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JEREMIAH 1: 1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

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The Prophet Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, was of the sacerdotal race, and a native of Anathoth, a village in the tribe of Benjamin, within a few miles of Jerusalem, which had been appointed for the use of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, Jos 21:18. He was called to the prophetic office when very young; probably when he was fourteen years of age, and in the thirteenth of the reign of Josiah, A.M. 3375, b.c. 629. He continued to prophesy till after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, which took place A.M. 3416; and it is supposed that about two years after he died in Egypt. Thus it appears that he discharged the arduous duties of the prophetic office for upwards of forty years.

Being very young when called to the prophetic office, he endeavored to excuse himself on account of his youth and incapacity for the work; but, being overruled by the Divine authority, he undertook the task, and performed it with matchless zeal and fidelity in the midst of a most crooked and perverse people, by whom he was continually persecuted, and whom he boldly reproved, often at the hazard of his life.

His attachment to his country was strong and fervent; he foresaw by the light of prophecy the ruin that was coming upon it. He might have made terms with the enemy, and not only saved his life, but have gained ease and plenty; but he chose rather to continue with his people, and take his part in all the disasters that befell them.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar having made Gedaliah governor of Judea, the fractious Jews rose up against him, and put him to death; they then escaped to Tahpanhes in Egypt, carrying Jeremiah with them; who, continuing to testify against their wickedness and idolatry, at length fell a victim to his faithfulness: they filled up the measure of their iniquity, as tradition reports, by stoning the prophet to death. God marked this murderous outrage by his peculiar displeasure; for in a few years after they were almost all miserably destroyed by the Chaldean armies which had invaded Egypt; and even this destruction had been foretold by the prophet himself, chap. 44: "They were consumed by the sword and by the famine until there was an end of them, a small remnant only escaping," Jer 44:14, Jer 44:27, Jer 44:28.

The pitch of desperate wickedness to which the Jews had arrived previously to their captivity was truly astonishing. They had exhausted all the means that infinite mercy, associated with infinite justice, could employ for the salvation of sinners; and they became in consequence desperately wicked; no wonder, therefore, that wrath fell upon them to the uttermost. It seems that their hardness and darkness had proceeded to such lengths that they abandoned themselves to all the abominations of idolatry to avenge themselves on God, because he would not bear with their continual profligacy. Were ever people more highly favored, more desperately ungrateful, or more signally punished! What a lesson is their history to the nations of the earth, and especially to those who have been favored with the light of revelation!

I should have entered into a particular discussion relative to the history of those times mentioned by this prophet, had they not passed already in review in the Books of Kings and Chronicles; in which much of the historical parts of this prophet has been anticipated; and to which, in order to avoid

repetition, I must refer my readers. What is farther necessary to be added will be found in the following notes.

As a writer, the character of Jeremiah has been well drawn by Bishop Lowth. On comparing him with Isaiah, the learned prelate says: "Jeremiah is by no means wanting either in elegance or sublimity; although, generally speaking, inferior to Isaiah in both. St. Jerome has objected to him a certain rusticity in his diction; of which, I must confess, I do not discover the smallest trace. His thoughts, indeed, are somewhat less elevated, and he is commonly more large and diffuse in his sentences; but the reason of this may be, that he is mostly taken up with the gentler passions of grief and pity, for the expressing of which he has a peculiar talent. This is most evident in the Lamentations, where those passions altogether predominate; but it is often visible also in his Prophecies; in the former part of the book more especially, which is principally poetical. The middle parts are for the most part historical; but the last part, consisting of six chapters, is entirely poetical; and contains several oracles distinctly marked, in which this prophet falls very little short of the loftiest style of Isaiah." It has often been remarked, that although several of the prophecies in this book have their dates distinctly noted, and most of the rest may be ascertained from collateral evidence; yet there is a strange disorder in the arrangement. "There is," says Dr. Blayney, "a preposterous jumbling together of the prophecies of the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah in the seventeen chapters which follow the twentieth, according to the Hebrew copies; so that, without any apparent reason, many of the latter reigns precede those of the former; and in the same reign, the last delivered are put first, and the first, last." In order to prevent the confusion arising from this, Dr. Blayney has transposed the chapters where he thought it needful, without altering the numerals as they stand in our common Bibles.

This defect has been noticed, and attempts made to remedy it, by others. Dr. John George Dahler, Professor of Theology in the Protestant seminary of Strasburg, has just now published the first volume of a work, entitled, *Jeremie, traduit sur le Texte original, accompagne de Notes Explicatives, Historiques, et Critiques*, 8vo., (antedated) Strasbourg, 1824. After a preface, and very judicious historical introduction, consisting, the first of twenty-two, the second of thirty-six pages, the text and notes follow. The poetical parts of the text are translated in the hemistich manner, as the original appears in the best copies; and the whole is divided into sections; each of which is introduced with judicious observations relative to time, place, circumstances, and the matter contained in that section. The discourses or prophecies delivered under a particular reign, are all produced under that reign in their chronological order. A table of this arrangement I shall here introduce, and refer to the use of it afterwards:

Table I Prophecies under Josiah 1:1-19 3:6-4:4 4, 5, Jer 6:30 Jer 17:19-27 -Jer 3:1-5 Jer 47:1-7 Under Jehoiakim 7:1-9:25 Jer 20:14-18 26:1-24 23:9-40 Jer 46:2-12 35:1-19 10:1-16 25:1-38 14:1-15:21 36:1-32 16:1-17:18 Jer 45:1-5 18:1-23 Jer 12:14-17 19:1-20:13 Jer 10:17-25 Under Jeconiah 13:1-27 Under Zedekiah 22:1-23:8 Jer 34:1-7 11:1-17 Jer 37:1-10 11:18-12:13 Jer 34:8-22 Jer 24:1-10 Jer 37:11-21 29:1-32 38:1-28 27:1-28:17 Jer 39:15-18 Jer 49:34-39 32:1-44 Jer 51:59-64 33:1-26 Jer 21:1-14 Jer 39:1-10 After the destruction of Jerusalem Jer 39:11-14 42:1-43:7 40:1-41:18 30:1-31:40 Prophecies delivered in Egypt Jer 43:8-13 44:1-30 46:13-28 Prophecies relative to strange nations Jer 46:1 Jer 49:23-27 Jer 49:14 Jer 49:28-33 48:1-47 50:1-51:64 49:7-22 Historical Appendix 52:1-34

The kings under whom Jeremiah prophesied succeeded each other in the following order:

1. Josiah;
2. Jehoahaz;

3. Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah;
4. Jehoiakim;
5. Zedekiah.

To render the transpositions evident which have taken place in these prophetic discourses, we have only to look at those which bear the date of their delivery.

Table II Jer 1:1. Delivered the thirteenth year of Josiah Jer 35:1. Under Jehoiakim Jer 3:6. Under Josiah Jer 36:1. Under Jehoiakim Jer 21:1. Under Zedekiah Jer 37:1. Under Zedekiah during the siege of Jerusalem Jer 24:1. After the carrying away of Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim Jer 37:11. Under Zedekiah Jer 25:1. The fourth year of Jehoiakim Jer 38:1. Under Zedekiah Jer 26:1. The beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim Jer 39:15. Under Zedekiah while Jeremiah was in prison Jer 28:1. The beginning of the reign of Zedekiah Jer 45:1. The fourth year of Jehoiakim Jer 29:1. After the carrying away of Jeconiah Jer 46:2. The fourth year of Jehoiakim Jer 32:1. The tenth year of Zedekiah Jer 49:34. In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah Jer 34:1. (Under Zedekiah) during the siege of Jerusalem Jer 51:59. The fourth year of Zedekiah Jer 34:8. (Under Zedekiah) when he had obliged his subjects to give liberty to the Israelites whom they had reduced to slavery

Taking into consideration the order of the reigns, a child may perceive that the above prophecies are not in the order of the times of their delivery; and that the sheets or skins on which the text of that MS. was written, from which the present copies have derived their origin, have been pitifully interchanged, huddled and tacked together, without connection or arrangement.

To remedy this defect, Dr. Blayney has arranged the chapters in the following order which he terms a new arrangement of the chapters in Jeremiah, from chap. 20, to chap. 46, inclusive: 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36, 45, 24, 29, 30, 31, 27, 28, 21, 34, 37, 32, 33, 38, 39:15-18, 39:1-14, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, etc.

The preceding and subsequent chapters Dr. Blayney thought sufficiently correct for all the general purposes of chronology; and it is according to this order that he prints the text in his edition and translation of this prophet.

Dr. Dahler, as we have seen, is more circumstantial. Where he has dates, as are shown in the preceding table, he produces the text in that order; where there are not positive dates, he ascertains several by circumstantial intimations, which bear great evidence of accuracy; but there is a numerous class of discourses which he is obliged to insert in this work by critical conjecture. In such a case as this, when the arrangement of the common text is so evidently defective, and in many respects absurd, this procedure is quite allowable; for although the present text as to its arrangement has the sanction of antiquity, yet when a remedy is found, it would be absurd, if not sinful, to follow an order which we may rest satisfied never did proceed from the inspired writer.

I hope none will suppose that these observations detract any thing from the Divine inspiration of the book. The prophet delivered his discourses at particular times in select portions, during forty or forty-three years; these were afterwards gathered together and stitched up without any attention to chronological arrangement. Though the Spirit of the Lord directed the prophet, yet it would be absurd to suppose that it guided the hand of every collector or scribe into whose custody these several parcels might come. Suppose a man buy a copy of the Bible in sheets, and not knowing how to collate them, stitches the whole confusedly together, so that in many places the sense cannot be made out from a preceding to a following sheet, would it not be singularly foolish for any person to say, "As God is the Fountain of wisdom and Author of reason, such incongruities cannot proceed

from him, therefore this book was not given by Divine revelation." A child in a printer's office might reply, "Cut the stitching asunder, that is man's work; collate the sheets and put them in their proper order, and you will soon see that every paragraph is in harmony with the rest, and contains the words of Divine wisdom." Many an ancient MS., which appeared mutilated and imperfect, I have restored to order and perfection by cutting the binding asunder, and restoring the sheets and leaves to those places from which the ignorance and unskilfulness of the binder had detached them. May we not be allowed to treat the dislocations in the writings of a prophet in the same way, when it is evident that in the lapse of time his work has suffered by the hand of the careless and ignorant.

But it may be asked, "After all the evidence I have, and the concessions I have made, why I have not transposed those disjointed chapters, and produced them in the order in which I think they should be read?" I answer, Were I to give a new translation with notes of this prophet separately, as Drs. Blayney and Dahler have done, I should feel it my duty to do what the objection states; but as my province as a general commentator requires me to take up all the books of the sacred volume in the order in which I find them in the present authorized version, though convinced that this arrangement is neither correct nor convenient; so I take up the parts of each, however transposed, in the same manner, directing the reader by tables and notes to regulate his use of the work so as to produce general edification with as little embarrassment as possible.

For general purposes, Dr. Blayney's chronological arrangement may be sufficient; but for greater accuracy Table I. may be preferred. These may at least be considered in the light of helps to a better understanding of these several prophecies; but no man is bound to follow either, farther than he is convinced that it follows what is specifically set down by the prophet himself, or fairly deducible from strong circumstantial evidence.

In my notes on this prophet I have availed myself, as far as my plan would permit, of the best helps within my reach. The various readings of Kennicott and De Rossi I have carefully consulted, and occasionally strengthened the evidence in behalf of those readings, more particularly recommended by collations from my own MSS. I regret that I have not been able, for the reasons mentioned at the conclusion of the notes on Isaiah, to produce all the various readings of importance found in these ancient MSS., and especially in the Book of Lamentations, which is contained in five of them; but like the woman in the Gospels, I have done what I could, and must leave the rest to those who, with better abilities, may possess the greater advantages of youth and strength, with unimpaired sight.

Reader! God designs thee a blessing by every portion of his word: in thy reading seek for this; and if these notes be helpful to thee, give Him the glory.

A.C.

Eastcott, Nov. 1, 1824.

General title to the whole Book, Jer 1:1-3. Jeremiah receives a commission to prophesy concerning nations and kingdoms, a work to which in the Divine purpose he had been appointed before his birth, Jer 1:4-10. The vision of the rod of an almond tree and of the seething pot, with their signification, Jer 1:11-16. Promises of Divine protection to Jeremiah in the discharge of the arduous duties of his prophetic office, Jer 1:17-19.

Verse 1

The words of Jeremiah - These three verses are the title of the Book; and were probably added by Ezra when he collected and arranged the sacred books, and put them in that order in which they are

found in Hebrew Bibles in general. For particulars relative to this prophet, the times of his prophesying, and the arrangement of his discourses, see the introduction.

Eleventh year of Zedekiah - That is, the last year of his reign; for he was made prisoner by the Chaldeans in the fourth month of that year, and the carrying away of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was in the fifth month of the same year.

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JEREMIAH 1: 2 to whom the LORD's word came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

JEREMIAH 1: 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

JEREMIAH 1: 4 Now the LORD's word came to me, saying,

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#### Verse 4

The word of the Lord came unto me - Then I first felt the inspiring influence of the Divine Spirit, not only revealing to me the subjects which he would have me to declare to the people, but also the words which I should use in these declarations.

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JEREMIAH 1: 5 "Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you. Before you came out of the womb, I sanctified you. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

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#### Verse 5

Before I formed thee - I had destined thee to the prophetic office before thou wert born: I had formed my plan, and appointed thee to be my envoy to his people. St. Paul speaks of his own call to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in similar terms, Gal 1:15, Gal 1:16.

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JEREMIAH 1: 6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord the LORD! Behold, I don't know how to speak; for I am a child."

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#### Verse 6

I cannot speak - Being very young, and wholly inexperienced, I am utterly incapable of conceiving aright, or of clothing these Divine subjects in suitable language. Those who are really called of God to the sacred ministry are such as have been brought to a deep acquaintance with themselves, feel their own ignorance, and know their own weakness. They know also the awful responsibility that attaches to the work; and nothing but the authority of God can induce such to undertake it. They whom God never called run, because of worldly honor and emolument: the others hear the call with fear and trembling, and can go only in the strength of Jehovah. "How ready is the man to go,

Whom God hath never sent!

How timorous, diffident, and slow,  
God's chosen instrument!"

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JEREMIAH 1: 7 But the LORD said to me, "Don't say, 'I am a child;' for to whoever I shall send you, you shall go, and whatever I shall command you, you shall speak.

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Verse 7

Whatsoever I command thee - It is my words and message, not thine own, that thou shalt deliver. I shall teach thee; therefore thy youth and inexperience can be no hinderance.

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JEREMIAH 1: 8 Don't be afraid because of them; for I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

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Verse 8

Be not afraid of their faces - That is, the Jews, whom he knew would persecute him because of the message which he brought. To be fore-warned is to be half armed. He knew what he was to expect from the disobedient and the rebellious, and must now be prepared to meet it.

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JEREMIAH 1: 9 Then the LORD stretched out his hand, and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

JEREMIAH 1: 10 Behold, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

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Verse 10

I have - set thee over the nations - God represents his messengers the prophets as doing what he commanded them to declare should be done. In this sense they rooted up, pulled down, and destroyed - declared God's judgments, they builded up and planted - declared the promises of his mercy. Thus God says to Isaiah, Isa 6:10 : "Make the heart of this people fat - and shut their eyes." Show them that they are stupid and blind; and that, because they have shut their eyes and hardened their hearts, God will in his judgments leave them to their hardness and darkness.

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JEREMIAH 1: 11 Moreover the LORD's word came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

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Verse 11

A rod of an almond tree - דקש shaken, from דקש shakad, "to be ready," "to hasten," "to watch for an opportunity to do a thing," to awake; because the almond tree is the first to flower and bring

forth fruit. Pliny says, Floret prima omnium amygdala mense Januario; Martio vero pomum maturat. It blossoms in January, when other trees are locked up in their winter's repose; and it bears fruit in March, just at the commencement of spring, when other trees only begin to bud. It was here the symbol of that promptitude with which God was about to fulfill his promises and threatening. As a rod, says Dahler, is an instrument of punishment, the rod of the almond may be intended here as the symbol of that punishment which the prophet was about to announce.

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JEREMIAH 1: 12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well; for I watch over my word to perform it."

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#### Verse 12

I will hasten my word - Here is a paronomasia. What dost thou see? I see דקש shaken, "an almond," the hastening tree: that which first awakes. Thou hast well seen, for (דקש shoked) I will hasten my word. I will awake, or watch over my word for the first opportunity to inflict the judgments which I threaten. The judgment shall come speedily; it shall soon flourish, and come to maturity.

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JEREMIAH 1: 13 the LORD's word came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" I said, "I see a boiling cauldron; and it is tipping away from the north."

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#### Verse 13

A seething pot - toward the north - We find, from Eze 24:3, etc., that a boiling pot was an emblem of war, and the desolations it produces. Some have thought that by the seething pot Judea is intended, agitated by the invasion of the Chaldeans, whose land lay north of Judea. But Dr. Blayney contends that מִפְּנֵי צְפוֹנָה mippeney tsaphonah should be translated, From the face of the north, as it is in the margin; for, from the next verse, it appears that the evil was to come from the north; and therefore the steam, which was designed as an emblem of that evil, must have arisen from that quarter also. The pot denotes the empire of the Babylonians and Chaldeans lying to the north of Judea, and pouring forth its multitudes like a thick vapor, to overspread the land. Either of these interpretations will suit the text.

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JEREMIAH 1: 14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north evil will break out on all the inhabitants of the land."

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#### Verse 14

Shall break forth - תִּפְתַּח tippathach, shall be opened. The door shall be thrown abroad, that these calamities may pass out freely.

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JEREMIAH 1: 15 For, behold, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD; "and they shall come, and they shall each set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls all around, and against all the cities of Judah.

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Verse 15

Shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates - As the gates of the cities were the ordinary places where justice was administered, so the enemies of Jerusalem are here represented as conquering the whole land, assuming the reins of government, and laying the whole country under their own laws; so that the Jews should no longer possess any political power: they should be wholly subjugated by their enemies.

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JEREMIAH 1: 16 I will utter my judgements against them touching all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

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Verse 16

I will utter my judgments - God denounced his judgments: the conquest of their cities, and the destruction of the realm, were the facts to which these judgments referred; and these facts prove that the threatening was fulfilled.

Worshipped the works of their own hands - Idolatry was the source of all their wickedness and was the cause of their desolations. For למעשי lemaasey, the works, more than a hundred MSS. of Kennicott's and De Rossi's, with many editions, have למעשה lemaaseh, the work. Idolatry was their One great Work, the business of their life, their trade.

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JEREMIAH 1: 17 "You therefore put your belt on your waist, arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Don't be dismayed at them, lest I dismay you before them.

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Verse 17

Gird up thy loins - Take courage and be ready, lest I confound thee; take courage and be resolute, ין pen, lest by their opposition thou be terrified and confounded. God is often represented as doing or causing to be done, what he only permits or suffers to be done. Or, do not fear them, I will not suffer thee to be confounded. So Dahler, Ne crains pas que je te confonde a leurs yeux, "Do not fear that I shall confound thee before them." It is well known that the phrase, gird up thy reins, is a metaphor taken from the long robes of the Asiatics; which, on going a journey, or performing their ordinary work, they were obliged to truss up under their girdles, that the motions of the body might not be impeded.

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JEREMIAH 1: 18 For, behold, I have made you this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land.

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Verse 18

I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and, brazen walls - Though thou shalt be exposed to persecutions and various indignities, they shall not prevail against thee. To their attacks thou shalt be as an impregnable city; as unshaken as an iron pillar; and as imperishable as a wall of brass. None, therefore, can have less cause to apprehend danger than thou hast. The issue proved the truth of this promise: he outlived all their insults; and saw Jerusalem destroyed, and his enemies, and the enemies of his Lord, carried into captivity. Instead of **חֲמוֹת** chomoth, walls, many MSS. and editions read **חֹמַת** chomath, a wall, which corresponds with the singular nouns preceding.

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JEREMIAH 1: 19 They will fight against you; but they will not prevail against you; for I am with you", says the LORD, "to deliver you."

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Verse 19

They shall not prevail against thee - Because I am determined to defend and support thee against all thy enemies. One of the ancients has said, Θεου θελοντος, και επι ρυπος πλεη Σωζη· Thestius, apud Theophil. ad Autolyc. lib. 2: "God protecting thee, though thou wert at sea upon a twig, thou shouldst be safe."