

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 10

This chapter is introduced with giving the reasons why the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:1,2). Moses and Aaron go in to him, and once more demanded in the name of the Lord the dismissal of the people of Israel, and in case of refusal, threatened him with locusts being sent into his country, which should make terrible havoc in all his coasts, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:3-6), the servants of Pharaoh entreat him to let them go, upon which Moses and Aaron are brought in again, and treated with about the terms of their departure; but they, insisting upon taking all with them, men, women, and children, and flocks and herds, and Pharaoh not willing that any but men should go, they are drove from his presence in wrath, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:7-11) wherefore the locusts were brought on all the land, which made sad devastation in it, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:12-15), and this wrought on Pharaoh so far as to acknowledge his sin, pray for forgiveness, and to desire Moses and Aaron to entreat the Lord to remove the plague, which they did, and it was removed accordingly, but still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:16-20) then followed the plague of thick darkness over all the land for three days, which brought Pharaoh to yield that all should go with them excepting their flocks and herds; but Moses not only insisted that not a hoof should be left behind, but that Pharaoh should give them sacrifices and burnt offerings, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:21-26). Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to comply, and Moses was bid to be gone, and take care never to see his face any more, and which Moses agreed to, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 10:27-29).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart*, etc.] Or, as some render it, "though I have hardened his heart"^{f265}; or otherwise it would seem rather to be a reason he should not go, than why he should; at least it would be discouraging, and he might object to what purpose should he go, it would be in vain, no end would be answered by it; though there was an end God had in view, and which was answered by hardening his heart,

and the heart of his servants; whose hearts also were hardened until now; until the plague of the locusts was threatened, and then they relent; which end was as follows:

that I might shew these my signs before him; which had been shown already, and others that were to be done, (see ^{<III>}Exodus 7:3) or in the midst of him ^{f266}, in the midst of his land, or in his heart, (see ^{<III>}Exodus 9:14).

Ver. 2. *And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son*, etc.] Not of his sons and grandsons only; for Moses here, as Aben Ezra observes, was in the stead of Israel; and the sense is, that it should be told to their posterity in all succeeding ages:

what things I have wrought in Egypt; the plagues that he inflicted on the Egyptians:

and my signs which I have done amongst them; meaning the same things which were signs:

that ye may know how that I am the Lord; that their God is the true Jehovah, and the one only living and true God; the Lord God omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, and eternal.

Ver. 3. *And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh*, etc.] As the Lord commanded them, for what is before said to Moses was designed for Aaron also, his prophet and spokesman:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews; as the ambassadors of the God of Israel, and in his name said:

how long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? to acknowledge his offence, lie low before God, and be subject to his will; he had humbled himself for a moment, but then this did not continue; what God expected of him, and complains of the want of, was such a continued humiliation before him, and such a subjection to him, as would issue in complying with what he had so often demanded of him, and is as follows:

let my people go, that they may serve me; (see ^{<III>}Exodus 9:1,13).

Ver. 4. *Else, if thou refuse to let my people go*, etc.] He threatens him with the following plague, the plague of the locusts, which Pliny ^{f267} calls “denrum irae pestis”:

behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast; according to Bishop Usher^{f268} this was about the seventh day of the month Abib, that this plague was threatened, and on the morrow, which was the eighth day, it was brought; but Aben Ezra relates it as an opinion of Japhet an Hebrew writer, that there were many days between the plague of the hail, and the plague of the locusts, that there might be time for the grass and plants to spring out of the field; but this seems not necessary, for these locusts only ate of what were left of the hail, as in the following verse.

Ver. 5. *And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth*, etc.] Or, “cover the eye of the earth”^{f269}; either the appearance and colour of the earth, so as they could not be discerned for the multitude of the locusts on it; so the word is used in (~~<04107>~~Numbers 11:7) or the eye of man looking upon the earth, which would not be able to see it, because the locusts would be between his eye and the earth. The Targum of Onkelos is,

“and shall cover the eye of the sun of the earth,”

so that its rays shall not reach the earth; and so Abarbinel interprets it of the sun, which is the light of the earth, when it casts forth its rays, as the eye upon the object that is seen; and the meaning is, that the locusts should be so thick between the heavens and the earth, that the eye of the earth, which is the sun, could not see or cast its rays upon it, as in (~~<02015>~~Exodus 10:15), and so Pliny says^{f270}, that locusts came sometimes in such multitudes as to darken the sun:

and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail; particularly the wheat and the rye, or rice, which was not grown, (~~<04032>~~Exodus 9:32) and the herb or grass of the land, (~~<02012>~~Exodus 10:12)

and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field; such fruit trees as escaped the hail, and such boughs and branches of them which were not broken off by it, (~~<02015>~~Exodus 10:15) and locusts will indeed eat trees themselves, the bark of them, and gnaw everything, even the doors of houses, as Pliny^{f271} relates.

Ver. 6. *They shall fill thy houses*, etc.] The king’s palace and all the offices of it:

and the houses of thy servants; the palaces of his nobles and courtiers:

and the houses of all the Egyptians; of all the common people, not only in the metropolis, but in all the cities and towns in the kingdom; and so Dr. Shaw ^{f272} says, the locusts he saw in Barbary, in the years 1724 and 1725, climbed as they advanced over every tree or wall that was in their way; nay, they entered into our very houses and bedchambers, he says, like so many thieves:

which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers, have seen since the day they were upon the earth unto this day; for size, for numbers, and for the mischief they should do; for though they have sometimes appeared in great numbers, and have covered a large spot of ground where they have settled, and devoured all green things, yet never as to cover a whole country at once, and so large an one as Egypt, and destroy all green things in it; at least, never such a thing had been seen or known in Egypt before since it was a nation, though it was a country sometimes visited by locusts; for Pliny ^{f273} says, that in the country of Cyreniaca, which was near Egypt, (see ~~400~~ Acts 2:10) there was a law made for the diminishing of them, and keeping them under, to be observed three times a year, first by breaking their eggs, then destroying their young, and when they were grown up:

and he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh; as soon as Moses had delivered his message, perceiving anger in Pharaoh's countenance, and concluding from hence and some gestures of his that he should not succeed, and perhaps might be bid to go away, though it is not recorded; or "he looked and went out from him", ^{f274}, in honour to the king, as R. Jeshuah observes, he went backward with his face to the king; he did not turn his back upon him, but went out with his face to him; and which as it was and is the manner in the eastern countries, so it is with us at this day, to go from the presence of the king, not with the back, but with the face turned toward him, so long as he is to be seen.

Ver. 7. *And Pharaoh's servants said to him*, etc.] His courtiers and counsellors, such of them as were not so hardened as others, or however now began to relent, and dreaded what would be the consequence of things, even the ruin of the whole country, the good of which they seem to have had at heart:

how long shall this man be a snare unto us? an occasion of ruin and destruction, as birds by a snare; they speak in a contemptuous manner of Moses, calling him "this man", the rather to ingratiate themselves into the

good will of Pharaoh, and that their advice might be the better and the easier taken:

let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: that is, Moses and his people, grant them their request, that the land may be preserved from ruin; for if things go on long at this rate, utter destruction must ensue:

knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? as good as ruined, by the plagues that already were come upon it, especially by the last, by the murrain and boils upon the cattle, which destroyed great quantities, and by the hail which had smitten their flax and their barley; or, “must thou first know that Egypt is destroyed?” before thou wilt let the people go; or dost thou first wish, or is it thy pleasure, that it should be first declared to thee that Egypt is destroyed, as Aben Ezra interprets it, before thou wilt grant the dismissal of this people? The Targum of Jonathan is,

“dost thou not yet know, that by his hands the land of Egypt must perish?”

(See Gill on “~~4015~~Exodus 1:15”). (See Gill on “~~4015~~Exodus 2:15”).

Ver. 8. *And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh,* etc.] Upon this motion of his ministers, messengers were sent to bring them in again:

and he said, go, serve the Lord your God; as you have often desired:

but who are they that shall go? or, “who and who”^{f275}? for Pharaoh was unwilling that they should all go, but would have some retained as pledges of their return; for he was jealous of a design to get out of his country, and never return again, which he could not bear the thoughts of, even of losing such a large number of men he had under his power, and from whom he received so much profit and advantage by their labour.

Ver. 9. *Moses said, we will go with our young and with our old,* etc.] The latter were necessary to guide, direct, and instruct in the business of sacrifice, and to perform it as heads of their respective families; and the former were to be present, that they might be trained up and inured to such religious services:

with our sons and with our daughters; as with persons of every age, so of every sex, who had all a concern herein, especially as it was a solemn feast, which all were to partake of:

with our flocks and with our herds will we go; which were requisite for the sacrifices, not knowing which they were to sacrifice, and with which to serve God, till they came to the place where they were to sacrifice; (see ⁽¹⁷⁰⁶⁾Exodus 10:26),

for we [must hold] a feast unto the Lord; which required the presence of old and young, men, women, and children, to join in it, and their flocks and their herds, out of which it was to be made.

Ver. 10. *And he said unto them, let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones*, etc.] Either as mocking them, let the Lord you talk of be with you if he will, and let him deliver you if he can, as I shall let you go with your children, which I never will; or as wishing them ill, that the Lord their God may be with them, as he should dismiss them on their proposal, that is, not at all; he wishes they might never have the presence of the Lord, or receive any from him, till he should dismiss them, which he was determined never to do in the manner they desired; and therefore the sum of his wish or imprecation is, that they might never enjoy any benefits from the Lord; the first sense seems to be best:

look to it, for evil is before you; which is either a charge of sin upon them, that they had an evil design upon him, and intended to raise a mutiny, make an insurrection, and form a rebellion against him; or a threatening to inflict the evil of punishment upon them, if they would not comply with his terms; and it is as if he should say, be it at your peril if you offer to go away in any other manner than it is my pleasure.

Ver. 11. *Not so*, etc.] You shall not go with your children as you propose:

go now ye [that are] men, and serve the Lord, for that you did desire; suggesting that that was all they first required, that their men should, go three days into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the Lord; whereas the demand was, let my people go, (⁽¹⁷⁰⁷⁾Exodus 5:1) which were not the men only, but the women and children also, and all were concerned in the service of God, and in keeping a feast to him:

and they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence; by some of his officers, according to his orders.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt*, etc.] First one way, and then another, towards every

quarter, and every part of the land, to signify that the following plague would come upon the whole land:

for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt; the stretching out of his hand was to be the signal to them to come up and spread themselves over the land, which was brought about by the mighty power of God; for otherwise there was no such virtue in the hand or rod of Moses, to have produced so strange an event:

and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left; the wheat and the rye, or rice, the grass, herbs, and plants, it had beat down, but not utterly destroyed, as well as some boughs and branches of trees which were left unbroken by it.

Ver. 13. *And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt,* etc.] His hand, with his rod in it:

and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land, all that day and all that night; all that day after he had been driven from Pharaoh, and after he had stretched out his hand with his rod in it over Egypt, which was the seventh of the month Abib, and all the night following. This Jehovah did, who holds the winds in his fist, and brings them out of his treasures, whose will they obey, and whose word they fulfil:

and when it was morning; the morrow was come, (^{<200>}Exodus 10:4) the eighth day of the month Abib:

the east wind brought the locusts; it was usual for these creatures to be taken up and carried with the wind, and brought into countries, as Pliny ^{f276} and other writers attest. In the year 1527, a strong wind brought vast troops of locusts out of Turkey into Poland, which did much mischief; and in the year 1536 a wind from the Euxine Pontus brought such vast numbers of them into Podolia, as that for twenty miles round they devoured everything ^{f277}. The word here used commonly signifies the east wind, and so the Jewish writers unanimously interpret it; and if those locusts were brought from the Red sea, into which they were carried, it must be by an east wind, since the Red sea was east of Egypt; but the Septuagint version renders it the “south wind”, and which is approved of by De Dieu on the place, and by Bochart ^{f278}; and the latter supposes these locusts were brought by a south wind out of Ethiopia, which lay to the south of Egypt, and where in the spring of the year, as it now was, were usually great numbers of locusts, and where were a people that lived upon them, as

Diodorus Siculus ^{f279} and Strabo ^{f280} relate; who both say that at the vernal equinox, or in the spring, the west and southwest winds blowing strongly brought locusts into those parts; and the south wind being warm might contribute to the production, cherishing, and increasing of these creatures, and which are sometimes brought by a south wind. Dr. Shaw says ^{f281}, the locusts he saw in Barbary, An. 1724 and 1725, were much bigger than our common grasshoppers, and had brown spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow; their first appearance was toward the latter end of March, the wind having been for some time from the south.

Ver. 14. *And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt*, etc.] Being raised up by the wind in the places where they were generated, they flew and spread themselves all over the land, being in a wonderful manner produced and multiplied by the power of God:

and rested in all the coasts of Egypt; in every part of it where the Egyptians dwelt, and where there were meadows, pastures, fields, gardens, orchards; here they lighted and fed, excepting the land of Goshen, where Israel dwelt, which must be thought to be exempted from this plague, as from the rest.

Very grievous were they; because of the mischief that they did, and because of their multitude, for they were innumerable, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, and as it is, (~~958~~ Psalm 105:34),

there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such; there were none before, and there would be none afterwards like them, which Moses knew by a spirit of prophecy. If this is to be understood of their size, they must be very large; in the year 1556, there were locusts at Milain that were a span long, and had six feet, and these like the feet of rats, and there was one four times bigger than the rest, which was taken and kept by a citizen, and would hiss like a serpent when it saw that no food was set before it ^{f282}; yea, Pliny ^{f283} speaks of locusts in India three feet long; and what Moses here says is not contradicted in (~~211B~~ Joel 2:2) because his words may be understood of the Chaldean army, of which the locusts were an emblem; and besides, each may be restrained to the country in which they were, as that none ever before or since were seen in Egypt as these, though they might be in other countries; and so those in Joel's time were such as never before or since were seen in the land of Judea, though they might be in other places.

Ver. 15. *For they covered the face of the whole earth*, etc.] Of the whole land of Egypt; and this seems to be the instance in which these locusts differed from all others, that had been or would be, even in their numbers; for though there might have been before, and have been since, such vast numbers of them together as to darken the air and the sun, and by lighting first on one spot, and then on another, have destroyed whole countries; yet never was such an instance known as this, as that they should come in so large a body, and at once to light, and spread, and settle themselves over the whole country. Leo Africanus ^{f284} indeed speaks of a swarm of locusts, which he himself saw at Tagtessa in Africa, A. D. 1510, which covered the whole surface of the ground; but then that was but in one place, but this was a whole country. It is in the original, “they covered the eye of the whole earth”; of which ((see Gill on “^{<005>}Exodus 10:5”)).

so that the land was darkened; the proper colour of the earth, and the green grass on it, could not be seen for them, they lay so thick upon it; and being perhaps of a brown colour, as they often are, the land seemed dark with them:

and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left; for though every herb of the field is said to be smitten, and every tree of the field to be broke with it, (^{<005>}Exodus 9:25), yet this, as has been observed, is to be understood either hyperbolically, or of the greater part thereof, but not of the whole:

and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt; the like is said to befall the province of Carpitania, in the ninth year of Childibert, king of France; which was so wasted by locusts, that not a tree, nor a vineyard, nor a forest, nor any sort of fruit, nor any other green thing remained ^{f285}. So Dr. Shaw ^{f286} says of the locusts he saw as above related, that they let nothing escape them, eating up everything that was green and juicy, not only the lesser kinds of vegetables, but the vine likewise, the fig tree, the pomegranate, the palm, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field. But then such devastations are usually made gradually, by these creatures moving from place to place, whereas this destruction in Egypt was done in one day. Indeed we are told in history, that in one country one hundred and forty acres of land were destroyed in one day ^{f287}; but what is this to all the land of Egypt? with this plague may be compared that of the locusts upon the sounding of the fifth trumpet, (^{<005>}Revelation 9:1-11).

Ver. 16. *Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste*, etc.] Or, “hastened to call them”^{f288}; sent messengers in all haste to fetch them, and desire them to come as soon as possible to him. Thus he who a few hours ago drove them from his presence, in a hurry, sends for them to come to him with all speed, which the present circumstances he was in required:

and he said to Moses and Aaron: when they were brought into his presence:

I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you; against the Lord by disobeying his command, in refusing to let Israel go, when he had so often required it of him; and against Moses and Aaron his ambassadors, whom he had treated with contempt, and had drove them from his presence with disgrace; and against the people of Israel, whom they personated, by retaining them, and using them so ill as he had. This confession did not arise from a true sense of sin, as committed against God, nor indeed does he in it own Jehovah to be his God, only the God of Moses and Aaron, or of the Israelites; but from the fright he was in, and fear of punishment continued upon him, to the utter ruin of him and his people.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin, only this once*, etc.] Pretending that he would never offend any more, and if he did, he did not desire it should be forgiven him, but that due punishment should be inflicted on him. These words are directed to Moses, he being the principal person that came to him with a commission from the Lord, and who was made a god to Pharaoh; and therefore he does not ask forgiveness of the Lord, but of Moses:

and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only; this deadly plague of the locusts, which devouring all the fruits of the earth, must in course produce a famine, and that the death of men. Moreover, the author of the book of Wisdom says, that the bites of the locusts killed men,

“For them the bitings of grasshoppers and flies killed, neither was there found any remedy for their life: for they were worthy to be punished by such.” (Wisdom 16:9)

Pharaoh was sensible that this plague came from God, and that he only could remove it; and therefore begs the prayers of Moses and Aaron to him for the removal of it, and suggests that he would never desire such another favour; but that if he offended again, and another plague was inflicted on

him, he could not desire it to be taken away; by which he would be understood, that he determined to offend no more, or give them any occasion for any other judgment to come upon him, was he once clear of this.

Ver. 18. *And he went out from Pharaoh*, etc.] Without the city, as he had been wont to do: and entreated the Lord; prayed to him that he would remove the plague of the locusts from the land.

Ver. 19. *And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind*, etc.] He turned the wind the contrary way it before blew; it was an east wind that brought the locusts, but now it was changed into a west wind, or “a wind of the sea”^{f289}, of the Mediterranean sea; a wind which blew from thence, which lay to the west of Egypt, as the Red sea did to the east of it, to which the locusts were carried by the wind as follows: which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; and as it is usual for locusts to be brought by winds, so to be carried away with them, and to be let fall into seas, lakes, and pools, and there perish. So Pliny says^{f290} of locusts, that being taken up and carried with the wind in flocks or swarms, they fell into seas and lakes; and Jerom observes^{f291} in his time, that they had seen swarms of locusts cover the land of Judea, which upon the wind rising have been driven into the first and last seas; that is, into the Dead sea, and into the Mediterranean sea; (see <sup>^{21B>} Joel 2:20). This sea here called the Red sea is the same which is now called the Arabian gulf; in the original text it is the sea of Suph; that is, the sea of flags or rushes; as the word is rendered, (<sup>^{21B>} Exodus 2:3,5) from the great numbers of these growing on the banks of it, which are full of them, as Thevenot^{f292} says; or the “sea of weeds”^{f293}, from the multitude of them in the bottom of it, or floating on it. So Columbus found in the Spanish West Indies, on the coast of Paria, a sea full of herbs, or weeds^{f294}, which grew so thick, that they sometimes in a manner stopped the ships. Some render Yam Suph, the sea of bushes; and some late travellers^{f295} observe, that though, in the dreadful wilds along this lake, one sees neither tree, shrub, nor vegetable, except a kind of bramble, yet it is remarkable that they are found in the sea growing on its bottom, where we behold with astonishment whole groves of trees blossoming and bearing fruit, as if nature by these marine vegetables meant to compensate for the extreme sterility reigning in all the deserts of Arabia; and with this agrees the account that Pliny^{f296} gives of the Red sea, that in it olives and green fruit trees grow; yea, he says that that and all the Eastern ocean is full of woods; and adds, it is wonderful that in the Red sea

woods live, especially the laurel, and the olive bearing berries. Hillerus^{f297} thinks this sea here has the name of the sea of Suph from a city of the same name near unto it. It is often called the Red sea in profane authors as here, not from the coral that grew in it, or the red sand at the bottom of it, or red mountains near it; though Thevenot^{f298} says, there are some mountains all over red on the sides of it; nor from the shade of those mountains upon it; nor from the appearance of it through the rays of the sun upon it; and much less from the natural colour of it; which, as Curtius^{f299} observes, does not differ from others; though a late traveller says^{f300}, that

“on several parts of this sea (the Red sea) we observed abundance of reddish spots made by a weed resembling “cargaco” (or Sargosso) rooted in the bottom, and floating in some places: upon strict examination, it proved to be that which we found the Ethiopians call Sufo (as here Suph), used up and down for dying their stuffs and clothes of a red colour,”

but the Greeks called it so from Erythras or Erythrus, a king that reigned in those parts^{f301}, whose name signifies red; and it is highly probable the same with Esau, who is called Edom, that is, red, from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to Jacob; and this sea washing his country, Idumea or Edom, was called the Red sea from thence; and here the locusts were cast by the wind, or “fixed”^{f302}, as a tent is fixed, as the word signifies, and there continued, and never appeared more:

there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt; so that the removal of them was as great a miracle as the bringing them at first: this was done about the ninth day of the month Abib.

Ver. 20. *But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart*, etc.] For as yet he had not brought all his judgments on him he designed to bring:

so that he would not let the children of Israel go: though he had promised to do it, and that he would never offend more in this way.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] About the eleventh day of the month Abib:

stretch out thine hand toward heaven; where the luminaries are, and from whence light comes:

that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt; that is, what caused it, the gross vapours and thick fogs; for otherwise darkness itself, being a privation of light, cannot be felt: Onkelos paraphrases it,

“after that the darkness of the night is removed;”

so Jonathan; that it might appear to be different from that, and be much grosser.

Ver. 22. *And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness over all the land of Egypt three days.*] The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth days of the month Abib; with this compare the fifth vial, (⁽⁶⁶⁶⁰⁾Revelation 16:10).

Ver. 23. *They saw not one another*, etc.] Not only the luminaries of heaven were covered and beclouded with the darkness, so that they were of no use to them; but the fogs and vapours which occasioned it were so damp and clammy that they put out their fires, lamps, and candles, so that they could receive no benefit from them:

neither rose up any from his place for three days; from the place of his habitation, not being able to find the way to the door, or however not able to do any business abroad; and besides were quite amazed and confounded, supposing the course of nature was changed and all things going to a dissolution, their consciences filled with horror and terror and black despair, strange and terrible phantoms and apparitions presented to their minds, as the author of the book of Wisdom suggests,

“No power of the fire might give them light: neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night.”
(Wisdom 17:5)

and which is countenanced by what the psalmist says, who instead of this plague of darkness, takes notice of evil angels being sent among them, (⁽¹⁹⁸⁴⁾Psalm 78:49) that is, devils in horrible shapes represented to their minds, which dreadfully distressed and terrified them, so that they durst not stir and move from the place where they were:

but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings; not only in the land of Goshen, but in all places where they were mixed with the Egyptians, as it is plain they were, from (⁽¹⁰²³⁾Exodus 10:23) so that they

could go about their business, and perform it as at other times, and had now a fine opportunity of packing up their goods, and getting every thing ready for their departure, without being observed by the Egyptians. Doctor Lightfoot^{f303} thinks, that now they attended to the ordinance of circumcision, which had been generally neglected, and was necessary to their partaking of the passover, which in a few days was to be observed, and of which no uncircumcised person might eat, (⁴¹²⁸Exodus 12:48) and which he grounds upon (⁴⁹⁵³⁸Psalms 105:28), and this time was wisely taken for it, when the Egyptians could have no opportunity or advantage against them, because of their soreness by it; it may indeed be wondered at, that they did not take the advantage of the darkness the Egyptians were in, of getting out of the land, and going their three days' journey into the wilderness; but it was the will of God that they should not steal away privately, or go by flight as fugitives, but openly, and with the mighty hand and outstretched arm of God; besides, the Lord had not as yet wrought all the judgments he intended. In the fabulous expedition of Bacchus against the Indians, a story is told which seems to be taken from hence, that the Indians were covered with darkness, while those with Bacchus were in light all around them^{f304}.

Ver. 24. *And Pharaoh called unto Moses*, etc.] After the three days, as the Targum of Jonathan, when the darkness was over, or at least much diminished, fearing that still worse evils would befall him:

and said, go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed; stopped or remained behind, as a pledge and security of their return; and these the rather he was desirous of retaining, because of the great loss of cattle he had sustained by the murrain and boils upon them, and by the hail: let your little ones also go with you; this he had refused before, but now consents to it, which he thought was doing them a great favour, and that upon such terms they might be content to go.

Ver. 25. *And Moses said, thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings*, etc.] Sheep, rams, and goats for sacrifices, and oxen for burnt offerings; and that of his own, as Jarchi interprets it; but rather the meaning is, that besides having their little ones with them, they must be allowed also to take their cattle for sacrifices and burnt offerings:

that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God; might have wherewith to offer up in sacrifice to him as he shall require.

Ver. 26. *Our cattle also shall go with us*, etc.] Of every kind, of the flocks and of the herds:

there shall not an hoof be left behind; not a single creature that has an hoof: it is a proverbial expression, signifying that they should carry all that belonged to them with them:

for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; something of every kind and sort, all they had being devoted to his service, and to be yielded to him upon demand:

and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither; into the wilderness; they knew not exactly and precisely what kind of creatures or how many of them, as Aben Ezra observes, they were to offer at a time; for though before this there was a known distinction between clean and unclean creatures, and the various offerings and sacrifices of the patriarchs might in a good measure direct them in the use of them; yet the special and peculiar laws about sacrifices were not given until after their deliverance, and they were got into the wilderness; so that this was not a bare pretence to get their cattle along with them, but was the true case and real matter of fact.

Ver. 27. *But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart*, etc.] Yet more and more:

and he would not let them go; his heart was set against it, his will was resolute, and he was determined never to let them go.

Ver. 28. *And Pharaoh said unto him*, etc.] To Moses:

get thee from me; be gone from my presence, I have nothing more to say to thee, or do with thee:

take heed to thyself; lest mischief befall thee from me, or those about me:

see my face no more; neither here nor elsewhere:

for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die; this was a foolish as well as a wicked speech, when he lay at the mercy of Moses, rather than Moses at his; he being made a god unto him, and had such power to inflict plagues upon him, of which he had had repeated instances.

Ver. 29. *And Moses said, thou hast spoken well*, etc.] Not that which was good, in a moral sense, for it was very wicked, but what would eventually prove true:

I will see thy face again no more; which may be understood either conditionally, except he was sent for, and he desired to see him, he would not come of himself; or absolutely knowing by a spirit of prophecy that he should be no more sent unto him, and that Pharaoh should in a little time be drowned in the Red sea, when he would be seen no more by him nor any other; for as for what is said in the following chapter, it is thought by many to have been said at this time, as it might even before he went out of the presence of Pharaoh, which in (²¹¹⁰⁸Exodus 11:8) he is said to do in anger: and as for Pharaoh's calling for him at midnight, and bidding him rise and begone, (²¹²³¹Exodus 12:31) it might be delivered by messengers, and so he be not seen by Moses and Aaron. By this speech of Moses, it appears he was not afraid of Pharaoh and his menaces, but rather taunts at him, and it is to this fearless disposition of Moses at this time that the apostle refers in (⁵³¹²⁷Hebrews 11:27).