

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 8

In this chapter Pharaoh is threatened with the plague of frogs, in case he refused to let Israel go, which accordingly was brought upon him, (~~Q88~~Exodus 8:1-6) and though the magicians did something similar to it, yet these were so troublesome to Pharaoh, that he promised to let the people go, and sacrifice to God, if they removed; and a time being fixed for the removal of them, it was accordingly done at the entreaty of Moses and Aaron, (~~Q87~~Exodus 8:7-14) but there being a respite, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and the plague of lice is ordered, and which was executed; and though this the magicians essayed to do, and could not, but owned it to be the finger of God, yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, (~~Q85~~Exodus 8:15-19) wherefore he is threatened with a swarm of flies, which should not infest Goshen, only the places where the Egyptians dwelt, and it was so, (~~Q80~~Exodus 8:20-24) upon which Pharaoh called for Moses, and declared himself willing the people would sacrifice in the land; but this not being satisfactory, he agreed they should go into the wilderness, but not so far; and on the account of the entreaty of Moses, the plague was removed; but still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not let the people go, (~~Q85~~Exodus 8:25-32).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Either whilst the plague upon the waters continued, or immediately upon the removal of it:

go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord, let my people go, that they may serve me; mentioning neither time nor place, where, when, and how long they should serve him, for which their dismissal was required, but insist on it in general.

Ver. 2. *And if thou refuse to let them go*, etc.] Will not obey the orders:

I will smite all thy borders with frogs; he gives him warning of the blow before he strikes, which shows his clemency and goodness, his patience and longsuffering; and this he did, not only that he might have time and space for repentance, and thereby avoid the blow; but that when it came,

he might be sensible it was not by chance, or owing to second causes, but was from the Lord himself.

I will smite all thy borders with frogs: fill the whole land of Egypt with them, to the utmost borders thereof on every side. Some ^{f213} say the word signifies a large Egyptian fish, which in the Arabic tongue is called Altamsach, that is, a crocodile, with which the Nile abounded; but such a creature could not invade and attack them in the manner as is after related.

Ver. 3. *And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly,* etc.] The river Nile; and though water, and watery places, naturally produce these creatures, yet not in such vast quantities as to cover a whole country, and so large an one as Egypt, and this done at once, immediately; for they were all produced instantaneously, and in one day were spread all over the nation, and removed the next: and besides what follows is equally miraculous,

which shall go up and come into thine house; which though they may come up out of rivers, and be upon the banks and the meadows adjacent, yet are never known to come into houses, and especially into bedchambers and other places after mentioned, being not a bold but timorous creature, and shuns the sight and company of men; but these came even into the royal palace, nor could his guards keep them out:

and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed; and by their leaping upon him, and croaking in his ears, disturb his rest:

and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people both nobles and common people, and not only get into their houses, but upon their persons, on their hands when about their business, on their laps, and into their bosoms, as they sat; which must be very offensive and troublesome to them, what with their ugly shape, croaking noise and filthy smell, and the disagreeable touch of them, leaping on them, and even upon their food, and all vessels used for the same, which must make it very nauseous and distasteful to them:

and into thy ovens; where they baked their bread, and would be now hindered from the use of them:

and into thy kneadingtroughs; where they kneaded their dough, and made it into loaves, and prepared it for the oven; or the “dough” ^{f214} itself, which they leaped upon and licked, and made it loathsome for use.

Ver. 4. *And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy servants.*] No doubt by the interposition of divine power and providence, and it may be by the ministry of angels; so that let them use what care, caution, and diligence they would, there was no keeping them out; but they came upon all the people of the land, high and low, rich and poor, and upon the king's ministers, courtiers, and nobles, and the king himself not excepted; though by this particular enumeration of him, his people, and servants, the children of Israel may be thought to be exempted from this plague, as R. Japhez observes; though Aben Ezra dislikes his remark, but it seems to be just.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] By a secret impulse upon his mind, for he was now in the presence of Pharaoh, who had refused to let Israel go:

say unto Aaron, stretch forth thy hand with thy rod; for Aaron carried the rod, and he was the minister of Moses, who was appointed a god to him; and he was to speak and to do whatever he ordered him from the Lord:

over the streams, over the rivers and over the ponds; the seven streams of the river of Nile, and over the canals cut out of it, and over all places where there was a collection of water for any use for man or beast:

and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt; out of the streams, rivers, and ponds, immediately.

Ver. 6. *And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt,* etc.] That is, towards the waters of the Nile, and towards all places where any water was; for it was not possible he could stretch out his hand over all the waters that were in every place:

and the frogs came and covered the land of Egypt: they came up at once, and in such multitudes everywhere, that the whole land was full of them; this was done on the twenty fifth of Adar, or February, the same day the former plague ceased; so Artapanus^{f215}, the Heathen historian says, that Moses by his rod produced frogs, locusts, and lice. And the story which Heraclides Lembus^{f216} tells seems to be hammered out of this account of Moses, that in Paeonia and Dardania such a number of frogs fell from heaven, as filled the public roads and private houses; at first the inhabitants killed them, and keeping their houses shut, bore it patiently some time; but when it signified nothing, and their household goods were covered with them, and they found them boiled and roasted with their food, and lay in

such heaps that they could not tread for them, and were so distressed with the smell of the dead ones, they forsook their country.

Ver. 7. *And the magicians did so with their enchantments,* etc.] By their secret wiles and juggling tricks:

and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt, that is, some few, as a proof of their art and skill, and to show that Moses and Aaron did but what they could do; but what they did either were only in appearance, deceiving the sight of Pharaoh and his people, or real frogs were brought to them by the help of devils, but not in such numbers: and besides, this was adding to the plague, and not diminishing it; had they done anything to the purpose, they should have removed it at once, or destroyed the frogs; but that they could not do, of which Pharaoh being sensible, he therefore entreated for the removal of them by Moses and Aaron. To this plague there seems to be some reference at the pouring out of the sixth vial, (~~f163~~ Revelation 16:13,14).

Ver. 8. *Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron,* etc.] He sent for them:

and said, entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people; he begins now to know the Lord, whom he knew not before, by the judgments he executed on him, to acknowledge his hand in those judgments, and tacitly to own that none else could remove them; and his proud heart was so far humbled, as to beg the favour of Moses and Aaron to intercede with the Lord to cause this plague to cease, which was intolerable: and it may be observed from other instances in history, somewhat similar to this, that whole cities and countries have been deserted by their inhabitants on a like occasion, as those of Paeonia and Dardania, in the account above given; and Justin reports ^{f217} of the Abderites, a people of Thrace, that because of the multitude of frogs and mice, were obliged to leave their native country, and seek new habitations; and Diodorus Siculus ^{f218} and Aelianus ^{f219} relate much the same of a people called Autariatae; and Varro ^{f220} affirms, that in a city in France, the inhabitants of it were drove away by frogs; which instances, as they show how very distressing such a calamity is, so they serve to illustrate and confirm the truth of the divine history, cavilled at by infidels, when anything is related in it exceeding the common and ordinary course of things:

and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord; as had been frequently required of him, (^{<000>}Exodus 5:1,8 7:16 8:1).

Ver. 9. *And Moses said unto Pharaoh, glory over me,* etc.] If thou canst; take every advantage against me of lessening my glory, and increasing thine own; or vaunt or boast thyself against me, as the phrase is rendered, (^{<000>}Judges 7:2 ^{<23005>}Isaiah 10:15) or take this honour and glory to thyself over me, by commanding me, and fixing a time to pray for thee, and I will obey thy orders; which agrees with the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, and the paraphrase of Onkelos, “appoint”, or “order for me”; that is, when I shall pray for thee; or do me this honour, to believe me in the sight of the people, to declare before them that thou dost believe that upon my prayer for thee this plague shall be removed:

when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in this river only? Moses agreed to entreat the Lord for him as he desired, but leaves it with him to fix the time for doing it; and this he did, that it might appear that the removal of the frogs, as well as the bringing of them, would not be owing to chance or to any natural cause, but to the Lord himself; and though Moses had no direction from the Lord for this, that is recorded, yet he might presume upon it, since he was made a god to Pharaoh, and had power to do as he pleased; and also he knew the mind and will of God, and might have now a secret impulse upon his spirit, signifying it to him: and besides, he had the faith of miracles, and strongly believed that God would work this by him, and at whatsoever time should be fixed.

Ver. 10. *And he said, tomorrow,* etc.] Which according to Bishop Usher was the twenty sixth day of Adar, or February. It may seem strange that Pharaoh, and his people, being so greatly distressed with this plague, should not desire that the Lord would be entreated to do it immediately, and not put it off to another day: two reasons are usually given; one is, he might hope that it would by that time go off of itself, and then he should not be beholden to the Lord, nor to Moses; and the other is, that he thought an affair of this kind could not be done immediately, but that it required time for making the intercession, and performing rites and ceremonies, which he supposed might be used, as were by his magicians; and it might be now the evening of the day, and therefore deferred it till tomorrow:

and he said, be it according to thy word, as if he had said, it shall be done as thou hast desired, and at the time fixed:

that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God; that can send plagues, and remove them at his pleasure, which the deities he worshipped, and the magicians he employed, could not do.

Ver. 11. *And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people*, etc.] Signifying there should be a full and clear riddance of them:

they shall remain in the river only; the river Nile.

Ver. 12. *And Moses and Aaron went from Pharaoh*, etc.] To the place where they used to pray to the Lord, and meet with him, and receive messages from him; this they did the same day the plague was inflicted, the day before the morrow came when the frogs were to be removed:

and Moses cried unto the Lord: prayed unto him with great fervency, and with a loud voice, most fervently entreating that the frogs might be removed on the morrow, as he had promised, that so he might not be covered with shame and confusion before Pharaoh; his faith of the miracle being wrought did not hinder the use of prayer to God for it:

because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh; as an army: or “put upon”^{f221} him, as a judgment on him; or rather the sense is, as it may be rendered, “because of the business of the frogs, which he had proposed or promised to Pharaoh”^{f222}; that is, for the taking of them away, he had proposed to Pharaoh to fix the time when he should entreat the Lord for the removal of them; and he having fixed on the morrow, Moses promised it should be done according to his word; and now he is importunate with the Lord, that it may be done as he had promised.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord did according to the word of Moses*, etc.] He heard his prayers, and fulfilled what he had promised Pharaoh:

and the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the villages, and out of the fields; the word for “villages” signifies “courts”^{f223}, and may be so rendered here; and the sense is, that they not only died out of their dwelling houses, but out of their courtyards, and even out of their gardens, orchards, and fields, so that there were none near them to give any manner of trouble and offence. And their dying, and remaining dead upon the spot,

were clear proofs that they were real frogs that were produced, and not in appearance only, as the frogs of the magicians might be; God could have caused them to return to the river from whence they came, or have annihilated them, or removed them out of sight in an instant; but the killing of them, and letting them lie dead, proved the truth of the miracle, and gave apparent evidence of it both ways, both in the bringing and removing them.

Ver. 14. *And they gathered them together upon heaps*, etc.] Swept them up, and laid them in heaps out of the way:

and the land stank; with the stench of the dead frogs, which was another proof and evidence of the reality of the miracle; and that dead frogs will cause such an ill smell appears from the above account of what befell the inhabitants of Paeonia and Dardania, unless that should be the same with this, only the names of places and some circumstances altered; (See Gill on “^(IIII6)Exodus 8:16”).

Ver. 15. *But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite*, etc.] From his affliction, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; the plague was removed, and he found himself and his people at ease: or there was a “breathing” ^{f224}; before he and his people were so oppressed, that they could scarce breathe, but now being delivered from the judgment on them with which they were straitened, were enlarged and at liberty, and in easy circumstances: he hardened his heart; ((see Gill on “^(IIII4)Exodus 7:14”).

and hearkened not unto them; to Moses and Aaron, to let the children of Israel go, as they had required, and he had promised:

as the Lord had said; had foretold that he would not hearken to them, nor let Israel go as yet.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] On the twenty seventh day of the month, according to Bishop Usher, the same day the flogs were removed; no warning is given him of the next plague, at least there is no account of any:

say unto Aaron, stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land; in some one part of the land, that place nearest to him where there was a quantity of dust; for it cannot be imagined that he should smite all the dust of the land in every part of it, but smiting one part served for the whole:

that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt: not gnats, as some, nor flies, as others, but lice, though perhaps not of the common and ordinary sort, but new and extraordinary, and it may be of different sorts, suitable to different creatures.

Ver. 17. *And they did so*, etc.] As follows:

for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod; as directed and ordered:

and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast; which shows it was a miraculous operation, since lice do not usually spring from dust, but thrive in the sweat of bodies, and the nastiness of them, through sloth and idleness; and moreover, this was like the creation of man at first, which was out of the dust of the earth, and alike the effect of almighty power:

all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt; that is, the greatest part of it, not that every atom of dust became lice, nor was the land of Goshen, in which the Israelites dwelt, infected with this plague, unless where any of the Egyptians were; though Dr. Lightfoot ^{f225} thinks, that lice were in Goshen as in other parts of Egypt, there being no severing between Goshen and Egypt mentioned until the next plague; and since Israel had partook of many of the sins of Egypt, they must partake of some of her punishments; and he thinks this is the reason that the plague of lice is not reckoned among the plagues of Egypt in (^{<397844>}Psalm 78:44-51) because it was common to Israel, and to the Egyptians, and which is the sense of Aben Ezra on (^{<00724>}Exodus 7:24). The account that Artapanus ^{f226}, the Heathen historian, gives of this plague, is this;

“Moses smote the earth with a rod, and produced a certain flying animal, which greatly distressed the Egyptians, and raised ulcers in their bodies, which no physicians could cure.”

And so Origen ^{f227} describes this creature as

“having wings and flying in the air, but so subtile and minute as to escape the eye, unless very sharp sighted; but when it lights upon a body, it stings most bitterly, so that what a man cannot see flying, he feels stinging.”

Both seem to design the gnat, but this sort of vermin do not stick in and abide with men or beasts, as these here are said to do, but buzz about and bite, and then are gone.

Ver. 18. *And the magicians did so with their enchantments, to bring forth lice*, etc.] They made use of their magical art, and juggling tricks they were masters of, to produce the like sort of creatures, or at least to make such appear, or seem to appear, to the eyes of men:

but they could not; God would not suffer them to do it, to impose upon Pharaoh, and deceive him and the Egyptians any longer; and a stop is put to them, when such small and despicable creatures were produced, the more to put them to shame and confusion, and to show that what they did before was not real, and that what they did in appearance was only by divine permission;

so there were lice upon man and upon beast; these lay in great numbers on both, biting and distressing them in a most terrible manner; for as the magicians could not produce such creatures, it was not in their power to remove them.

Ver. 19. *Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God*, etc.] This is to be ascribed to a power superior to human, to a divine power; so long as they could do something similar, or impose upon the senses of men, and make them believe they did the like, they would not acknowledge divine omnipotence; but when they no longer could deceive the sight of Pharaoh and the Egyptian, then they own the effects of a superior power: and this they did partly to detract from the power of Moses and Aaron, because they would not have them pass for more skilful persons in the magic art than themselves; and therefore suggest, that this was done not by virtue of any human skill and art, but by the power of the Supreme Being; and partly to detract from the honour of the God of Israel; for they do not say this is the finger of Jehovah, whom they accounted, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f228} observes, as a petty trivial god, but this is the finger of Elohim, the Supreme Deity. It is conjectured by some ^{f229}, that in memory of this plague the Egyptian priests scrape their whole bodies, lest there should be a louse or any unclean thing on them when they worship their gods, as Herodotus ^{f230} relates:

and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; either not unto the magicians owning the hand of God, and his divine

power in the plague inflicted; or to Moses and Aaron demanding the dismissal of the people of Israel, which latter seems to be confirmed by the usual phrase, as follows,

as the Lord had said; (see ^{<01704>}Exodus 7:4).

Ver. 20. *And the Lord said unto Moses, rise up early in the morning*, etc.] Of the day following, the twenty eight of Adar, or February, according to Bishop Usher; this was the fittest time to meet with Pharaoh, and the most likely to make impressions on him:

and stand before Pharaoh: meet him as he comes along, and stop him, and stand before him as having something to say to him; this was using great boldness and freedom with a king; but as Moses was ordered to do it by the King of kings, it became him to obey him:

lo, he cometh forth to the water; ((see Gill on "^{<01715>}Exodus 7:15"))

and say unto him, thus saith the Lord, let my people go, that they may serve me; which had often been required before, but to no purpose, and in case of refusal he is threatened as follows.

Ver. 21. *Else, if thou wilt not let my people go*, etc.] But remainest obstinate and inflexible:

behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee; the word used is generally thought to signify a "mixture", and is interpreted by many a mixture of various creatures; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it a mixture of wild beasts, and so Josephus ^{f231} understands it of all sorts of beasts, of many forms, and such as were never seen before; according to Jarchi, all sorts of evil beasts are meant, as serpents and scorpions, mixed together; and so Aben Ezra says it signifies evil beasts mixed together, as lions, wolves, bears, and leopards; but it is not likely the houses should be filled with these, or the ground covered with them, as after related: and besides, they would soon have destroyed, all the inhabitants of the land, since as it follows they are said to be upon them; rather a mixture of insects is intended; the Septuagint; version renders it the "dog fly", and so Philo the Jew ^{f232}; which, as Pliny ^{f233} says, is very troublesome, to dogs especially, about their ears, and this version Bochart ^{f234} approves of:

and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; they should be sent unto and settle first on his own person, and also on his

ministers and courtiers, and upon all his subjects in general, and get into their houses, and be very troublesome guests there:

and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of the swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are; their number would be so very great.

Ver. 22. *And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell,* etc.] Distinguish it from other parts of the land of Egypt:

that no swarms of flies shall be there; which was a very wonderful thing, and so the word may be rendered. “I will marvellously sever or separate” ^{f235}, and so the Targum of Jonathan, “I will do wonders or miracles in that day”: as they were to make such a difference in one part of the country from another, and so near as Goshen was to the place where Pharaoh lived, and to bound and limit such sort of creatures as flies, which move swiftly from place to place, and particularly to keep the land of Goshen clear of them; when, as Bishop Patrick observes, it was a country that abounded with cattle, whose dung is apt to breed flies:

to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth; he is God over all the earth, and rules as a King in the midst of it, and does whatsoever he pleases in it; (see ^{<197412>}Psalm 74:12) and in the midst of the land of Goshen where his people dwelt, and over whom he was King in a peculiar manner, and took a peculiar care of them, to protect and defend them; and which must the more vex and distress the Egyptians, when they saw the Israelites clear of those plagues they were afflicted with.

Ver. 23. *And I will put a division between my people and thy people,* etc.] Or, a “redemption” ^{f236}; for by distinguishing them in his providence from the Egyptians, he might be said to redeem or deliver them; thus God makes a difference between his chosen people and the rest of the world, through his Son’s redemption of them by his blood, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation:

tomorrow shall this sign be: which, according to Bishop Usher, must be the twenty ninth day of Adar or February.

Ver. 24. *And the Lord did so,* etc.] And this he did immediately of himself without any means; not by the rod of Aaron, to let the Egyptians see that there was nothing in that rod, that it had no magic virtue in it, and what was done by it was from the Lord himself, who could as well inflict plagues without it as with it; (see ^{<194531>}Psalm 105:31) and there came a grievous

swarm of flies; or a “heavy” ^{f237} one, which was both very numerous, and very troublesome and distressing:

into the house of Pharaoh, and into the houses of his servants, and into all the land of Egypt: into the palace of Pharaoh, and into the palaces of his nobles, ministers, and courtiers, and into the dwelling places of all his subjects, throughout the whole land, excepting the land of Goshen:

the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies; Josephus ^{f238} says, the land lay neglected and uncultivated by the husbandmen; it may be, the air was infected by the flies, which produced a pestilence that took off many of the inhabitants; so among the Eleans, as Pliny ^{f239} reports, a multitude of flies produced a pestilence; however, it is certain many of the inhabitants of Egypt perished by them; they might sting them to death, suck their blood, and poison them with their envenomed stings; (see ^{<1985} Psalm 78:45).

Ver. 25 *And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron,* etc.] He and his people not being able to endure this plague of flies any longer; and we read in profane history of such creatures being so troublesome, that people have been obliged to quit their habitations, and seek for new ones; so Pausanias ^{f240} relates of the inhabitants of Myus, that such a number of flies rose out of the lake, that the men were obliged to leave the city, and go to Miletus; so Aelian ^{f241} reports, that the inhabitants of Megara were driven from thence by a multitude of flies, as were the inhabitants of Phaselis by wasps, which creatures also might be in this mixture of insects:

and said, go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land; that is, in the land of Goshen, in the place where they were; he was willing to allow them the liberty of sacrificing to their God, which it seems they had before; but then he would not consent they should go out of the land to do it.

Ver. 26. *And Moses said, it is not meet so to do,* etc.] It being the command and will of God that they should go three days’ journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice there; and besides it was dangerous, the Egyptians might be provoked by their sacrifices to fall upon them, and kill them;

for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; by which Moses is not to be understood as calling the idols of Egypt an abomination, as being so to God and to all good men, that were not idolaters; for though they were, Moses would scarcely call them so before Pharaoh, when he could have made use of another word as well; but his

meaning is, that the Israelites would sacrifice that which would be an abomination, and very detestable to the Egyptians for them to do. And so the Targum of Jonathan;

“for the sheep, which are the idols of the Egyptians, we shall take and offer before the Lord our God.”

Herodotus^{f242} says, it was not accounted with the Egyptians lawful to sacrifice any creature but swine, and male oxen, and calves, such as were clean; but nevertheless, as after these times the Egyptians did offer such creatures as oxen, sheep, and goats, at least some of them did, Bishop Patrick thinks this may only refer to the rites and ceremonies of sacrificing, and to the qualities and condition of the beasts that were offered, about which the Egyptians in later ages were very curious; however, be it which it will, something might be done which would displease the Egyptians, and therefore it was best to sacrifice out of their land:

lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? rise up in a body in great wrath, and fall upon us and slay us, by taking up stones and casting at us, or by some means or another dispatch us while offering; just as Pilate mingled the blood of the Galilaeans with their sacrifices, (^{<Q13>}Luke 13:1) and the Egyptians were a people that greatly resented any indignity done to their deities, and would prosecute it with great wrath and fury; as appears from an instance which Diodorus Siculus^{f243} reports he was an eyewitness of, as that a certain Roman having killed a cat, (which is an Egyptian deity,) the mob rose about his house, so that neither the princes sent by the king of Egypt to entreat them, nor the common dread of the Roman name, could deliver the man from punishment, though he did it imprudently, and not on purpose.

Ver. 27. *We will go three days' journey into the wilderness,* etc.] As was first insisted on, and from which demand they should not depart:

and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, as he shall command us; both what sacrifices shall be offered, and the manner in which they shall be done, both which seemed for the present in a good measure undetermined and unknown; and therefore it was possible, and very probable, that in one or the other they should give offence to the Egyptians, should they sacrifice among them, being at all events resolved to do as the Lord should command them.

Ver. 28. *And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness*, etc.] He does not say three days, though as he allowed them to go into the wilderness and sacrifice, they could not go and come again in less time; nor would Moses have accepted of the grant, as it seems by what follows he had, if he had obliged them to less time:

only you shall not go very far away; his meaning is, as Aben Ezra observes, that they should go no further than three days' journey; he was jealous that this was only an excuse to get entirely out of his dominions, and never return more. He might have heard of their claim to the land of Canaan, and of their talk, and hope, and expectation, of going and settling there; and so understood this motion of theirs, to have leave to go into the wilderness for three days, to sacrifice to the Lord, was only a pretence; that their real intention was to proceed on in their journey to Canaan; however, being in this great distress, he made as if he was willing to grant what they desired, and very importunately urged they would pray he might be delivered from this plague:

entreat for me; the words seem to be spoken in haste, and with great eagerness and vehemence.

Ver. 29. *And Moses said, behold, I go out from thee*, etc.] Directly, immediately, to the place where he was wont to meet the Lord, and receive orders and instructions from him:

and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh; for as he sent them, he only could remove them, and he could do the one as easily as he did the other:

from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; that there might be a thorough and clear riddance of them from him and all his subjects, and out of every part of his kingdom; which should be done, and was done on the morrow, that is, on the thirtieth day of Adar, answering to part of our February, and part of our March, so that this must be about the middle of March:

but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord; as in the plague of frogs, refusing to let them go when it was past; which Moses calls an illusion, a mocking of them, and dealing deceitfully, to which he here refers; (see ^{<ORIS>}Exodus 8:15).

Ver. 30. *And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.*] He did as he promised he would, and prayed to the Lord to remove the flies from Pharaoh and his people.

Ver. 31. *And the Lord did according to the word of Moses,* etc.] Did as he entreated him to do, as follows:

and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; by what means is not said, whether by destroying them at once, as the frogs, or by driving them away with a wind, as the locusts afterwards:

there remained not one; the meaning is not, not one swarm of flies, but not one fly, there was not one left; which looks as if it was in the latter way that they were removed, since, if in the former, they would have remained, though dead, as the frogs did, for a little while.

Ver. 32. *And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also,* etc.] As he did before, when he found the plague was removed, and the flies were gone:

neither would he let the people go; through pride and covetousness, being loath to have the number of those under his dominion so much diminished, and to lose so large a branch of his revenues arising from the labour of these people.