter into geographical and genealogical discussions, and vaunt and scold most contemptibly.

1SAMUEL 17: 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky, and to the animals of the field."

Verse 44

Come to me, and I will give thy flesh - He intended, as soon as he could lay hold on him, to pull him to pieces.

1SAMUEL 17: 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

Verse 45

Thou comest to me with a sword - I come to thee with the name (בשם beshem) of Jehovah of hosts; the God of the armies of Israel. What Goliath expected from his arms, David expected from the ineffable name.

1SAMUEL 17: 46 Today, the LORD will deliver you into my hand. I will strike you, and take your head from off you. I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky, and to the wild animals of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

Verse 46

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand - This was a direct and circumstantial prophecy of what did take place.

1SAMUEL 17: 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD doesn't save with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

Verse 47

For the battle is the Lord's - It is the Lord's war: you are fighting against him and his religion, as the champion of your party; I am fighting for God, as the champion of his cause.

1SAMUEL 17: 48 When the Philistine arose, and came and drew near to meet David, David hurried, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

Verse 48

The Philistine arose - This was an end of the parley; the Philistine came forward to meet David, and David on his part ran forward to meet the Philistine.

1SAMUEL 17: 49 David put his hand in his bag, took a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

Verse 49

Smote the Philistine in his forehead - Except his face, Goliath was everywhere covered over with strong armor. Either he had no beaver to his helmet, or it was lifted up so as to expose his forehead; but it does not appear that the ancient helmets had any covering for the face. The Septuagint however supposes that the stone passed through the helmet, and sank into his forehead: *Και διεδου ὁ λιθος δια της περικεφαλαιας εις το μετωπον αυτου*, "and the stone passed through his helmet, and sank into his skull." To some this has appeared perfectly improbable; but we are assured by ancient writers that scarcely any thing could resist the force of the sling.

Diodorus Siculus, lib. v., c. 18, p. 287, edit. Bipont, says "The Baleares, in time of war, sling greater stones than any other people, and with such force, that they seem as if projected from a catapult. *Διο και κατα τας τειχομαχιας εν ταις προσβολαις τυ π τ ο ν τ ε ς τους προ των επαλξεων εφεστωτας κατατραυματιζουσιν· εν δε ταις παραταξεσι τους τε θυρεους, και τα κρानη, και παν σκεπαστηριον ὄπλον συντριβουσι. Κατα δε την ευστοχιαν ούτως ακριβεις εισιν, ὡστε κατα το πλειστον μη ἄμαρτανειν του προκειμενου σκοπου* Therefore, in assaults made on fortified towns, they grievously wound the besieged; and in battle they break in pieces the shields, helmets, and every species of armor by which the body is defended. And they are such exact marksmen that they scarcely ever miss that at which they aim." The historian accounts for their great accuracy and power in the use of the sling, from this circumstance: *Αιτιαι δε τουτων, κ.τ.λ.* "They attain to this perfection by frequent exercise from their childhood; for while they are young and under their mother's care, they are obliged to learn to sling; for they fasten bread for a mark at the top of the pole; and till the child hit the bread he must remain fasting; and when he has hit it, the mother gives it to him to eat." - Ibid.

I have given these passages at large, because they contain several curious facts, and sufficiently account for the force and accuracy with which David slung his stone at Goliath. We find also in the *μη ἄμαρτανειν*, not miss the mark, of the historian, the true notion of *ἄμαρτανειν*, to sin, which I have contended for elsewhere. He who sins, though he aims thereby at his gratification and profit, misses the mark of present and eternal felicity.

1SAMUEL 17: 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

1SAMUEL 17: 51 Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head therewith. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

Verse 51

When the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled - They were panic-struck; and not being willing to fulfill the condition which was stipulated by Goliath, they precipitately left the field. The Israelites took a proper advantage of these circumstances, and totally routed their enemies.

1SAMUEL 17: 52 The men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until you come to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath, and to Ekron.

1SAMUEL 17: 53 The children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.

1SAMUEL 17: 54 David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

Verse 54

David took the head of the Philistine - It has been already remarked that this, with the following verses, and the five first verses of the eighteenth chapter, are omitted by the Septuagint. See the observations at the end, 1Sam 17:58 (note).

1SAMUEL 17: 55 When Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I can't tell."

1SAMUEL 17: 56 The king said, "Inquire whose son the young man is!"

1SAMUEL 17: 57 As David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

1SAMUEL 17: 58 Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, you young man?" David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

Verse 58

Whose son art thou, thou young man? - That Saul should not know David with whom he had treated a little before, and even armed him for the combat, and that he should not know who his father was, though he had sent to his father for permission to David to reside constantly with him, (1Sam 16:22), is exceedingly strange! I fear all Bishop Warburton's attempts to rectify the chronology by assumed anticipations, will not account for this. I must honestly confess they do not satisfy me; and I must refer the reader to what immediately follows on the authenticity of the verses which concern this subject.

On the subject of that large omission in the Septuagint of which I have spoken on 1Sam 17:12, I here subjoin the reasons of Mr. Pilkington and Dr. Kennicott for supposing it to be an interpolation of some rabbinical writer, added at a very early period to the Hebrew text. "Had every version of the Hebrew text," says Mr. Pilkington, "agreed to give a translation of this passage, as we now find, the attempts of clearing it from its embarrassments would have been attended with very great difficulties; but, as in several other cases before mentioned, so here, the providence of God seems to

have so far secured the credit of those who were appointed to be the penmen of the oracles of truth, that the defense of their original records may be undertaken upon good grounds, and supported by sufficient evidence. For we are now happily in possession of an ancient version of these two chapters, which appears to have been made from a Hebrew copy, which had none of the thirty-nine verses which are here supposed to have been interpolated, nor was similar to what we have at present in those places which are here supposed to have been altered. This version is found in the Vatican copy of the Seventy, which whoever reads and considers, will find the accounts there given regular, consistent, and probable. It will be proper, therefore, to examine the several parts where such alterations are supposed to have been made in the Hebrew text, in order to produce such other external or internal evidence, as shall be necessary to support the charge of interpolation, which ought not to be laid merely upon the authority of any single version. "The first passage, which is not translated in the Vatican copy of the Greek version, is from the 11th to the 32d verse of the 17th chapter wherein we have an account:

1. Of David's being sent to the camp to visit his brethren.
2. Of his conversation with the men of Israel, relating to Goliath's challenge; and their informing him of the premium Saul had offered to any one that should accept it, and come off victorious.
3. Of Eliab's remarkable behavior to his brother David, upon his making this inquiry. And,
4. Of Saul's being made acquainted with what David had said upon this occasion. "It is obvious to remark upon this passage: - "1. That, after David had been of so much service to the king, in causing the evil spirit to depart from him; after its being recorded how greatly Saul loved him, and that he had made him his armor-bearer; after the king had sent to Jesse to signify his intention of keeping his son with him; all of which are particularly mentioned in the latter part of the preceding chapter; the account of his keeping his father's sheep afterwards, and being sent to his brethren upon this occasion, must appear to be somewhat improbable.
2. That what is here said of the premium that Saul had offered to him who should conquer the Philistine, is not well consistent with the accounts afterwards given, of which we shall have occasion to take particular notice.
3. That Eliab's behavior, as here represented, is not only remarkable but unaccountable and absurd. And,
4. That the inquiries of a young man, who is not said to have declared any intentions of accepting the challenge of the Philistine, would scarcely have been related to the king.

But now, if this passage be supposed to have been interpolated, we must see how the connection stands upon its being omitted." "1Sam 17:11. 'When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.' "1Sam 17:32. 'Then David said unto Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' "No connection can be more proper, and in this view David is represented as being at that time an attendant upon the king; and when we had been told just before, (1Sam 16:21), that Saul had made him his armor-bearer, we might justly expect to find him with him when the battle was set in array; 1Sam 17:2. In this connection David is also represented as fully answering the character before given of him: 'A mighty valiant man, and a man of war,' 1Sam 16:18, and ready to fight with the giant upon the first proposal, (for the account of the Philistine presenting himself forty days is in this passage here supposed to have been interpolated, 1Sam 17:16). I shall leave it to the critical Hebrew reader to make what particular remarks he may think proper in respect to the style and manner of expression

in these twenty verses, and let Jesse go for an old man amongst men in the days of Saul, etc." - Pilkington's Remarks upon several Passages of Scripture, p. 62. "The authorities," says Dr. Kennicott, "here brought to prove this great interpolation are the internal evidence arising from the context, and the external arising from the Vatican copy of the Greek version. But how then reads the Alexandrian MS.? The remarks acknowledge that this MS. agrees here with the corrupted Hebrew; and therefore was probably translated, in this part, from some late Hebrew copy which had thus been interpolated; see pages 72, 75. Now that these two MSS. do contain different readings in some places, I observed in pages 398-404, and 414. And in this 17th chapter of Samuel, 1Sam 17:4, the Alexandrian MS. says, agreeably to the present Hebrew, that the height of Goliath was six cubits and a span, i.e., above eleven feet; but the Vatican MS., agreeably to Josephus, that it was four cubits and a span, i.e., near eight feet. And in 1Sam 17:43, what the Vatican renders he cursed David by his gods, the Alexandrian renders by his idols. But though the Hebrew text might be consulted and a few words differently rendered by the transcriber of one of these MSS., or by the transcribers of the MSS. from which these MSS. were taken; yet, as these MSS. do contain, in this chapter, such Greek as is almost universally the same, (in verb, noun, and particle), I presume that they contain here the same translation with the designed alteration of a few words, and with the difference of the interpolated verses found in the Alexandrian MS. "But, after all, what if the Alexandrian MS., which now has these verses should itself prove them interpolated? What if the very words of this very MS. demonstrate that these verses were not in some former Greek MS.? Certainly if the Alexandrian MS. should be thus found, at last, not to contradict, but to confirm the Vatican in its omission of these twenty verses, the concurrence of these authorities will render the argument much more forcible and convincing. "Let us then state the present question; which is, Whether the twenty verses between 1Sam 17:11 and 1Sam 17:32, which are now in the Hebrew text, are interpolated? The Vatican MS. goes on immediately from the end of the 11th verse (και εφοβηθησαν σφοδρα) to 1Sam 17:32, which begins και ειπε Δαυιδ: whereas the 12th verse in the Hebrew begins, not with a speech, but with David's birth and parentage. If then the Alexandrian MS. begins its present 12th verse as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly, I appeal to any man of judgment whether the transcriber was not certainly copying from a MS. in which the 32d verse succeeded the 11th verse; and if so, then from a MS. which had not these intermediate verses? Now that this is the fact, the case will at once appear upon examining the Alexandrian copy, where the 12th verse begins with ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕ ΔΑΥΙΔ; as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly. "The case seems clearly to be, that the transcriber, having wrote what is now in the 11th verse, was beginning what is now the 32d verse; when, after writing και ειπε Δαυιδ, he perceived that either the Hebrew, or some other Greek copy, or the margin of his own copy, had several intermediate verses: upon which, without blotting out the significant word ΕΙΠΕ, he goes on to write the addition: thus fortunately leaving a decisive proof of his own great interpolation. if this addition was in the margin of that MS. from which the Alexandrian was transcribed, it might be inserted by that transcriber; but if it was inserted either from the Hebrew, or from any other Greek copy, the transcriber of this MS. seems to have had too little learning for such a proceeding. If it was done by the writer of that former MS., then the interpolation may be a hundred or a hundred and fifty years older than the Alexandrian MS. Perhaps the earliest Christian writer who enlarges upon the strong circumstance of David's coming from the sheep to the army, is Chrysostom, in his homily upon David and Saul; so that it had then been long in some copies of the Greek version. The truth seems to be, that the addition of these twenty verses took its first rise from what Josephus had inserted in his variation and embellishment of this history; but that many circumstances were afterwards added to his additions. "For (and it is extremely remarkable) though Josephus has some, he has not half the improbabilities which are found at present in the sacred history: as for instance: Nothing of the armies being fighting in the valley, or fighting at all, when David was sent by his

father, as in 1Sam 17:19. Nothing of the host going forth, and shouting for the battle, at the time of David's arrival, as in 1Sam 17:20. Nothing of all the men of Israel fleeing from Goliath, as in 1Sam 17:24; on the contrary, the two armies, (it should seem), continued upon their two mountains. Nothing of David's long conversation with the soldiers, 1Sam 17:25-27, in seasons so very improper, as, whilst they were shouting for the battle, or whilst they were fleeing from Goliath; and fleeing from a man after they had seen him and heard him twice in every day for forty days together, 1Sam 17:16, the two armies, all this long while, leaning upon their arms, and looking very peaceably at one another. Nothing of Goliath's repeating his challenge every morning and every evening, as in 1Sam 17:16. David, (it is said, 1Sam 17:23), happened to hear one of these challenges; but if he heard the evening challenge, it would have been then too late for the several transactions before, and the long pursuit after, Goliath's death; and David could not well hear the morning challenge, because he could scarce have arrived so early, after travelling from Beth-lehem to the army, (about fifteen miles), and bringing with him an ephah of parched corn, and ten loaves, and ten cheeses, as in 1Sam 17:17, 1Sam 17:18. Nothing of encouraging any man to fight Goliath, by an offer of the king's daughter, 1Sam 17:25; which, as it seems from the subsequent history, had never been thought of; and which, had it been offered, would probably have been accepted by some man or other out of the whole army. Nothing of Eliab's reprimanding David for coming to see the battle, as in 1Sam 17:28; but for a very different reason; and, indeed, it is highly improbable that Eliab should treat him at all with contempt and scurrility, after having seen Samuel anoint him for the future king of Israel, see 1Sam 16:1-13. Nothing of a second conversation between David and the soldiers, as in 1Sam 17:30, 1Sam 17:31. Nothing of Saul and Abner's not knowing who was David's father, at the time of his going forth against the Philistine, as in 1Sam 17:55. Nothing of David's being introduced to the king by Abner, in form, after killing the Philistine, 1Sam 17:57, at a time when the king and the captain of the host had no leisure for complemental ceremony; but were set out, 1Sam 17:57, in immediate and full pursuit of the Philistines. Nor, lastly, is any notice taken here by Josephus of what now begins the 18th chapter, Jonathan's friendship for David, which is related elsewhere, and in a different manner; on the contrary, as soon as Josephus has mentioned Goliath's death, and told us that Saul and all Israel shouted, and fell at once upon the Philistines, and that, when the pursuit was ended, the head of Goliath was carried by David into his own tent, (and he could have then no tent of his own if he had not been then an officer in the army): I say, as soon as Josephus has recorded these circumstances, he goes on to Saul's envy and hatred of David, arising from the women's songs of congratulation; exactly as these capital parts of the history are connected in the Vatican MS. And with this circumstance I shall conclude these remarks; earnestly recommending the whole to the learned reader's attentive examination. "It must not however be forgot, that the learned F. Houbigant has, in his Bible, placed these twenty verses (from the 11th to the 32d) between hooks, as containing a passage which comes in very improperly. "If it be inquired as to this interpolation in Samuel, when it could possibly be introduced into the text? It may be observed that, about the time of Josephus, the Jews seem to have been fond of enlarging and, as they vainly thought, embellishing the sacred history, by inventing speeches, and prayers, and hymns, and also new articles of history, and these of considerable length; witness the several additions to the book of Esther; witness the long story concerning wine, women, and truth, inserted amidst parts of the genuine history of Ezra and Nehemiah, and worked up into what is now called the First Book of Esdras; witness the hymn of the three children in the fiery furnace, added to Daniel; and witness also the many additions in Josephus. Certainly, then, some few remarks might be noted by the Jews, and some few of their historical additions might be inserted in the margin of their Hebrew copies; which might afterwards be taken into the text itself by injudicious transcribers. "The history of David's conquest of the mighty and insulting Philistine is certainly very engaging; and it gives a most amiable description of a brave young man, relying with firm confidence upon the aid of the God of battle against the

blaspheming enemy. It is not therefore very strange that some fanciful rabbin should be particularly struck with the strange circumstances of the Philistines daring to challenge all Israel; and David's cutting off the giant's head with the giant's own sword. And then, finding that Josephus had said that David came from the sheep to the camp, and happened to hear the challenge, the rabbin might think it very natural that David should be indignant against the giant, and talk valorously to the soldiers, and that the soldiers should mightily encourage David; and then, to be sure, this was the most lucky season to introduce the celebrated friendship of Jonathan for David; particularly when, according to these additions, Jonathan had seen Abner leading David in triumph to the king's presence; every one admiring the young hero, as he proudly advanced with the grim head of the Philistine in his hand. So that this multiform addition and fanciful embellishment of the rabbin reminds one of the motley absurdity described by the poet in the famous lines: -

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam

Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plasmas, etc. "The passage supposed to be interpolated here, was in the Hebrew text before the time of Aquila; because there are preserved a few of the differences in those translations of it which were made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. These verses, being thus acknowledged at that time, would doubtless be found in such copies as the Jews then declared to be genuine, and which they delivered afterwards to Origen as such. And that Origen did refer to the Jews for such copies as they held genuine, he allows in his epistle to Africanus; for there he speaks of soothing the Jews, in order to get pure copies from them." - Kennicott's Second Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, p. 419.

In the general dissertation which Dr. Kennicott has prefixed to his edition of the Hebrew Bible, he gives additional evidence that the verses in question were not found originally in the Septuagint, and consequently not in the Hebrew copy used for that version. Several MSS. in the royal library at Paris either omit these verses or have them with asterisks or notes of dubiousness. And the collation by Dr. Holmes and his continuators has brought farther proof of the fact. From the whole, there is considerable evidence that these verses were not in the Septuagint in the time of Origen; and if they were not in the MSS. used by Origen, it is very probable they were not in that version at first; and if they were not in the Septuagint at first, it is very probable that they were not in the Hebrew text one hundred and fifty years before Christ; and if not then in the Hebrew text, it is very probable they were not in that text originally. See Dissertation on Gen., p. 9; and Remarks on Select Passages, p. 104.

I have only to remark here, that the historical books of the Old Testament have suffered more by the carelessness or infidelity of transcribers than any other parts of the sacred volume; and of this the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, give the most decided and unequivocal proofs. Of this also the reader has already had considerable evidence; and he will find this greatly increased as he proceeds.

It seems to me that the Jewish copyists had not the same opinion of the Divine inspiration of those books as they had of those of the law and the prophets; and have therefore made no scruple to insert some of their own traditions, or the glosses of their doctors, in different parts; for as the whole must evidently appear to them as a compilation from their public records, they thought it no harm to make different alterations and additions from popular statements of the same facts, which they found in general circulation. This is notoriously the case in Josephus; this will account, and it does to me very satisfactorily, for many of the various readings now found in the Hebrew text of the historical books. They were held in less reverence, and they were copied with less care, and emended with less critical skill, than the pentateuch and the prophets; and on them the hands of

careless, ignorant, and temerarious scribes, have too frequently been laid. To deny this, only betrays a portion of the same ignorance which was the parent of those disorders; and attempts to blink the question, though they may with some be an argument of zeal, yet with all the sincere and truly enlightened friends of Divine revelation, will be considered to be as dangerous as they are absurd.

Where the rash or ignorant hand of man has fixed a blot on the Divine records, let them who in the providence of God are qualified for the task wipe it off; and while they have the thanks of all honest men, God will have the glory.

There have been many who have affected to deny the existence of giants. There is no doubt that the accounts given of several are either fabulous or greatly exaggerated. But men of an extraordinary size are not uncommon even in our own day: I knew two brothers of the name of Knight, who were born in the same township with myself, who were seven feet six inches high; and another, in the same place, Charles Burns who was eight feet six! These men were well and proportionately made. I have known others of this height, whose limbs were out of all proportion; their knees bent in, and joints rickety.

Ireland, properly speaking, is the only nation on the earth that produces Giants; and let me tell the poor, that this is the only nation in the world that may be said to live on potatoes; with little bread, and less flesh-meat.

I have seen and entertained in my house the famous Polish dwarf, the Count Boruwlaski, who was about thirty-six inches high, every part of whose person was formed with the most perfect and delicate symmetry. The prodigious height and bulk of Charles Burns, and the astonishing diminutiveness of Count Boruwlaski, could not be properly estimated but by comparing both together. Each was a perfect man; and yet, in quantum, how disproportionate! Man is the only creature in whom the extremes of minuteness and magnitude are so apparent, and yet the proportion of the parts in each strictly correlative.

1SAMUEL 18: 1 When he had made an end of speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

Jonathan and David commence a lasting friendship; and David acts prudently with respect to Saul, 1Sam 18:1-5. Saul becomes jealous of David, on account of the esteem in which he is held in Israel; and, in his fury endeavors to destroy him, 1Sam 18:6-12. David is made captain over a thousand; and the people love and respect him, 1Sam 18:13-16. Saul, in order to ensnare him, offers him his daughter in marriage, 1Sam 18:17-24; and requires a hundred foreskins of the Philistines for dowry; hoping that, in endeavoring to procure them, David might fall by the hands of the Philistines, 1Sam 18:25. David agrees to the conditions, fulfils them, and has Michal to wife, 1Sam 18:26-30.

Verse 1

When he had made an end of speaking - These first five verses are omitted by the Septuagint. See the notes on the preceding chapter, 1 Samuel 17 (note).

Jonathan loved him as his own soul - The most intimate friendship subsisted between them; and they loved each other with pure hearts fervently. No love was lost between them; each was worthy of the other. They had a friendship which could not be affected with changes or chances, and which exemplified all that the ancients have said on the subject; Την φιλίαν ισοτητα ειναι, και μιαν ψυχην, τον φιλον ετερον αυτον; "Friendship produces an entire sameness; it is one soul in two bodies: a friend is another self."

1SAMUEL 18: 2 Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

1SAMUEL 18: 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

1SAMUEL 18: 4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him, and gave it to David, and his clothing, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his sash.

Verse 4

Jonathan stripped himself - Presents of clothes or rich robes, in token of respect and friendship, are frequent in the East. And how frequently arms and clothing were presented by warriors to each other in token of friendship, may be seen in Homer and other ancient writers.

1SAMUEL 18: 5 David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Verse 5

Set him over the men of war - Made him generalissimo; or what we would call field marshal.

1SAMUEL 18: 6 As they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with instruments of music.

Verse 6

When David was returned - This verse connects well with the 54th verse of the preceding chapter; and carries on the narration without any break or interruption. See the notes on 1Sam 17:54.

The women came out - It was the principal business of certain women to celebrate victories, sing at funerals, etc.

With instruments of music - The original word (שלישִׁים shalishim) signifies instruments with three strings; and is, I think, properly translated by the Vulgate, cum sistris, "with sistrums." This instrument is well known as being used among the ancient Egyptians: it was made of brass, and had

three, sometimes more, brass rods across; which, being loose in their holes, made a jingling noise when the instrument was shaken.

1SAMUEL 18: 7 The women sang one to another as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands."

Verse 7

Saul hath slain his thousands - As it cannot literally be true that Saul had slain thousands, and David ten thousands; it would be well to translate the passage thus: Saul hath smitten or fought against thousands; David against tens of thousands. "Though Saul has been victorious in all his battles; yet he has not had such great odds against him as David has had; Saul, indeed, has been opposed by thousands; David, by ten thousands." We may here remark that the Philistines had drawn out their whole forces at this time: and when Goliath was slain, they were totally discomfited by the Israelites, led on chiefly by David.

1SAMUEL 18: 8 Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. What can he have more but the kingdom?"

1SAMUEL 18: 9 Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

1SAMUEL 18: 10 On the next day, an evil spirit from God came mightily on Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house. David played with his hand, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand;

Verse 10

The evil spirit from God - See on 1Sam 16:14 (note), etc.

He prophesied in the midst of the house - He was beside himself; made prayers, supplications, and incoherent imprecations: "God preserve my life," "Destroy my enemies," or such like prayers, might frequently escape from him in his agitated state. The Arabic intimates that he was actually possessed by an evil spirit, and that through it he uttered a sort of demoniacal predictions.

But let us examine the original more closely: it is said that Saul prophesied in the midst of his house, that is, he prayed in his family, while David was playing on the harp; and then suddenly threw his javelin, intending to have killed David. Let it be observed that the word וַיִּתְנַבֵּא *vaiythnabbe* is the third person singular of the future hithpael; the sign of which is not only to do an action on or for one's self, but also to feign or pretend to do it. The meaning seems to be, Saul pretended to be praying in his family, the better to conceal his murderous intentions, and render David unsuspecting; who was, probably, at this time performing the musical part of the family worship. This view of the subject makes the whole case natural and plain.

1SAMUEL 18: 11 and Saul threw the spear; for he said, "I will pin David even to the wall!" David escaped from his presence twice.

Verse 11

Saul cast the javelin - The javelin or spear was the emblem of regal authority; kings always had it at hand, and in ancient monuments they are always represented with it.

In ancient times, says Justin, kings used a spear instead of a diadem: Per ea tempora reges hastas pro diademate habebant, Hist. lib. xliii. And as spears were the emblems of supreme power, hence they were reputed as attributes of the Divinity, and were worshipped as representatives of the gods. Ab origine verum, pro Diis immortalibus veteres Hastas coluerunt, ob cuius religionis memoriam, adhuc deorum simulachris Hastae adduntur. - Ibid.

1SAMUEL 18: 12 Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

1SAMUEL 18: 13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

Verse 13

Made him his captain - This was under pretense of doing him honor, when it was in effect only to rid himself of the object of his envy.

1SAMUEL 18: 14 David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.

1SAMUEL 18: 15 When Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him.

Verse 15

He was afraid of him - He saw that, by his prudent conduct, he was every day gaining increasing influence.

1SAMUEL 18: 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.

1SAMUEL 18: 17 Saul said to David, "Behold, my elder daughter Merab, I will give her to you as wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul said, "Don't let my hand be on him, but let the hand of the Philistines be on him."

Verse 17

Fight the Lord's battles - Mr. Calmet properly remarks that the wars of the Hebrews, while conducted by the express orders of God, were truly the wars of the Lord; but when the spirit of

worldly ambition and domination became mingled with them, they were no longer the wars of the Lord, but wars of lust and profanity.

1SAMUEL 18: 18 David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?"

1SAMUEL 18: 19 But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as wife.

1SAMUEL 18: 20 Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David; and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

1SAMUEL 18: 21 Saul said, I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Therefore Saul said to David, "You shall this day be my son-in-law a second time."

Verse 21

That she may be a snare to him - Saul had already determined the condition on which he would give his daughter to David; viz., that he should slay one hundred Philistines: this he supposed he would undertake for the love of Michal, and that he must necessarily perish in the attempt; and thus Michal would become a snare to him.

1SAMUEL 18: 22 Saul commanded his servants, "Talk with David secretly, and say, 'Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.'"

1SAMUEL 18: 23 Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. David said, "Does it seem to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?"

1SAMUEL 18: 24 The servants of Saul told him, saying, "David spoke like this."

1SAMUEL 18: 25 Saul said, "You shall tell David, 'The king desires no dowry except one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.'" Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

Verse 25

But a hundred foreskins - That is, Thou shalt slay one hundred Philistines, and thou shalt produce their foreskins, as a proof, not only that thou hast killed one hundred men, but that these are of the uncircumcised. A custom similar to this still prevails among the Abyssinians, according to Bruce. See his Travels.

1SAMUEL 18: 26 When his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. The days were not expired;

1SAMUEL 18: 27 and David arose and went, he and his men, and killed of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. Saul gave him Michal his daughter as wife.

Verse 27

Slew - two hundred men - The Septuagint has only one hundred men. Saul covenanted with David for a hundred; and David himself says, 2Sam 3:14, that he espoused Michal for a hundred: hence it is likely that one hundred is the true reading.

1SAMUEL 18: 28 Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David; and Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.

1SAMUEL 18: 29 Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul was David's enemy continually.

1SAMUEL 18: 30 Then the princes of the Philistines went out: and as often as they went out, David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was highly esteemed.

Verse 30

Then the princes of the Philistines went forth - Probably to avenge themselves on David and the Israelites: but of this war we know no more than that David was more skillful and successful in it than any of the other officers of Saul. His military skill was greater, and his success was proportionate to his skill and courage; hence it is said, he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.

1SAMUEL 19: 1 Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David.

Jonathan pleads for David before Saul, who is for the present reconciled, 1Sam 19:1-7. David defeats the Philistines; and Saul becomes again envious, and endeavors to slay him, but he escapes, 1Sam 19:8-10. Saul sends men to David's house, to lie in wait for him; but Michal saves him by a stratagem, 1Sam 19:11-17. David flees to Samuel, at Ramah, 1Sam 19:18. Saul, hearing of it, sends messengers three several times to take him; but the Spirit of coming upon them, they prophesy, 1Sam 19:19-21. Saul, hearing of this, goes after David himself, and falls under the same influence, 1Sam 19:22-24.

Verse 1

That they should kill David - Nothing less than the especial interposition of God could have saved David's life, when every officer about the king's person, and every soldier, had got positive orders to despatch him.

1SAMUEL 19: 2 Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Now therefore, please take care of yourself in the morning, and live in a secret place, and hide yourself."

Verse 2

Take heed to thyself until the morning - Perhaps the order was given to slay him the next day; and therefore Jonathan charges him to be particularly on his guard at that time, and to hide himself.

1SAMUEL 19: 3 I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will talk with my father about you; and if I see anything, I will tell you."

1SAMUEL 19: 4 Jonathan spoke good of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Don't let the king sin against his servant, against David; because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you;

Verse 4

Jonathan spoke good of David - It is evident that Jonathan was satisfied that David was an innocent man; and that his father was most unjustly incensed against him.

1SAMUEL 19: 5 for he put his life in his hand, and struck the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great victory for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"

Verse 5

For he did put his life in his hand - The pleadings in this verse, though short, are exceedingly cogent; and the argument is such as could not be resisted.

1SAMUEL 19: 6 Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan: and Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death."

Verse 6

He shall not be slain - In consequence of this oath, we may suppose he issued orders contrary to those which he had given the preceding day.

1SAMUEL 19: 7 Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as before.

Verse 7

He was in his presence, as in times past - By Jonathan's advice he had secreted himself on that day on which he was to have been assassinated: the king having sworn that he should not be slain, David resumes his place in the palace of Saul.

1SAMUEL 19: 8 There was war again. David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and killed them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him.

1SAMUEL 19: 9 An evil spirit from the LORD was on Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand.

Verse 9

And the evil spirit from the Lord - His envy and jealousy again returned, producing distraction of mind, which was exacerbated by diabolic influence. See on 1Sam 16:14 (note).

1SAMUEL 19: 10 Saul sought to pin David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he stuck the spear into the wall. David fled, and escaped that night.

Verse 10

But he slipped away - He found he could not trust Saul; and therefore was continually on his watch. His agility of body was the means of his preservation at this time.

1SAMUEL 19: 11 Saul sent messengers to David's house, to watch him, and to kill him in the morning. Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed."

Verse 11

To slay him in the morning - When they might be able to distinguish between him and Michal his wife; for, had they attempted his life in the night season, there would have been some danger to Michal's life. Besides, Saul wished to represent him as a traitor; and consequently an attack upon him was justifiable at any time, even in the fullest daylight.

1SAMUEL 19: 12 So Michal let David down through the window. He went, fled, and escaped.

Verse 12

Let David down through a window - As Saul's messengers were sent to David's house to watch him, they would naturally guard the gate, or lie in wait in that place by which David would come out. Michal, seeing this let him down to the ground through a window probably at the back part of the house; and there being neither entrance nor issue that way, the liers in wait were easily eluded.

1SAMUEL 19: 13 Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes.

Verse 13

Michal took an image - את התרפים eth hatteraphim, the teraphim. The Hebrew word appears to mean any kind of image, in any kind of form, as a representative of some reality. Here it must have been something in the human form; because it was intended to represent a man lying in bed indisposed.

A pillow of goats' hair - Perhaps she formed the appearance of a sick man's head muffled up by this pillow or bag of goats' hair. So I think the original might be understood. The goats' hair was merely accidental; unless we could suppose that it was designed to represent the hair of David's head, which is not improbable.

1SAMUEL 19: 14 When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."

1SAMUEL 19: 15 Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him."

1SAMUEL 19: 16 When the messengers came in, behold, the teraphim was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head.

1SAMUEL 19: 17 Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus, and let my enemy go, so that he is escaped?" Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"

Verse 17

Let me go; why should I kill thee? - That is, If thou do not let me go, I will kill thee. This she said to excuse herself to her father: as a wife she could do not less than favor the escape of her husband, being perfectly satisfied that there was no guilt in him. It is supposed that it was on this occasion that David wrote the fifty-ninth Psalm, Deliver me from mine enemies, etc.

1SAMUEL 19: 18 Now David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. He and Samuel went and lived in Naioth.

Verse 18

David fled, and escaped - to Samuel - He, no doubt, came to this holy man to ask advice; and Samuel thought it best to retain him for the present, with himself at Naioth, where it is supposed he had a school of prophets.

1SAMUEL 19: 19 It was told Saul, saying, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah."

1SAMUEL 19: 20 Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came on the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

Verse 20

The company of the prophets prophesying - Employed in religious exercises.

Samuel - appointed over them - Being head or president of the school at this place.

The Spirit of God was upon the messengers - They partook of the same influence, and joined in the same exercise; and thus were prevented from seizing David.

1SAMUEL 19: 21 When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied.

1SAMUEL 19: 22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to the great well that is in Secu: and he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"

One said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah."

1SAMUEL 19: 23 He went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God came on him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

Verse 23

He went on, and prophesied - The Divine Spirit seemed to have seized him at the well of Sechu; and he went on from that prophesying - praying, singing praises, etc.; till he came to Naioth.

1SAMUEL 19: 24 He also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Verse 24

He stripped off his clothes - Threw off his royal robes or military dress, retaining only his tunic; and continued so all that day and all that night, uniting with the sons of the prophets in prayers, singing praises, and other religious exercises, which were unusual to kings and warriors; and this gave rise to the saying, Is Saul also among the prophets? By bringing both him and his men thus under a Divine

influence, God prevented them from injuring the person of David. See the notes on 1Sam 10:6 (note), etc.; and see my sermon on The Christian Prophet and his Work.

1SAMUEL 20: 1 David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

David complains to Jonathan of Saul's enmity against him; Jonathan comforts him, 1Sam 20:1-10. They walk out into the field, and renew their covenant, 1Sam 20:11-17. David asks Jonathan's leave to absent himself from Saul's court; and Jonathan informs him how he shall ascertain the disposition of his father towards him, 1Sam 20:18-23. David hides himself; is missed by Saul; Jonathan is questioned concerning his absence; makes an excuse for David; Saul is enraged, and endeavors to kill Jonathan, 1Sam 20:24-33. Jonathan goes out to the field; gives David the sign which they had agreed on, and by which he was to know that the king had determined to take away his life, 1Sam 20:34-39. He sends his servant back into the city; and then he and David meet, renew their covenant, and have a very affectionate parting, 1Sam 20:40-42.

Verse 1

David fled from Naioth - On hearing that Saul had come to that place, knowing that he was no longer in safety, he fled for his life.

1SAMUEL 20: 2 He said to him, "Far from it; you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small, but that he discloses it to me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so."

Verse 2

My father will do nothing - Jonathan thought that his father could have no evil design against David, because of the oath which he had sworn to himself 1Sam 19:6; and at any rate, that he would do nothing against David without informing him.

1SAMUEL 20: 3 David swore moreover, and said, "Your father knows well that I have found favour in your eyes; and he says, 'Don't let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved:' but truly as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death."

Verse 3

There is but a step between me and death - My life is in the most imminent danger. Your father has, most assuredly, determined to destroy me.

The same figure used here, there is but a step between me and death, may be found in Juvenal, who, satirizing those who risk their lives for the sake of gain in perilous voyages, speaks thus: -

I nune et ventis animam committe, dolato

Confisus ligno, digitis a morte remotus

Quatuor aut septem, si sit latissima teda.

Sat. xii., ver. 57. "Go now, and commit thy life to the winds, trusting to a hewn plank, four or seven fingers thick, if the beam out of which it has been cut have been large enough."

1SAMUEL 20: 4 Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever your soul desires, I will even do it for you."

1SAMUEL 20: 5 David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to dine with the king; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field to the third day at evening."

Verse 5

To-morrow is the new moon - The months of the Hebrews were lunar months, and they reckoned from new moon to new moon. And as their other feasts, particularly the passover, were reckoned according to this, they were very scrupulous in observing the first appearance of each new moon. On these new moons they offered sacrifices, and had a feast; as we learn from Num 10:10; Num 28:11. And we may suppose that the families, on such occasions, sacrificed and feasted together. To this David seems to refer; but the gathering together all the families of a whole tribe seems to have taken place only once in the year. There is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family, 1Sam 20:6.

1SAMUEL 20: 6 If your father miss me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city; for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'

1SAMUEL 20: 7 If he says, 'It is well;' your servant shall have peace: but if he be angry, then know that evil is determined by him.

1SAMUEL 20: 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant; for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you: but if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?"

Verse 8

If there be in me iniquity - If thou seest that I am plotting either against the state, or the life of thy father, then slay me thyself.

1SAMUEL 20: 9 Jonathan said, "Far be it from you; for if I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come on you, then wouldn't I tell you that?"

1SAMUEL 20: 10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who shall tell me if perchance your father answers you roughly?"

Verse 10

Who shall tell me? - Who shall give me the necessary information? What means wilt thou use to convey this intelligence to me?

1SAMUEL 20: 11 Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." They both went out into the field.

Verse 11

Come, and let us go out into the field - In answer to David's question, he now shows him how he shall convey this intelligence to him.

1SAMUEL 20: 12 Jonathan said to David, "By the LORD, the God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good toward David, shall I not then send to you, and disclose it to you?"

Verse 12

Jonathan said - O Lord God of Israel - There is, most evidently, something wanting in this verse. The Septuagint has, The Lord God of Israel doth Know. The Syriac and Arabic, The Lord God of Israel is Witness. Either of these makes a good sense. But two of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. supply the word 'N chai, "liveth;" and the text reads thus, As the Lord God of Israel Liveth, when I have sounded my father - if there be good, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee, the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan. This makes a still better sense.

1SAMUEL 20: 13 The LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do you evil, if I don't disclose it to you, and send you away, that you may go in peace: and the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father.

Verse 13

The Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father - From this, and other passages here it is evident that Jonathan knew that the Lord had appointed David to the kingdom.

1SAMUEL 20: 14 You shall not only while yet I live show me the loving kindness of the LORD, that I not die;

Verse 14

Show me the kindness of the Lord - When thou comest to the kingdom, if I am alive, thou shalt show kindness to me, and thou shalt continue that kindness to my family after me.

1SAMUEL 20: 15 but also you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever; no, not when the LORD has cut off the enemies of David everyone from the surface of the earth."

1SAMUEL 20: 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "The LORD will require it at the hand of David's enemies."

1SAMUEL 20: 17 Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

1SAMUEL 20: 18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon: and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.

1SAMUEL 20: 19 When you have stayed three days, you shall go down quickly, and come to the place where you hid yourself when this started, and shall remain by the stone Ezel.

1SAMUEL 20: 20 I will shoot three arrows on its side, as though I shot at a mark.

Verse 20

I will shoot three arrows - Jonathan intended that David should stay at the stone Ezel, where probably there was some kind of cave, or hiding place; that, to prevent all suspicion, he would not go to him himself, but take his servant into the fields, and pretend to be exercising himself in archery; that he would shoot three arrows, the better to cover his design; and that, if he should say to his servant, who went to bring back the arrows, "The arrows are on this side of thee," this should be a sign to David that he might safely return to court, no evil being designed; but if he should say, "The arrows are beyond thee," then David should escape for his life, Saul having determined his destruction.

1SAMUEL 20: 21 Behold, I will send the boy, saying, 'Go, find the arrows!' If I tell the boy, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of you. Take them;' then come; for there is peace to you and no hurt, as the LORD lives.

1SAMUEL 20: 22 But if I say this to the boy, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you;' then go your way; for the LORD has sent you away.

1SAMUEL 20: 23 Concerning the matter which you and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."

1SAMUEL 20: 24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon had come, the king sat him down to eat food.

1SAMUEL 20: 25 The king sat on his seat, as at other times, even on the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was empty.

Verse 25

The king sat upon his seat - It seems that there was one table for Saul, Jonathan, David, and Abner; Saul having the chief seat, that next to the wall. As only four sat at this table, the absence of any one would soon be noticed.

1SAMUEL 20: 26 Nevertheless Saul didn't say anything that day: for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean. Surely he is not clean."

1SAMUEL 20: 27 On the next day after the new moon, the second day, David's place was empty. Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why doesn't the son of Jesse come to eat, neither yesterday, nor today?"

1SAMUEL 20: 28 Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem.

1SAMUEL 20: 29 He said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city. My brother has commanded me to be there. Now, if I have found favour in your eyes, please let me go away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

Verse 29

Our family hath a sacrifice - Such sacrifices were undoubtedly festal ones; the beasts slain for the occasion were first offered to God, and their blood poured out before him; afterwards all that were bidden to the feast ate of the flesh. This was a family entertainment, at the commencement of which God was peculiarly honored.

1SAMUEL 20: 30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse rebellious woman, don't I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"

Verse 30

Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman - This clause is variously translated and understood. The Hebrew might be translated, Son of an unjust rebellion; that is, "Thou art a rebel against thy own father." The Vulgate, Fili mulieris virum ultro rapientis; "Son of the woman who, of her own accord, forces the man." The Septuagint is equally curious, Υιε κορασιων αυτομολουντων; "Son of the damsels who came of their own accord." Were these the meaning of the Hebrew, then the bitter reflection must refer to some secret transaction between Saul and Jonathan's mother; which certainly reflects more dishonor on himself than on his brave son. Most sarcasms bear as hard upon the speaker, as they do on him against whom they are spoken. Abusive language always argues a mean, weak, and malevolent heart.

1SAMUEL 20: 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Therefore now send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die!"

1SAMUEL 20: 32 Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

1SAMUEL 20: 33 Saul cast his spear at him to strike him. By this Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death.

1SAMUEL 20: 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

Verse 34

Jonathan arose - in fierce anger - We should probably understand this rather of Jonathan's grief than of his anger, the latter clause explaining the former: for he was grieved for David. He was grieved for his father - he was grieved for his friend.

1SAMUEL 20: 35 In the morning, Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little boy with him.

1SAMUEL 20: 36 He said to his boy, "Run, find now the arrows which I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

1SAMUEL 20: 37 When the boy had come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the boy, and said, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?"

1SAMUEL 20: 38 Jonathan cried after the boy, "Go fast! Hurry! Don't delay!" Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

Verse 38

Make speed, haste, stay not - Though these words appear to be addressed to the lad, yet they were spoken to David, indicating that his life was at stake, and only a prompt flight could save him.

1SAMUEL 20: 39 But the boy didn't know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

1SAMUEL 20: 40 Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."

Verse 40

Jonathan gave his artillery - I believe this to be the only place in our language where the word artillery is not applied to cannon or ordnance. The original (כֵּלֵי keley) signifies simply instruments, and here means the bow, quiver, and arrows.

1SAMUEL 20: 41 As soon as the boy was gone, David arose out of the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times. They kissed one another, and wept one with another, and David wept the most.

Verse 41

Until David exceeded - David's distress must, in the nature of things, be the greatest. Besides his friend Jonathan, whom he was now about to lose for ever, he lost his wife, relatives, country; and, what was most afflictive, the altars of his God, and the ordinances of religion.

Saul saw David's growing popularity, and was convinced of his own maladministration. He did not humble himself before God, and therefore became a prey to envy, pride, jealousy, cruelty, and every other malevolent temper. From him David had every thing to fear, and therefore he thought it was safer to yield to the storm, than attempt to brave it; though he could have even raised a very powerful party in Israel, had he used the means which were so much in his power. But as he neither sought nor affected the kingdom, he left it to the providence of God to bring him in by such means, at such a way, and in such a time, as was most suited to his godly wisdom. He that believeth shall not make haste: God's way and time are ever the best; and he who, even in God's way, runs before he is sent, runs at random; runs without light, and without Divine strength.

Feeble, therefore, must be his own might, his own counsel, and his own wisdom: though he encompass himself with his own sparks yet this hath he at the Lord's hand - he shall lie down in sorrow.

1SAMUEL 20: 42 Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have both sworn in the LORD's name, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my seed and your seed, forever.'" He arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

1SAMUEL 21: 1 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no man with you?"

David comes to Ahimelech at Nob, receives provisions from him, and the sword of Goliath; and is noticed by Doeg, one of the servants of Saul, 1Sam 21:1-9. He leaves Nob, and goes to Achish, king of Gath, 1Sam 21:10. But on being recognised as the vanquisher of Goliath by the servants of Achish, he feigns himself deranged, and Achish sends him away, 1Sam 21:11-15.

Verse 1

Then came David to Nob - There were two places of this name, one on this side, the second on the other side of Jordan; but it is generally supposed that Nob, near Gibeah of Benjamin, is the place here intended; it was about twelve miles from Jerusalem.

Why art thou alone - Ahimelech probably knew nothing of the difference between Saul and David; and as he knew him to be the king's son-in-law, he wondered to see him come without any attendants.

1SAMUEL 21: 2 David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commanded me a business, and has said to me, 'Let no man know anything of the business about which I send you, and what I have commanded you; and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place.'

Verse 2

The king hath commanded me a business - All said here is an untruth, and could not be dictated by the Spirit of the Lord; but there is no reason to believe that David was under the influence of Divine inspiration at this time. It is well known that from all antiquity it was held no crime to tell a lie, in order to save life. Thus Diphilus: - Ὑπολαμβάνω το ψευδος επι σωτηρια λεγομενον, ουδεν περιποιεισθαι δυσχερες. "I hold it right to tell a lie, in order to procure my personal safety; nothing should be avoided in order to save life."

A heathen may say or sing thus; but no Christian can act thus, and save his soul, though he by doing so may save his life.

1SAMUEL 21: 3 Now therefore what is under your hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever there is present."

1SAMUEL 21: 4 The priest answered David, and said, "There is no common bread under my hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women."

1SAMUEL 21: 5 David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women have been kept from us about these three days. When I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was but a common journey. How much more then today shall their vessels be holy?"

1SAMUEL 21: 6 So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the show bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

Verse 6

So the priest gave him hallowed bread - To this history our Lord alludes, Mar 2:25, in order to show that in cases of absolute necessity a breach of the ritual law was no sin. It was lawful for the priests only to eat the shew-bread; but David and his companions were starving, no other bread could be had at the time, and therefore he and his companions ate of it without sin.

1SAMUEL 21: 7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the best of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.

Verse 7

Detained before the Lord - Probably fulfilling some vow to the Lord, and therefore for a time resident at the tabernacle.

And his name was Doeg - From 1Sam 22:9 we learn that this man betrayed David's secret to Saul, which caused him to destroy the city, and slay eighty-five priests. We learn from its title that the fifty-second Psalm was made on this occasion; but titles are not to be implicitly trusted.

1SAMUEL 21: 8 David said to Ahimelech, "Isn't there here under your hand spear or sword? For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

1SAMUEL 21: 9 The priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it; for there is no other except that here." David said, "There is none like that. Give it to me."

Verse 9

The sword of Goliath - It has already been conjectured (see 1 Samuel 17:1-58) that the sword of Goliath was laid up as a trophy in the tabernacle.

1SAMUEL 21: 10 David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

Verse 10

Went to Achish the king of Gath - This was the worst place to which he could have gone: it was the very city of Goliath, whom he had slain, and whose sword he now wore; and he soon found, from the conversation of the servants of Achish, that his life was in the most imminent danger in this place.

1SAMUEL 21: 11 The servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David the king of the land? Didn't they sing one to another about him in dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands?'"

1SAMUEL 21: 12 David laid up these words in his heart, and was very afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

1SAMUEL 21: 13 He changed his behaviour before them, and pretended to be mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down on his beard.

Verse 13

And he changed his behavior - Some imagine David was so terrified at the danger to which he was now exposed, that he was thrown into a kind of frenzy, accompanied with epileptic fits. This opinion is countenanced by the Septuagint, who render the passage thus: *Ιδου ιδετε ανδρα επιλητον;* "Behold, ye see an epileptic man. Why have ye introduced him to me?" *Μη ελαττουμαι επιληπτων εγω;* "Have I any need of epileptics, that ye have brought him to have his fits before me,

(επιληπτευσθαι προς με?) It is worthy of remark, that the spittle falling upon the beard, i.e., slavering or frothing at the mouth, is a genuine concomitant of an epileptic fit.

If this translation be allowed, it will set the conduct of David in a clearer point of view than the present translation does. But others think the whole was a feigned conduct, and that he acted the part of a lunatic or madman in order to get out of the hands of Achish and his courtiers. Many vindicate this conduct of David; but if mocking be catching, according to the proverb, he who feigns himself to be mad may, through the just judgment of God, become so. I dare not be the apologist of insincerity or lying. Those who wish to look farther into this subject may consult Dr. Chandler, Mr. Saurin, and Ortlob, in the first volume of Dissertations, at the end of the Dutch edition of the Critici Sacri.

1SAMUEL 21: 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me?"

1SAMUEL 21: 15 Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

Verse 15

Shall this fellow come into my house? - I will not take into my service a man who is liable to so grievous a disease. Chandler, who vindicates David's feigning himself, mad, concludes thus: "To deceive the deceiver is in many instances meritorious, in none criminal. And what so likely to deceive as the very reverse of that character which they had so misconstrued? He was undone as a wise man, he had a chance to escape as a madman; he tried, and the experiment succeeded." I confess I can neither feel the force nor the morality of this. Deceit and hypocrisy can never be pleasing in the sight of God.

1SAMUEL 22: 1 David therefore departed there, and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him.

David flees to the cave of Adullam, where he is joined by four hundred men of various descriptions, 1Sam 22:1, 1Sam 22:2. He goes afterwards to Moab; and by the advice of the prophet Gad, to the forest of Hareth, 1Sam 22:3-5. Saul, suspecting his servants of infidelity, upbraids them, 1Sam 22:6-8. Doeg informs him of David's coming to Nob; of his being entertained by Ahimelech; on which Saul slays Ahimelech and all the priests, to the number of eighty-five, and destroys the city of Nob, 1Sam 22:9-19. Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, only escapes; he joins with David, by whom he is assured of protection, 1Sam 22:20-23.

Verse 1

The cave Adullam - This was in the tribe of Judah, and, according to Eusebius and Jerome, ten miles eastward of what they call Eleutheropolis.

1SAMUEL 22: 2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented, gathered themselves to him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Verse 2

And every one that was in distress - debt - discontented - It is very possible that these several disaffected and exceptionable characters might at first have supposed that David, unjustly persecuted, would be glad to avail himself of their assistance that he might revenge himself upon Saul, and so they in the mean time might profit by plunder, etc. But if this were their design they were greatly disappointed, for David never made any improper use of them. They are never found plundering or murdering; on the contrary, they always appear under good discipline, and are only employed in services of a beneficent nature, and in defense of their country. Whatever they were before they came to David, we find that he succeeded in civilizing them, and making profitable to the state those who were before unprofitable. It is not necessary to strain the words of the original in order to prove that these were oppressed people, and not exceptionable characters, as some have done.

1SAMUEL 22: 3 David went there to Mizpeh of Moab, and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come out with you, until I know what God will do for me."

Verse 3

He said unto the king of Moab - David could not trust his parents within the reach of Saul, and he found it very inconvenient to them to be obliged to go through all the fatigues of a military life, and therefore begs the king of Moab to give them shelter. The king of Moab, being one of Saul's enemies, would be the more ready to oblige a person from whom he might at least expect friendship, if not considerable services.

1SAMUEL 22: 4 He brought them before the king of Moab; and they lived with him all the while that David was in the stronghold.

1SAMUEL 22: 5 The prophet Gad said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold. Depart, and go into the land of Judah."

Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.

Verse 5

Get thee into the land of Judah - Gad saw that in this place alone he could find safety.

1SAMUEL 22: 6 Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.

Verse 6

Saul abode in Gibeah - Saul and his men were in pursuit of David, and had here, as is the general custom in the East, encamped on a height, for so Ramah should be translated, as in the margin. His spear, the ensign of power (see on 1Sam 18:11 (note)), was at hand, that is stuck in the ground where he rested, which was the mark to the soldiers that there was their general's tent.

And all his servants were standing about him - That is, they were encamped around him, or perhaps here there is a reference to a sort of council of war called by Saul for the purpose of delivering the speech recorded in the following verses.

1SAMUEL 22: 7 Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds,

1SAMUEL 22: 8 that all of you have conspired against me, and there is no one who discloses to me when my son makes a treaty with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me, or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

Verse 8

There is none that showeth me - He conjectured that Jonathan had made a league with David to dethrone him, and he accuses them of disloyalty for not making the discovery of this unnatural treason. Now it was impossible for any of them to show what did not exist, no such league having ever been made between David and Jonathan.

1SAMUEL 22: 9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

Verse 9

Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul - In 1Sam 21:7 he is said to be the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul, and the Septuagint intimate that he was over the mules of Saul. Probably he was what we call the king's equery or groom.

1SAMUEL 22: 10 He inquired of the LORD for him, gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

Verse 10

And he inquired of the Lord for him - This circumstance is not related in history; but it is probably true, as David would most naturally wish to know where to direct his steps in this very important crisis.

1SAMUEL 22: 11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

1SAMUEL 22: 12 Saul said, "Hear now, you son of Ahitub." He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

1SAMUEL 22: 13 Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread, and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

1SAMUEL 22: 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, "Who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into your council, and is honourable in your house?"

Verse 14

And who is so faithful - The word נאמן neeman, which we here translate faithful, is probably the name of an officer. See the note on Num 12:7.

1SAMUEL 22: 15 Have I today begun to inquire of God for him? Be it far from me! Don't let the king impute anything to his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for your servant knows nothing of all this, less or more."

Verse 15

Did I then begin to inquire of God - He probably means that his inquiring now for David was no new thing, having often done so before, and without ever being informed it was either wrong in itself, or displeasing to the king. Nor is it likely that Ahimelech knew of any disagreement between Saul and David. He knew him to be the king's son-in-law, and he treated him as such.

1SAMUEL 22: 16 The king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father's house."

1SAMUEL 22: 17 The king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn, and kill the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and didn't disclose it to me." But the servants of the king wouldn't put out their hand to fall on the priests of the LORD.

Verse 17

But the servants of the king would not - They dared to disobey the commands of the king in a case of such injustice, inhumanity, and irreligion.

1SAMUEL 22: 18 The king said to Doeg, "Turn and attack the priests!" Doeg the Edomite turned, and he attacked the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five people who wore a linen ephod.

Verse 18

And Doeg - fell upon the priests - A ruthless Edomite, capable of any species of iniquity.

Fourscore and five persons - The Septuagint read τριακοσιους και πεντε ανδρας, three hundred and five men; and Josephus has three hundred and eighty-five men. Probably the eighty-five were priests; the three hundred, the families of the priests; three hundred and eighty-five being the whole population of Nob.

That did wear a linen ephod - That is, persons who did actually administer, or had a right to administer, in sacred things. The linen ephod was the ordinary clothing of the priests.

1SAMUEL 22: 19 He struck Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing babies, and cattle and donkeys and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

Verse 19

And Nob - smote he with the edge of the sword - This is one of the worst acts in the life of Saul; his malice was implacable, and his wrath was cruel, and there is no motive of justice or policy by which such a barbarous act can be justified.

1SAMUEL 22: 20 One of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

Verse 20

Abiathar, escaped - This man carried with him his sacerdotal garments, as we find from 1Sam 23:6, 1Sam 23:9.

1SAMUEL 22: 21 Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

1SAMUEL 22: 22 David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of all the persons of your father's house.

Verse 22

I knew it that day - When I saw Doeg there, I suspected he would make the matter known to Saul.

I have occasioned the death of all the persons - I have been the innocent cause of their destruction.

1SAMUEL 22: 23 Stay with me, don't be afraid; for he who seeks my life seeks your life. For with me you shall be in safeguard."

Verse 23

He that seeketh my life seeketh thy life - The enmity of Saul is directed against thee as well as against me, and thou canst have no safety but in being closely attached to me; and I will defend thee even at the risk of my own life. This he was bound in duty and conscience to do.

1SAMUEL 23: 1 David was told, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are robbing the threshing floors."

David succours Keilah, besieged by the Philistines; defeats them, and delivers the city, 1Sam 23:1-6. Saul, hearing that David was at Keilah, determines to come and seize him, 1Sam 23:7, 1Sam 23:8. David inquires of the Lord concerning the fidelity of the men of Keilah towards him; is informed that if he stays in the city, the men of Keilah will betray him to Saul, 1Sam 23:9-12. David and his men escape from the city, and come to the wilderness of Ziph, 1Sam 23:13-15. Jonathan meets David in the wood of Ziph, strengthens his hand in God, and they renew their covenant, 1Sam 23:16-18. The Ziphites endeavor to betray David to Saul, but he and his men escape to Maon, 1Sam 23:19-22. Saul comes to Maon; and having surrounded the mountain on which David and his men were, they must inevitably have fallen into his hands, had not a messenger come to call Saul to the succor of Judah, then invaded by the Philistines, 1Sam 23:25-27. Saul leaves the pursuit of David, and goes to succor the land; and David escapes to En-gedi, 1Sam 23:28, 1Sam 23:29.

Verse 1

The Philistines fight against Keilah - Keilah was a fortified town in the tribe of Judah near to Eleutheropolis, on the road to Hebron.

Rob the threshing-floors - This was an ancient custom of the Philistines, Midianites, and others. See Jdg 6:4. When the corn was ripe and fit to be threshed, and they had collected it at the threshing-floors, which were always in the open field, then their enemies came upon them and spoiled them of the fruits of their harvest.

1SAMUEL 23: 2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and strike these Philistines?" The LORD said to David, "Go strike the Philistines, and save Keilah."

Verse 2

Therefore David inquired of the Lord - In what way David made this inquiry we are not told, but it was probably by means of Abiathar; and therefore I think, with Houbigant that the sixth verse should be read immediately after the first. The adventure mentioned here was truly noble. Had not David loved his country, and been above all motives of private and personal revenge, he would have rejoiced in this invasion of Judah as producing a strong diversion in his favor, and embroiling his inveterate enemy. In most cases a man with David's wrongs would have joined with the enemies of his country, and avenged himself on the author of his adversities; but he thinks of nothing but succouring Keilah, and using his power and influence in behalf of his brethren! This is a rare instance of disinterested heroism.

The Lord said - Go and smite - He might now go with confidence, being assured of success. When God promises success, who need be afraid of the face of any enemy?

1SAMUEL 23: 3 David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

1SAMUEL 23: 4 Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. The LORD answered him, and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."

Verse 4

David inquired of the Lord yet again - This was to satisfy his men, who made the strong objections mentioned in the preceding verse.

1SAMUEL 23: 5 David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their livestock, and killed them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

Verse 5

Brought away their cattle - The forage and spoil which the Philistines had taken, driving the country before them round about Keilah.

1SAMUEL 23: 6 When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, he came down with an ephod in his hand.

Verse 6

Came down with an ephod - I think this verse should come immediately after 1Sam 23:1 (note).

1SAMUEL 23: 7 It was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that has gates and bars."

1SAMUEL 23: 8 Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

Verse 8

Saul called all the people together - That is, all the people of that region or district, that they might scour the country, and hunt out David from all his haunts.

1SAMUEL 23: 9 David knew that Saul was devising mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

Verse 9

Bring hither the ephod - It seems as if David himself, clothed with the ephod, had consulted the Lord; and 1Sam 23:10-12 contain the words of the consultation, and the Lord's answer. But see on 1Sam 23:2 (note).

1SAMUEL 23: 10 Then David said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

1SAMUEL 23: 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, the God of Israel, I beg you, tell your servant." The LORD said, "He will come down."

Verse 11

In these verses we find the following questions and answers: - David said, Will Saul come down to Keilah? And the Lord said, He will come down. Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. In this short history we find an ample proof that there is such a thing as contingency in human affairs; that is, God has poised many things between a possibility of being and not being, leaving it to the will of the creature to turn the scale. In the above answers of the Lord the following conditions were evidently implied: - If thou continue in Keilah, Saul will certainly come down; and If Saul come down, the men of Keilah will deliver thee into his hands. Now though the text positively asserts that Saul would come to Keilah, yet he did not come; and that the men of Keilah would deliver David into his hand, yet David was not thus delivered to him. And why? Because David left Keilah; but had he stayed, Saul would have come down, and the men of Keilah would have betrayed David. We may observe from this that, however positive a declaration of God may appear that refers to any thing in which man is to be employed, the prediction is not intended to suspend or destroy free agency, but always comprehends in it some particular condition.

1SAMUEL 23: 12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" The LORD said, "They will deliver you up."

1SAMUEL 23: 13 Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went wherever they could go. It was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he gave up going there.

1SAMUEL 23: 14 David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God didn't deliver him into his hand.

Verse 14

Wilderness of Ziph - Ziph was a city in the southern part of Judea, not far from Carmel.

1SAMUEL 23: 15 David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood.

1SAMUEL 23: 16 Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the woods, and strengthened his hand in God.

Verse 16

And Jonathan - strengthened his hand in God - It is probable that there was always a secret intercourse between David and Jonathan, and that by this most trusty friend he was apprised of the various designs of Saul to take away his life. As Jonathan well knew that God had appointed David to the kingdom, he came now to encourage him to trust in the Most High, and to assure him that the hand of Saul should not prevail against him; and at this interview they renewed their covenant of friendship. Now all this Jonathan could do, consistently with his duty to his father and his king. He knew that David had delivered the kingdom; he saw that his father was ruling unconstitutionally; and he knew that God had appointed David to succeed Saul. This he knew would come about in the order of Providence; and neither he nor David took one step to hasten the time. Jonathan, by his several interferences, prevented his father from imbruing his hands in innocent blood: a more filial and a more loyal part he could not have acted; and therefore, in his attachment to David, he is wholly free of blame.

1SAMUEL 23: 17 He said to him, "Don't be afraid; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you; and you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you; and that also Saul my father knows."

1SAMUEL 23: 18 They both made a covenant before the LORD: and David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his house.

1SAMUEL 23: 19 Then the Ziphites came up to Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doesn't David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert?"

1SAMUEL 23: 20 Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him up into the king's hand."

1SAMUEL 23: 21 Saul said, "You are blessed by the LORD; for you have had compassion on me.

1SAMUEL 23: 22 Please go make yet more sure, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who has seen him there; for it is told me that he deals very subtly.

1SAMUEL 23: 23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides himself, and come again to me with certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall happen, if he is in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."

1SAMUEL 23: 24 They arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert.

1SAMUEL 23: 25 Saul and his men went to seek him. When David was told, he went down to the rock, and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard that, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon.

Verse 25

The wilderness of Maon - Maon was a mountainous district in the most southern parts of Judah. Calmet supposes it to be the city of Menois, which Eusebius places in the vicinity of Gaza; and the Maenaemi Castrum, which the Theodosian code places near to Beersheba.

1SAMUEL 23: 26 Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men surrounded David and his men to take them.

Verse 26

Saul went on this side of the mountain - Evidently not knowing that David and his men were on the other side.

1SAMUEL 23: 27 But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come; for the Philistines have made a raid on the land!"

Verse 27

There came a messenger - See the providence of God exerted for the salvation of David's life! David and his men are almost surrounded by Saul and his army, and on the point of being taken, when a messenger arrives and informs Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land! But behold the workings of Providence! God had already prepared the invasion of the land by the Philistines, and kept Saul ignorant how much David was in his power; but as his advanced guards and scouts must have discovered him in a very short time, the messenger arrives just at the point of time to prevent it. Here David was delivered by God, and in such a manner too as rendered the Divine interposition visible.

1SAMUEL 23: 28 So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela Hammahlekoth.

Verse 28

They called that place Sela-hammah-lekoth - That is, the rock of divisions; because, says the Targum, the heart of the king was divided to go hither and thither. Here Saul was obliged to separate himself from David, in order to go and oppose the invading Philistines.

1SAMUEL 23: 29 David went up from there, and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

Verse 29

Strong holds at En-gedi - En-gedi was situated near to the western coast of the Dead Sea, not far from Jeshimon: it literally signifies the kid's well, and was celebrated for its vineyards, Sol 1:14. It was also celebrated for its balm. It is reported to be a mountainous territory, filled with caverns; and consequently proper for David in his present circumstances.

How threshing-floors were made among the ancients, we learn from Cato, De Re Rustica, chap. 91, and 129. And as I believe it would be an excellent method to make the most durable and efficient barn-floors, I will set it down: - *Aream sic facito. Locum ubi facies confodito; postea amurca conspergito bene, sinitoque combibat. Postea comminuito glebas bene. Deinde coaequato, et paviculis verberato. Postea denuo amurca conspergito, sinitoque arescat. Si ita feceris neque formicae nocebunt, neque herbae nascentur: et cum pluerit, lutum non erit.* "Make a threshing-floor thus: dig the place thoroughly; afterwards sprinkle it well with the lees of oil, and give it time to soak in. Then beat the clods very fine, make it level, and beat it well down with a paver's rammer. When this is done, sprinkle it afresh with the oil lees, and let it dry. This being done, the mice cannot burrow in it, no grass can grow through it, nor will the rain dissolve the surface to raise mud."

The directions of Columella are nearly the same; but as there are some differences of importance, I will subjoin his account: -

Area quoque si terrena erit, ut sit ad trituram satis habilis, primum radatur, deinde confodiatur, permixtis paleis cum amurca, quae salem non accepit, extergatur; nam ea res a populatione murium formicarumque frumenta defendit. Tum aequare paviculis, vel molari lapide condensetur, et rursus subjectis paleis inculcetur, atque ita solibus siccanda relinquantur.

De Re Rustica, lib. ii., c. 20. "If you would have a threshing-floor made on the open ground, that it may be proper for the purpose, first pare off the surface, then let it be well digged, and mixed with lees of oil, unsalted, with which chaff has been mingled, for this prevents the mice and ants from burrowing and injuring the corn. Then level it with a paver's rammer, or press it down with a millstone. Afterwards scatter chaff over it, tread it down, and leave it to be dried by the sun."

This may be profitably used within doors, as well as in the field; and a durable and solid floor is a matter of very great consequence to the husbandman, as it prevents the flour from being injured by sand or dust.

1SAMUEL 24: 1 When Saul was returned from following the Philistines, it was told him, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of En Gedi."

Saul is informed that David is at En-gedi, and goes to seek him with three thousand men, 1Sam 24:1, 1Sam 24:2. He goes into a cave to repose, where David and his men lay hid; who, observing this, exhort David to take away his life: David refuses, and contents himself with privily cutting off Saul's skirt, 1Sam 24:3-7. When Saul departed, not knowing what was done, David called after him; showed him that his life had been in his power; expostulates strongly with him; and appeals to God, the Judge of his innocence, 1Sam 24:8-15. Saul confesses David's uprightness, acknowledges his obligation to him for sparing his life; and causes him to swear that, when he should come to the kingdom, he would not destroy his seed, 1Sam 24:17-21. Saul returns home, and David and his men stay in the hold, 1Sam 24:22.

Verse 1

Saul was returned - It is very probable that it was only a small marauding party that had made an excursion in the Israelitish borders, and this invasion was soon suppressed.

1SAMUEL 24: 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the rocks of the wild goats.

Verse 2

Rocks of the wild goats - The original (צורי היעלים) *tsurey haiyeelim* is variously understood. The Vulgate makes a paraphrase: *Super abruptissimas petras quae solis ibicibus perviae sunt*; "On the most precipitous rocks over which the ibexes alone can travel." The Targum: the caverns of the rocks. The Septuagint make the original a proper name; for out of צרוי היעלים *tsurey haiyeelim*, they make Σαδδαιεμ *Saddaiem*, and in some copies Αειαμειν *Aeiamein*, which are evidently corruptions of the Hebrew.

1SAMUEL 24: 3 He came to the sheep pens by the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost parts of the cave.

Verse 3

The sheep-cotes - Caves in the rocks, in which it is common, even to the present time, for shepherds and their flocks to lodge. According to Strabo there are caverns in Syria, one of which is capable of containing four thousand men: Ὡν ἐν και τετρακιςχιλι ο υ ς ανθρωπους δεξασθαι δυναμενον; lib. xvi. p. 1096. Edit. 1707.

Saul went in to cover his feet - Perhaps this phrase signifies exactly what the Vulgate has rendered it, *ut purparet ventrem*. The Septuagint, the Targum, and the Arabic understand it in the same way. It is likely that, when he had performed this act of necessity, he lay down to repose himself, and it was while he was asleep that David cut off the skirt of his robe. It is strange that Saul was not aware that there might be men lying in wait in such a place; and the rabbins have invented a most curious conceit to account for Saul's security: "God, foreseeing that Saul would come to this cave, caused a spider to weave her web over the mouth of it, which, when Saul perceived, he took for granted that no person had lately been there, and consequently he entered it without suspicion." This may be literally true; and we know that even a spider in the hand of God may be the instrument of a great salvation. This is a Jewish tradition, and one of the most elegant and instructive in their whole collection.

David and his men remained in the sides of the cave - This is no hyperbole; we have not only the authority of Strabo as above mentioned, but we have the authority of the most accurate travelers, to attest the fact of the vast capacity of caves in the East.

Dr. Pococke observes: "Beyond the valley (of Tekoa) there is a very large grotto, which the Arabs call El Maamah, a hiding place; the high rocks on each side of the valley are almost perpendicular, and the way to the grotto is by a terrace formed in the rock, which is very narrow. There are two entrances into it; we went by the farthest, which leads by a narrow passage into a large grotto, the rock being supported by great natural pillars; the top of it rises in several parts like domes; the grotto is perfectly dry. There is a tradition that the people of the country, to the number of thirty thousand, retired into this grotto to avoid a bad air. This place is so strong that one would imagine it to be one of the strong holds of En-gedi, to which David and his men fled from Saul; and possibly it may be that very cave in which he cut off Saul's skirt, for David and his men might with great ease lie hid there and not be seen by him." - Pococke's Travels, vol. ii., part 1, p. 41.

1SAMUEL 24: 4 The men of David said to him, "Behold, the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly.

Verse 4

And the men of David said - We know not to what promise of God the men of David refer; they perhaps meant no more than to say, "Behold, the Lord hath delivered thine enemy into thy land, now do to him as he wishes to do to thee."

Then David arose - Though I have a high opinion of the character of David, yet the circumstances of the case seem to indicate that he arose to take away the life of Saul, and that it was in reference to this that his heart smote him. It appears that he rose up immediately at the desire of his men to slay his inveterate enemy, and one whom he knew the Lord had rejected; but when about to do it he was prevented by the remonstrance of God in his conscience, and instead of cutting off his head, as he might have done, an act which the laws and usages of war would have justified, he contented himself with cutting off the skirt of his robe; and he did this only to show Saul how much he had been in his power.

1SAMUEL 24: 5 Afterward, David's heart struck him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

1SAMUEL 24: 6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed."

Verse 6

The Lord's anointed - However unworthily Saul was now acting, he had been appointed to his high office by God himself, and he could only be removed by the authority which placed him on the throne. Even David, who knew he was appointed to reign in his stead, and whose life Saul had often sought to destroy, did not conceive that he had any right to take away his life; and he grounds the reasons of his forbearance on this - He is my master, I am his subject. He is the Lord's anointed, and therefore sacred as to his person in the Lord's sight. It is an awful thing to kill a king, even the most untoward, when he has once been constitutionally appointed to the throne. No experiment of this kind has ever succeeded; the Lord abhors king killing. Had David taken away the life of Saul at this time, he would, in the sight of God, have been a murderer.

1SAMUEL 24: 7 So David checked his men with these words, and didn't allow them to rise against Saul. Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

Verse 7

Suffered them not to rise against Saul - As he could restrain them, it was his duty to do so; had he connived at their killing him, David would have been the murderer. In praying for the king we call God the only Ruler of princes, for this simple reason, that their authority is the highest among men, and next to that of God himself; hence he alone is above them. We find this sentiment well expressed by an elegant poet: -

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,

Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

Horace, Odar. lib. iii., Od. i., ver. 5.

Kings are supreme over their own subjects;

Jove is supreme over kings themselves.

1SAMUEL 24: 8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!"

When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth, and showed respect.

1SAMUEL 24: 9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to men's words, saying, 'Behold, David seeks your hurt?'"

1SAMUEL 24: 10 Behold, this day your eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered you today into my hand in the cave. Some urged me to kill you; but I spared you; and I said, I will not stretch out my hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.

1SAMUEL 24: 11 Moreover, my father, behold, yes, see the skirt of your robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of your robe, and didn't kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor disobedience in my hand, and I have not sinned against you, though you hunt for my life to take it.

1SAMUEL 24: 12 May the LORD judge between me and you, and may the LORD avenge me of you; but my hand shall not be on you.

Verse 12

The Lord judge between me and thee - Appeals of this kind to God are the common refuge of the poor and oppressed people. So also among the Hindoos: God will judge between us. Mother Kalee will judge. Sometimes this springs from a consciousness of innocence, and sometimes from a desire of revenge.

1SAMUEL 24: 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness;' but my hand shall not be on you.

Verse 13

Wickedness proceeded from the wicked - This proverb may be thus understood: He that does a wicked act, gives proof thereby that he is a wicked man. From him who is wicked, wickedness will proceed; he who is wicked will add one iniquity to another. Had I conspired to dethrone thee, I should have taken thy life when it was in my power, and thus added wickedness to wickedness.

1SAMUEL 24: 14 Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea?

Verse 14

After a dead dog - A term used among the Hebrews to signify the most sovereign contempt; see 2Sam 16:9. One utterly incapable of making the least resistance against Saul, and the troops of Israel. The same idea is expressed in the term flea. The Targum properly expresses both thus: one who is weak, one who is contemptible.

1SAMUEL 24: 15 May the LORD therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of your hand."

Verse 15

The Lord therefore be judge - Let God determine who is guilty.

1SAMUEL 24: 16 It came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

Verse 16

My son David? - David had called Saul his master, lord, and king. Saul accosts him here as his son, to show that he felt perfectly reconciled to him, and wished to receive him as formerly into his family.

1SAMUEL 24: 17 He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have done good to me, whereas I have done evil to you.

1SAMUEL 24: 18 You have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, because when the LORD had delivered me up into your hand, you didn't kill me.

1SAMUEL 24: 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away unharmed? Therefore may the LORD reward you good for that which you have done to me this day.

Verse 19

If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? - Or rather, Will he send him in a good way? But Houbigant translates the whole clause thus: *Si quis, inimicum suum reperiens, dimittit eum in viam bonam, redditur ei adomino sua merces;* "If a man, finding his enemy, send him by a good way, the Lord will give him his reward." The words which are here put in italic, are not in the Hebrew text, but they are found, at least in the sense, in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, and seem necessary to complete the sense; therefore, adds Saul, the Lord will reward thee good for what thou hast done unto me.

1SAMUEL 24: 20 Now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

Verse 20

I know well that thou shalt surely be king - Hebrew, Reigning, thou shalt reign. He knew this before; and yet he continued to pursue him with the most deadly hatred.

1SAMUEL 24: 21 Swear now therefore to me by the LORD, that you will not cut off my seed after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."

Verse 21

Swear now - Saul knew that an oath would bind David, though it was insufficient to bind himself; see 1Sam 19:6. He had sworn to his son Jonathan that David should not be slain; and yet sought by all means in his power to destroy him!

1SAMUEL 24: 22 David swore to Saul. Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Verse 22

Saul went home - Confounded at a sense of his own baseness, and overwhelmed with a sense of David's generosity.

David and his men gat them up unto the hold - Went up to Mizpeh, according to the Syriac and Arabic. David could not trust Saul with his life; the utmost he could expect from him was that he should cease from persecuting him; but even this was too much to expect from a man of such a character as Saul. He was no longer under the Divine guidance; an evil spirit had full dominion over his soul. What God fills not, the devil will occupy.

1SAMUEL 25: 1 Samuel died; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

The death of Samuel, 1Sam 25:1. The history of Nabal, and his churlishness towards David and his men, 1Sam 25:2-12. David, determining to punish him, is appeased by Abigail, Nabal's wife, vv. 13-35. Abigail returns, and tells Nabal of the danger that he has escaped: who on hearing it is thunderstruck, and dies in ten days, 1Sam 25:36-38 David, hearing of this, sends and takes Abigail to wife, 1Sam 25:39-42. He marries also Ahinoam of Jezreel, Saul having given Michal, David's wife, to Phalti, the son of Laish, 1Sam 25:43, 1Sam 25:44.

Verse 1

And Samuel died - Samuel lived, as is supposed, about ninety-eight years; was in the government of Israel before Saul from sixteen to twenty years; and ceased to live, according to the Jews, about four months before the death of Saul; but according to Calmet and others, two years. But all this is very uncertain; how long he died before Saul, cannot be ascertained. For some account of his character, see the end of the chapter, 1Sam 25:44 (note).

Buried him in his house - Probably this means, not his dwelling-house, but the house or tomb he had made for his sepulture; and thus the Syriac and Arabic seem to have understood it.

David - went down to the wilderness of Paran - This was either on the confines of Judea, or in Arabia Petraea, between the mountains of Judah and Mount Sinai; it is evident from the history that it was not far from Carmel, on the south confines of Judah.

1SAMUEL 25: 2 There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

1SAMUEL 25: 3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail; and the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful face: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

Verse 3

The name of the man was Nabal - The word נָבַל nabal signifies to be foolish, base, or villanous; and hence the Latin word nebulo, knave, is supposed to be derived.

The name of his wife Abigail - The joy or exultation of my father. A woman of sense and beauty, married to the boor mentioned above, probably because he was rich. Many women have been thus sacrificed.

Of the house of Caleb - והוא כלבי vehu Chalibbi, "he was a Calebite." But as the word caleb signifies a dog, the Septuagint have understood it as implying a man of a canine disposition, and translate it thus, καὶ ὁ ἀνθρώπος κυνικός, he was a doggish man. It is understood in the same way by the Syriac and Arabic.

1SAMUEL 25: 4 David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

1SAMUEL 25: 5 David sent ten young men, and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name.

1SAMUEL 25: 6 You shall tell him, 'Long life to you! Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.

Verse 6

Peace be both to thee - This is the ancient form of sending greetings to a friend: Peace to Thee, peace to thy Household, and peace to all that Thou Hast. That is, May both thyself, thy family, and all that pertain unto thee, be in continual prosperity!

Perhaps David, by this salutation, wished Nabal to understand that he had acted so towards him and his property that nothing had been destroyed, and that all had been protected; see 1Sam 25:15-17.

1SAMUEL 25: 7 Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds have now been with us, and we didn't hurt them, neither was there anything missing from them, all the while they were in Carmel.

Verse 7

Thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not - It is most evident that David had a claim upon Nabal, for very essential services performed to his herdmen at Carmel. He not only did them no hurt, and took none of their flocks for the supply of his necessities, but he protected them from the rapacity of others; they were a Wall unto us, said Nabal's servants, both by night and day. In those times, and to the present day, wandering hordes of Arabs, under their several chiefs, think they have a right to exact contributions of provisions, etc., wherever they come; David had done nothing of this kind, but protected them against those who would.

1SAMUEL 25: 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let the young men find favour in your eyes; for we come in a good day. Please give whatever comes to your hand, to your servants, and to your son David.”

Verse 8

Whatsoever cometh to thine hand - As thou art making a great feast for thy servants, and I and my men, as having essentially served thee, would naturally come in for a share were we present; send a portion by my ten young men, for me and my men, that we also may rejoice with you. Certainly this was a very reasonable and a very modest request. This mode of address is not unfrequent among the Hindoos: "O father, fill the belly of thy son; he is in distress."

1SAMUEL 25: 9 When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

1SAMUEL 25: 10 Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants who break away from their masters these days.

Verse 10

Who is David? - Nabal's answer shows the surliness of his disposition. It was unjust to refuse so reasonable a request; and the manner of the refusal was highly insulting. It is true what his own servants said of him, He is such a son of Belial that one cannot speak to him, 1Sam 25:17.

1SAMUEL 25: 11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men who I don't know where they come from?"

1SAMUEL 25: 12 So David's young men turned on their way, and went back, and came and told him according to all these words.

1SAMUEL 25: 13 David said to his men, "Every man put on his sword!"

Every man put on his sword. David also put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David; and two hundred stayed by the baggage.

1SAMUEL 25: 14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to Greet our master; and he railed at them.

1SAMUEL 25: 15 But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we went with them, when we were in the fields.

1SAMUEL 25: 16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

1SAMUEL 25: 17 Now therefore know and consider what you will do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house; for he is such a worthless fellow that one can't speak to him."

1SAMUEL 25: 18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.

Verse 18

Took two hundred loaves - The Eastern bread is ordinarily both thin and small; and answers to our cakes.

Two bottles of wine - That is, two goat-skins full. The hide is pulled off the animal without ripping up; the places where the legs, etc., were are sewed up, and then the skin appears one large bag. This is properly the Scripture and Eastern bottle. There is one such before me.

Five sheep - Not one sheep to one hundred men.

Clusters of raisins - Raisins dried in the sun.

Cakes of figs - Figs cured, and then pressed together. We receive the former in jars, and the latter in small barrels; and both articles answer the description here given.

Now all this provision was a matter of little worth, and, had it been granted in the first instance, it would have perfectly satisfied David, and secured the good offices of him and his men. Abigail showed both her wisdom and prudence in making this provision. Out of three thousand sheep Nabal could not have missed five; and as this claim was made only in the time of sheep-shearing, it could not have been made more than once in the year: and it certainly was a small price for such important services.

1SAMUEL 25: 19 She said to her young men, "Go on before me. Behold, I come after you." But she didn't tell her husband, Nabal.

1SAMUEL 25: 20 It was so, as she rode on her donkey, and came down by the covert of the mountain, that behold, David and his men came down toward her; and she met them.

Verse 20

She came down - and David - came down - David was coming down Mount Paran; Abigail was coming down from Carmel. - Calmet.

1SAMUEL 25: 21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him. He has returned me evil for good.

1SAMUEL 25: 22 God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that belongs to him by the morning light so much as one who urinates on a wall."

Verse 22

So and more also do God - Nothing can justify this part of David's conduct. Whatever his provocation might have been, he had suffered, properly speaking, no wrongs; and his resolution to cut off a whole innocent family, because Nabal had acted ungenerously towards him, was abominable and cruel, not to say diabolic. He who attempts to vindicate this conduct of David is, at least constructively, a foe to God and truth. David himself condemns this most rash and unwarrantable conduct, and thanks God for having prevented him from doing this evil, 1Sam 25:32, etc.

Any that pisseth against the wall - This expression certainly means either men or dogs, and should be thus translated, if I leave, any male; and this will answer both to men and dogs, and the offensive mode of expression be avoided. I will not enter farther into the subject: Bochart and Calmet have done enough, and more than enough; and in the plainest language too.

1SAMUEL 25: 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried, and alighted from her donkey, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.

1SAMUEL 25: 24 She fell at his feet, and said, "On me, my lord, on me be the iniquity; and please let your handmaid speak in your ears. Hear the words of your handmaid.

1SAMUEL 25: 25 Please don't let my lord regard this worthless fellow, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I, your handmaid, didn't see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.

1SAMUEL 25: 26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has withheld you from blood guiltiness, and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now therefore let your enemies, and those who seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

1SAMUEL 25: 27 Now this present which your servant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord.

1SAMUEL 25: 28 Please forgive the trespass of your handmaid. For the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD; and evil shall not be found in you all your days.

Verse 28

And evil hath not been found in thee - Thou hast not committed any act of this kind hitherto.

1SAMUEL 25: 29 Though men may rise up to pursue you, and to seek your soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD your God. He will sling out the souls of your enemies, as from the hollow of a sling.

Verse 29

Shall be bound in the bundle of life - Thy life shall be precious in the sight of the Lord: it shall be found in the bundle of life; it shall be supported by Him who is the Spring and Fountain of life, and ever be found united to those who are most favored by the Almighty.

Them shall he sling out - Far from being bound and kept together in union with the Fountain of life, he will cast them off from himself as a stone is cast out from a sling. This betokens both force and violence.

1SAMUEL 25: 30 It shall come to pass, when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and shall have appointed you prince over Israel,

1SAMUEL 25: 31 that this shall be no grief to you, nor offence of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. When the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid."

1SAMUEL 25: 32 David said to Abigail, "Blessed is the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!

1SAMUEL 25: 33 Blessed is your discretion, and blessed are you, that have kept me this day from blood guiltiness, and from avenging myself with my own hand.

1SAMUEL 25: 34 For indeed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has withheld me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely there wouldn't have been left to Nabal by the morning light so much as one who urinates on a wall."

1SAMUEL 25: 35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him: and he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. Behold, I have listened to your voice, and have granted your request."

1SAMUEL 25: 36 Abigail came to Nabal; and behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Therefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

1SAMUEL 25: 37 In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

Verse 37

His heart died within him, and he became as a stone - He was thunderstruck, and was so terrified at the apprehension of what he had escaped, that the fear overcame his mind, he became insensible to all things around him, probably refused all kinds of nourishment, and died in ten days.

1SAMUEL 25: 38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal, so that he died.

1SAMUEL 25: 39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed is the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from evil. The LORD has returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head." David sent and spoke concerning Abigail, to take her to him as wife.

Verse 39

To take her to him to wife - It is likely that he had heard before this that Saul, to cut off all his pretensions to the throne, had married Michal to Phalti; and this justified David in taking Abigail or any other woman; and, according to the then custom, it was not unlawful for David to take several wives. By his marriage with Abigail, it is probable he became possessed of all Nabal's property in Carmel and Maon.

1SAMUEL 25: 40 When the servants of David had come to Abigail to Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you, to take you to him as wife."

1SAMUEL 25: 41 She arose, and bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, "Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

1SAMUEL 25: 42 Abigail hurried, and arose, and rode on a donkey, with five ladies of hers who followed her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

1SAMUEL 25: 43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they both became his wives.

Verse 43

David also took Ahinoam - Many think that this was his wife before he took Abigail; she is always mentioned first in the list of his wives, and she was the mother of his eldest son Ammon.

Of Jezreel - There were two places of this name; one in the tribe of Issachar, the other in the tribe of Judah.

1SAMUEL 25: 44 Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

Verse 44

Phalti - Called also Phaltiel, 2Sam 3:16.

Of Gallim - Probably a city or town in the tribe of Benjamin; see Isa 10:30. It is likely therefore that Saul chose this man because he was of his own tribe.

In this chapter we have the account of the death of Samuel, who from his infancy had been devoted to God and the service of his people. He was born at a time in which religion was at a very low ebb in Israel, as there were but very few prophets, and no open vision - scarcely any revelation from God. Those who might be called prophets had no regular ministry of God's word; they were extraordinary messengers sent for a particular purpose, and not continued in the work any longer than the time necessary to deliver their extraordinary message.

Samuel is supposed to have been the first who established academies or schools for prophets, at least we do not hear of them before his time; and it is granted that they continued till the Babylonish captivity. This was a wise institution, and no doubt contributed much to the maintenance of pure religion, and the prevention of idolatry among that people.

Samuel reformed many abuses in the Jewish state, and raised it to a pitch of political consequence to which it had been long a stranger. He was very zealous for the honor of God, and supported the rights of pure religion, of the king, and of the people, against all encroachments. He was chief magistrate in Israel before the appointment of a king, and afterwards he acted as prime minister to Saul, though without being chosen or formally appointed to that station. Indeed, he seems on the whole to have been the civil and ecclesiastical governor, Saul being little more than general of the Israelitish forces.

In his office of minister in the state, he gave the brightest example of zeal, diligence, inflexible integrity, and uncorruptedness. He reprov'd both the people and the king for their transgressions, with a boldness which nothing but his sense of the Divine authority could inspire, and yet he tempered it with a sweetness which showed the interest he felt in their welfare, and the deep and distressing concern he felt for their back-slidings and infidelities.

He was incorrupt; he received no man's bribe; he had no pension from the state; he enriched none of his relatives from the public purse; left no private debts to be discharged by his country. He was among the Hebrews what Aristides is said to have been among the Greeks, so poor at his death, though a minister of state, that he did not leave property enough to bury him. Justice was by him duly and impartially administered, and oppression and wrong had no existence.

If there ever was a heaven-born minister, it was Samuel; in whose public and private conduct there was no blemish, and whose parallel cannot be found in the ancient or modern history of any country in the universe.

Let ministers of state who have sought for nothing but their own glory, and have increased the public burdens by their improvident expenditure; who have endeavored, by their wordy representations, to dazzle and elude the people, and impose false grandeur in the place of true greatness and solid prosperity; who have oppressed the many, and enriched the worthless few; fall down at the feet of This heaven-born man, and learn, from this immaculate judge of Israel, what a faithful servant to his king, and an incorruptible minister of state, means, and in retiring from their high station, or in going to appear before the judgment-seat of God, see whether, in the presence of their king, and in the face of the thousands of their people, they can boldly say, "Behold, here am I! Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose ass have I seized? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, by the imposition of heavy taxes for the support of needless expenses, and the payment of venal men? Or of whose hand have I taken any bribe to blind my eyes? Scrutinize my conduct, examine the state of my family, compare their present circumstances with what they were previously to my administration, and see if you can find aught in my hands." See 1Sam 12:1, etc.

O, how seldom in the annals of the world, from the assembled heads of the great body politic, can the departing prime minister hear, "Thou hast not defrauded us, thou hast not oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand!" This voice call be heard from Gilgal; but of what other minister can this be spoken but of Samuel the seer, who was the gift of God's mercy to the people of Israel; whose memory was too precious to be intrusted to public monuments, but stands, and alas; almost unique in the Book of God? Of Daniel, and his administration, I shall have occasion to speak elsewhere.

A prime minister, deeply devoted to God and faithful to his king and to his country, is so rare a character in the world, that when he does occur, he should be held up to public admiration. But I have no parallel for Samuel. See the notes on 1 Samuel 12:1-25 (note) and on 1Sam 24:6 (note).

1SAMUEL 26: 1 The Ziphites came to Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doesn't David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert?"

The Ziphites inform Saul of David's hiding place, 1Sam 26:1. Saul, with three thousand men, goes in pursuit of him, 1Sam 26:2, 1Sam 26:3. David sends out spies; and finds where Saul had pitched his camp; and he and Abishai come to the camp by night, find all asleep, and bring away Saul's spear, and the cruse of water that was at his head, 1Sam 26:4-12. David goes to the opposite hill; awakes Abner, captain of Saul's host; chides him for being so careless of his master's life; and calls on Saul to send one of his servants for the spear; and severely chides him for his continued hostility to him, 1Sam 26:13-24. Saul humbles himself to David; promises to persecute him no more; and returns to his own place, 1Sam 26:25.

Verse 1

The Ziphites came - This is the second time that these enemies of David endeavored to throw him into the hands of Saul. See 1Sam 23:19.

1SAMUEL 26: 2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

Verse 2

Three thousand chosen men - Though they knew that David was but six hundred strong, yet Saul thought it was not safe to pursue such an able general with a less force than that mentioned in the text; and, that he might the better depend on them, they were all elect or picked men out of the whole of his army.

1SAMUEL 26: 3 Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the way. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

1SAMUEL 26: 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had certainly come.

1SAMUEL 26: 5 David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his army: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped around him.

Verse 5

David arose - As David and his men knew the country, they had many advantages over Saul and his men; and no doubt could often watch them without being discovered.

Saul lay in the trench - The word במעגל bammaegal, which we translate in the trench, and in the margin in the midst of his carriages, is rendered by some in a ring of carriages, and by others in the circle, i.e., which was formed by his troops. Luther himself translates it wagenburg, a fortress formed of wagons or carriages.

As עגל agal signifies any thing round, it may here refer to a round pavilion or tent made for Saul, or else to the form of his camp. The Arabs, to the present day, always form a circle in their encampments, and put their principal officers in the center.

1SAMUEL 26: 6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?" Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

Verse 6

Abishai the son of Zeruiah - She was David's sister; and therefore Abishai and Joab were nephews to David.

1SAMUEL 26: 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay around him.

1SAMUEL 26: 8 Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered up your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore please let me strike him with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time."

Verse 8

God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand - Here Abishai uses the same language as did David's men, when Saul came into the cave at En-gehi, (see 1Sam 24:4, etc.), and David uses the same language in reply.

1SAMUEL 26: 9 David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?"

1SAMUEL 26: 10 David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle and perish.

Verse 10

The Lord shall smite him - He shall die by a stroke of the Divine judgment; or his day shall come to die - he shall die a natural death; which in the course of things must be before mine, and thus I shall get rid of mine enemy; or he shall descend into the battle, and perish - he shall fall by the enemies of his country. These are the three ordinary ways by which man accomplishes, as a hireling, his day. Murder David could not consider to be lawful; this would have been taking the matter out of God's hand, and this David would not do.

1SAMUEL 26: 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head, and the jar of water, and let us go."

1SAMUEL 26: 12 So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head; and they went away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen on them.

Verse 12

David took the spear and the cruse - The spear, we have already seen, was the emblem of power and regal dignity. But it is usual, in Arab camps, for every man to have his lance stuck in the ground beside him, that he may be ready for action in a moment. The cruse of water resembled, in some measure, the canteens of our soldiers. In such a climate, where water was always scarce, it was necessary for each man to carry a little with him, to refresh him on his march.

A deep sleep from the Lord - It is the same word which is used, Gen 2:21, to describe the sleep which God caused to fall upon Adam, when he formed Eve out of his side.

1SAMUEL 26: 13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them;

1SAMUEL 26: 14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Don't you answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered, "Who are you who cries to the king?"

1SAMUEL 26: 15 David said to Abner, "Aren't you a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord, the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your lord.

Verse 15

Art not thou a valiant man? - This is a strong irony. Ye are worthy to die; ye are sons of death - ye deserve death for this neglect of your king. And had not Saul been so deeply affected with David's generosity in preserving his life, he had doubtless put Abner and his chief officers to death; though they were not to blame, as their apparent neglect was the effect of a supernatural sleep.

1SAMUEL 26: 16 This thing isn't good that you have done. As the LORD lives, you are worthy to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the LORD's anointed. Now see where the king's spear is, and the jar of water that was at his head."

1SAMUEL 26: 17 Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"

David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king."

1SAMUEL 26: 18 He said, "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in my hand?"

1SAMUEL 26: 19 Now therefore, please let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is so that the LORD has stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, they are cursed before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day that I shouldn't cling to the LORD's inheritance, saying, 'Go, serve other gods!'

Verse 19

Let him accept an offering - If God have stirred thee up against me, why, then, let him deliver my life into thy hand, and accept it as a sacrifice. But as the word is מִנְחָה minchah, a gratitude-offering, perhaps the sense may be this: Let God accept a gratitude-offering from thee, for having purged the land of a worker of iniquity; for, were I not such, God would never stir thee up against me.

But if they be the children of men - If men have, by false representations, lies, and slanders, stirred thee up against an innocent man, then let them be cursed before the Lord. If I am guilty, I deserve to die; if not, those who seek my life should be destroyed.

Saying, Go, serve other gods - His being obliged to leave the tabernacle, and the place where the true worship of God was performed, and take refuge among idolaters, said in effect, Go, serve other gods.

1SAMUEL 26: 20 Now therefore, don't let my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

Verse 20

As when one doth hunt a partridge - It is worthy of remark that the Arabs, observing that partridges, being put up several times, soon become so weary as not to be able to fly; they in this manner hunt them upon the mountains, till at last they can knock them down with their clubs.

It was in this manner that Saul hunted David, coming hastily upon him, and putting him up from time to time, in hopes that he should at length, by frequent repetitions of it, be able to destroy him. See Harmer.

1SAMUEL 26: 21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David; for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."

Verse 21

I have sinned - Perhaps the word **חַטָּאתִי** *chatathi*, "I have sinned," should be read, I have erred, or, have been mistaken. I have taken thee to be a very different man from what I find thee to be. Taken literally it was strictly true. He often purposed the spilling of David's blood; and thus, again and again, sinned against his life.

1SAMUEL 26: 22 David answered, "Behold the spear, O king! Then let one of the young men come over and get it.

1SAMUEL 26: 23 The LORD will render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness; because the LORD delivered you into my hand today, and I wouldn't stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed.

1SAMUEL 26: 24 Behold, as your life was respected this day in my eyes, so let my life be respected in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all oppression."

1SAMUEL 26: 25 Then Saul said to David, "You are blessed, my son David. You shall both do mightily, and shall surely prevail." So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Verse 25

Thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. - The Hebrew is **גַּם עָשָׂה תַעֲשֶׂה וְגַם יִכַל** *gam asoh thaaseh, vegam yachol tuchal*; "Also in doing thou shalt do, and being able thou shalt be able; which the Targum translates, also in reigning thou shalt reign, and in prospering thou shalt prosper; which in all probability is the meaning.

There is a vast deal of dignity in this speech of David, arising from a consciousness of his own innocence. He neither begs his life from Saul, nor offers one argument to prevail upon him to desist from his felonious attempts, but refers the whole matter to God, as the judge and vindicator of oppressed innocence. Saul himself is speechless, except in the simple acknowledgment of his sin; and in the behalf of their king not one of his officers has one word to say! It is strange that none of them offered now to injure the person of David; but they saw that he was most evidently under the guardian care of God, and that their master was apparently abandoned by him. Saul invites David to return, but David knew the uncertainty of Saul's character too well to trust himself in the power of this infatuated king. How foolish are the counsels of men against God! When he undertakes to save, who can destroy? And who can deliver out of his hands?

1SAMUEL 27: 1 David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel. So shall I escape out of his hand."

David flies to Achish, king of Gath, who receives him kindly, and gives him Ziklag to dwell in, where he continues a year and four months, 1Sam 27:1-7. David invades the Geshurites and Amalekites, and leaves neither man nor woman alive, 1Sam 27:8, 1Sam 27:9. He returns to Achish, and pretends that he had been making inroads on the Israelites, and Achish believes it, 1Sam 27:10-12.

Verse 1

I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul - This was a very hasty conclusion: God had so often interposed in behalf of his life, that he was authorized to believe the reverse. God had hitherto confounded all Saul's stratagems, and it was not at all likely that he would now abandon him: there was now no additional reason why he should withdraw from David his helping hand.

1SAMUEL 27: 2 David arose, and passed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.

Verse 2

David arose, and he passed over - unto Achish - There is not one circumstance in this transaction that is not blameable. David joins the enemies of his God and of his country, acts a most inhuman part against the Geshurites and Amalekites, without even the pretense of a Divine authority; tells a most deliberate falsehood to Achish, his protector, relative to the people against whom he had perpetrated this cruel act; giving him to understand that he had been destroying the Israelites, his enemies. I undertake no defense of this conduct of David; it is all bad, all defenceless; God vindicates him not. The inspired penman tells what he did, but passes no eulogium upon his conduct; and it is false to say that, because these things are recorded, therefore they are approved. In all these transactions David was in no sense a man after God's own heart. Chandler attempts to vindicate all this conduct: those who can receive his saying, let them receive it.

1SAMUEL 27: 3 David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

Verse 3

Every man with his household - So it appears that the men who consorted with David had wives and families. David and his company resembled a tribe of the wandering Arabs.

1SAMUEL 27: 4 It was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

1SAMUEL 27: 5 David said to Achish, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?"

Verse 5

Why should thy servant dwell in the royal city - He seemed to intimate that two princely establishments in the same city were too many. Achish appears to have felt the propriety of his proposal, and therefore appoints him Ziklag.

1SAMUEL 27: 6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day.

Verse 6

Achish gave him Ziklag - Ziklag was at first given to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards it was ceded to that of Simeon, Jos 15:31; Jos 19:5. The Philistines had, however, made themselves masters of it, and held it to the time here mentioned; it then fell into the tribe of Judah again, and continued to be the property of the kings of Judah. This verse is a proof that this book was written long after the days of Samuel, and that it was formed by a later hand, out of materials which had been collected by a contemporary author. See the preface.

1SAMUEL 27: 7 The number of the days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

1SAMUEL 27: 8 David and his men went up, and made a raid on the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for those were the inhabitants of the land, who were of old, as you go to Shur, even to the land of Egypt.

1SAMUEL 27: 9 David struck the land, and saved neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the cattle, and the donkeys, and the camels, and the clothing; and he returned, and came to Achish.

Verse 9

David smote the land - Here was a complete extirpation of all these people, not one being left alive, lest he should carry tidings of the disasters of his country! The spoil which David took consisted of sheep, oxen, asses, camels, and apparel.

1SAMUEL 27: 10 Achish said, "Against whom have you made a raid today?"

David said, "Against the South of Judah, against the South of the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites."

Verse 10

Whither have ye made a road today? - He had probably been in the habit of making predatory excursions. This seems to be implied in the question of Achish.

1SAMUEL 27: 11 David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath, saying, "Lest they should tell of us, saying, 'David this, and this has been his way all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.'"

1SAMUEL 27: 12 Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly to abhor him. Therefore he shall be my servant forever."

Verse 12

He hath made his people - utterly to abhor him - This deception, which Dr. Delaney says "did harm to nobody, and to the account of which he is at an utter loss what degree of guilt to charge," imposed upon Achish, had the most direct tendency to make him imagine himself secure, while in the utmost danger; and to have a faithful friend and able ally in David, while he was the veriest enemy he could possibly have. Shame on him who becomes the apologist of such conduct! As to Dr. Chandler, he should know that no lie is of the truth, and that all falsity is an abomination to the Lord.

1SAMUEL 28: 1 In those days, the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. Achish said to David, "Know assuredly that you shall go out with me in the army, you and your men."

The Philistines prepare to attack the Israelites, and Achish informs David that he shall accompany him to battle, 1Sam 28:1, 1Sam 28:2. Saul, unable to obtain any answer from God, applies to a witch at En-dor to bring up Samuel that he may converse with him on the issue of the war, 1Sam 28:3-11. Samuel appears, 1Sam 28:12-14. He reproaches Saul with his misconduct, and informs him of his approaching ruin, 1Sam 28:15-19. He is greatly distressed; but at the solicitations of the woman and his own servants, he takes some food, and departs the same night, 1Sam 28:20-25.

Verse 1

The Philistines gathered their armies together - Sir Isaac Newton conjectures that the Philistines had got a great increase to their armies by vast numbers of men which Amasis had driven out of Egypt. This, with Samuel's death, and David's disgrace, were no inconsiderable motives to a new war, front which the Philistines had now every thing to hope.

Thou shalt go out with me to battle - This he said, being deceived by what David had told him.

1SAMUEL 28: 2 David said to Achish, "Therefore you shall know what your servant will do." Achish said to David, "Therefore will I make you my bodyguard for ever."

Verse 2

Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do - This was another equivocal answer; and could only be understood by his succeeding conduct. It might imply what he could do in favor of the Philistines against Israel; or in favor of Israel against the Philistines. Achish understood it in the former sense; and therefore he said to David, I will make thee keeper of my head for ever; i.e., Thou shalt be captain of my life-guards.

1SAMUEL 28: 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. Saul had put away those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

Verse 3

Samuel was dead - And there was no longer a public accredited prophet to consult.

Those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards - See the note on Lev 19:31, and Exo 22:18.

1SAMUEL 28: 4 The Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and encamped in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa.

1SAMUEL 28: 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

Verse 5

When Saul saw - He saw from the superiority of his enemies, from the state of his army, and especially from his own state towards God, that he had every thing to fear.

1SAMUEL 28: 6 When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD didn't answer him, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Verse 6

The Lord answered him not - He used the three methods by which supernatural intelligence was ordinarily given: -

1. Dreams. - The person prayed for instruction; and begged that God would answer by a significant dream.
2. Urim. - This was a kind of oracular answer given to the high priest when clothed with the ephod, on which were the Urim and Thummim. How these communicated the answer, is not well known.
3. Prophets. - Who were requested by the party concerned to consult the Lord on the subject in question, and to report his answer. The prophets at that time could only be those in the schools of the prophets, which Samuel had established at Naioth and Gibeah. These were the only successors of Samuel that we know of.

1SAMUEL 28: 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek me a woman who has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her." His servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who has a familiar spirit at Endor."

Verse 7

Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit - Literally, Seek me a woman, **בעלת אוב** baalath ob, the mistress of the Obidiah or Pythonic spirit - one who had a familiar spirit, whom she could invoke when she pleased, and receive answers from him relative to futurity.

Strange that a man, who had banished all such from the land, as dangerous to the state, as impostors and deceivers, should now have recourse to them as the only persons in whom he could safely put his confidence in the time in which Jehovah had refused to help him!

At En-dor - This was a city in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, where the army of Saul had now encamped.

1SAMUEL 28: 8 Saul disguised himself, and put on other clothing, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, "Please divine to me by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomever I shall name to you."

Verse 8

Saul disguised himself - That he might not be known by the woman, lest she, being terrified, should refuse to use her art.

1SAMUEL 28: 9 The woman said to him, "Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

1SAMUEL 28: 10 Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall happen to you for this thing."

1SAMUEL 28: 11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up to you?" He said, "Bring Samuel up for me."

Verse 11

Whom shall I bring up - The woman certainly meant no more than making her familiar personify whomsoever the querist should wish. In the evocation of spirits this is all that, according to the professed rules of their art, such persons pretend to; for over human souls in paradise or in the infernal regions they have no power. If we allow that there is such an art founded on true principles, all it can pretend to is, to bring up the familiar; cause him when necessary to assume the form and character of some particular person, and to give such notices relative to futurity as he is able to collect. And this even in the cases to which authenticity is generally allowed, is often scanty, vague, and uncertain, for fallen spirits do not abound in knowledge: this is an attribute of God, and rays of this perfection are imparted to pure and holy intelligences; and even Satan himself, as may be seen from most of his temptations, is far from excelling in knowledge. He may be cunning and insidious, but he certainly is not wise and prudent; we in general give this fallen spirit credit for much more wisdom than he possesses.

1SAMUEL 28: 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!"

Verse 12

When the woman saw Samuel - That Samuel did appear on this occasion, is most evident from the text; nor can this be denied from any legitimate mode of interpretation: and it is as evident that he was neither raised by the power of the devil nor the incantations of the witch, for the appearances which took place at this time were such as she was wholly unacquainted with. Her familiar did not appear; and from the confused description she gives, it is fully evident that she was both surprised and alarmed at what she saw, being so widely different from what she expected to see.

1SAMUEL 28: 13 The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. For what do you see?" The woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth."

Verse 13

I saw gods ascending out of the earth - The word אלהים *elohim*, which we translate gods, is the word which is used for the Supreme Being throughout the Bible; but all the versions, the Chaldee excepted, translate it in the plural number, as we do. The Chaldee has, I see מלאכא די *malacha dayeya*, an angel of the Lord, ascending from the earth. This sight alarmed the woman; it was what she did not expect; in this she could not recognise her familiar, and she was terrified at the appearance.

1SAMUEL 28: 14 He said to her, "What does he look like?" She said, "An old man comes up. He is covered with a robe." Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and showed respect.

Verse 14

An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle - This seems to have been a second apparition; she cannot mean that she had seen gods ascending out of the earth, and these gods were like an old man with a mantle. The angelic appearance first mentioned prepared the way for Samuel; and the whole was done so as to show to the woman that her art had not prevailed in the present instance, and that what was now taking place was wholly independent of her incantations.

Saul perceived that it was Samuel - The description was suitable to his person and clothing.

1SAMUEL 28: 15 Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me, to bring me up?" Saul answered, "I am very distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me, and answers me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I shall do."

Verse 15

Why hast thou disquieted me - The complaint is not directed against the woman but against Saul. Indeed, her incantations had no influence in the business, and it does not appear that she had commenced her operations before the angels had prepared the way of the prophet, and before the prophet himself had made his appearance.

That thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do - In his former difficulties, and when pressed by his enemies, he was in the habit of consulting Samuel; and now he applies to him as his former preceptor. God, he knew, might answer by such a man as Samuel, when he would answer by no other means.

1SAMUEL 28: 16 Samuel said, "Why then do you ask of me, since the LORD has departed from you and has become your adversary?"

Verse 16

Wherefore then dost thou ask of me - Was ever I wont to give answers that were not dictated by the Lord? It is his counsel alone that I communicate.

1SAMUEL 28: 17 The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbour, even to David.

Verse 17

The Lord hath done to him - I believe these words are spoken of Saul; and as they are spoken to him, it seems evident that him should be thee. The Vulgate has tibi, the Septuagint σου, to Thee: and

this is the reading of five of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., as well as of both the Bibles printed at Venice in 1518, where we read לך lecha, to Thee, instead of לו lo, to Him.

As he spake by me - Here was no illusion; none but Samuel could say this.

1SAMUEL 28: 18 Because you didn't obey the voice of the LORD, and didn't execute his fierce wrath on Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.

Verse 18

Nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek - See 1Sam 15:1-9 (note) and the notes there.

1SAMUEL 28: 19 Moreover the LORD will deliver Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will deliver the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."

Verse 19

To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me - What an awful message! In the course of the ensuing day thou shalt be slain, thy three sons shall be slain, and the armies of Israel shall be delivered into the hands of the Philistines! Can any person read this, properly considering the situation of this unfortunate monarch, the triumph of the enemies of God, and the speedy ruin in which the godlike Jonathan is about to be involved, without feeling the keenest anguish of heart?

But Samuel says, "He and his sons should be with him." Does not this mean that they were to go to paradise? I suppose it means no more than that they should all die. Yet the paraphrase of the Rev. C. Wesley is beautiful: - "What do these solemn words portend?

A ray of hope when life shall end.

Thou and thy sons, though slain, shall be

To-morrow in repose with me.

Not in a state of hellish pain,

If Saul with Samuel do remain:

Not in a state of damn'd despair,

If loving Jonathan be there."

Saul had committed the sin unto death - the sin to be visited with a violent death, while the mercy of God was extended to the soul. Thus say my faith, my hope, and my charity; and doth not the mercy of God say the same?

1SAMUEL 28: 20 Then Saul fell immediately his full length on the earth, and was terrified, because of the words of Samuel. There was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

Verse 20

Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth - Literally, he fell with his own length, or with the fullness of his stature. He was so overwhelmed with this most dreadful message, that he swooned away, and thus fell at his own length upon the ground. The woman, being terrified, had probably withdrawn to some distance at the first appearance of the prophet; and Saul was left alone with Samuel. After some short time, the woman came again unto Saul, found him sore troubled, and offered him those succours which humanity dictated.

1SAMUEL 28: 21 The woman came to Saul, and saw that he was very troubled, and said to him, "Behold, your handmaid has listened to your voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have listened to your words which you spoke to me.

1SAMUEL 28: 22 Now therefore, please listen also to the voice of your handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength, when you go on your way."

1SAMUEL 28: 23 But he refused, and said, "I will not eat." But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him; and he listened to their voice. So he arose from the earth and sat on the bed.

Verse 23

I will not eat - It is no wonder that not only his strength, but also his appetite, had departed from him.

And sat upon the bed - Beds or couches were the common places on which the ancients sat to take their repasts.

1SAMUEL 28: 24 The woman had a fattened calf in the house. She hurried and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread of it.

Verse 24

The woman had a fat calf - The ancients used great despatch in their cookery. In hot countries they could not keep flesh meat by them any length of time; hence they generally kept young animals, such as calves, lambs, and kids, ready for slaughter; and when there was occasion, one of them was killed, and dressed immediately.

Unleavened bread - There was not time to bake leavened bread; that would have taken considerable time, in order that the leaven might leaven the whole lump.

1SAMUEL 28: 25 She brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they ate. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

Verse 25

They rose up, and went away that night - The transactions of this chapter occupy one night only.

1. Saul came by night to En-dor, 1Sam 28:8.
2. He consulted the woman, and had his conference with Samuel the same night; for no time whatever appears to have been lost after his arrival at En-dor.
3. He was overcome by the heavy tidings which he heard; and which for a time appear to have deprived him of all power.
4. The woman kills a calf; dresses a part; makes and bakes bread; and Saul and his servants eat. And,
5. They rose and went away that night, 1Sam 28:25. The next day, in all probability, the battle happened in which Israel was defeated, and Saul and his sons lost their lives.

There is a considerable diversity of opinion, both among learned and pious men, relative to the subject mentioned in this chapter, that of raising Samuel from the dead. Some deny the possibility of the thing, and say that it was the devil that personified Samuel; and others, that the whole was the imposition of this cunning woman, and that there was no supernatural agency in the business. This is not a proper place to argue the point. I have given my opinion in the notes. I may sum up in a few particulars.

1. I believe there is a supernatural and spiritual world, in which Human spirits, both good and bad, live in a state of consciousness.
2. I believe there is an invisible world, in which various orders of spirits, not human, live and act.
3. I believe that any of these spirits may, according to the order of God, in the laws of their place of residence, have intercourse with this world, and become visible to mortals.
4. I believe there is a possibility, by arts not strictly good, to evoke and have intercourse with spirits, not Human; and to employ, in a certain limited way, their power and influence.
5. I believe that the woman of En-dor had no power over Samuel; and that no incantation can avail over any departed saint of God, nor indeed over any human disembodied spirit.
6. I believe Samuel did actually appear to Saul; and that he was sent by the especial mercy of God to warn this infatuated king of his approaching death, that he might have an opportunity to make his peace with his Maker.
7. I believe that the woman found, from the appearances, that her real or pretended charms had no effect; and that what now took place came from a totally different disposition of things from those with which she was conversant.
8. I believe that direct, circumstantial, and unequivocal oracles were now delivered concerning things which neither human nor diabolical wisdom could foresee or penetrate; that the defeat of the Israelites, and the death of Saul and his three sons on the following day, were matters which, from

their nature, could only be known to God himself; and that no demon or bad spirit could be employed in such a transaction.

1SAMUEL 29: 1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites encamped by the spring which is in Jezreel.

The Philistines gather their armies together against Israel, and encamp at Aphek; while the Israelites encamp at Jezreel, 1Sam 29:1. The lords of the Philistines refuse to let David go to battle with them, lest he should betray them, 1Sam 29:2-5. Achish expresses his confidence in David; but begs him to return, 1Sam 29:6-10. David and his men return, 1Sam 29:11.

Verse 1

To Aphek - This was a place in the valley of Jezreel, between Mounts Tabor and Gilboa.

Pitched by a fountain - To be near a fountain, or copious spring of water, was a point of great importance to an army in countries such as these, where water was so very scarce. It is supposed, as William of Tyre says, that it was at this same fountain that Saladin pitched his camp, while Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, pitched his by another fountain between Nazareth and Sephoris; each being anxious to secure that without which it was impossible for their armies to subsist.

1SAMUEL 29: 2 The lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands; and David and his men passed on in the rear with Achish.

Verse 2

By hundreds, and by thousands - They were probably divided, as the Jewish armies, by fifties, hundreds, and thousands; each having its proper officer or captain.

1SAMUEL 29: 3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What about these Hebrews?" Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Isn't this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell away to this day?"

Verse 3

These days, or these years - I suppose these words to mark no definite time, and may be understood thus: "Is not this David, who has been with me for a considerable time?"

1SAMUEL 29: 4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; and the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man return, that he may go back to his place where you have appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For with what should this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Should it not be with the heads of these men?"

Verse 4

The princes of the Philistines were wroth - It is strange that they had not yet heard of David's destruction of a village of the Geshurites, Gezrites, and Amalekites, 1Sam 27:8, 1Sam 27:9. Had they heard of this, they would have seen much more cause for suspicion.

1SAMUEL 29: 5 Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands?'"

1SAMUEL 29: 6 Then Achish called David, and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the lords don't favour you.

Verse 6

Thou hast been upright - So he thought, for as yet he had not heard of the above transaction; David having given him to understand that he had been fighting against Israel.

1SAMUEL 29: 7 Therefore now return, and go in peace, that you not displease the lords of the Philistines."

1SAMUEL 29: 8 David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant so long as I have been before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

Verse 8

David said - what have I done? - Dr. Chandler and others may say what they will to make David act a consistent part in this business; but it is most evident, whatever his intentions might be as to the part he was to take in the approaching battle, he did intend to persuade Achish that he would fight against Israel; and affects to feel his reputation injured by not being permitted on this occasion to show his fidelity to the king of Gath.

It was in the order of God's gracious providence that the Philistine lords refused to let David go with them to this battle. Had he gone, he had his choice of two sins - First, If he had fought for the Philistines, he would have fought against God and his country. Secondly If he had in the battle gone over to the Israelites, he would have deceived and become a traitor to the hospitable Achish. God, therefore, so ordered it in his mercy that he was not permitted to go to a battle in which he was sure to be disgraced, whatever side he took, or with what success soever he might be crowned.

1SAMUEL 29: 9 Achish answered David, "I know that you are good in my sight, as an angel of God. Notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.'

Verse 9

As an angel of God - There is some reason to think that Achish had actually embraced or was favourably disposed towards the Jewish religion. He speaks here of the angels of God, as a Jew might be expected to speak; and in 1Sam 29:6 he appeals to, and swears by Jehovah; which, perhaps, no Philistine ever did. It is possible that he might have learned many important truths from David, during the time he sojourned with him.

1SAMUEL 29: 10 Therefore now rise up early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you; and as soon as you are up early in the morning, and have light, depart."

Verse 10

With thy master's servants - Who were these? has been very properly asked; and to this question there can be but two answers: -

1. The six hundred Israelites which were with him; and who might still be considered the subjects of Saul, though now residing in a foreign land.
 2. The servants of achish; i.e., David's men thus considered; because on his coming to Gath, he had in effect given up himself and his men to Achish. But Saul may be the master to whom Achish refers, and the words convey a delicate information to David that he is no vassal, but still at liberty.
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1SAMUEL 29: 11 So David rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. The Philistines went up to Jezreel.

1SAMUEL 30: 1 When David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the South, and on Ziklag, and had struck Ziklag, and burned it with fire,

While David is absent with the army of Achish, the Amalekites invade Ziklag, and burn it with fire, and carry away captive David's wives, and those of his men, 1Sam 30:1, 1Sam 30:2. David and his men return; and, finding the desolate state of their city, are greatly affected, 1Sam 30:3-5. The men mutiny, and threaten to stone David, who encourages himself in the Lord, 1Sam 30:6. David inquires of the Lord, and is directed to pursue the Amalekites, with the promise that he shall recover all,

1Sam 30:7, 1Sam 30:8. He and his men begin the pursuit, but two hundred, through fatigue are obliged to stay behind at the brook Besor, 1Sam 30:9, 1Sam 30:10. They find a sick Egyptian, who directs them in their pursuit, 1Sam 30:11-15. David finds the Amalekites secure, feasting on the spoils they had taken; he attacks and destroys the whole host, except four hundred, who escape on camels, 1Sam 30:16, 1Sam 30:17. The Israelites recover their wives, their families, and all their goods, 1Sam 30:18-20. They come to the two hundred who were so faint as not to be able to pursue the enemy, with whom they divide the spoil; and this becomes a statute in Israel, 1Sam 30:21-25. David sends part of the spoil which he had taken to different Jewish cities, which had suffered by the incursion of the Amalekites; and where David and his men had been accustomed to resort, 1Sam 30:26-31.

Verse 1

On the third day - This was the third day after he had left the Philistine army at Aphek. Calmet supposes that Aphek was distant from Ziklag more than thirty leagues.

The Amalekites had invaded - These were, doubtless, a travelling predatory horde, who, availing themselves of the war between the Philistines and the Israelites, plundered several unprotected towns, and among them Ziklag. It is likely they had not heard of what David did to some of their tribes, else they would have avenged themselves by slaying all they found in Ziklag.

1SAMUEL 30: 2 and had taken captive the women and all who were therein, both small and great. They didn't kill any, but carried them off, and went their way.

1SAMUEL 30: 3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captive.

1SAMUEL 30: 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

Verse 4

Wept, until they had no more power to weep - This marks great distress; they wept, as says the Vulgate, till their tears failed them.

1SAMUEL 30: 5 David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

1SAMUEL 30: 6 David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

Verse 6

The people spake of stoning him - David had done much to civilize those men; but we find by this of what an unruly and ferocious spirit they were; and yet they strongly felt the ties of natural affection, they "grieved every man for his sons and for his daughters."

David encouraged himself in the Lord - He found he could place very little confidence in his men; and, as he was conscious that this evil had not happened either through his neglect or folly, he saw he might the more confidently expect succor from his Maker.

1SAMUEL 30: 7 David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me here the ephod." Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

Verse 7

Bring me hither the ephod - It seems as if David had put on the ephod, and inquired of the Lord for himself; but it is more likely that he caused Abiathar to do it.

1SAMUEL 30: 8 David inquired of the LORD, saying, "If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue; for you shall surely overtake them, and shall without fail recover all."

1SAMUEL 30: 9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed.

Verse 9

The brook Besor - This had its source in the mountain of Idumea, and fell into the Mediterranean Sea beyond Gaza. Some suppose it to have been the same with the river of the wilderness, or the river of Egypt. The sense of this and the following verse is, that when they came to the brook Besor, there were found two hundred out of his six hundred men so spent with fatigue that they could proceed no farther. The baggage or stuff was left there, 1Sam 30:24, and they were appointed to guard it.

1SAMUEL 30: 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so faint that they couldn't go over the brook Besor.

1SAMUEL 30: 11 They found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he ate; and they gave him water to drink.

1SAMUEL 30: 12 They gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

Verse 12

A cake of figs - See on 1Sam 25:18 (note).

1SAMUEL 30: 13 David asked him, "To whom do you belong? Where are you from?"

He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick."

Verse 13

My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick - This was very inhuman: though they had booty enough, and no doubt asses sufficient to carry the invalids, yet they left this poor man to perish; and God visited it upon them, as he made this very person the means of their destruction, by the information which he was enabled to give to David and his men.

1SAMUEL 30: 14 We made a raid on the South of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

Verse 14

Upon the south of the Cherethites - Calmet and others maintain, that the כרתי kerethi, which, without the points, might be read Creti, were not only at this time Philistines, but that they were aborigines of Crete, from which they had their name Cherethites or Cretans, and are those of whom Zephaniah speaks, Zep 2:5 : Wo to the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites. And by Ezekiel, Eze 25:16 : Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and will cut off the Cherethim. In 2Sam 15:18 we find that the Cherethites formed a part of David's guards.

South of Caleb - Somewhere about Kirjath-arba, or Hebron, and Kirjath-sepher; these being in the possession of Caleb and his descendants.

1SAMUEL 30: 15 David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this troop?"

He said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this troop."

Verse 15

Swear unto me - At the conclusion of this verse, the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic add, that David swore to him. This is not expressed in the Hebrew, but is necessarily implied.

1SAMUEL 30: 16 When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread around over all the ground, eating, drinking, and dancing, because of all the great plunder that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

Verse 16

Out of the land of the Philistines - That these Amalekites were enemies to the Philistines is evident, but it certainly does not follow from this that those whom David destroyed were enemies also. This,

I think, has been too hastily assumed by Dr. Chandler and others, in order the better to vindicate the character of David.

1SAMUEL 30: 17 David struck them from the twilight even to the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped from there, except four hundred young men, who rode on camels and fled.

Verse 17

There escaped not a man of them - It is well known to every careful reader of the Bible, that the Amalekites were a proscribed people, even by God himself, and that in extirpating them it has been supposed David fulfilled the express will of God. But all this depends on whether he had an express commission to do so, received from God himself, as Saul had.

1SAMUEL 30: 18 David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives.

1SAMUEL 30: 19 There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither plunder, nor anything that they had taken to them. David brought back all.

1SAMUEL 30: 20 David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's plunder."

Verse 20

And David took all the flocks - He and his men not only recovered all their own property, but they recovered all the spoil which these Amalekites had taken from the south of Judah, the Cherethites, and the south of Caleb. When this was separated from the rest, it was given to David, and called David's spoil.

1SAMUEL 30: 21 David came to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made to stay at the brook Besor; and they went out to meet David, and to meet the people who were with him. When David came near to the people, he greeted them.

1SAMUEL 30: 22 Then all the wicked men and base fellows, of those who went with David, answered and said, "Because they didn't go with us, we will not give them anything of the plunder that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that he may lead them away, and depart."

Verse 22

Men of Belial - This is a common expression to denote the sour, the rugged, the severe, the idle, and the profane.

1SAMUEL 30: 23 Then David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with that which the LORD has given to us, who has preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand."

Verse 23

That which the Lord hath given us - He very properly attributes this victory to God; the numbers of the Amalekites being so much greater than his own. Indeed, as many fled away on camels as were in the whole host of David.

1SAMUEL 30: 24 Who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who tarries by the baggage: they shall share alike."

1SAMUEL 30: 25 It was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

Verse 25

He made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel - Nothing could be more just and proper than this law: he who stays at home to defend house and property, has an equal right to the booty taken by those who go out to the war. There was a practice of this kind among the Israelites long before this time; see Num 31:27; Jos 22:8; and the note on this latter verse.

Unto this day - This is another indication that this book was composed long after the facts it commemorates. See the hypothesis in the preface.

1SAMUEL 30: 26 When David came to Ziklag, he sent of the plunder to the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, "Behold, a present for you of the plunder of the enemies of the LORD."

Verse 26

Unto the elders of Judah - These were the persons among whom he sojourned during his exile, and who had given him shelter and protection. Gratitude required these presents.

1SAMUEL 30: 27 He sent it to those who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the South, and to those who were in Jattir,

Verse 27

To them which were in Beth-el - This was in the tribe of Ephraim.

South Ramoth - So called to distinguish it from Ramoth Gilead, beyond Jordan. This Ramoth belonged to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:8.

In Jattir - Supposed by Calmet to be the same as Ether, Jos 15:42, but more probably Jattir, Jos 15:48. It was situated in the mountains, and belonged to Judah.

1SAMUEL 30: 28 and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa,

Verse 28

In Aroer - Situated beyond Jordan, on the banks of the river Arnon, in the tribe of God.

Siphmoth - Supposed to be the same with Shepham, Num 34:10, on the eastern border of the promised land.

Eshtemoa - Another city in the tribe of Judah. See Jos 15:50.

1SAMUEL 30: 29 and to those who were in Racal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,

Verse 29

Them which were in Rachal - We know not where this place was; it is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Calmet conjectures that Hachilah, 1Sam 23:19, may be the same place; here we know David did conceal himself for some time, till the Ziphites endeavored to betray him to Saul.

The cities of the Jerahmeelites - See before, 1Sam 27:10 (note).

And - the cities of the Kenites - A very small tract on the southern coast of the Dead Sea.

1SAMUEL 30: 30 and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Borashan, and to those who were in Athach,

Verse 30

Hormah - The general name of those cities which belonged to Arad, king of Canaan; and were devoted to destruction by the Hebrews, and thence called Hormah. See Num 21:1-3.

In Chor-ashan - Probably the same as Ashan in the tribe of Judah: see Jos 15:42 (note). It was afterwards ceded to Simeon, Jos 19:7.

To them which were in Athach - Probably the same as Ether, Jos 19:7.

1SAMUEL 30: 31 and to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men used to stay.

Verse 31

To them which were in Hebron - This was a place strongly attached to David, and David to it, and the place where he was proclaimed king, and where he reigned more than seven years previously to the death of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, who was, for that time, his competitor in the kingdom.

David's having sent presents to all these places, not only shows his sense of gratitude, but that the booty which he took from the Amalekites must have been exceedingly great. And we learn from this also that David sojourned in many places which are not mentioned in the preceding history; for these are all said to be places where David and his men were wont to haunt.

We are not to suppose that the transactions mentioned here and in the preceding chapter took place after Saul's interview with the woman of En-dor, they were considerably antecedent to this, but how long we do not know. What is recorded in the following chapter must have taken place the next day after Saul left En-dor.

1SAMUEL 31: 1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain on Mount Gilboa.

A battle in Mount Gilboa between Israel and the Philistines; in which the former are defeated, and Saul's three sons slain, 1Sam 31:1, 1Sam 31:2. Saul, being mortally wounded, and afraid to fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, desires his armor-bearer to despatch him; which he refusing, Saul falls on his sword, and his armor-bearer does the same, 1Sam 31:3-6. The Israelites on the other side of the valley forsake their cities, and the Philistines come and dwell in them, 1Sam 31:7. The Philistines, finding Saul and his three sons among the slain, strip them of their armor, which they put in the house of Ashtaroth, cut off their heads, send the news to all the houses of their idols, and fasten the bodies of Saul and his three sons to the walls of Beth-shan, 1Sam 31:8-10. Valiant men of Jabesh-gilead go by night, and take away the bodies; burn them at Jabesh; bury their bones under a tree; and fast seven days, 1Sam 31:11-13.

Verse 1

Now the Philistines fought - This is the continuation of the account given in 1Sam 29:1-11.

The men of Israel fled - It seems as if they were thrown into confusion at the first onset, and turned their backs upon their enemies.

1SAMUEL 31: 2 The Philistines followed hard on Saul and on his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul.

Verse 2

Followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons - They, seeing the discomfiture of their troops, were determined to sell their lives as dear as possible, and therefore maintained the battle till the three brothers were slain.

1SAMUEL 31: 3 The battle went hard against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers.

Verse 3

He was sore wounded of the archers - It is likely that Saul's sons were slain by the archers, and that Saul was now mortally wounded by the same. Houbigant translates, The archers rushed upon him, from whom he received a grievous wound. He farther remarks that had not Saul been grievously wounded, and beyond hope of recovery, he would not have wished his armor-bearer to despatch him; as he might have continued still to fight, or have made his escape from this most disastrous battle. Some of the versions render it, He Feared the archers greatly; but this is by no means likely.

1SAMUEL 31: 4 Then Saul said to his armour bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me!" But his armour bearer would not; for he was terrified. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell on it.

Verse 4

Draw thy sword, and thrust me through - Dr. Delaney has some good observations on this part of the subject: "Saul and his armor-bearer died by the same sword. That his armor-bearer died by his own sword is out of all doubt; the text expressly tells us so; and that Saul perished by the same sword is sufficiently evident. Draw Thy sword, says he to him, and thrust me through; which, when he refused, Saul, says the text, took The sword, (אֶת הַחֶרֶב, eth hachereb, the very sword), and fell upon it. What sword? Not his own, for then the text would have said so; but, in the plain natural grammatical construction, the sword before mentioned must be the sword now referred to, that is, his armor-bearer's, 1Chr 10:4, 1Chr 10:5. Now it is the established tradition of all the Jewish nation that this armor-bearer was Doeg, and I see no reason why it should be discredited; and if so, then Saul and his executioner both fell by that weapon with which they had before massacred the priests of God. So Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with the same swords with which they stabbed Caesar; and Calippus was stabbed with the same sword with which he stabbed Dio."

1SAMUEL 31: 5 When his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword, and died with him.

1SAMUEL 31: 6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

Verse 6

And all his men - Probably meaning those of his troops which were his life or body guards: as to the bulk of the army, it fled at the commencement of the battle, 1Sam 31:1.

1SAMUEL 31: 7 When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them.

Verse 7

The men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley - They appear to have been panic-struck, and therefore fled as far as they could out of the reach of the Philistines. As the Philistines possessed Beth-shan, situated near to Jordan, the people on the other side of that river, fearing for their safety, fled also.

1SAMUEL 31: 8 On the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

Verse 8

On the morrow - It is very likely that the battle and pursuit continued till the night, so that there was no time till the next day to strip and plunder the slain.

1SAMUEL 31: 9 They cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines all around, to carry the news to the house of their idols, and to the people.

Verse 9

And they cut off his head - It is possible that they cut off the heads of his three sons likewise; for although only his head is said to be cut off, and his body only to be fastened to the walls of Beth-shan, yet we find that the men of Jabesh-gilead found both his body and the bodies of his three sons, fastened to the walls, 1Sam 31:12.

Perhaps they only took off Saul's head, which they sent about to their temples as a trophy of their victory, when they sent the news of the defeat of the Israelites through all their coasts, and at last placed it in the temple of Dagon, 1Chr 10:10.

1SAMUEL 31: 10 They put his armour in the house of the Ashtaroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

Verse 10

They put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth - As David had done in placing the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle. We have already seen that it was common for the conquerors to consecrate armor and spoils taken in war, to those who were the objects of religious worship.

They fastened his body to the wall - Probably by means of iron hooks; but it is said, 2Sam 21:12, that these bodies were fastened in the Street of Beth-shan. This may mean that the place where they were fastened to the wall was the main street or entrance into the city.

1SAMUEL 31: 11 When the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul,

Verse 11

When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard - This act of the men of Jabesh-gilead was an act of gratitude due to Saul, who, at the very commencement of his reign, rescued them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites, (see 1Sam 11:1, etc.), and by his timely succours saved them from the deepest degradation and the most oppressive tyranny. This heroic act, with the seven days' fast, showed that they retained a due sense of their obligation to this unfortunate monarch.

1SAMUEL 31: 12 all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

Verse 12

And burnt them there - It has been denied that the Hebrews burnt the bodies of the dead, but that they buried them in the earth, or embalmed them, and often burnt spices around them, etc. These no doubt were the common forms of sepulture, but neither of these could be conveniently practiced in the present case. They could not have buried them about Beth-shan without being discovered; and as to embalming, that was most likely out of all question, as doubtless the bodies were now too putrid to bear it. They therefore burnt them, because there was no other way of disposing of them at that time so as to do them honor; and the bones and ashes they collected, and buried under a tree or in a grove at Jabesh.

1SAMUEL 31: 13 They took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

Verse 13

And fasted seven days - To testify their sincere regret for his unfortunate death, and the public calamity that had fallen upon the land.

Thus ends the troublesome, and I had almost said the useless, reign of Saul. A king was chosen in opposition to the will of the Most High; and the government of God in effect rejected, to make way for this king.

Saul was at first a very humble young man, and conducted himself with great propriety; but his elevation made him proud, and he soon became tyrannical in his private conduct and in his political measures. His natural temper was not good; he was peevish, fretful, and often outrageous; and these bad dispositions, unchecked by proper application to the grace of God, became every day more headstrong and dangerous. Through their violence he seems at times to have been wholly carried away and deranged; and this derangement appears to have been occasionally greatly exacerbated by diabolical influences. This led him to take his friends for his foes; so that in his paroxysms he strove to imbrue his hands in their blood, and more than once attempted to assassinate his own son; and most causelessly and inhumanly ordered the innocent priests of the Lord at Nob to be murdered. This was the worst act in his whole life.

Saul was but ill qualified for a proper discharge of the regal functions. The reader will remember that he was chosen rather as a general of the armies than as civil governor. The administration of the affairs of the state was left chiefly to Samuel, and Saul led forth the armies to battle.

As a general he gave proof of considerable capacity; he was courageous, prompt, decisive, and persevering; and, except in the last unfortunate battle in which he lost his life, generally led his troops to victory.

Saul was a weak man, and very capricious; this is amply proved by his unreasonable jealousy against David, and his continual suspicion that all were leagued against him. It is also evident, in his foolish adjuration relative to the matter of the honey (see 1Sam 14:24-30, 1Sam 14:38-44) in which, to save his rash and nonsensical oath, he would have sacrificed Jonathan his son!

The question, "Was Saul a good king?" has already in effect been answered. He was on the whole a good man, as far as we know, in private life; but he was a bad king; for he endeavored to reign independently of the Jewish constitution; he in effect assumed the sacerdotal office and functions, and thus even changed what was essential to that constitution. He not only offered sacrifices which belonged to the priests alone; but in the most positive manner went opposite to the orders of that God whose vicegerent he was.

Of his conduct in visiting the woman at En-dor I have already given my opinion, and to this I must refer. His desperate circumstances imposed on the weakness of his mind; and he did in that instance an act which, in his jurisprudential capacity, he had disapproved by the edict which banished all witches, etc., from Israel. Yet in this act he only wished to avail himself of the counsel and advice of his friend Samuel.

To the question, "Was not Saul a self-murderer?" I scruple not to answer, "No." He was to all appearance mortally wounded, when he begged his armor-bearer to extinguish the remaining spark of life; and he was afraid that the Philistines might abuse his body, if they found him alive; and we can scarcely say how much of indignity is implied in this word; and his falling on his sword was a fit of desperation, which doubtless was the issue of a mind greatly agitated, and full of distraction. A few minutes longer, and his life would in all probability have ebbed out; but though this wound accelerated his death, yet it could not be properly the cause of it, as he was mortally wounded before, and did it on the conviction that he could not survive.

Taking Saul's state and circumstances together, I believe there is not a coroner's inquest in this nation that would not have brought in a verdict of derangement; while the pious and the humane would everywhere have consoled themselves with the hope that God had extended mercy to his soul.

Millbrook, June 11, 1818.

Ended this examination August 13, 1827. - A.C.