

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 19

This chapter gives an account of a sad affair of a Levite and his concubine, and of the bad consequence of it, how that she played the whore, and went away from him to her father's house, whither he followed her, and where he was kindly entertained by her father several days, (^{<07916>}Judges 19:1-9) and then set out on his journey to his own country; and passing by Jebus or Jerusalem, he came to Gibeah, and could get no lodging, (^{<07910>}Judges 19:10-15), but at length was taken in by an old man, an Ephraimite, (^{<07916>}Judges 19:16-21) when the house where he was beset by some wicked men in Gibeah, with the same intent as the men of Sodom beset the house of Lot, (^{<07922>}Judges 19:22-24) and after some expostulation of the old man with them, the concubine was brought out to them and abused by them even unto death, (^{<07925>}Judges 19:25-28) upon which the Levite her husband cut her into twelve pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, which was shocking and surprising, (^{<07929>}Judges 19:29,30) the consequence of which is related in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel,* etc.] The same is observed in (^{<07716>}Judges 17:6 18:1) and refers to the same times, the times before the judges, between them and the death of Joshua, during which time there was no supreme magistrate or ruler in Israel, which is meant; and this is observed, as before, to account for wickedness being committed with impunity, such as adultery, sodomy, murder, etc. afterwards related:

that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim; in a city that was on one side of that mountain; it seems not to have been a Levitical city, because he was only a sojourner in it; perhaps he chose to reside there, as being near to the tabernacle of Shiloh, which was in that tribe;

who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah; the same place from whence the wicked Levite came, spoken of in the preceding chapters, and who was the means of spreading idolatry in Israel; and here a wicked

concubine of a Levite comes from the same, and was the cause of great effusion of blood in Israel; which two instances may seem to reflect dishonour and disgrace on Bethlehem, which were wiped off by the birth of some eminent persons in it, as Boaz, Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah. The woman the Levite took from hence is in the Hebrew called, “a wife, a concubine”^{f390}; for a concubine was a secondary wife, taken without espousals and a dowry: some think they were espoused, though there was no dowry, and were reckoned truly wives, though they had not all the honour and privilege as others; and that this woman was accounted the wife of the Levite, appears from his being called her husband frequently; and her father is said to be his father-in-law, and he his son-in-law; nor could she have been chargeable with adultery otherwise.

Ver. 2. *And his concubine played the whore against him*, etc.] Was unfaithful to him and his bed, and broke the covenant and agreement between them; or “with him”^{f391}, while she was with him in the house; or “before him”^{f392}, of which he had knowledge and proof; though some think this is not to be understood of whoredom or adultery, but of her ill usage of him, and departure from him. The Targum is, she despised him; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it of her declining and turning aside from him, and returning to her father’s house, as follows: and indeed, had she been guilty of such a crime, one would think he would never have sought after her to reconcile her, and take her again, since she not only deserved to be put away, but to be put to death according to the law of God:

and went away from him to her father’s house to Bethlehemjudah; where she was received, as she knew she should, having a parent perhaps too indulgent, and which was an encouragement to her to leave her husband:

and was there some whole months or a year and four whole months, according to Ben Gersom; so Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the copulative “and” is wanting, which is expressed in (⁴⁰²⁰1 Samuel 27:7) and “yamim, days”, is so the times used for a year, (⁴⁰⁴⁸Judges 14:8 15:1 21:19).

Ver. 3. *And her husband arose*, etc.] From the place where he lived:

and went after her; to Bethlehemjudah, where her father lived:

to speak comfortably to her “or to her heart”^{f393}; having heard perhaps that she repented of her sin, or if it was only upon a quarrel between them, his anger might cool and subside, and therefore sought for a reconciliation;

and which was the more commendable in him, as he did not put her away, but she departed from him: and

to bring her again; to his own city, and to his own house and bed, as before:

having his servant with him, and a couple of asses; one of them for her to ride upon, and the other to carry provisions on:

and she brought him into her father's house; it seems she met with him before he came thither, in the fields, or in the street; and by this it appears that she was glad to see him, and received him in a loving manner, and introduced him into her father's house, so that things looked well, and promised success:

and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him; having a good opinion of him, and perhaps understood, even by his daughter's story, that she was most in fault, and therefore was well pleased to see him come after her; though he ought before this time to have sent her home, or sought for a reconciliation of her to her husband.

Ver. 4. *And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him*, etc.] Prevailed upon him to stay some time with him:

and he abode with him three days; it seems as if he agreed to stay with him so long, and that time he stayed contentedly:

so they did eat and drink, and lodged there; the Levite and his servant were very handsomely entertained, and had everything provided for them convenient for meat, drink, and lodging.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass on the fourth day*, etc.] The time the Levite had agreed to stay being up:

when they arose early in the morning the Levite, his concubine and servant, in order to set out on their journey: that he arose to depart; the Levite rose up from his seat to take his leave of his father-in-law, and depart from his house, and proceed on his way homeward; for rising out of his bed is before expressed:

and the damsel's father said to his son in law, comfort thy heart with a morsel of bread; take a breakfast first, that he might be fitter for his journey, for bread comforts or strengthens men's hearts, (¹⁹⁴¹⁵Psalm

104:15) though here it may be put for any and all sorts of provisions, whatever might be proper to take early in a morning, and before setting out on a journey: and afterwards go your way; he seemed as if he was willing he should set forward, after he had refreshed him with a meal.

Ver. 6. *And they sat down*, etc.] Not only sat down upon their seats again, the Levite having rose up in order to go away, but sat down at table:

and did eat and drink both of them together; both the Levite and his father-in-law; and it appears by this, and what follows, that the Levite did not take only a short repast, or breakfast with him, but stayed and dined with him, when they ate a plentiful meal, and drank freely after dinner:

for the damsel's father had said to the man, be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry; let us spend a pleasant evening together, in drinking freely, though not to excess, in cheerful conversation, and innocent mirth. This he proposed to him, and hoped he would agree to it.

Ver. 7. *And when the man rose up to depart*, etc.] Rose up from table, having ate and drank sufficiently, in order to depart the house, and proceed on his journey:

his father in law urged him; with much entreaty, and earnest solicitations, that he would stay all night with him:

therefore he lodged there again; another night, being prevailed upon through his father's importunity.

Ver. 8. *And he rose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart*, etc.] With a full intention to take his leave of his father, and be gone:

and the damsel's father said, comfort thine heart, I pray thee; with a meal's meat, with a breakfast, before he set out on his journey, that he might be heartier and stronger for it:

and they tarried until afternoon; or "until the decline of the day",^{f394} when the sun had passed the meridian, and was declining, as it immediately does when noon is past:

and they did eat both of them; the man stayed and took a dinner with his father-in-law; and though no mention is made of the concubine, neither in this, nor in the other instances, no doubt she ate with them.

Ver. 9. *And when the man rose up to depart, he and his concubine, and his servant*, etc.] Rose up from table, having comfortably refreshed themselves:

his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, behold, now the day draweth towards evening; or is “remiss”, or “weak”^{f395}; that is, the heat, light, and strength of the sun abated, and became weaker and more remiss, as it does the more it declines, and is nearer setting:

I pray you tarry all night; suggesting, it was a very improper time to set out in on a journey:

behold, the day groweth to an end; or “behold, it is the encampment of the day”^{f396}, when the day or sun seems to be pitching its tent, and going to rest; or it being the time when an army on the march stops and pitches their tents, in order to continue all night; or when men go to their tents and habitations, and lie down and take their rest:

lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and let us have another pleasant evening together, which cannot be had in an inn upon the road; you cannot be comfortable there, as here, and therefore be persuaded to stay, since it is not possible to get home tonight:

and tomorrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home; to thy city, as the Targum; signifying, that he should not insist upon their staying any longer, and then they might set out on their journey as soon as they pleased.

Ver. 10. *But the man would not tarry that night*, etc.] He was determined upon his journey; he perceived there was no end of the solicitations of his father-in-law, and did not know how long he intended to detain him, and therefore was resolved not to hearken to him any longer:

but he rose up and departed; rose up from his seat, took his leave of his father-in-law, and proceeded on his journey:

and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; which was then called Jebus, because inhabited by the Jebusites, as appears from the following verse; this was about six miles from Bethlehem^{f397}; so far they were come on in their journey homewards:

and there were with him two asses saddled; which he brought with him when he came to Bethlehem, (^{4793B}Judges 19:3) now said to be “saddled”,

either for him and his concubine to ride on; or they were bound or girt, as the word signifies, being loaded with bread, and wine, and provender; or it may be one of them was for him and his concubine to ride on by turns, and the other to carry the provisions:

and his concubine also was with him; matters being now made up between them, she had agreed to go with him, and did, which was the end of his coming to her father's house; and therefore this is observed on that account, as well as for what follows in the tragical part of this history.

Ver. 11. *And when they were by Jebus the day was far spent*, etc.] Or “was gone down very much”^{f398}, the sun was going down apace, and near setting:

and the servant said unto his master, come, I pray thee: he proposed it to him in a submissive manner, and might use some entreaty for his master's good and safety:

and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it; for though that part of the city which belonged to the tribe of Judah was taken by them after the death of Joshua, yet that which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, part of it was still possessed by the Jebusites, whom the Benjamites could not expel, (~~1002~~Judges 1:21) and Ben Gersom thinks, that this affair of this Levite, and his concubine, was before the men of Judah fought against it, and took it; which not unlikely, seeing it is called here a city of the Jebusites, and because the Levite objected going into it on that account; whereas there would not have been much in his objection, if one part or it was in the session of the men of Judah, and the other in the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, though they had some Jebusites dwelling among them.

Ver. 12. *And his master said unto him, we will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger*, etc.] A city of the children of the Gentiles, as the Targum, as the Jebusites were, being one of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, who were to be dispossessed and destroyed; and which, one would think, he would not have so called, had it been inhabited, though but in part, by the children of Judah and Benjamin: by this it appears, that this Levite was a good man, and conscientious, and shunned all appearance of evil, and the company of wicked men, as became his character and profession: and it is added,

that is not of the children of Israel; which further confirms the above conjecture, that this city was not as yet at all in the hands of the Israelites; or if it had been, was retaken, and now in the hands of the Jebusites:

we will pass over to Gibeah; which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and inhabited by men of that tribe, and so more agreeable to this Levite, though it proved fatal to him; this was, as Josephus says ^{f399} thirty furlongs, or near four miles from Jebus or Jerusalem; and though it was near sun setting, he chose rather to proceed on to this place, than to lodge at Jebus, and the rather it may be, as it was a Levitical city, (^{<6217>}Joshua 21:17).

Ver. 13. *And he said to his servant, come, and let us draw near*, etc.] And get on as fast as we can:

to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and he left it to his servant to go to either, to that which was most convenient, because of the time of the day, it being near sun setting; now, as before observed, Gibeah was not quite four miles from Jerusalem; whereas, according to Jerom ^{f400}, Ramah was six miles, and therefore we find they took up at Gibeah, as being nearest of these two places; (see Gill on "^{<6824>}Joshua 18:24-25") (see Gill on "^{<2818>}Hosea 5:8")

Ver. 14. *And they passed on, and went their way*, etc.] Proceeded on in their journey from Jebus or Jerusalem, near to which they were:

and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin; which is added, to distinguish it from another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah, (^{<6857>}Joshua 15:57) when they were come pretty near to this place, on the side of it, as it seems, the sun was just setting, which determined them to take up their lodging here, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And they turned aside thither to go in and lodge in Gibeah*, etc.] Instead of going right forward, and passing by Gibeah, over against which they were, they turned out of their road, and went into the city to seek a lodging in it:

and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city; to see whether any person would invite him into any of their houses, as was usual in those hospitable times and countries, and where there were few inns for the entertainment of travellers and strangers, or none at all, and especially in cities; if any where, they were upon the public road:

for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging; the spirit of hospitality being greatly declined, and even gone from among them; or as some think, those that had such a spirit, and were willing to receive strangers, were afraid, because of their wicked neighbours, who would beset their houses to abuse strangers, as the sequel of this history shows.

Ver. 16. *And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even*, etc.] Which is the time that men come from their labour, and take their rest; and this man, though a man in years, and of some substance, as appears by what follows, yet attended the business of his calling, which was very commendable in him:

which was also of Mount Ephraim; as the Levite was, which when the old man understood, he was the more ready no doubt to receive him into his house:

and he sojourned in Gibeah; he was not a native of the place, and yet more kind to strangers than such as were; nor does he appear to be a Levite, though it was a Levitical city; on what account he sojourned here is not manifest:

but the men of the place were Benjamites: for as yet the number of Levites were not large, others dwelt in the cities besides them, even such as were of the tribe to which they belonged.

Ver. 17. *And when he had lifted up his eyes*, etc.] For it may be, as he came out of the field, he was musing and meditating with his eyes downwards directed, but coming into the city looked up:

he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city; whom he supposed to be a traveller and a stranger by his dress, and other circumstances, having never seen him before, and knowing pretty well the inhabitants of the place:

and the old man said, whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? the meaning of the questions is, what place he was travelling to, and from whence he came last.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him, we are passing from Bethlehemjudah*, etc.] He answers to his last question first, for this was the place from whence they came:

towards the side of Mount Ephraim: thither they were going, which is an answer to the first question: and then adds, which is more than what was requested,

from thence am I; that is, he was an inhabitant of a city on one side of Mount Ephraim, but what that city was, he says not, nor is it elsewhere said:

and I went to Bethlehemjudah; on what account he does not declare, but the above narrative clearly shows for what reason he went thither:

but I am now going to the house of the Lord; that is, the tabernacle in Shiloh, there he proposed to go first to offer sacrifice for the success of his journey, and for the reconciliation of his wife to him, and to pray to God for happiness in his family yet to come, and where some think his habitation was; but rather it was at some distance, not far from Mount Ephraim, and on the side of it, whither he should return when he had performed those acts of religion and devotion, which he judged were his duty:

and there is no man that receiveth me to house: that had invited him to his house to take a lodging there, as was common to do to travellers, as the instances of Abraham, Lot, Job, and others, show. It was a law with the Lucani (a people in Italy), that if a stranger came at sun setting, and was desirous of coming under the roof of anyone, if such an one did not receive him, he was to be fined, and suffer the punishment of inhospitality^{f401}.

Ver. 19. *Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses*, etc.] Straw to litter them with, and provender to feed them with, which he had brought with him on them:

and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thine handmaid; meaning himself and his concubine; there were enough for them both, which were packed up, and carried by the asses:

and for the young man which is with thy servants; the supplement, which is, seems quite needless, and even impertinent; for as yet the young man, by whom he means his servant, was not as yet in company with the servants of the old man; but the sense is, that there was not only provisions with him for himself, and his wife, and also for his servant, but even enough for the servants of the old man, whether maid or manservants: there is no want of anything; and therefore none needed to be shy of taking them in, since they

should not be burdensome to any upon any account; all they wanted was a lodging.

Ver. 20. *And the old man said, peace be with you,* etc.] All happiness attend thee, particularly ease and tranquillity of mind, let nothing disturb or distress thee:

howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me; signifying, that if he had neither bread nor wine for himself, his wife, and his servant, nor any litter nor provender for his asses, he was welcome to all from him; and whatever his wants were, he would supply them, which was nobly and generously said:

only lodge not in the street: that I cannot bear to think of, as if he should say; for a stranger, an Israelite, one of my own country, a good man, a Levite going to the house of God, to take up a lodging in the streets, let it not be said.

Ver. 21. *So he brought him into his house,* etc.] Showed him the way to it, and in a kind and friendly manner introduced him, and bid him welcome:

and gave provender unto the asses; this is mentioned first, it being then perhaps, as now, the first thing that a careful man is concerned for, to see that his cattle is taken care of, and then himself; and such a method this ancient good man took with his guest:

and they washed their feet; which was commonly done to strangers in those hot countries, and was very refreshing, (see ^{CHAP.} Genesis 18:4 19:2)

and did eat and drink; sat down at table and supped with him.

Ver. 22. *Now as they were making their hearts merry,* etc.] With a glass of wine after supper, and conversing together in a cheerful manner about their country and friends:

behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial; very wicked, lawless, ungovernable, worthless, and unprofitable creatures, men under the influence of Satan, and their own lusts:

beset the house round about: that none might escape out of it, especially the Levite, his wife and servant:

and beat at the door; to get entrance, either by those within opening to them, or by breaking it open:

and spake to the master of the house, the old man; who, upon this noise and clamour made, came to the door, to inquire what was the meaning of all this: to whom they replied, saying,

bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him; not what manner of person he was, of what country and profession, whither he was going, and what business he had here; but that they might have carnal knowledge of him in an unnatural way, or commit that sin with him which is commonly called sodomy; and the men of Sodom expressed their lust by the same word, (^{OLD}Genesis 19:5).

Ver. 23. *And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them*, etc.] Opened the door, and went out to converse with them, and talked them after this manner:

and said unto them, nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; it is plain he understood them in such sense, that they meant not bare knowledge of the man, as who he was, etc. but to commit wickedness the most abominable; so great, that it cannot be well said how great it is; and to dissuade from it, he uses the most tender language, and the most earnest entreaties:

seeing this man is come into my house, do not this folly; he argues from the law of hospitality, which ought not to be infringed; a man being obliged to protect a stranger under his roof; and from the nature of the crime, which was folly, stupidity, and what was abominable to the last degree.

Ver. 24. *Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine*, etc.] His own daughter, a virgin, and the concubine of the Levite his guest:

them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you; those he proposed to bring out, and deliver to them, to lie with, to do with as they pleased to gratify their raging lust, which to do was more than he ought, or had power to do: he had no right to prostitute his own daughter, and much less the concubine or wife of another man, though perhaps it might be with the consent of the Levite; but all this he said in a hurry and surprise, in a fright and terror, and of two evils choosing the least, and perhaps in imitation of Lot, whose case might come to remembrance:

but unto this man do not so vile a thing; as he apprehended that to be which they were desirous of, whether to kill him, as he himself says,

(~~0215~~Judges 20:5) or to commit the unnatural sin, and which, rather than comply with, he should have chosen to have been slain.

Ver. 25. *But the men would not hearken to him*, etc.] Especially with respect to his daughter, whom they knew very well, and had no affection for, perhaps was not handsome enough for them:

so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; that is, not the old man, but the Levite took his own wife or concubine, and put her forth to them, very probably with her consent, to try if that would pacify them, she being a fair and beautiful woman, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel suggest; and Josephus^{f402} intimates, that some young men of the city had seen her in the street, and were captivated with her beauty, and came on purpose for her, and would not be satisfied unless she was delivered to them; and upon which her husband, perceiving this, laid hold on her by main strength, as the word signifies, and brought her out whether she would or not, as Kimchi notes:

and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning; had carnal knowledge of her, and used her in a most shocking manner one after another, all the night long, until the morning appeared:

and when the day began to spring; at break of day, when the light dawned: they let her go; their works being works of darkness, and would not bear the light.

Ver. 26. *Then came the woman in the dawning of the day*, etc.] When those wicked wretches who had abused her had left her, having had her from place to place, at some distance from the house out of which she was put, and to which she got again, as well as she could:

and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was; her husband, so called, not because she had been his servant, but because she was his wife; and at the door of the old man's house, where he was, which she knew, and had found out by one means or another; she fell down, either purposely for her ease, and to lie and wait there, until the time of opening the door in the morning; or rather through weakness, not being able to stand, nor so much as to knock at the door to get admittance: and there she lay

till it was light; broad daylight.

Ver. 27. *And her lord rose up in the morning*, etc.] Very early no doubt, and it is scarcely reasonable to think he should sleep quietly after such a riot, and his concubine or wife delivered up to the lust of such brutish creatures:

and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way; either in search of her, or rather to make the best of his way on his journey, to preserve his own life, having given her up for lost:

and, behold the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold; in a posture that persons are when they fall, stretching out their hands to save themselves what they can; or of such who lay themselves down to sleep with their hands under their heads, and which her husband thought was her case, by what follows.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto her, up, and let us be going*, etc.] He spoke to her as supposing her asleep, in order to awake her, and prepare for their journey with all the haste they could, lest greater mischief should befall them:

but none answered; for she was dead; and her death was occasioned, as Josephus^{f403} says, partly through grief at what she had suffered, and partly through shame, not daring to come into the sight of her husband; but chiefly through the injuries done her by the number of persons that had lain with her: so it is reported^{f404} of the Thessalonians, when they took Phocis, many women were destroyed through the abundance of rapes committed upon them. To these Abarbinel adds, the cold of the night, being without her clothes, or anything to cover her:

then the man took her up upon an ass; and carried off her dead body, without making any remonstrance to the inhabitants, from whom he could not expect that any justice would be done him:

and the man rose up, and got him unto his place; to his city on one side Mount Ephraim, to which he made as much haste as he could, instead of going to the house of God at Shiloh, as he proposed; for now the circumstances of things were changed with him, and instead of sacrificing and giving praise to God in his house, his business was to seek for justice from the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 29. *And when he was come into his house*, etc.] Having taken the dead body of his wife from off the ass, and brought it in thither, and laid it in a proper place and order:

he took a knife; a carving knife, such as food is cut with, as the word signifies; the Targum is, a sword:

and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces; cut off her limbs at the joints of her bones, and made twelve pieces of them, according to the number of the tribes of Israel:

and sent her into all the coasts of Israel; that is, to every tribe, as Josephus says^{f405}: there was now no supreme magistrate to apply unto for justice, nor the court of seventy elders, and therefore he took this strange and unheard of method to acquaint each of the tribes with the fact committed; this he did not out of disrespect to his wife, but to express the vehement passion he was in on account of her death, in the way it was, and to raise their indignation at the perpetrators of it. Ben Gersom thinks he did not send to the tribe of Benjamin, where the evil was done; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and as Levi was not a tribe that lay together in one part of the land, but was scattered in it, pieces might be sent to the two half tribes of Manasseh, as the one lay on the one side Jordan, and the other on the other, and so there were twelve for the twelve pieces to be sent unto. So Ptolemy king of Egypt killed his eldest son, and divided his members, and put them in a box, and sent them to his mother on his birthday^{f406}. Chytraeus^{f407} writes, that about A. C. 140, a citizen of Vicentia, his daughter being ravished by the governor Carrarius, and cut to pieces, who had refused to send her to him, being sent back again, he put up the carcass in a vessel, and sent it to the senate of Venice, and invited them to punish the governor, and seize upon the city.

Ver. 30. *And it was so, that all that saw it*, etc.] The dismembered pieces of the dead body, and were made acquainted with the cause of it; for so Josephus^{f408} says, he gave the messengers a command to declare what was the cause of her death:

said, there was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, unto this day; meaning not so much the cutting in pieces the dead body, and sending it to different parts; though that was awful and shocking, as the complicated wickedness committed at Gibeah, which was the cause of it, to which reference is had, (~~300~~) Hosea

9:9) this is an observation of the writer of this book, Samuel; but what follows are the words either of those the Levite sent, who were bid to deliver them to those to whom the pieces were sent, or else of the persons present at the time of the delivery of the pieces to them, or whom they got together to disclose the matter to:

consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds; well weigh and think of the matter within yourselves, consult with one another what is proper to be done, and give your opinion freely without any reserve.