

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 23

In this chapter are recorded the last words of David under a divine inspiration, (^{<1231>}2 Samuel 23:1-7); and an account is given of his great men, famous for warlike exploits, particularly of three mighty men who did very marvellous things, (^{<1232>}2 Samuel 23:8-17); and of two others next unto them, which belonged to another class of three, (^{<1233>}2 Samuel 23:18-23); and then of thirty one more, (^{<1234>}2 Samuel 23:24-39); who are all mentioned by name.

Ver. 1. *Now these [be] the last words of David*, etc.] Which refer not to the psalm in the preceding chapter, but to what follows; not the last words he spoke, for he said many things afterwards; for the advice he gave to Solomon, and the instructions to him about building the temple, were delivered after this time; but these were the last after he had finished the book of Psalms; or the last that he spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or that he delivered out by way of prophecy; though the Jews ^{f373} will not allow him to speak by the spirit of prophecy; they own he spoke by the Holy Spirit, which they distinguish from prophecy; but the Targum calls these words a prophecy, and takes them to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and of things to come, as undoubtedly they are, paraphrasing them thus;

“these are the words of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied concerning the end of the world, concerning the days of consolation that should come;”

this is observed to excite attention, the last words of dying men being usually regarded and remembered:

David the son of Jesse said; he began with his descent, which was comparatively mean, in order to illustrate the distinguishing goodness of God to him in his exaltation:

and the man [who was] raised up on high; from a low estate to an high one, from the sheepfold to the throne, to be king over all the tribes of Israel, and a conqueror, and head of the nations round about him:

the anointed of the God of Jacob; who was anointed king by Samuel by the order of the God of Jacob; and which was an instance of his being the God of Jacob or Israel, and of his care of them, and regard unto them, that he anointed such a man to be king over them, as well as it was an honour to David:

and the sweet psalmist of Israel; who composed most of the psalms and hymns of praise for the people of Israel; invented and set the tunes to them to which they were to be sung, and the instruments of music on which they were sung; and appointed singers to preside, and lead them in that part of divine worship, singing psalms and hymns; and very sweet were the psalms he composed as to the matter of them, and very sweet and delightful to the ear was the music in the manner of singing them: it may be rendered, who was “sweet” or “pleasant [in the] songs of Israel” ^{f374}, his warlike exploits and victories being the subject of them, (^{<D1816>}1 Samuel 18:6,7);

said; as follows; for all that goes before are the words of the penman of this book, drawing the character of David; in which he was a type of Christ, a branch out of the root of Jesse, highly exalted, and chosen from among the people, anointed to be prophet, priest, and King; and who sweetly expounded the psalms concerning himself, and ordered them to be sung in the churches, and of which he is the subject, and may be said to be sweetly held forth in them, (see ^{<D244>}Luke 24:44).

Ver. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,* etc.] The psalms and songs he composed were not the fruits of his own genius, but were written by him under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; by whom holy men of God, the penmen of the Scriptures, spoke, even as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, of whom David was one, being a prophet; (see ^{<4116>}Acts 1:16) (^{<4120>}Acts 2:30); so the Targum here,

“David spoke by the spirit of prophecy of the Lord:”

or spake “in me” ^{f375}; what he spoke was first internally impressed upon his mind by the Spirit of God, and then he expressed it with his tongue, as follows:

and his word [was] in my tongue; not only the matter of his psalms was indited by the Spirit of God, and suggested to his mind; but the very words in which they are delivered were given to him, and he was directed to make use of them, and did.

Ver. 3. *The God of Israel said*, etc.] To David, or by him; he who was the covenant God of Israel literally considered, and is the covenant God and Father of the whole spiritual Israel, and who is owned, believed in, and worshipped by them:

the Rock of Israel spake to me; the same with the God of Israel in other words, who is the strength and security of Israel; or the second divine Person, the Son and Word of God, is meant, who is often called a rock in Scripture; and is the rock on which the Israel or church of God is built, and in whom it remains safe and firm, the gates of hell not being able to prevail against it; and so here is an instance and proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the God of Israel, Jehovah the Father; the Rock of Israel, Jehovah the Son; and the Spirit of Jehovah, as in (^{103E}2 Samuel 23:2), who is Jehovah the Spirit: now what was said by these three divine Persons to David, and by him, and concerning himself as a type of the Messiah, follows:

he that ruleth over men [must be] just, ruling in the fear of God; which is a character every king among men ought to have, administering justice to their subjects; ruling not only according to the laws of the land, but according to the law of God; having his fear before their eyes, and acting with a view to his honour and glory, whose vicegerents they are, and to whom they are accountable; they should rule with gentleness and humanity, considering they are men, and not brutes, they rule over. Agamemnon in Homer is often called “king of men”. This character, in all respects, was found in David, (^{108S}2 Samuel 8:15); and may be here given as an instruction to his son and successor, Solomon; and is in all respects applicable to the Messiah, who is a “ruler” or King by the designation of his father; a ruler “over men”, even over all men, yea, over the greatest of men, King of kings, and Lord of lords, and especially, and in an eminent sense, King of saints; and he is “just”, a King that reigns in righteousness, righteous in all his ways and works, and particularly just as a King, as well as in all his other characters, (see ^{223E}Jeremiah 23:5,6 ^{300D}Zechariah 9:9); and upon whom, as man and Mediator, the Spirit of “the fear of the Lord”

rests, and under the influence of which, as such, he has acted, (~~2310B~~ Isaiah 11:1,2); so the Targum applies these words to the Messiah thus,

“the true Judge said, he would appoint to me a King, who is the Messiah, who shall arise and rule in the fear of the Lord:”

and they may be rendered, there shall be “a ruler over men, just, ruling in the fear of God”; or ruling, appointing, ordering, and directing the worship of God, and the ordinances of it under the Gospel dispensation, as Christ did, (see ~~418B~~ Matthew 28:18-20).

Ver. 4. *And [he shall be] as the light of the morning, [when] the sun riseth, [even] a morning without clouds,* etc.] That is, such a ruler that rules in righteousness, and in the fear of God; he is the light and glory of his people, who guides and directs them, makes them cheerful and comfortable; his administrations are pleasant and delightful, and promise a growing and increasing happiness to them, like the morning light and rising sun; and there are no clouds, nor forebodings of dark times, affliction and distress, coming upon them, but all the reverse: and with Christ these metaphors well suit, who is the true light that shines, (~~400B~~ John 1:9); the morning star, (~~626B~~ Revelation 22:16); the dayspring from on high, (~~417B~~ Luke 1:78); the sun of righteousness, (~~304B~~ Malachi 4:2); and light of the world, (~~48B~~ John 8:2 9:5); his going forth or appearance in human nature, at his incarnation, was as the morning, (~~203B~~ Hosea 6:3); the first discovery him to Adam, after sin had brought a night of darkness on the world, was as the dawn of the morning; and this light like that of the morning increased, fresh and clearer discoveries of him being made to the patriarchs afterwards; and though as yet the sun was not up, and it was not a morning without clouds, yet the discoveries then made brought joy with them, as to Abraham and others, and were a sure sign of the sun rising. When Christ appeared in the flesh, the sun of righteousness then arose, and scattered the darkness of the night, both in the Jewish and Gentile world; introduced the light of the Gospel to a greater degree than it was under the legal dispensation, and made the Gospel day; which was not only like the morning light, growing and increasing, but was as a morning without clouds, without the darkness of the ceremonial law, the shadows of which now disappeared; and without the storms and tempests of the moral law, its curses being bore and removed by Christ; and without the frowns of divine wrath, reconciliation and satisfaction being made by him: and this is all applicable particularly to the government of Christ, which is delightful and grateful to his people,

serviceable and beneficial to them, under which they enjoy great peace and prosperity; and which will more and more increase, and stilt be more glorious and illustrious, (see ^{<5717>}Psalm 72:7,8 ^{<2316>}Isaiah 30:26). A learned writer ^{f376} has observed, that in an ancient manuscript the word “Jehovah” is inserted and read thus,

“and as the light of the morning shall arise Jehovah the sun,”

which clearly points to Christ the sun of righteousness; and be it an interpolation, it gives the true sense of the words: a glorious, beautiful, and illustrious person is described in Ovid ^{f377} by the same figure as here:

[as] the tender grass [springing] out of the earth by clear shining after rain; which springs up the faster, and is more flourishing after a shower of rain, and when upon that the sun breaks out and shines clearly: or “from clear shining from rain” ^{f378}; that is, the springing of the tender grass out of the earth is owing partly to the rain which falls in the night, and partly to the sun rising in the morning, and the clear shine of it: this may denote the fruitful and flourishing estate which a good and righteous ruler over men is the happy instrument of bringing his people into; and may be applied both to the incarnation of Christ, when he grew up as a tender plant, or as the tender grass, mean in his original and descent, weak in himself as man; and yet this fruit of the earth was excellent and comely, beautiful and glorious, and the springing of it owing to the favour and good will of God, and his coming was as the latter and former rain to the earth, (^{<2818>}Hosea 6:3); and to the government of Christ, and the benefits of it to his church and people; who flourish under it the light of his grace and favour, and through rains of Gospel doctrines they are blessed with: or “than clear shining, than rain”; Christ is more beneficial to his people, who are comparable to grass for their meanness, and weakness, and number, than the sun and rain are to the grass in the field.

Ver. 5. *Although my house [be] not so with God,* etc.] So bright, and flourishing, and prosperous as the government of the just ruler before described; or is not “right” ^{f379} with God, meaning his family, in which great sins were committed, and great disorders and confusions brought into it, as the cases of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah showed; or “not firm” or “stable” ^{f380}, through the rebellion of one, the insurrection of another, and the usurpation of a third; yet he believed it would be firm and stable in the Messiah that should spring from him, promised in the everlasting covenant; though the Jewish writers understand this of the firmness and stability of

his kingdom and government: “but my house is not so”, etc. like the morning light, which increases by little and little, and like the morning, which sometimes is not cloudy, and sometimes is; sometimes the sun shines clearly, and sometimes not; or like the tender grass, which is sometimes flourishing, and after withers; but so is not my kingdom, it is a perpetual one, given and secured by an everlasting covenant; and such certainly is or will be the kingdom of the Messiah:

yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all [things], and sure; or, “for ^{f381} he hath made”, etc. the covenant by which the kingdom was settled on David and his seed was a covenant that would continue for ever, and would be kept, “observed”, and “preserved” ^{f382} in all the articles of it, and so be sure to his seed, particularly to the Messiah that should spring from him, in whom it was fulfilled, (~~☞~~ Luke 1:32,33); and the covenant of grace made with David’s antitype, with Christ the head of the church, and the representative of it, and so with all his people in him, is an everlasting one: it was made with Christ from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, the source and spring of it; the earliness of the divine counsels on which it is formed, and blessings and promises of it, with which it is filled, which were before the world was; and from Christ being set up as the Mediator of it from everlasting: and it will continue to everlasting; it is a covenant that cannot be broken, will never be removed, nor give way to or be succeeded by another: it is “ordered in all things”: to promote and advance the glory of all the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; to secure the persons of the saints, and to provide everything needful for them for time and eternity: and it is “sure”; it stands upon a sure basis, the unchangeable will and favour of God, and is in the hands of Christ, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; its mercies are the sure mercies of David, and its promises are yea and amen in Christ, and are sure to all the seed. Though things may not be with them God-ward, as they desire, and could be wished for; though they may be attended with many sins and infirmities, the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and various afflictions, and be guilty of many backslidings, yet covenant interest always continues; and so, though in the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world, there are, and may be, many things disagreeable; it may be attended with persecutions, heresies, scandals, etc. yet it shall continue and increase, and spread, and be an everlasting kingdom:

for [this is] all my salvation: all depends upon this covenant; the safety of David’s family, and the security of the kingdom in it, and to his seed, till

the Messiah came, depended on the covenant made with him respecting that; and the spiritual and eternal salvation of the Lord's people depends upon the covenant of grace; which was contrived, formed, and settled in it, in which the Saviour is provided, and the persons to share in his salvation are taken into it and secured, with all blessings both of grace and glory:

and all [my] desire; to see it fulfilled; as it is the desire of good men to be led more and more into it, to see their interest in it, to have the blessings and promises of it applied unto them, and to be saved by it, and not by the covenant of works; and there is all that in it that a believer can desire to make him comfortable here, or happy hereafter; and it is what gives him delight and pleasure in all his troubles: it may be supplied he is, as well as "this is", and be applied to Christ, the ruler over men, described, (^{12 Samuel 23:3,4); with whom the covenant of grace is made, in whom is the salvation of men; he is the author and the only author of it; in whom it is complete and perfect; "all" salvation is in him, and which they can claim as theirs; to whom is "all [their] desire"; and in whom is "all [their] delight", as it may be rendered; on account of the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, and his suitableness as a Saviour; whom they desire to know more of, and have more communion with:}

although he made [it] not to grow; though there may not be at present any growth of outward prosperity, or of inward grace, or even of the produce of the earth, (^{3 Habakkuk 3:17,18); though the horn of David is not yet made to bud, or his family in growing and flourishing circumstances, or the Messiah, the man, the branch, does not yet shoot forth, though he certainly would; or, "for shall he not bud forth" he shall, (^{2 Jeremiah 23:5} ^{3 Zechariah 3:8 6:12).}}

Ver. 6. *But [the sons] of Belial [shall be] all of them as thorns thrust away*, etc.] Not like the tender grass that springs up, and flourishes after rain, and the sunshine upon that; but like thorns, useless, hurtful, and pernicious, and fit only for burning: this is true of wicked men in general, that cast off the yoke of the Lord, and become unprofitable, as Belial signifies; and of wicked governors in particular, who, instead of being helpful, are harmful to a commonwealth; and instead of being the joy and comfort of their subjects, and of giving pleasure to them, and making them cheerful and prosperous, give pain and trouble, and cause grief and sorrow; and are, if possible, to be thrust away, and deposed from government:

because they cannot be taken with hands; thorns cannot be handled and gently dealt with, but some instrument must be used to put them away with force; so wicked men, and especially wicked rulers, are untractable, and not to be managed in a gentle way, and therefore violent ones must be taken.

Ver. 7. *But the man [that] shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear*, etc.] To remove these thorns, or sons of Belial, out of the way, or to defend himself against them; or weapons of war must be made use of to conquer and destroy them, according to the sense of Ben Gersom, and which De Dieu follows; a man that meddles with them must expect to be as much hurt and wounded by them, all over the body, as if not only the point or iron head of a spear, but the wood or handle of the spear, were thrust up in him; but the former sense seems best:

and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the [same] place: where the thorns grew, or whither they are removed, or are sitting; where persons are sitting to warm themselves by them: and this may be understood of the destruction of wicked rulers, when their kingdom is taken from them, and they are consumed root and branch; and was true not only of Saul, and his posterity, as some apply it, and of Jeroboam, and those like to him, as the above Jewish writer; but of the wicked Jews, and their rulers, those sons of Belial, who rejected the yoke of Christ, and would not have him to rule over them; to whom the Lord sent the Roman armies fenced with swords and spears, and burnt their city, and destroyed them in the same place; and may take in antichrist, and antichristian states, those sons of Belial, of the wicked *ανομος*, and lawless one, the son of perdition, whose city, Rome, shall be burnt with fire; and even all wicked men, at the great day of judgment, to which the Targum refers these words; when they, whose end, like thorns, is to be burnt, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Ver. 8. *These [be] the names of the mighty men whom David had*, etc.] Besides Joab his general, who is not mentioned; for these were all military men under him, which are distinguished into three classes; the first and highest consisted of three only, who were general officers; and the second also of three, who perhaps were colonels of regiments; and the third of thirty, who were captains of thousands and hundreds:

the Tachmonite that sat in the seat, the chief among the captains: not in the chief seat in the sanhedrim, and was the head of that, and so had the

name of Tachmonite, from his wisdom, as the Jewish writers say; but in the council of war, where he presided under the general, or in his absence, and was, perhaps, lieutenant general, and so over all the captains; and therefore was neither David nor Joab, to whom some of the Rabbins apply these words, as observed by Kimchi; or rather he was the chief of the three to whom he belonged; his name, in (^{<43111>}1 Chronicles 11:11), is Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, or the son of an Hachmonite, the same as in (^{<4370>}1 Chronicles 27:2); and here it may be as well read Josheb-bashebeth the Tachmonite, the same name, with a little variation; which seem to be names given him, taken from his character and office; for his proper name was as follows:

the same [was] Adino the Eznite: so called either from the family he was of, or from the place of his birth; though a learned man thinks it should be read as in the following supplement ^{f383},

[he lifted up his spear] against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time; which, though a very extraordinary exploit, yet not more strange, or so strange as that of Shamgar's slaying six hundred men with an ox goad, (^{<4083>}Judges 3:31), or as that of Samson's killing a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, (^{<4755>}Judges 15:15): in (^{<43111>}1 Chronicles 11:11), the number is only three hundred, which some attempt to reconcile by observing, that not the same person is meant in both places; here he is called Joshebbashebeth, there Jashobeam; here the Tachmonite, there the son of an Hachmonite; nor is he there called Adino the Eznite; but yet it seems plain that in both places the chief of the three worthies of David is meant, and so the same man: others observe, that he engaged with eight hundred, and slew three hundred of them, when the rest fled, and were pursued and killed by his men; and he routing them, and being the occasion of their being slain, the slaying of them all is ascribed to him; or he first slew three hundred, and five hundred more coming upon him, he slew them also: but what Kimchi offers seems to be best, that there were two battles, in which this officer was engaged; at one of them he slew eight hundred, and at the other three hundred; for so what is omitted in the books of Samuel, and of the Kings, is frequently supplied in the books of Chronicles, as what one evangelist in the New Testament omits, another records. The above learned writer ^{f384} conjectures, that Ç being the first letter of the words for three and eight, and the numeral letter being here reduced to its word at length, through a mistake in the copier, was written hnmç, "eight", instead of çl ç, "three": the Septuagint version is,

“he drew out his spear against eight hundred soldiers at once,”

and says nothing of slaying them; and seems to be the true sense of the word, as the same learned writer^{f385} has abundantly shown.

Ver. 9. *And after him [was] Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite*, etc.] Or the son of Ahohi, perhaps the same with Ahoah, a descendant of Benjamin, (~~1388~~1 Chronicles 8:4); this Eleazar was the next to the Tachmonite, the second worthy of the first class:

[one] of the three mighty men with David; the second of the three valiant men that were with David in his wars, and fought with him, and for him:

when they defied the Philistines; clapped their hands at them, gloried over them, daring them to come and light them; so did David and his mighty men, as Goliath had defied them before:

[that] were there gathered together to battle; at Pasdammim, as appears from (~~1311B~~1 Chronicles 11:13);

and the men of Israel were gone away; fled when they saw the Philistines gather together to fight them, notwithstanding they had defied them; and so David, and his three mighty men, were left alone to combat with the Philistines.

Ver. 10. *He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary*, etc.] He rose up when the Israelites fled, and stood his ground alone, and fought with the Philistines, and smote them with his sword, until his hand was weary with smiting:

and his hand clave unto the sword; which was contracted by holding it so long, and grasping it so hard, that it could not easily be got out of it; or through the quantity of blood which ran upon his hand, as it was shed, so Josephus^{f386}; and which being congealed, and dried, caused his hand to stick to the hilt of his sword, so that they were, as it were, glued together by it; or the sense may be only, that though weary, he did not drop his sword, but held it fast till he had destroyed the enemy:

and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; for to him it must be ascribed, and not to the strength and valour of the man:

and the people returned after him only to spoil; they that fled, when they saw what a victory was obtained by him, returned and came after him; not

to help him in smiting, but to spoil those that were slain, and strip them of what they had.

Ver. 11. *And after him [was] Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite*, etc.]

One who was of the mountainous country, as the Targum, the hill country of Judea, of Hebron, or the parts adjacent; this was the third of the first three; there was one of this name among the thirty, (^{<1023>}2 Samuel 23:33);

and the Philistines were gathered together into a troop; but so they were no doubt at first; R. Isaiah takes it to be the name of a place called Chiyah; as the Targum, Chayatha; and which Kimchi says was a village, an unwalled town; and Ben Melech observes, that it is said in the Arabic language, a collection of houses is called Alchai: it may be the same with Lehi, where Samson slew a thousand with the jawbone of an ass, (^{<0757>}Judges 15:17), whence it had its name; and Josephus ^{f387} says, the place where the Philistines were gathered together was called “the Jawbone”: but perhaps the sense of Ben Gersom may be best of all, that they gathered together in this place for provision, for food and forage, to support the life of them and their cattle: since it follows,

where was a piece of ground full of lentiles; a sort of pulse, which was eaten in those countries, and the pottage of which was delicious food, (see ^{<1231>}Genesis 25:30,34);

and the people fled from the Philistines; as they did before under Eleazar, (^{<1231>}2 Samuel 23:9).

Ver. 12. *But he stood in the midst of the ground*, etc.] The field of lentiles:

and defended it; the field, so that the Philistines could not ravage it, and get food and forage from it:

and slew the Philistines; made a great slaughter among them, entirely routed them, so that they that escaped his sword were obliged to flee:

and the Lord wrought a great victory; to whom the glory of it belonged; a similar fact is ascribed to Eleazar before mentioned in (^{<3113>}1 Chronicles 11:13,14); and, indeed, it seems to be the same, and in which they were both concerned; for it is plain from the account that there were more than one engaged in this action, since it is there said, “and they set themselves in the midst of that parcel”; and though that parcel of ground is said there to be full of barley, it may easily be reconciled by observing, that one part of it

might be sowed with barley, and the other part with lentiles; so the Targum in (^{<3113>}1 Chronicles 11:13); for it was half lentiles and half barley; and Eleazar might be placed to defend the one, and Shammah the other; from whence it appears it was about March when this action was, at the latter end of which barley harvest began.

Ver. 13. *And three of the thirty chiefs went down*, etc.] Or three that were chief of the thirty, superior to them; which some understand of the three before mentioned, so Josephus ^{f388}; and that having related some particular exploits of theirs, here observes one, in which they were all concerned; and others think the three next are meant, of whom Abishai was the chief, Benaiah the next, and the third Asahel; but the first sense is best:

and came to David in the harvest time, unto the cave of Adullam; not when he was there, upon his flight from Saul, (^{<4921>}1 Samuel 22:1); but after he was king, when engaged in war with the Philistines; perhaps wheat harvest is here meant:

and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim; the army of the Philistines, as the Targum; of the valley of Rephaim, (see Gill on "^{<6158>}Joshua 15:8").

Ver. 14. *And David [was] then in an hold*, etc.] In a strong hold; the strong hold of Zion, as Josephus ^{f389}, or one on a rock near the cave of Adullam, (see ^{<3115>}1 Chronicles 11:15);

and the garrison of the Philistines [was] then [in] Bethlehem; which was about six miles from Jerusalem; the valley of Rephaim lay between that and Bethlehem; so far had they got into the land of Judea, and such footing in it, as to have a garrison so near its metropolis.

Ver. 15. *And David longed, and said*, etc.] It being harvest time, the summer season, and hot weather, and he thirsty:

oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which [is] by the gate! which he was well acquainted with, being his native place; and which might make it the more desirable, as well as its waters might be peculiarly cool and refreshing, and very excellent, as Kimchi suggests. This well was about a mile from Bethlehem, now called David's well, as some travellers say ^{f390}. It is said to be a very large well, with three mouths, and lies a little out of the road ^{f391}; and that there is now near Rachel's grave a good rich cistern, which is deep and wide; wherefore the

people that go to dip water are provided with small leathern buckets, and a line, as usual in those countries^{f392}; but Mr. Maundrell^{f393} says it is a well, or rather a cistern, supplied only with rain, without any excellency in its waters to make them desirable; but it seems, he adds, David's spirit had a further aim. Some think he meant by this to get Bethlehem out of the hands of the Philistines, and obtain the possession of it; others, as Jarchi, that he intended to ask some question of the sanhedrim that sat there; and others, that his desire was after the law of God, called waters, as in (~~2501~~ Isaiah 55:1); and some Christian writers, both ancient and modern^{f394}, are of opinion, that not literal but spiritual water was desired by him, and that he thirsted after the coming of the Messiah, to be born at Bethlehem, and the living water which he only can give, (~~6040~~ John 4:10).

Ver. 16. *And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines*, etc.] Which lay in the valley of Rephaim, between the hold in which David was and the well of Bethlehem; these three men hearing David express himself in the above manner, though without any view that any should risk their lives to obtain it, only in a general way said, oh for a draught of the water of the well of Bethlehem! immediately set out, and made their way through the army of the Philistines to the well:

and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that [was] by the gate, and took [it], and brought [it] to David; in a vessel which they probably carried with them for that purpose:

nevertheless he would not drink thereof; because, say they who take these words in a spiritual sense, it was not this water, but spiritual water, he desired: but the reason is given in (~~10237~~ 2 Samuel 23:17):

but poured it out unto the Lord; as a libation to him, it being rather blood than water, being fetched at the hazard of men's lives, and therefore more fit to be offered as a sacrifice to God than to be drank by him; and this he might do in thankfulness to God for preserving the lives of the men. Gersom thinks it was now the feast of tabernacles, which was the feast of ingathering the fruits of the earth, when great quantities of water were drawn and poured out at the altar, which was done to obtain the blessing of the former rain; (see Gill on "~~4075~~ John 7:37") and (see Gill on "~~4078~~ John 7:38").

Ver. 17. *And he said, be it far from me, O Lord, that one should do this*, etc.] Drink of the water these men had brought him:

[is not this] the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? who risked the shedding of their blood, and went in danger of their lives to get it:

therefore he would not drink it: some compare with this the story of Alexander ^{f395} to whom a vessel of water was offered when in extreme thirst, which he refused, because he could not bear to drink it alone, and so small a quantity could not be divided among all about him; but the reasons are not the same:

these things did these three mighty men; which made them very famous.

Ver. 18. *And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among the three,* etc.] Another triumvirate, of which he was the head:

and he lifted up his spear against three hundred, [and] slew [them]; Josephus ^{f396} says six hundred; this seems to confirm the reading of (¹⁰²³2 Samuel 23:8), that the number eight hundred is right, for if it was only three hundred, Abishai would have been equal to one, even the first, of the former three; which yet is denied him in (¹⁰³⁹2 Samuel 23:19):

and had the name among three; of which he was one; and he had the chief name among them, or was the most famous of them.

Ver. 19. *Was he not most honourable of three?* etc.] He was; who, besides the exploit here mentioned, did many other things; he went down with David into Saul's camp, and took away his spear and cruse, which were at his bolster, (¹⁰²⁶1 Samuel 26:6-12); he relieved David when in danger from Ishbibenob the giant, (¹²¹⁶2 Samuel 21:16,17); he beat the Edomites, and slew eighteen thousand of them in the valley of salt, (¹³⁸²1 Chronicles 18:12):

therefore he was their captain; of the other two, or was head over them, took rank before them:

howbeit he attained not unto the [first] three; for fortitude, courage, and warlike exploits, namely, to the Tachmonite, Eleazar, and Shammah.

Ver. 20. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel,* etc.] A city in the tribe of Judah, (¹⁶⁵²Joshua 15:21); the father of this man was a man of great vivacity, valour, and strength, so that it was like father like son. Procopius Gazaeus says Benaiah was David's brother's son, and a grandson of Jesse:

who had done many acts; which may refer either to the father of Benaiah or to Benaiah himself; and indeed the Syriac and Arabic versions refer the preceding character, “a valiant man”, not to the father, but the son:

he slew two lionlike men of Moab; two princes of Moab, as the Targum, or two giants of Moab, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; men who were comparable to lions for their strength and courage; for this is not to be understood of two strong towers of Moab, as Ben Gersom, which were defended by valiant men like lions, or which had the form of lions engraved on them: nor of Moabitish altars, as Gussetius^{f397}, the altar of the Lord, being called by this name of Ariel, the word used; but of men of uncommon valour and fortitude:

he went down also, and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow; not Joab, (^{<1023>}1 Kings 2:34), as is the tradition^{f398}, but a real lion, the strongest among the beasts; and that in a pit where he could not keep his distance, and turn himself, and take all advantage, and from whence he could not make his escape; and which indeed might quicken his resolution, when he must fight or die; and on a snowy day, when lions are said to have the greatest strength, as in cold weather, or however are fiercer for want of food; and when Benaiah might be benumbed in his hands and feet with cold. Josephus^{f399} represents the case thus, that the lion fell into a pit, where was much snow, and was covered with it, and making a hideous roaring, Benaiah went down and slew him; but rather it was what others say, that this lion very much infested the places adjacent, and did much harm; and therefore, for the good of the country, and to rid them of it, took this opportunity, and slew it; which one would think was not one of the best reasons that might offer; it seems best therefore what Bochart^{f400} conjectures, that Benaiah went into a cave, for so the word used may signify, to shelter himself a while from the cold, when a lion, being in it for the same reason, attacked him, and he fought with it and slew it; or rather it may be an hollow place, a valley that lay between Acra and Zion, where Benaiah, hearing a lion roar, went down and slew it^{f401}.

Ver. 21. *And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man*, etc.] A person of good countenance and shape, very large and tall; in (^{<1312>}1 Chronicles 11:28), he is said to be a man of great stature, and five cubits high, and so wanted a cubit and a span of the height of Goliath, (^{<070>}1 Samuel 17:4);

and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; as large as Goliath's; for in (^{<13123>}1 Chronicles 11:23), it is said to be like a weaver's beam, as Goliath's was, (see Gill on "^{<0900>}1 Samuel 17:7"):

and he went down to him with a staff; with a walking staff only, having no other weapon:

and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand; and therefore must be a man very nimble and dexterous, as well as bold and courageous:

and slew him with his own spear; as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. This is supposed ^{f402} to be Shimei, the son of Gera, (^{<1086>}1 Kings 2:46).

Ver. 22. *These [things] did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*, etc.] Slew a lion, and two lion-like men of Moab, and an Egyptian of a gigantic stature, (^{<1023>}2 Samuel 23:20,21):

and had the name among three mighty men; of which he was one, and Abishai another, the third Asahel, one of the thirty; or was over them, (^{<1024>}2 Samuel 23:24), since thirty are reckoned without him. Abarbinel thinks that the third was Adina, the son of Shiza, the Reubenite, (^{<3114>}1 Chronicles 11:42); since thirty were with him, and he at the head of them.

Ver. 23. *He was more honourable than the thirty*, etc.] Whose names are after recorded:

but he attained not to the [first] three; the first triumvirate, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah; he was not equal to them for fortitude, courage, and military exploits:

and David set him over his guard; his bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, (^{<1088>}2 Samuel 8:18 20:23); who are called in the Hebrew text "his hearing," ^{f403} because they hearkened to his orders and commands, and obeyed them.

Ver. 24. *Asahel the brother of Joab [was] one of the thirty*, etc.] Or rather over the thirty ^{f404}, who are next mentioned; since there are thirty reckoned besides him, and the Arabic version calls him the prince of the thirty; Joab is not named at all, because he was general of the whole army, and so not to be reckoned in any of the three classes:

Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem: a townsman of David.

Ver. 25. *Shammah the Harodite*, etc.] Called Shammah the Harorite in (^{<3127>}1 Chronicles 11:27); by a change of the letters **r** “R” and **d** “D”, which is frequent:

Elika the Harodite; or who was of Harod, as the Targum; these both were from one place: mention is made of the well of Harod, (^{<000>}Judges 7:1).

Ver. 26. *Helez the Paltite*, etc.] Who was of a place called Pater, as the Targum; in (^{<3127>}1 Chronicles 11:27), he is called the Pelonite:

Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; who was of the city of Tekoah, the native place of Amos the prophet, famous for oil, about twelve miles from Jerusalem; (see Gill on “^{<300>}Amos 1:1”).

Ver. 27. *Abiezer the Anethothite*, etc.] He was of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<6218>}Joshua 21:18), the birthplace of Jeremiah the prophet, (^{<2100>}Jeremiah 1:1):

Mebunnai the Hushathite; the same with Sibbecai, (^{<3129>}1 Chronicles 11:29 27:11) (^{<0218>}2 Samuel 21:18); this man had two names, and was a descendant of Hushah, who came of Judah, (^{<3004>}1 Chronicles 4:4).

Ver. 28. *Zalmon the Ahohite*, etc.] The same with Ilai, (^{<3129>}1 Chronicles 11:29); a descendant of Ahoah, a grandson of Benjamin, (^{<3004>}1 Chronicles 8:4);

Maharai the Netophathite, who was of Netophah, a city of the tribe of Judah, mentioned along with Bethlehem, (^{<1675>}Nehemiah 7:26); a place of this name is spoken of in the Misnah ^{f405}, famous for artichokes and olives.

Ver. 29. *Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite*, etc.] Called Heled, (^{<3130>}1 Chronicles 11:30 27:15);

Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin: sometimes called Gibeah of Benjamin, (^{<0210>}Judges 20:10 ^{<0132>}1 Samuel 13:2,15,16 14:16), and Gibeah of Saul, (^{<0104>}1 Samuel 11:4 15:34 ^{<0206>}2 Samuel 21:6 ^{<2309>}Isaiah 10:29), being a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and the birth place of Saul king of Israel; and this man is distinguished hereby from Ittai the Gittite, (^{<0059>}2 Samuel 15:19).

Ver. 30. *Benaiah the Pirathonite*, etc.] Who was of Pirathon, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, (^{<0725>}Judges 12:15).

Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash; which perhaps ran by the hill Gaash, and was also in the tribe of Ephraim, (^{<0690>}Joshua 24:30). This man is called Hurai, (^{<0313>}1 Chronicles 11:32).

Ver. 31. *Abialbon the Arbatite*, etc.] A native of Betharabah, either in the tribe of Judah, (^{<0656>}Joshua 15:6,7), or in the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<0688>}Joshua 18:18,22); he is called Abiel in (^{<0313>}1 Chronicles 11:32);

Azmaveth the Barhumite; or Bachurimite, the letters transposed, an inhabitant of Bachurim or Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<0065>}2 Samuel 16:5 19:16).

Ver. 32. *Eliabha the Shaalbonite*, etc.] Of Shaalboa or Shaiabin, a city in the tribe of Dan, (^{<0692>}Joshua 19:42); perhaps the Silbonitis of Josephus^{f406}:

of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan; in (^{<0313>}1 Chronicles 11:34), it is, the sons of Hashem the Gizonite: sons are spoken of, though but one, as in (^{<0463>}Genesis 46:23).

Ver. 33. *Shammah the Hararite*, etc.] From the mountainous country, as the Targum; the Arabic and Syriac versions say, from the mount of Olives:

Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite: from the high mountain, as the Targum; in (^{<0315>}1 Chronicles 11:35), he is called the son of Sacar.

Ver. 34. *Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite*, etc.] In (^{<0315>}1 Chronicles 11:35), he is called Eliphaz the son of Ur:

Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite; David's counsellor, that went off to Absalom, (^{<0052>}2 Samuel 15:12); Eliam his son is supposed, by the Jews, to be the father of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, (^{<0008>}2 Samuel 11:3); according to Hillerus^{f407}, he is the same with Ahijah the Pelonite, (^{<0316>}1 Chronicles 11:36).

Ver. 35. *Hezrai the Carmelite*, etc.] Of Mount Carmel; or from Carmela, as the Targum, (see ^{<0252>}1 Samuel 25:2); he is called Hezro, (^{<0317>}1 Chronicles 11:37);

Paarai the Arbite; or from Arab, as the Targum, a city in the tribe of Judah, (^{<0652>}Joshua 15:52); according to Hillerus^{f408}, the same with "Naarai the son of Ezbai", in (^{<0317>}1 Chronicles 11:37).

Ver. 36. *Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah*, etc.] kingdom in Syria, (^{<108B>}2 Samuel 8:3); according to Hillerus ^{f409} the same with Joel, (^{<1318>}1 Chronicles 11:38);

Bani the Gadite; who was of the tribe of Gad, as the Targum; in the room of this stands “Mibhar, the son of Haggeri”, in (^{<1318>}1 Chronicles 11:38).

Ver. 37. *Zelek the Ammonite*, etc.] Who was so either by birth, and became a proselyte; so the Targum says, he was of the children of Ammon; or is so called, because he had sojourned some time in their land, or had done some exploits against them; unless he was of Chepharhaammonai, a city of the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<6824>}Joshua 18:24);

Naharai the Beerothite; native of Beeroth, a city in the same tribe, (^{<6825>}Joshua 18:25);

armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah; Joab had ten of them, this perhaps was the chief of them, (^{<1085>}2 Samuel 18:15); who was advanced to be a captain, and therefore has a name and place among the thirty, very likely for some military, exploits performed by him; he is in the list of David’s worthies, though not Joab his master, as before observed; the reason of Joab being left out is either because he was over them all, as before noted; according to Josephus ^{f410}, Uriah the Hittite, after mentioned, was an armourbearer to Joab.

Ver. 38. *Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite*.] These were of Jether, as the Targum, a descendant of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, (^{<1320>}1 Chronicles 2:50,53) (^{<1345>}1 Chronicles 4:15,17).

Ver. 39. *Uriah the Hittite*, etc.] The husband of Bathsheba; of whom (see Gill on “^{<1018>}2 Samuel 11:3”);

thirty and seven all; reckoning the three mighty men of the first class, the three of the second, and the third class consisting of thirty men, whose names are as above, and Joab the general and head of them all. In (^{<1314>}1 Chronicles 11:41), Zabad the son of Ahlai follows Uriah as one of this catalogue; he succeeding in honour one that soon died, particularly Elika, (^{<1025>}2 Samuel 23:25), who is omitted in Chronicles, where a list of fifteen more is given, (^{<1314>}1 Chronicles 11:42-47); at the head of which stands Adina a Reubenite, “and thirty” are said to be “with him”, according to our version; but should be rendered, as by Junius and Tremellius, “but the

thirty were superior to him”, that is, the above thirty; for these fifteen, though brave men, were of lesser note.