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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON  
2 SAMUEL

*by Adam Clarke.*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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# A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

# HOLY BIBLE

## OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

**BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.**

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

### **OTHERWISE CALLED THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS**

As this is a continuation of the preceding history, without any interruption, it can scarcely be called *another* book. Originally this and the preceding made but one book, and they have been separated without reason or necessity. For a general account of both, see the *preface* to the *first* book of Samuel.

It is generally allowed that this book comprehends a period of forty years, from about A.M. 2949 to 2989. See the prefixed chronological account.

It has been divided into *three* parts: in the *first* we have an account of the happy commencement of David's reign, 2 Sam. 1-10. In the *second*, David's unhappy fall, and its miserable consequences, 2 Sam. 11-18. In the *third*, his restoration to the Divine favour, the re-establishment of his kingdom, and the events which signaled the latter part of his reign, 2 Sam. 19-24.

## THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

- Year from the Creation, 2949.
- Year before the Incarnation, 1055.
- Year before the first Olympiad, 279.
- Year before the building of Rome, 302.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3659.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 467.
- Cycle of the Sun, 19.
- Cycle of the Moon, 11.

### CHAPTER 1

*An Amalekite comes to David, and informs him that the Philistines had routed the Israelites; and that Saul and his sons were slain, 1-4. And pretends that he himself had despatched Saul, finding him ready to fall alive into the hands of the Philistines, and had brought his crown and bracelets to David, 5-10. David and his men mourn for Saul and his sons, 11, 12. He orders the Amalekite, who professed that he had killed Saul, to be slain, 13-16. David's funeral song for Saul and Jonathan, 17-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 2. A man came out of the camp]** The whole account which this young man gives is a fabrication: in many of the particulars it is grossly *self-contradictory*. There is no *fact* in the case but the bringing of the *crown*, or *diadem*, and *bracelets* of Saul; which, as he appears to have been a plunderer of the slain, he found on the field of battle; and he brought them to David, and told the lie of having despatched Saul, merely to ingratiate himself with David.

**Verse 8. I am an Amalekite.]** Dr. Delaney remarks that an Amalekite took that crown from off the head of Saul, which he had forfeited by his disobedience in the case of Amalek.

**Verse 10. The crown-and the bracelet]** The crown was probably no more than a royal *fillet* or *diadem*, both being the ensigns of royalty. It is sometimes customary in the *East* for a sovereign prince to give a *crown* and *bracelets*, when investing others with dominion or authority over

certain provinces. Had Saul these in token of his being God's *vicegerent*, and that he held the kingdom from him alone?

**Verse 16. Thy blood be upon thy head]** If he killed Saul, as he said he did, then he deserved death; at that time it was not known to the contrary, and this man was executed on his own confession.

**Verse 17. David lamented]** See this lamentation, and the notes on it at the end of this chapter. See Clarke “<sup><0012></sup>2 Samuel 1:21”.

**Verse 18. The use of the bow]** *The use of* is not in the Hebrew; it is simply *the bow*, that is, a song thus entitled. See the observations at the end. See Clarke “<sup><0012></sup>2 Samuel 1:21”.

**Verse 21. As though he had not been]** In stead of *yl b beli*, NOT, I read *yl k keley*, INSTRUMENTS.

**Anointed with oil.]** See the observations at the end. <sup><0018></sup>2 Samuel 1:18, &c.: *He bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow, tvq kasheth.*

The word *kasheth* is to be understood of the title of the song which immediately follows, and not of the use of the bow, as our translation intimates.

Many of David's Psalms have titles prefixed to them; some are termed *Shosannim*, some *Maschil*, *Nehiloth*, *Neginoth*, &c., and this one here, *Kadesh* or *The Bow*, because it was occasioned by the Philistine archers. <sup><0310></sup>1 Samuel 31:3: “And the archers hit him.”

But especially respecting the *bow* of Jonathan, “which returned not back from the blood of the slain,” as the song itself expresses. And David could not but remember the *bow* of Jonathan, out of which “the arrow was shot beyond the lad,” <sup><0216></sup>1 Samuel 20:36. It was the time when that covenant was made, and that affection expressed between them “which was greater than the love of women.”

On these accounts the song was entitled *Kasheth*, or *The song of the Bow*, and David commanded the chief musicians, Ethan, Heman, and Jeduthun, to teach the children of Judah to sing it.

“It is written in the book of Jasher.” *Sept.*, επι βιβλιου του ευθους, “in the book of the upright.”

*atywad arps siphra deoraita*, “The book of the Law.”-*Jonathan*.

The *Arabic* says, “Behold it is written in the book of Ashee; this is the book of Samuel;” the interpretation of which is, “book of songs or canticles.”

This lamentation is justly admired as a picture of distress the most tender and the most striking; unequally divided by grief into longer and shorter breaks, as nature could pour them forth from a mind interrupted by the alternate recurrence of the most lively images of *love* and *greatness*.

His reverence for Saul and his love for Jonathan have their strongest colourings; but their *greatness* and *bravery* come full upon him, and are expressed with peculiar energy.

Being himself a *warrior*, it is in that character he sees their greatest excellence; and though his imagination hurries from one point of recollection to another, yet we hear him-at first, at last, everywhere-lamenting, *How are the mighty fallen!*

It is almost impossible to read the noble original without finding every word *swollen* with a *sigh* or *broken* with a *sob*. A heart pregnant with distress, and striving to utter expressions descriptive of its feelings, which are repeatedly interrupted by an excess of grief, is most sensibly painted throughout the whole. Even an *English* reader may be convinced of this, from the following specimen in European characters:—

19. Hatstsebi Yishrael al bamotheycha chahal;  
Eych naphelu gibborim;
20. Al taggidu begath,  
Al tebasseru bechutsoth Ashkelon;  
Pen tismachnah benoth Pelishtim,  
Pen taalozenah benoth haarelim.
21. Harey baggilboa al tal,  
Veal matar aleychem usedey terumoth;  
Ki sham nigal magen Gibborim.  
Magen Shaul keley Mashiach bashshamen!
22. Middam chalalim, mecheleb gibborim,  
Kesheth Yehonathan lo nashog achor;  
Vechereb Shaul lo thashub reykam.

23. Shaul Vihonathan,  
 Hannee habim vehanneimim bechaiyeyhem,  
 Ubemotham lo niphradu.  
 Minnesharim kallu, mearayoth gaberu!
24. Benoth Yishrael el Shaul becheynah;  
 Hammalbishchem shani im adanim,  
 Hammaaleh adi zahab al lebushechen.
25. Eych naphelu gibborim bethoch hammilchamah!  
 Yehonathan al bamotheycha chalal!
26. Tsar li aleycha achi  
 Yehonathan, naamta li meod  
 Niphleathah ahabathecha li meahabath nashim!
27. Eych naphelu gibborim,  
 Vaiyobedu keley milchamah!

The three last verses in this sublime lamentation have *sense* and *sound* so connected as to strike every reader.

Dr. *Kennicott*, from whom I have taken several of the preceding remarks, gives a fine Latin version of this song, which I here subjoin:—

O decus Israelis, super excelsa tua MILES!  
 Quomodo ceciderunt FORTES!  
 Nolite indicare in Gath,  
 Nolite indicare in plateis Ascalonis:  
 Ne lætentur filiæ Philistæorum,  
 Ne exultent filiæ incircumcisorum.  
 Montes Gilboani super vos  
 Nec ros, nec pluvia, neque agri primitiarum;  
 Ibi enim abjectus fuit clypeus fortium.  
 Clypeus Saulis, arma inuncti olec!  
 Sine sanguine MILITUM,  
 Sine adipe FORTIUM.  
 Arcus Jonathanis non retrocesserat;  
 Gladiusque Saulis non redierat incassum.  
 Saul et Jonathan  
 Amabiles erant et jucundi in vitis suis,  
 Et in morte sua non separati.  
 Præ aquilis veloces!  
 Præ leonibus fortes!  
 Filiæ Israelis deflete Saulem;  
 Qui coccino cum deliciis vos vestivit,

Qui vestibus vestris ornamenta imposuit aurea!  
 Quomodo ceciderunt FORTES, in medio belli!  
 O Jonathan, super excelsa tua MILES!  
 Versor in angustiis, tui causa,  
 Frater mi, Jonathan!  
 Mihi fuisti admodum jucundus!  
 Mihi tuus amor admodum mirabilis,  
 Mulierum exuperans amorem!  
 Quomodo ceciderunt fortes,  
 Et perierunt arma belli!  
 DISSERTATION I., p. 122.

In verse 21 I have inserted **yl k keley** for **yl b beli**. Dr. Delaney rightly observes that the particle **yl b beli** is not used in any part of the Bible in the sense of *quasi non, as though not*, in which sense it must be used here if it be retained as a genuine reading: The shield of Saul as *though it had not been* anointed with oil.

In a MS. written about the year 1200, numbered 30 in *Kennicott's Bible*, **yl k keley** is found; and also in the *first edition of the whole Hebrew Bible*, printed *Soncini* 1488. Neither the *Syriac* nor *Arabic* versions, nor the *Chaldee* paraphrase, acknowledge the negative particle **yl b beli**, which they would have done had it been in the copies from which they translated. It was easy to make the mistake, as there is such a similarity between **b beth** and **k caph**; the line therefore should be read thus: The shield of Saul, *weapons* anointed with oil.

In verse 22 **gwn** *nashog*, to *obtain, attain*, seems to have been written for **gwsn** *nasog*, to *recede, return*. The former destroys the sense, the latter, which our translation has followed, and which is supported by the authority of 30 MSS., makes it not only intelligible but beautiful.

In verses 19, 22, and 25, **l l j** and **pyl l j** *chalal* and *chalalim* occur, which we translate the SLAIN, but which Dr. *Kennicott*, I think from good authority, renders *soldier* and *soldiers*; and thus the version is made more consistent and beautiful. **l l j** *chalal* signifies to *bore or pierce through*; and this epithet might be well given to a soldier, q.d., the PIERCER, because his business is to *transfix* or *pierce* his enemies with sword, spear, and arrows.



If it be translated *soldiers* in the several places of the Old Testament, where we translate it SLAIN or WOUNDED, the sense will be much mended; see ~~<072B>~~ **Judges 20:31, 39;** ~~<9891>~~ **Psalm 89:11;** ~~<310726>~~ **Proverbs 7:26;** ~~<245104>~~ **Jeremiah 51:4, 47, 49;** ~~<251106>~~ **Ezekiel 11:6, 7; 21:14.** In several others it retains its radical signification of *piercing, wounding, &c.*

AFTER these general observations I leave the particular beauties of this inimitable song to be sought out by the intelligent reader. Much has been written upon this, which cannot, consistently with the plan of these notes, be admitted here. See *Delaney, Kennicott, Lowth, &c.*; and, above all, let the reader examine the *Hebrew* text.

## II SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 2

*David, by the direction of God, goes up to Hebron, and is there anointed king over the house of Judah, 1-4. He congratulates the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead on their kindness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines, 5-7. Abner anoints Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel; over whom he reigned two years, 8-10. David reigns over Judah, in Hebron, seven years and six months, 11. Account of a battle between Abner, captain of the Israelites, and Joab, captain of the men of Judah; in which the former are routed with the loss of three hundred and sixty men: but Asahel, the brother of Joab, is killed by Abner, 12-32.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. David inquired of the Lord]** By means of Abiathar the priest; for he did not know whether the different tribes were willing to receive him, though he was fully persuaded that God had appointed him king over Israel.

**Unto Hebron.]** The metropolis of the tribe of Judah, one of the richest regions in Judea. The mountains of Hebron were famed for fruits, herbage, and honey; and many parts were well adapted for vines, olives, and different kinds of grain, abounding in springs of excellent water, as the most accurate travellers have asserted.

**Verse 4. Anointed David king]** He was anointed before by Samuel, by which he acquired *jus ad regnum, a right TO the kingdom*; by the present anointing he had *jus in regno, authority OVER the kingdom*. The other parts of the kingdom were, as yet, attached to the family of Saul.

**Verse 5. David sent messengers unto-Jabesh-gilead]** This was a generous and noble act, highly indicative of the grandeur of David's mind. He respected Saul as his once legitimate sovereign; he loved Jonathan as his most intimate friend. The former had greatly injured him, and sought his destruction; but even this did not cancel his respect for him, as the anointed of God, and as the king of Israel. This brings to my remembrance that fine speech of Saurin, when speaking of the banishment of the Protestants from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. He thus at the Hague

apostrophizes Louis XIV., their persecutor: *Et toi, prince redoutable, que j'honorai jadis comme mon roi, et que je respecte encore comme le fleau de Seigneur.* "And thou, O formidable prince, whom I once honoured as my king, and whom I still reverence as the scourge of the Lord!"

**Verse 7. Now let your hands be strengthened]** David certainly wished to attach the men of Jabesh to his interest; he saw that they were generous and valiant, and must be of great service to him whose part they espoused; and he was no doubt afraid that they would attach themselves to the house of Saul, in consideration of the eminent services Saul had rendered them in rescuing them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites.

**Verse 8. Abner the son of Ner]** This man had long been one of the chief captains of Saul's army, and commander-in-chief on several occasions; he was probably envious of David's power, by whom he had often been out-generalled in the field.

**Verse 9. Made him king over Gilead]** These were places beyond Jordan; for as the Philistines had lately routed the Israelites, they were no doubt in possession of some of the principal towns, and were now enjoying the fruits of their victory. Abner was therefore afraid to bring the new king to any place where he was likely to meet with much resistance, till he had got his army well recruited.

Who the *Ashurites* were is not generally agreed; probably men of the tribe of Ashur.

**Verse 10. Ish-bosheth-reigned two years.]** It is well observed that Ish-bosheth reigned *all the time that David reigned in Hebron*, which was *seven years and six months*. Perhaps the meaning of the writer is this: Ish-bosheth reigned two years before any but the tribe of Judah had attached themselves to the interest of David. Some think that Abner in effect reigned the last five years of Ish-bosheth, who had only the name of king after the first two years. Or the text may be understood thus: *When Ish-bosheth had reigned two years over Israel, he was forty years of age.*

*Houbigant*, dissatisfied with all the common modes of solution, proposes to read **hnv tyvv shishshith shanah**, *six years*, for the **μynv μytv shetayim shanim**, *two years*, of the text, which he contends is a *solecism*; for in pure Hebrew the words would be **μytv hnv** as they are everywhere read in the first book; and **hnv** is the reading of eleven of Kennicott's

MSS., and nine of Deuteronomy Rossi's; but the number *two* is acknowledged by all the ancient versions, and by all the MSS. yet collated. The critical reader may examine Houbigant on the place. After all, probably the expedition mentioned in the succeeding verses is that to which the writer refers, and from which he *dates*. Ish-bosheth had reigned two years without any rupture with David or his men, till under the direction of Abner, captain of his host, the Israelites passed over Jordan, from Mahanaim to Gibeon, and being opposed by Joab, captain of David's host, that battle took place which is described in the following verses.

**Verse 14. Let the young men-play before us.]** This was diabolical play, where each man thrust his sword into the body of the other, so that the twenty-four (twelve on each side) fell down dead together! But this was the signal for that sanguinary skirmish which immediately took place.

**Verse 16. Caught every one his fellow by the head]** Probably by the beard, if these persons were not too young to have one, or by the hair of the head. Alexander ordered all the Macedonians to shave their beards; and being asked by Parmenio why they should do so, answered, "Dost thou not know that in battle there is no better hold than the beard?"

**Helkath-hazzurim]** "The portion of the mighty;" or, "The inheritance of those who were slain," according to the *Targum*.

**Verse 18. Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe]** To be *swift of foot* was deemed a great accomplishment in the heroes of antiquity; *ποδας ωκυς αχιλλευς*, *the swift-footed Achilles*, is an epithet which Homer gives to that hero no less than thirty times in the course of the *Ilias*. It has a qualification also among the Roman soldiers; they were taught both to *run swiftly*, and to *swim well*.

**Verse 21. Take thee his armour.]** It seems Asahel wished to get the armour of Abner as a trophy; this also was greatly coveted by ancient heroes. Abner wished to spare him, for fear of exciting Joab's enmity; but as Asahel was obstinate in the pursuit, and was swifter of foot than Abner, the latter saw that he must either kill or be killed, and therefore he *turned his spear* and ran it through the body of Asahel. This *turning about* that he might pierce him is what we translate "the hinder end of his spear." This slaying of Asahel cost Abner his life, as we shall find in the next chapter.

**Verse 27. And Joab said]** The meaning of this verse appears to be this: If Abner had not provoked the battle, (see <sup><10214></sup>**2 Samuel 2:14**.) Joab would not have attacked the Israelites that day; as his orders were probably to act on the defensive. Therefore the blame fell upon Israel.

**Verse 29. They came to Mahanaim.]** So they returned to the place whence they set out. See <sup><10212></sup>**2 Samuel 2:12**. This was the commencement of the civil wars between Israel and Judah, and properly the commencement of the division of the two kingdoms, through which both nations were deluged with blood.

## II SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 3

*Account of the children born to David in Hebron, 1-5. Abner being accused by Ish-bosheth of familiarities with Rizpah, Saul's concubine, he is enraged; offers his services to David; goes to Hebron, and makes a league with him, 6-22. Joab, through enmity to Abner, pretends to David that he came as a spy, and should not be permitted to return, 23-25. He follows Abner, and treacherously slays him, 26, 27. David hearing of it is greatly incensed against Joab, and pronounces a curse upon him and upon his family, 28, 29. He commands a general mourning for Abner, and himself follows the bier weeping, 30-32. David's lamentation over Abner, 33, 34. The people solicit David to take meat; but he fasts the whole day, and complains to them of the insolence and intrigues of Joab and his brothers: the people are pleased with his conduct, 35-39.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. There was long war]** Frequent battles and skirmishes took place between the followers of David and the followers of Ish-bosheth, after the two years mentioned above, to the end of the fifth year, in which Ish-bosheth was slain by Rechab and Baanah.

**Verse 6. Abner made himself strong]** This strengthening of himself, and going in to the late king's concubine, were most evident proofs that he wished to seize upon the government. See <sup><1022></sup> **1 Kings 2:21, 22; 12:8; 16:21.**

**Verse 8. Amos I a dog's head]** Dost thou treat a man with indignity who has been the only prop of thy tottering kingdom, and the only person who could make head against the house of David?

**Verse 9. Except, as the Lord hath sworn to David]** And why did he not do this before, when he knew that God had given the kingdom to David? Was he not now, according to his own concession, fighting against God?

**Verse 11. He could not answer Abner a word]** Miserable is the lot of a king who is governed by the general of his army, who may strip him of his power and dignity whenever he pleases! Witness the fate of poor Charles I. of England and Louis XVI. of France. Military men, above all others,

should never be intrusted with any *civil* power, and should be great only in the *field*.

**Verse 13. Except thou first bring Michal]** David had already *six wives* at Hebron; and none of them could have such pretensions to *legitimacy* as Michal, who had been taken away from him and married to Phaltiel. However distressing it was to take her from a husband who loved her most tenderly, (see <sup><10316></sup>**2 Samuel 3:16**;) yet prudence and policy required that he should strengthen his own interest in the kingdom as much as possible; and that he should not leave a princess in the possession of a man who might, in her right, have made pretensions to the throne. Besides, she was his own lawful wife, and he had a right to demand her when he pleased.

**Verse 14. Deliver me my wife]** It is supposed that he meant to screen Abner; and to prevent that *violence* which he might have used in carrying off Michal.

**Verse 16. Weeping behind her]** If genuine affection did not still subsist between David and Michal, it was a pity to have taken her from Phaltiel, who had her to wife from the conjoint authority of her *father* and her *king*. Nevertheless David had a legal right to her, as she had never been divorced, for she was taken from him by the hand of violence.

**Verse 18. The Lord hath spoken of David]** Where is this spoken? Such a promise is not extant. Perhaps it means no more than, “Thus, it may be presumed, God hath determined.”

**Verse 21. He went in peace.]** David dismissed him in good faith, having no sinister design in reference to him.

**Verse 27. And smote him there]** Joab feared that, after having rendered such essential services to David, Abner would be made captain of the host: he therefore determined to prevent it by murdering the man, under pretense of avenging the death of his brother Asahel.

The murder, however, was one of the most unprovoked and wicked: and such was the power and influence of this nefarious general, that the king dared not to bring him to justice for his crime. In the same way he murdered *Amasa*, a little time afterwards. See <sup><10310></sup>**2 Samuel 20:10**. Joab was a cool-blooded, finished murderer. “Treason and murder ever keep together, like two yoke-devils.”

**Verse 29. Let it rest on the head]** All these verbs may be rendered in the *future* tense: it *will* rest on the head of Joab, &c. This was a prophetic declaration, which sufficiently showed the displeasure of God against this execrable man.

**Verse 31. David said to Joab]** He commanded him to take on him the part of a principal mourner.

**Verse 33. The king lamented over Abner]** This lamentation, though short, is very pathetic. It is a high strain of poetry; but the *measure* cannot be easily ascertained. Our own translation may be measured thus:—

*Died Abner as a fool dieth?  
Thy hands were not bound,  
Nor thy feet put into fetters.  
As a man falleth before the wicked.  
So hast thou fallen!  
Or thus:—  
Shall Abner die  
A death like to a villain's?  
Thy hands not bound,  
Nor were the fetters to thy feet applied.  
Like as one falls before the sons of guilt,  
So hast thou fallen!*

He was not taken away by the hand of *justice*, nor in *battle*, nor by *accident*: he died the death of a culprit by falling into the hands of a villain.

This song was a heavy reproof to Joab; and must have galled him extremely, being sung by all the people.

**Verse 36. The people took notice]** They saw that the king's grief was sincere, and that he had no part nor device in the murder of Abner: see ~~<0037>~~ **2 Samuel 3:37.**

**Verse 39. I am this day weak]** Had Abner lived, all the tribes of Israel would have been brought under my government.

**Though anointed king]** I have little else than the title: *first*, having only one tribe under my government; and *secondly*, the sons of Zeruah, Joab and his brethren, having usurped all the power, and reduced me to the shadow of royalty.



**The Lord shall reward the doer of evil]** That is, Joab, whom he appears afraid to name.

WE talk much of ancient manners, their *simplicity* and *ingenuousness*; and say that *the former days were better than these*. But who says this who is a judge of the times? In those days of celebrated *simplicity*, &c., there were not so *many* crimes as at present I grant: but what they wanted in *number* they made up in *degree*: *deceit*, *cruelty*, *rapine*, *murder*, and *wrong* of almost every kind, then flourished. We are *refined* in our vices; they were *gross* and *barbarous* in theirs: they had neither so many *ways* nor so many *means* of sinning; but the *sum* of their moral turpitude was greater than ours. We have a sort of *decency* and *good breeding*, which lay a certain restraint on our passions, they were boorish and beastly, and their bad passions were ever in full play. Civilization prevents barbarity and atrocity; mental cultivation induces decency of manners: those primitive times were generally without these. Who that knows them would wish such ages to return?

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 4

*Some account of Rechab and Baanah, two of Ish-bosheth's captains, and of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, 1-4. Rechab and Baanah murder Ish-bosheth, and escape; and bring his head to David, 5-8. David is greatly irritated, and commands them to be slain, 9-12.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 1. All the Israelites were troubled]** Abner was their great support; and on him they depended; for it appears that Ish-bosheth was a feeble prince, and had few of those qualities requisite for a sovereign.

**Verse 2. Captains of bands]** *Principes latronum*, captains of banditti, says the *Vulgate*; the *Syriac* is the same. Whether Ish-bosheth kept bands of *marauders*, whose business it was to make sudden incursions into the country places, and carry off grain, provisions, cattle, &c., we know not; but such persons would be well qualified for the bloody work in which these two men were afterwards employed.

**Verse 3. The Beerothites fled to Gittaim]** Probably the same as *Gath*; as *Ramathaim* is the same as *Ramah*.

**Verse 4. He fell, and became lame]** Dislocated his *ankle*, *knee*, or *thigh*; which was never after reduced; and thus he became lame. Lovely Jonathan! unfortunate in thy life, and in thy progeny.

**Verse 5. Lay on a bed at noon.]** It is a custom in all hot countries to travel or work very *early* and very *late*, and rest at *noonday*, in which the *heat* chiefly prevails.

**Verse 6. As though they would have fetched wheat]** The king's stores were probably near his own dwelling; and these men were accustomed to go thither for provisions for themselves, their cattle, and their men. This supposition which is natural, renders unnecessary all the emendations of *Houbigant* and others.

As these men were accustomed to bring wheat from these stores, from which it appears there was an easy passage to the king's chamber,

(especially if we consider this a *summer-house*, as it most probably was,) no man would suspect their present errand, as they were in the habit of going frequently to that place.

**Verse 8. They brought the head-unto David]** They thought, as did the poor lying Amalekite, to ingratiate themselves with David by this abominable act.

**Verse 9. Who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity]** This was, in David's case, a very proper view of the goodness and watchful providence of God towards him. His *life* was frequently in danger; murderers had often laid wait for it: but God, the *living* God, had always *redeemed that life* from *all adversity*; and called on him now to punish such evil-minded and blood-thirsty men.

**Verse 10. A reward for his tidings]** Ω εδει με δουναι ευαγγελια, *Septuagint*. Here is a proof that ευαγγελιον, *evangelium* or *gospel*, signifies the *reward* which the bringer of good tidings is entitled to receive. See my *preface* to St. Matthew's Gospel. See Clarke "~~4001~~ Matthew 1:1".

**Verse 11. How much more]** Here are several things which aggravated the guilt of those wicked men. 1. Ish-bosheth was an *innocent man*, and therefore none could have any ground of quarrel against him. 2. He was in *his own house*, which was his sanctuary, and none but the worst of men would disturb him there. 3. He was *upon his bed*, resting in the heat of the day, and so free from suspicion that he was not even attended by his guards, nor had he his doors secured. To take away the life of such a man, in such circumstances, whom also they professed to hold as their sovereign, was the most abandoned treachery.

**Verse 12. And they slew them]** None ever more richly deserved death; and by this act of justice, David showed to all Israel that he was a decided enemy to the destruction of Saul's family; and that none could lift up their hands against any of them without meeting with condign punishment. In all these cases I know not that it was possible for David to show more sincerity, or a stricter regard for justice.

## II SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 5

*The elders of all the tribes of Israel come and anoint David king over all Israel, 1-5. He goes against the Jebusites, and takes the strong hold of Zion, and afterwards the city itself; which is called the city of David, 6-9. David's prosperity, and friendship with Hiram, king of Tyre, 10-12. He takes more concubines, and begets several sons and daughters, 13-16. The Philistines gather together against him in the valley of Rephaim; he defeats them; they abandon their idols, and David and his men burn them, 17-21. They assemble once more in the valley of Rephaim, and David smites them from Geba to Gazer, 22-25.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. Then came all the tribes of Israel]** Ish-bosheth the king, and Abner the general, being dead, they had no hope of maintaining a separate kingdom, and therefore thought it better to submit to David's authority. And they founded their resolution on *three* good arguments: 1. David was their own countryman; *We are thy bone and thy flesh*. 2. Even in Saul's time David had been their general, and had always led them to victory; *Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel*. 3. God had appointed him to the kingdom, to govern and protect the people; *The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people and be a captain over Israel*.

**Verse 3. They anointed David king]** This was the third time that David was anointed, having now taken possession of the whole kingdom.

**Verse 6. The king and his men went to Jerusalem]** This city was now in the hands of the Jebusites; but how they got possession of it is not known, probably they took it during the wars between Ish-bosheth and David. After Joshua's death, what is called the *lower city* was taken by the Israelites; and it is evident that the whole city was in their possession in the time of Saul, for David brought the head of Goliath thither, <sup><01754></sup> **1 Samuel 17:54**. It appears to have been a very strong fortress, and, from what follows, deemed impregnable by the Jebusites. It was right that the Israelites should repossess it; and David very properly began his reign over the whole country by the siege of this city.

**Except thou take away the blind and the lame]** Scarcely a passage in the sacred oracles has puzzled commentators more than this. For my own part, I do not think that it is worth the labour spent upon it, nor shall I encumber these pages with the discordant opinions of learned men. From the general face of the text it appears that the Jebusites, vainly confiding in the strength of their fortress, placed *lame* and *blind men* upon the walls, and thus endeavoured to turn into ridicule David's attempt to take the place: *Thou shalt not come in hither, except thou take away the blind and the lame*; nothing could be more cutting to a warrior.

Dr. *Kennicott* has taken great pains to correct this passage, as may be seen in his *First Dissertation on the Hebrew Text*, pages 27 to 47. I shall insert our present version with his amended text line for line, his translation being distinguished by *italics*; and for farther information refer to Dr. K.'s work.

Ver. 6. And the king and his men went to

K. *And the king and his men went to*

Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants

K. *Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of*

of the land: who spake unto David, saying,

K. *the land; who spake unto David, saying;*

Except thou take away the blind and the

K. *Thou shalt not come in hither; for the blind*

lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking,

K. *and the lame shall drive thee away by saying,*

David cannot come in hither.

K. *"David shall not come in hither."*

Ver. 8. And David said-Whosoever getteth

K. *And David said-Whosoever smiteth the*

up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites,

K. *Jebusites, and through the subterranean passage*

and the lame and the blind, that are hated

K. *reacheth the lame and the blind who*

of David's soul-Wherefore they said, The

K. *hate the life of David (because the blind and*

blind and the lame shall not come into the

K. *the lame said, "He shall not come into the*

house. \* \* \* \* \*

K. *house,") shall be chief and captain. So*

\* \* \* \* \*

K. *Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and*

\* \* \* \* \*

K. *was chief.*

**Verse 11. Hiram king of Tyre]** He was a very friendly man, and no doubt a believer in the true God. He was not only a friend to David, but also of his son Solomon, to whom, in building the temple, he afforded the most important assistance.

**Verse 13. David took him more concubines]** He had, in all conscience, enough before; he had, in the whole, *eight wives* and *ten concubines*. That dispensation permitted *polygamy*, but from the beginning it was not so; and as upon an average there are about *fourteen* males born to *thirteen* females, polygamy is unnatural, and could never have entered into the original design of God.

**Verse 14. These be the names]** *Eleven* children are here enumerated in the Hebrew text; but the *Septuagint* has no less than *twenty-four*. I shall insert their names, and the reader if he please may collate them with the text: *Sammus, Sobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ebear, Elisue, Naphek, Jephies, Elisama, Elidæ, Eliphalth, Samæ, Jessibath, Nathan, Galimaan, Jebaar, Theesus, Eliphalth, Naged, Naphek, Jonathan, Leasamus, Baalimath, and Eliphaath*. There is no doubt some corruption in these names; there are two of the name of *Nathan*, two of *Eliphalth*, and two of *Naphek*; and probably *Sammus* and *Samæ* are the same.

**Verse 17. The Philistines came up to seek David]** Ever since the defeat of the Israelites and the fall of Saul and his sons, the Philistines seem to have been in undisturbed possession of the principal places in the land of Israel; now, finding that David was chosen king by the whole nation, they thought best to attack him before his army got too numerous, and the affairs of the kingdom were properly settled.

**Verse 19. David inquired of the Lord]** He considered himself only the captain of the Lord's host, and therefore would not strike a stroke without the command of his Superior.

**Verse 20. The Lord hath broken forth]** He very properly attributes the victory of Jehovah, without whose strength and counsel he could have done nothing.

**Baal-perazim]** The *plain* or *chief of breaches*, because of the *breach* which God made in the Philistine army; and thus he commemorated the interference of the Lord.

**Verse 21. They left their images]** It was the custom of most nations to carry their gods with them to battle: in imitation of this custom the Israelites once took the ark and lost it in the field; see ~~1 Samuel 4:10~~ **1 Samuel 4:10, 11.**

**Verse 23. Fetch a compass behind them]** When they may be had, God will not work without using *human means*. By this he taught David caution, prudence, and dependence on the Divine strength.

**Verse 24. When thou hearest the sound of a going]** If there had not been an evident *supernatural interference*, David might have thought that the *sleight* or *ruse de guerre* which he had used was the cause of his victory. By the *going in the tops of the mulberry trees* probably only a *rustling among the leaves* is intended. The Targum says, *a noise*; the Arabic has it, *the noise of horses' hoofs*.

**Verse 25. And David did so]** He punctually obeyed the directions of the Lord, and then every thing succeeded to his wish.

How is it that such supernatural directions and assistances are not communicated now? Because they are not asked for; and they are not asked for because they are not expected; and they are not expected because men have not faith; and they have not faith because they are under a refined spirit of atheism, and have no spiritual intercourse with their Maker. Who believes that God sees all things and is everywhere? Who supposes that he concerns himself with the affairs of his creatures? Who acknowledges him in all his ways? Who puts not his own wisdom, prudence, and strength, in the place of God Almighty? Reader, hast *thou* faith in God? Then exercise it, cultivate it, and thou mayest remove mountains.

It is worthy of remark that David was, by the appointment of God, *to feed the people*. As he had formerly the care of a flock of sheep, which he was to watch over, defend, lead in and out, and for which he was to find pasture; now he is to watch over, defend, lead in and out, feed, and protect, the Israelites. He is to be the shepherd of the people, not the tyrant or oppressor.

In ancient times, among the Greeks, kings were denominated **ποιμενες λαου**, *shepherds of the people*; and all good kings were really such: but, in process of time, this pleasing title was changed for **βασιλευς** and **τυραννος**, *sovereign* and *tyrant*; in neither of which names does any thing of the original title exist. And such are the different political constitutions of the kingdoms of the earth, that it is impossible that in any of them, the British excepted, the king can be the *shepherd* and *father of his people*. All the other regal constitutions under the sun permit the sovereign to be *despotic*, and consequently *oppressive* and *tyrannical* if he please. The British alone gives no power of this kind to the prince; by the constitution he is a *patriotic king*, and by the influence of those maxims of state which are continually presented to his view, and according to which all acts of government are formed, he becomes *habitually* the *father of his people*, and in this light alone do the British people behold the British king.

David, by his own authority, *without any form of law*, could slay the Amalekite who said he had killed Saul; and could cut off the heads of Rechab and Baanah, who murdered Ish-bosheth; but, in the government of Britain, the culprit is to be heard in his vindication, witnesses are to be examined, the facts viewed by an upright judge in the light of the law; and then the alleged criminality is left to the decision of twelve honest men, the equals of the accused, who are bound by a solemn oath to decide *according to the evidence* brought before them. The Israelitish constitution was radically good, but the British constitution is much better. In the former, while the king ruled according to the *spirit* of the constitution, he could do no wrong, because he was only the *vicegerent* of the Almighty; in the latter, the king can do no wrong, because he is bound both by the *spirit* and *letter* of the law, to do nothing but what is according to the rules of eternal justice and equity laid down in that law; nothing is left to mere regal power or authority, and nothing trusted to human fickleness or caprice. In all his acts he is directed by his nobles and commons; who, being the representatives of all classes of the people, are always supposed to speak their mind. Well may it be said, Blessed are the people who are in such a case!



## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 6

*David goes with thirty thousand men to bring the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem, 1-5. The ox stumbling, Uzzah, who drove the cart on which the ark was placed, put forth his hand to save it from falling: the Lord was displeased, and smote him so that he died, 6, 7. David, being alarmed, carries the ark to the house of Obed-edom, 8-10. Here it remained three months; and God prospered Obed-edom, in whose house it was deposited, 11. David, hearing of this, brings the ark, with sacrifices and solemn rejoicings, to Jerusalem, 12-15. Michal, seeing David dance before the ark, despises him, 16. He offers burnt-offerings and peace offerings, and deals among all the people, men and women, a cake of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine each, 17-19. Michal coming to meet him, and seeing him dance extravagantly before the ark, reproaches him for his conduct: he vindicates himself, reproves her, and she dies childless, 20-23.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 1. Thirty thousand.]** This is supposed to have been a new levy; and thus he augmented his army by 30,000 fresh troops. The *Septuagint* has 70,000.

**Verse 2. From Baale of Judah]** This is supposed to be the same city which, in <sup><0650></sup>**Joshua 15:60**, is called *Kirjah-baal* or *Kirjath-jearim*; (see <sup><3136></sup>**1 Chronicles 13:6**;) or *Baalah*, <sup><0650></sup>**Joshua 15:9**.

**Whose name is called by the name of the Lord]** That is, The ark is called *the ark of the Lord of hosts*. But this is not a *literal* version; the word **שֵׁם** *shem*, NAME, occurs twice together; probably one of them should be read **שָׁם** *sham*, THERE. There the name of the Lord of hosts was invoked, &c.

**Verse 3. A new cart]** Every thing used in the worship of God was hallowed or *set apart* for that purpose: a new cart was used through respect, as that had never been applied to any profane or common purpose. But this was not sufficient, for the ark should have been carried on the shoulders of the priests; and the neglect of this ceremony was the cause of the death of Uzzah.

**Verse 5. On all manner of instruments made of fir wood]** This place should be corrected from the parallel place, <sup><13108></sup> **1 Chronicles 13:8**: “All Israel played before God, with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries,” &c. Instead of **yx[ I kb bechol atsey**, “with all woods” or “trees;” the parallel place is **z[ I kb bechol oz**. “with all their strength:” this makes a good sense, the first makes none. The *Septuagint*, in this place, has the verse reading; **εν ισχυι**, *with might*.

**Verse 6. Uzzah put forth his hand]** In <sup><00415></sup> **Numbers 4:15-20**, the Levites are forbidden to touch the ark *on pain of death*, this penalty was inflicted upon Uzzah, and he was the first that suffered for a breach Of this law.

**Verse 7. Smote him there for his error]** Uzzah sinned through ignorance and precipitancy; he had not time to reflect, the oxen suddenly stumbled; and, fearing lest the ark should fall, he suddenly stretched out his hand to prevent it. Had he touched the ark with impunity, the populace might have lost their respect for it and its sacred service, the example of Uzzah must have filled them with fear and sacred reverence; and, as to Uzzah, no man can doubt of his eternal safety. He committed a sin unto death, but doubtless the mercy of God was extended to his soul.

**Verse 10. But David carried it aside]** The house of Obed-edom appears to have been very near the city, which they were about to enter, but were prevented by this accident, and lodged the ark with the nearest friend.

**Verse 11. The Lord blessed Obed-edom]** And why? Because he had the ark of the Lord in his house. Whoever entertains God’s messengers, or consecrates his house to the service of God, will infallibly receive God’s blessing.

**Verse 12. So David-brought up the ark]** The *Vulgate* adds to this verse: *And David had seven choirs, and a calf for a sacrifice*. The *Septuagint* make a greater addition: “And he had seven choirs carrying the ark, a sacrifice, a calf, and lambs. And David played on harmonious organs before the Lord; and David was clothed with a costly tunic; and David and all the house of Israel, brought the ark of the Lord with rejoicing, and the sound of a trumpet.” Nothing of this is found in any MS., nor in the *Chaldee*, the *Syriac*, nor the *Arabic*, nor in the parallel place, <sup><13152></sup> **1 Chronicles 15:25**.

**Verse 14. And David danced before the Lord]** Dancing is a religious ceremony among the Hindoos, and they consider it an act of devotion to

their idols. It is evident that David considered it in the same light. What connection dancing can have with devotion I cannot tell. This I know, that unpremeditated and involuntary *skipping* may be the effect of sudden mental elation.

**Verse 16. She despised him in her heart.]** She did not blame him outwardly; she thought he had disgraced himself, but she kept her mind to herself.

**Verse 18. He blessed the people in the name of the Lord]** David acted here as priest, for it was the general prerogative of the priests to bless the people, but it appears, by both David and Solomon, that it was the prerogative of the *kings* also.

**Verse 19. A cake of bread]** Such as those which are baked without leaven, and are made very thin.

**A good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.]** The words *of flesh* and *of wine* we add; they are not in the Hebrew. The *Chaldee* translates *one part* and *one portion*; but all the other versions understand the Hebrew as we do.

**Verse 20. To bless his household.]** This was according to the custom of the *patriarchs*, who were priests in their own families. It is worthy of remark, that David is called *patriarch* by Stephen, <sup><4122></sup>**Acts 2:29**, though living upwards of *four hundred* years after the termination of the patriarchal age.

**How glorious was the king of Israel]** This is a strong irony. From what Michal says, it is probable that David used some *violent* gesticulations, by means of which some parts of his body became uncovered. But it is very probable that we cannot guess all that was implied in this reproach.

**Verse 21. It was before the Lord, which chose me]** David felt the reproach, and was strongly irritated, and seems to have spoken to Michal with sufficient asperity.

**Verse 22. I will yet be more vile]** The plain meaning of these words appears to be this: "I am not ashamed of *humbling* myself before that God who rejected thy father because of his *obstinacy* and *pride*, and chose me in his stead to rule his people; and even those maid-servants, when they come to know the motive of my conduct, shall acknowledge its propriety,

and treat me with additional respect; and as for thee, thou shalt find that thy conduct is as little pleasing to God as it is to me.” Then it is said, *Michal had no child till the day of her death*: probably David never more took her to his bed; or God, in his providence, might have subjected her to *barrenness* which in Palestine was considered both a misfortune and a *reproach*. Michal formed her judgment without reason, and meddled with that which she did not understand. We should be careful how we attribute actions, the reasons of which we cannot comprehend, to motives which may appear to us unjustifiable or absurd. Rash judgments are *doubly* pernicious; they hurt those who form them, and those of whom they are formed.

## II SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 7

*David consults the prophet Nathan about building a temple for the Lord, and is encouraged by him to do it, 1-3. That night Nathan receives a revelation from God, stating that Solomon, not David, should build the temple, 4-16. Nathan delivers the Divine message, and David magnifies God for his mercies, and makes prayer and supplication, 17-29.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 1. When the king sat in his house]** That is, when he became resident in the palace which Hiram, king of Tyre, had built for him.

**And the Lord had given him rest]** This was after he had defeated the Philistines, and cast them out of all the strong places in Israel which they had possessed after the overthrow of Saul; but before he had carried his arms beyond the land of Israel, against the Moabites, Syrians, and Idumeans. See <sup><1080></sup>**2 Samuel 8:1-14**.

**Verse 2. I dwell in a house of cedar]** That is, a house whose principal beams, ceiling, and wainscot, were cedar.

**Dwelleth within curtains.]** Having no other residence but the tabernacle, which was a place covered with the *skins* of beasts, <sup><1264></sup>**Exodus 26:14**.

**Verse 3. Nathan said to the king]** In this case he gave his judgment as a pious and prudent man, not as a prophet; for the prophets were not always under a Divine afflatus; it was only at select times they were thus honoured.

**For the Lord is with thee.]** Thou hast his blessing in all that thou doest, and this pious design of thine will most certainly meet with his approbation.

**Verse 5. Shalt thou build me a house]** That is, Thou shalt not: this is the force of the interrogative in such a case.

**Verse 7. With any of the tribes]** “Spake I a word to any of the JUDGES” is the reading in the parallel place, <sup><3170></sup>**1 Chronicles 17:6**, and this is probably the true reading. Indeed, there is but one letter of difference between them, and letters which might be easily mistaken for each other:

*y*cbv *shibtey, tribes*, is almost the same in *appearance* with *y*cpv *shophetey, judges*; the *b* *beth* and the *p* *pe* being the same letter, the apex under the upper stroke of the *p* *pe* excepted. If this were but a little effaced in a MS., it would be mistaken for the other, and then we should have *tribes* instead of *judges*. This reading seems confirmed by <sup><1071></sup>**2 Samuel 7:11**.

**Verse 10. I will appoint a place]** *I have* appointed a place, and have planted them. See the observations at the end. See Clarke “<sup><1075></sup>**2 Samuel 7:25**”.

**Verse 11. The Lord-will make thee a house.]** Thou hast in thy heart to make *me* a house; I have it in my heart to make *thee* a house: thy family shall be built up, and shall prosper in the throne of Israel; and thy spiritual posterity shall remain for ever. God is the author of all our holy purposes, as well as of our good works, he first excites them; and if we be workers together with him, he will crown and reward them as though they were our own, though he is their sole author.

**Verse 13. He shall build]** That is, Solomon shall build my temple, not thou, because *thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars*. See <sup><1328></sup>**1 Chronicles 22:8**; and see also the observations at the end. See Clarke “<sup><1075></sup>**2 Samuel 7:25**”.

**The throne of his kingdom for ever.]** This is a reference to the government of the *spiritual kingdom*, the kingdom of the *Messiah*, agreeably to the predictions of the prophet long after, and by which this passage is illustrated: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even FOR EVER.” <sup><2007></sup>**Isaiah 9:7**.

**Verse 14. If he commit iniquity]** Depart from the holy commandment delivered to him; *I will chasten him with the rod of men*-he shall have affliction, but his government shall not be utterly subverted. But this has a higher meaning. See the observations at the end. See Clarke “<sup><1075></sup>**2 Samuel 7:25**”.

**Verse 15. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul]** His house shall be a lasting house, and he shall die in the throne

of Israel, his children succeeding him; and the spiritual seed, Christ, possessing and ruling in that throne to the end of time.

The family of Saul became *totally extinct*; the family of David remained till the incarnation. Joseph and Mary were both of that family; Jesus was the *only heir* to the kingdom of Israel; he did not choose to sit on the *secular* throne, he ascended the *spiritual* throne, and now he is exalted to the right hand of God, a PRINCE and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. See the observations at the end of the chapter. See Clarke “~~1075~~-2 Samuel 7:25”.

Many have applied these verses and their parallels to support the doctrine of *unconditional final perseverance*; but with it the text has nothing to do; and were we to press it, because of the antitype, Solomon, the doctrine would most evidently be ruined, for there is neither *proof* nor *evidence* of Solomon’s salvation.

**Verse 18. Sat before the Lord]** Sometimes, when a Hindoo seeks a favour from a superior, he sits down in his presence in silence; or if he solicits some favour of a *god*, as *riches, children, &c.*, he places himself before the idol, and remains in a *waiting posture*, or repeats the name of the god, counting the beads in his necklace.-WARD.

**Verse 19. And is this the manner of man]** Literally: *And this, O Lord God, is the law of Adam.* Does he refer to the promise made to Adam, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent?* From my line shall the Messiah spring, and be the spiritual and triumphant King, for ever and ever. See the additions at the end. See Clarke “~~1075~~-2 Samuel 7:25”.

**Verse 20. What can David say more]** How can I express my endless obligation to thee?

**Verse 25. And do as thou hast said.]** David well knew that all the promises made to himself and family were *conditional*; and therefore he prays that they may be fulfilled. His posterity did not walk with God, and therefore they were driven from the throne. It was taken from them by the neighbouring nations, and it is now in the hands of the Mohammedans; all the promises have failed to David and his *natural posterity*, and to Christ and his spiritual seed alone are they fulfilled. Had David’s posterity been faithful, they would, according to the promises of God, have been sitting on the Israelitish throne at this day.

It is worthy of remark how seldom God employs a soldier in any spiritual work, just for the same reason as that given to David; and yet there have been several eminently pious men in the army, who have laboured for the conversion of sinners. I knew a remarkable instance of this; I was acquainted with Mr. *John Haime*, a well known preacher among the people called *Methodists*. He was a soldier in the queen's eighth regiment of dragoons, in Flanders, in the years 1739-46. He had his horse shot under him at the battle of *Fontenoy*, May 11, 1745; and was in the hottest fire of the enemy for above seven hours; he preached among his fellow soldiers frequently, and under the immediate patronage of his royal highness the *Duke of Cumberland*, commander-in-chief; and was the means of reforming and converting many hundreds of the soldiers. He was a man of amazing courage and resolution, and of inflexible loyalty. One having expressed a wonder "how he could reconcile *killing men* with *preaching the Gospel of the grace and peace of Christ*," he answered, "I never killed a man." "How can you tell that? were you not in several battles?" "Yes, but I am confident I never killed nor wounded a man." "How was this? did you not do your *duty*?" "Yes, with all my might; but when in battle, either my horse jumped aside or was wounded, or was killed, or my carbine missed fire, and I could never draw the blood of the enemy." "And would you have done it if you could?" "Yes, I would have slain the whole French army, had it been in my power; I fought in a good cause, for a good king, and for my country; and though I struck in order to cut, and hack, and hew, on every side, I could kill no man." This is the substance of his answers to the above questions, and we see from it a remarkable interfering Providence; God had appointed this man to build a spiritual house in the British army, in Flanders, and would not permit him to shed the blood of his fellow creatures.

"This chapter is one of the most important in the Old Testament, and yet some of its most interesting verses are very improperly rendered in our translation; it therefore demands our most careful consideration. And as in the course of these *remarks* I propose to consider, and hope to explain, some of the prophecies descriptive of THE MESSIAH, which were fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST, among which prophecies *that* contained in this chapter is worthy of particular attention, I shall introduce it with a general state of this great argument.

"It having pleased God that, between the time of *a Messiah* being promised and the time of his coming, there should be delivered by the prophets a



variety of *marks* by which the *Messiah* was to be known, and distinguished from every other man; it was impossible for any one to prove himself *the Messiah*, whose *character* did not answer to these *marks*; and of course it was necessary that *all these criteria*, thus Divinely *foretold*, should be *fulfilled* in the character of *Jesus Christ*. That these prophetic descriptions of the Messiah were *numerous*, appears from Christ and his apostles, (<sup><1247></sup>**Luke 24:27, 44;** <sup><417D></sup>**Acts 17:2, 3; 28:23,** &c.,) who referred the Jews to the Old Testament as containing abundant evidence of his being THE MESSIAH, because *he fulfilled all the prophecies* descriptive of that *singular* character. The chief of these prophecies related to his being *miraculously born of a virgin*; the *time* and *place* of his birth; the *tribe* and *family* from which he was to descend; the miracles he was to perform; the *manner* of his preaching; his *humility* and *mean* appearance; the perfect *innocence* of his life; the greatness of his *sufferings*; the *treachery* of his betrayer; the circumstances of his *trial*; the nature of his *death* and *burial*; and his *miraculous resurrection*. Now amongst all the circumstances which form this chain of prophecy, the first reference made in the New Testament relates to his *descent*; for the New Testament begins with asserting that JESUS CHRIST *was the son of David, the son of Abraham*. As to the descent of Christ from ABRAHAM, every one knows that Christ was born a *Jew*, and consequently descended from Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. And we all know that the promise given to Abraham concerning the Messiah is *recorded* in the *history* of Abraham's life, in <sup><12218></sup>**Genesis 22:18**. Christ being also to descend from DAVID, there can be no doubt that this promise, as made to David, was recorded likewise in the *history* of David. It is remarkable that David's life is given more at large than that of any other person in the Old Testament; and can it be supposed that the historian omitted to record *that promise* which was more honourable to David than any other circumstance? The *record* of this promise, if written at all, must have been written in this chapter; in the message *from God by Nathan to David*, which is here inserted. Here, I am fully persuaded, the promise was, and still is, recorded; and the chief reason why our divines have so frequently missed it, or been so much perplexed about it, is owing to our very improper translation of the 10th and 14th verses. { <sup><10710></sup>**2 Samuel 7:10, 14** }

“This wrong translation in a part of Scripture so very interesting, has been artfully laid hold of, and expatiated upon splendidly, by the deistical author of *The Ground and Reasons of the Christian Religion*; who pretends to

demonstrate that the promise of a Messiah could not be here recorded. His reasons, hitherto I believe unanswered, are three: 1. Because, in <sup><10710></sup>2 Samuel 7:10, the prophet speaks of the *future* prosperity of the Jews, as to be afterwards *fixed*, and *no more afflicted*; which circumstances are totally repugnant to the fate of the Jews, as connected with the birth and death of Christ. 2. Because the son here promised was (<sup><10713></sup>2 Samuel 7:13) to *build a house*; which house, it is pretended, must mean *the temple of Solomon*; and of course Solomon must be the son here promised. And, 3. Because <sup><10714></sup>2 Samuel 7:14 supposes that this son *might commit iniquity*, which could not be supposed of *the Messiah*. The first of these objections is founded on our wrong translation of <sup><10710></sup>2 Samuel 7:10, where the words should be expressed as relating to the time *past* or *present*. For the prophet is there declaring what great things God *had already done* for David and his people; that he *had raised* David from the sheepfold to the throne; and that he *had planted* the Israelites in a place of safety, at rest from all those enemies who had so often before afflicted them. That the verbs **ytmcw** *vesanti*, and **yt [cnw]** *unetati*, may be rendered in the time *past* or *present*, is allowed by our own translators; who here (<sup><10711></sup>2 Samuel 7:11) render **ytj ynhw** *vahanichothi*, and *have caused thee to rest*, and also render **dyghw** *vehiggid*, and *telleth*; which construction, made necessary here by the context, might be confirmed by other proofs almost innumerable. The translation, therefore, should run thus: *I took thee from the sheepcote; and have made thee a great name; and I HAVE APPOINTED a place for my people Israel; and HAVE PLANTED them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more. Neither DO the children of wickedness afflict them any more; as before-time, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over Israel: and I HAVE CAUSED thee to rest from all thine enemies.*

“Objection the second is founded on a mistake in the sense. David indeed had proposed to build a house for God, which God did not permit. Yet, approving the piety of David’s intention, God was pleased to reward it by promising that he *would make a house for DAVID*; which house, to be thus erected by God, was certainly *not material*, or made of stones, but a *spiritual house*, or *family*, to be raised up for the honour of God, and the salvation of mankind. And this house, which God would make, was to be built by *David’s SEED*; and this seed was to be raised up *AFTER David slept with his fathers*; which words clearly exclude *Solomon*, who was set up and placed upon the throne *BEFORE David was dead*. This building

promised by God, was to be erected by one of David's descendants, who was also to be *an everlasting king*; and indeed the *house* and the *kingdom* were both of them to be *established forever*. Now that this house or spiritual building was to be set up, together with a *kingdom*, by the Messiah, is clear from *Zechariah*; who very emphatically says, (**Zecariah 6:12, 13.**) *Behold the man whose name is The Branch; HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord. Even HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his THRONE, &c.* Observe also the language of the New Testament. In <sup><818></sup>**1 Corinthians 3:9-17**, St. Paul says, *Ye are God's BUILDING-Know ye not that YE are the temple of God-the temple of God is holy, which temple YE are.* And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have his eye upon this very promise in *Samuel* concerning a *son* to David, and of the *house* which he should build; when he says, (<sup><816></sup>**Hebrews 3:6.**) **CHRIST, AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE.**

“As to the third and greatest difficulty, *that* also may be removed by a more just translation of <sup><1074></sup>**2 Samuel 7:14**; for the Hebrew words do not properly signify what they are now made to speak. It is certain that the principal word, **w**tw[**hb** *behaavotho*, is not the active infinitive of *kal*, which would be **w**tw[**b**, but **t**w[**h** from **h**y[ is in *niphal*, as **t**wl **gh** from **h**l **g**. It is also certain that a verb, which in the active voice signifies to *commit iniquity*, may, in the passive signify to *suffer for iniquity*; and hence it is that nouns from such verbs sometimes signify *iniquity*, sometimes *punishment*. See Lowth's *Isaiah*, p, 187, with many other authorities which shall be produced hereafter. The way being thus made clear, we are now prepared for abolishing our translation, *if he commit iniquity*; and also for adopting the true one, *even in his suffering for iniquity*. The Messiah, who is thus the person possibly here spoken of, will be made still more manifest from the whole verse thus translated: *I will be his father, and he shall be my son: EVEN IN HIS SUFFERING FOR INIQUITY, I shall chasten him with the rod of men, (with the rod due to men,) and with the stripes (due to) the children of ADAM.* And this construction is well supported by <sup><8304></sup>**Isaiah 53:4, 5**: *He hath carried OUR SORROWS, (i.e., the sorrows due to us, and which we must otherwise have suffered,) he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* See note, p. 479, in Hallet, on <sup><8113></sup>**Hebrews 11:26**. Thus, then, God declares himself the Father of the Son here meant; (see also

<8016> **Hebrews 1:5;**) and promises that, even amidst the *sufferings* of this Son, (as they would be for the sins of others, not for his own,) his mercy should still attend him: nor should his favour be ever removed from *this king*, as it had been from *Saul*. And thus (as it follows) *thine house* (O David) *and thy kingdom shall*, in Messiah, *be established for ever before ME: (before GOD:) thy throne shall be established for ever*. Thus the angel, delivering his message to the virgin mother, <4013> **Luke 1:32, 33**, speaks as if he was quoting from this very prophecy: *The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob FOR EVER: and of his kingdom there shall be no end*. In <4016> **2 Samuel 7:16**, **Ēynpl lephaneycha**, is rendered as **ynpl lephanai**, on the authority of *three* Hebrew MSS., with the Greek and Syriac versions; and, indeed, nothing could be established *for ever* in the presence of *David*, but in the presence of God only.

“Having thus shown that the words fairly admit here the promise made to David, that *from his seed* should arise *Messiah, the everlasting King*; it may be necessary to add that, if the *Messiah* be the person here meant, as suffering innocently for the sins of others, *Solomon* cannot be; nor can this be a prophecy admitting such double sense, or be applied properly to two such opposite characters. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of HIMSELF, or of SOME OTHER man?* This was a question properly put by the Ethiopian treasurer, (<4034> **Acts 8:34**;) who never dreamed that such a description as he was reading could relate to different persons; and Philip shows him that the person was *Jesus* only. So here it may be asked, *Of whom* speaketh the prophet this? of *Solomon*, or of *Christ*? It must be answered, *Of Christ*: one reason is, because the description does *not agree* to *Solomon*; and therefore *Solomon* being necessarily excluded in a single sense, must also be excluded in a double. Lastly, if it would be universally held absurd to consider the promise of *Messiah* made to *Abraham* as relating to *any other* person *besides* MESSIAH; why is there not an equal absurdity in giving a *double* sense to the promise of *Messiah* thus made to DAVID?

“Next to our present very improper translation, the cause of the common confusion here has been—not distinguishing the promise here made as to *Messiah* alone, from another made as to *Solomon* alone: the *first* brought by *Nathan*, the *second* by *Gad*; the *first* near the *beginning* of *David*’s reign, the *second* near the *end* of it; the *first* relating to *Messiah*’s *spiritual* kingdom, *everlasting without conditions*, the *second* relating to the *fate* of the *temporal* kingdom of *Solomon*, and his heirs, depending entirely on

their *obedience* or *rebellion*, <sup><13218></sup>**1 Chronicles 22:8-13; 28:7**. Let the first message be compared with this second in <sup><13218></sup>**1 Chronicles 22:8-13**, which the Syriac version (at <sup><13218></sup>**1 Chronicles 22:8**) tells us was delivered by a *prophet*, and the Arabian says by *the prophet* GAD. This *second* message was after David's *many wars*, when he *had shed much blood*; and it was this *second* message that, out of all David's sons, appointed *Solomon* to be his successor. At the time of the *first message* Solomon was *not born*; it being delivered soon after David became king at Jerusalem: but Solomon *was born* at the time of this *second message*. For though our translation very wrongly says, (<sup><13219></sup>**1 Chronicles 22:9**), *a son SHALL BE born to thee-and his name shall be Solomon*; yet the Hebrew text expressly speaks of him as *then born-Behold a son*, (**dl wn**, *natus est*), *IS BORN to thee*: and therefore the words following must be rendered, *Solomon IS his name, and I will give peace in his days: he shall build a house for my name, &c.*

“From David's address to God, after receiving the message by Nathan, it is plain that David understood the *Son promised* to be THE MESSIAH: in whom *his house* was to be *established for ever*. But the words which seem most expressive of this are in this verse now rendered very unintelligibly: *And is this the manner of man?* Whereas the words **udah trwt tazw** *vezoth torath haadam* literally signify, *and this is (or must be) the law of the man, or of the Adam*; i.e., this promise must relate to *the law* or ordinance made by God to *Adam*, concerning *the seed of the woman; the man, or the second ADAM*; as the Messiah is expressly called by St. Paul, <sup><6154></sup>**1 Corinthians 15:45, 47**. This meaning will be yet more evident from the parallel place, <sup><131717></sup>**1 Chronicles 17:17**, where the words of David are now miserably rendered thus: *And thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree*; whereas the words **hl [mh udah rwtk yntyarw** *ureithani kethor haadam hammaalah* literally signify, *and thou hast regarded me according to the order of the ADAM THAT IS FUTURE, or THE MAN THAT IS FROM ABOVE*: (for the word **hl [mh hammaalah** very remarkably signifies *hereafter* as to time, and *from above* as to place:) and thus St. Paul, including both senses-THE SECOND MAN *is* THE LORD FROM HEAVEN-and *Adam is the figure of him that was to come, or the future*, <sup><6154></sup>**Romans 5:14**.-See the *Preface* of the late learned Mr. *Peters* on *Job*, referred to and confirmed as to this interesting point in a note subjoined to my Sermon on A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, &c., P. 46-52, 8VO. 1765. A part of that note here follows: ‘The speech of David (<sup><10718></sup>**2 Samuel**

**7:18-29**) is such as one might naturally expect from a person overwhelmed with the greatness of the promised blessing: for it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions. *And now what can David say unto thee?* What, indeed! *For thou, LORD GOD knowest thy servant*-thou knowest the hearts of all men, and seest how full my own heart is. *For thy word's sake*-for the sake of former prophecies, *and according to thine own heart*-from the mere motive of thy wisdom and goodness, *hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.* I now perceive the reason of those miraculous providences which have attended me from my youth up; *taken from following the sheep*, and conducted through all difficulties *to be ruler of thy people*; and shall I distrust the promise now made me? *Thy words be true.* If the preceding remarks on this whole passage be just and well grounded, then may we see clearly the chief foundation of what St. Peter tells us (<sup><4023></sup>**Acts 2:30**) concerning DAVID: *that being a prophet, and KNOWING that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, &c.*’“

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 8

*David subdues the Philistines, 1; and the Moabites, 2; and the king of Zobah, 3, 4; and the Syrians in general, 5-8. Toi, king of Hamath, sends to congratulate him on his victories over the king of Zobah, and sends him rich presents, 9-10. David dedicates all the spoils to God, 11-13. He garrisons Edom, 14; and reigns over all Israel, 15. An account of his chief officers, 16-18.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. David took Metheg-ammah]** This is variously translated. The Vulgate has, *Tulit David frænum tributi, David removed the bondage of the tribute*, which the Israelites paid to the Philistines. Some think it means a *fortress*, city, or strong town; but no such place as *Metheg-ammah* is known. Probably the Vulgate is nearest the truth. The versions are all different. See the following comparison of the principal passages here collated with the parallel place in 1 Chron:—

- S. 8, 1-David took Methegammah 3. David  
 C. 18, 1-David took Gath and her towns. 3. David  
 S. smote Hadadezer 4. And David took from him  
 C. smote Hadarezer 4. And David took from him  
 S. 1000 and 700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot.  
 C. 1000 chariots, and 7000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot.  
 S. 6. Then David put garrisons in Syria 8. And  
 C. 6. Then David put in Syria 8. And  
 S. from Betah and Berothai cities of Hadadezer. 9.  
 C. from Tibhath and Chun cities of Hadarezer. 9.  
 S. When Toi heard that David had smitten  
 C. When Tou heard that David had smitten  
 S. Hadadezer 10. Then Toi sent Joram his son  
 C. Hadarezer 10. He sent Hadoram his son  
 S. 12-Syria and Moab 13-Syrians, in the valley  
 C. 11-Edom and Moab 12-Edomites, in the valley  
 S. of salt, 18,000 17-Ahimelech-and Seraiah  
 C. of salt, 18,000 16-Abimelech-and Shausha  
 S. was the scribe. 10, 16. Shobach the captain

C. *was scribe.* 19, 16. *Shophach the captain*

S. 17. David passed over Jordan, and came **hmal h**

C. 17. *David passed over Jordan and came* **phl a**

S. to Helam. 18. David slew 700

C. *upon them* 18. *David slew of the Syrians* 7000

S. chariots of the Syrians, and 40,000 horsemen;

C. *chariots, and 40,000 footmen;*

S. and smote Shobach, &c.

C. *and killed Shophach, &c.*

**Verse 2. And measured them with a line—even with two lines]** It has been generally conjectured that David, after he had conquered Moab, consigned *two-thirds* of the inhabitants *to the sword*; but I think the text will bear a meaning much more reputable to that king. The first clause of the verse seems to determine the sense; *he measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground*—to put to death, and with one line to keep alive. Death seems here to be referred to the cities by way of metaphor; and, from this view of the subject we may conclude that two-thirds of the cities, that is, the *strong places* of Moab, were erased; and not having strong places to trust to, the text adds, *So the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts*, i.e., were obliged to pay tribute. The word *line* may mean the same here as our *rod*, i.e., the instrument by which land is measured. There are various opinions on this verse, with which I shall not trouble the reader. Much may be seen in *Calmet* and *Dodd*.

**Verse 3. David smote-Hadadezer]** He is supposed to have been king of all Syria, except Phœnicia; and, wishing to extend his dominions to the Euphrates, invaded a part of David's dominions which lay contiguous to it; but being attacked by David, he was totally routed.

**Verse 4. A thousand chariots]** It is strange that there were a *thousand chariots*, and only *seven hundred horsemen* taken, and twenty thousand foot. But as the discomfiture appears complete, we may suppose that the *chariots*, being less manageable, might be more easily taken, while the *horsemen* might, in general, make their escape. The *infantry* also seem to have been surrounded, when twenty thousand of them were taken prisoners.

**David houghed all the chariot horses]** If he did so, it was both unreasonable and inhuman; for, as he had so complete a victory, there was



no danger of these horses falling into the enemy's hands; and if he did not choose to keep them, which indeed the law would not permit, he should have killed them outright; and then the poor innocent creatures would have been put out of pain. But does the text speak of houghing *horses* at all? It does not. Let us hear; **bkrh l k ta dwd rq[yw** *vayeakker David eth col harecheb, And David disjointed all the chariots*, except a hundred chariots which he reserved for himself. Now, this destruction of the *chariots*, was a matter of sound *policy*, and strict *piety*. God had censured those who trusted in chariots; *piety* therefore forbade David the use of them: and lest they should fall into the enemy's hands, and be again used against him, *policy* induced him to destroy them. The Septuagint render the words nearly as I have done, **και παρελυσε δαυιδ παντα τα αρματα.**

He kept however one hundred; probably as a sort of baggage or forage wagons.

**Verse 6. Brought gifts]** Paid tribute.

**Verse 7. David took the shields of gold]** We know not what these were. Some translate *arms*, others *quivers*, others *bracelets*, others *collars*, and others *shields*. They were probably costly ornaments by which the Syrian soldiers were decked and distinguished. And those who are called *servants* here, were probably the *choice troops* or *body-guard* of Hadadezer, as the *argyraspides* were of Alexander the Great. See Quintus Curtius.

**Verse 9. Toi king of Hamath]** Hamath is supposed to be the famous city of *Emesa*, situated on the *Orontes*, in Syria. This was contiguous to Hadadezer; and led him to wage war with Toi, that he might get possession of his territories. For a comparison of the 10th verse, see <sup><13180></sup>**1 Chronicles 18:9.**

**Verse 13. David gat him a name]** Became a very celebrated and eminent man. The Targum has it, *David collected troops*; namely, to *recruit* his army when he returned from smiting the Syrians. His many battles had no doubt greatly thinned his army.

**The valley of salt]** Supposed to be a large plain abounding in this mineral, about a league from the city of *Palmyra* or *Tadmor* in the wilderness.

**Verse 14. He put garrisons in Edom]** He repaired the strong cities which he had taken, and put garrisons in them to keep the country in awe.

**Verse 16. Joab-was over the host]** General and commander-in-chief over all the army.

**Ahilud-recorder]** *rykzm mazkir, remembrancer*; one who kept a strict journal of all the proceedings of the king and operations of his army; a chronicler. See the margin.

**Verse 17. Seraiah-the scribe]** Most likely the king's private secretary. See the margin.

**Verse 18. Benaiah]** The chief of the second class of David's worthies. We shall meet with him again.

**The Cherethites and the Pelethites]** The former supposed to be those who accompanied David when he fled from Saul; the latter, those who came to him at Ziklag. But the Targum translates these two names thus, *the archers and the slingers*; and this is by far the most likely. It is not at all probable that David was without a company both of *archers* and *slingers*. The *bow* is celebrated in the funeral lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; and the *sling* was renowned as the weapon of the Israelites, and how expert David was in the use of it we learn from the death of Goliath. I take for granted that the Chaldee paraphrast is correct. No weapons then known were equally powerful with these; the spears, swords, and javelins, of other nations, were as stubble before them. The bow was the grand weapon of our English ancestors; and even after the invention of firearms, they were with difficulty persuaded to prefer them and leave their archery.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 9

*David inquires after the family of Jonathan, and is informed of Mephibosheth his son, 1-4. He sends for him and gives him all the land of Saul, 5-8; and appoints Ziba the servant of Saul, and his family, to till the ground for Mephibosheth, 9-13.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. Is there yet any that is left]** David recollecting the covenant made with his friend Jonathan, now inquires after his family. It is supposed that *political* considerations prevented him from doing this *sooner*. *Reasons of state* often destroy all the charities of life.

**Verse 3. That I may show the kindness of God unto him?]** That is, the *utmost*, the *highest degrees of kindness*; as the *hail of God*, is very great hail, the *mountains of God*, exceeding high mountains: besides, this kindness was according to the *covenant of God* made between him and the family of Jonathan.

**Verse 4. Lo-debar.]** Supposed to have been situated beyond Jordan; but there is nothing certain known concerning it.

**Verse 7. Will restore thee all the land]** I believe this means the *mere family estate* of the house of Kish, which David as *king* might have retained, but which most certainly belonged, according to the Israelitish law, to the descendants of the family.

**And thou shalt eat bread at my table]** This was *kindness*, (the giving up the land was *justice*,) and it was the highest honour that any subject could enjoy, as we may see from the reference made to it by our Lord, <sup>(~~22:31~~)</sup> **Luke 22:30:** *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*. For such a person David could do no more. His lameness rendered him unfit for any public employment.

**Verse 9. I have given unto thy master's son]** Unless Ziba had been servant of Jonathan, this seems to refer to Micha, son of Mephibosheth, and so some understand it; but it is more likely that Mephibosheth is meant, who is called *son of Saul* instead of *grandson*. Yet it is evident

enough that the produce of the land went to the support of Micha, (see ~~<00910>~~ **2 Samuel 9:10**.) for the father was provided for at the table of David; but all the patrimony belonged to Mephibosheth.

**Verse 10. Thou therefore, and thy sons-shall till the land]** It seems that Ziba and his family had the care of the whole estate, and cultivated it at their own expense, yielding the half of the produce to the family of Mephibosheth. Ziba was properly the *hind*, whose duty and interest it was to take proper care of the ground, for the better it was cultivated the more it produced; and his *half* would consequently be the greater.

**Verse 11. So shall thy servant do.]** The promises of Ziba were fair and specious, but he was a traitor in his heart, as we shall see in the rebellion of Absalom, and David's indulgence to this man is a blot in his character; at this time however he suspected no evil; circumstances alone can develop the human character. The *internal* villain can be known only when circumstances occur which can call his propensities into action; till then he may be reputed an honest man.

**Verse 13. Did eat continually at the king's table]** He was fit for no public office, but was treated by the king with the utmost respect and affection.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 10

*The king of Ammon being dead, David sends ambassadors to comfort his son Hanun, by 2. Hanun, misled by his courtiers, treats the messengers of David with great indignity, 3-5. The Ammonites, justly dreading David's resentment, send, and hire the Syrians to make war upon him, 6. Joab and Abishai meet them at the city of Medeba, and defeat them, 7-14. The Syrians collect another army, but are defeated by David with great slaughter, and make with him a separate peace, 15-19.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 2. I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash]** We do not know exactly the nature or extent of the obligation which David was under to the king of the Ammonites; but it is likely that the Nahash here mentioned was the same who had attacked Jabesh-gilead, and whom Saul defeated: as David had taken refuge with the Moabites, (~~1021B~~ **1 Samuel 22:3**.) and this was contiguous to the king of the Ammonites, his hatred to Saul might induce him to show particular kindness to David.

**Verse 3. Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father]** It has been a matter of just complaint through all the history of mankind, that there is little sincerity in courts. Courtiers, especially, are suspicious of each other, and often mislead their sovereigns. They feel themselves to be insincere, and suspect others to be so too.

**Verse 4. Shaved off the one half of their beards]** The *beard* is held in high respect in the East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, *pledges* it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life. The beard was never cut off but in *mourning*, or as a sign of *slavery*. Cutting off half of the beard and the clothes rendered the men ridiculous, and made them look like slaves: what was done to these men was an accumulation of insult.

**Verse 5. Tarry at Jericho]** This city had not been rebuilt since the time of Joshua; but there were, no doubt, many cottages still remaining, and larger dwellings also, but the *walls* had not been repaired. As it must have been

comparatively a *private* place, it was proper for these men to tarry in, as they would not be exposed to public notice.

**Verse 6. The children of Ammon saw that they stank]** That is, that their conduct rendered them abominable. This is the Hebrew mode of expressing such a feeling. See <sup><01340></sup>**Genesis 34:30.**

**The Syrians of Bethrehob]** This place was situated at the extremity of the valley between Libanus and Anti-libanus. The Syrians of Zoba were subject to Hadadezer. *Maacah* was in the vicinity of Mount Hermon, beyond Jordan, in the Trachonitis.

**Ish-tob]** This was probably the same with *Tob*, to which Jephthah fled from the cruelty of his brethren. It was situated in the land of Gilead.

**Verse 7. All the host of the mighty]** All his *worthies*, and the flower of his army.

**Verse 8. At the entering in of the gate]** This was the city of *Medeba*, as we learn from <sup><13107></sup>**1 Chronicles 19:7.**

**Verse 9. Before and behind]** It is probable that one of the armies was in the *field*, and the other in the *city*, when Joab arrived. When he fronted this army, the other appears to have issued from the city, and to have taken him in the rear; he was therefore obliged to divide his army as here mentioned; one part to face the Syrians commanded by himself, and the other to face the Ammonites commanded by his brother Abishai.

**Verse 12. Be of good courage]** This is a very fine military address, and is equal to any thing in ancient or modern times. Ye fight *pro aris et focus*; for every good, sacred and civil; for God, for your families, and for your country.

**Verse 14. The Syrians were fled]** They betook themselves to their own confines, while the Ammonites escaped into their own city.

**Verse 16. The Syrians that were beyond the river]** That is, the *Euphrates*.

**Hadarezer]** This is the same that was overthrown by David, <sup><10818></sup>**2 Samuel 8:3** and there called Hadadezer; which is the reading here of about *thirty* of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS. But the **r** *resh* and **d** *daleth* are easily interchanged.

**Verse 17. David-gathered all Israel together]** He thought that such a war required his own presence.

**Verse 18. SEVEN HUNDRED chariots-and forty thousand HORSEMEN]** In the parallel place, <sup><131918></sup>**1 Chronicles 19:18**, it is said, *David slew of the Syrians SEVEN THOUSAND men*, which fought in *chariots*. It is difficult to ascertain the right number in this and similar places. It is very probable that, in former times, the Jews expressed, as they often do *now*, their numbers, not by *words at full length*, but by *numeral letters*; and, as many of the letters bear a great similarity to each other, mistakes might easily creep in when the numeral letters came to be expressed by *words at full length*. This alone will account for the many mistakes which we find in the numbers in these books, and renders a mistake here very probable. The letter *z zain*, with a dot above, stands for *seven thousand*, *n nun* for *seven hundred*: the great similarity of these letters might easily cause the one to be mistaken for the other, and so produce an error in this place.

**Verse 19. Made peace with Israel]** They made this peace separately, and were obliged to pay tribute to the Israelites. Some copies of the Vulgate add here after the word *Israel*, *Expaverunt et fugerunt quinquaginta et octo millia coram Israel*; “and they were panic-struck, and fled *fifty-eight thousand* of them before Israel.” This reading is nowhere else to be found. “Thus,” observes Dr. *Delaney*, “the arms of David were blessed; and God accomplished the promises which he had made to Abraham, <sup><01518></sup>**Genesis 15:18**, and renewed to Joshua, <sup><01012></sup>**Joshua 1:2, 4**.” And thus, in the space of *nineteen* or *twenty* years, David had the good fortune to finish gloriously *eight* wars, all righteously undertaken, and all honourably terminated; viz. 1. The civil war with *Ish-bosheth*. 2. The war against the *Jebusites*. 3. The war against the *Philistines* and their *allies*. 4. The war against the *Philistines* alone. 5. The war against the *Moabites*. 6. The war against *Hadadezer*. 7. The war against the *Idumeans*. 8. The war against the *Ammonites* and *Syrians*. This last victory was soon followed by the complete conquest of the kingdom of the Ammonites, abandoned by their allies. What glory to the monarch of Israel, had not the splendour of this illustrious epoch been obscured by a complication of crimes, of which one could never have even suspected him capable!

WE have now done with the first part of this book, in which we find David great, glorious, and pious: we come to the *second* part, in which we shall have the pain to observe him fallen from God, and his horn defiled in the

dust by crimes of the most flagitious nature. Let him that most assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall.



## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 11

*David sends Joab against the Ammonites, who besieges the city of Rabbah, 1. He sees Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, bathing; is enamoured of her; sends for and takes her to his bed, 24. She conceives, and informs David, 5. David sends to Joab, and orders him to send to him Uriah, 6. He arrives; and David having inquired the state of the army, dismisses him, desiring him to go to his own house, 7, 8. Uriah sleeps at the door of the king's house, 9. The next day the king urges him to go to his house; but he refuses to go, and gives the most pious and loyal reasons for his refusal, 10-11. David after two days sends him back to the army, with a letter to Joab, desiring him to place Uriah in the front of the battle, that he may be slain, 12-15. He does so; and Uriah falls, 16, 17. Joab communicates this news in an artful message to David, 18-25. David sends for Bath-sheba and takes her to wife, and she bears him a son, 26, 27.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. When kings go forth]** This was about a year after the war with the Syrians spoken of before, and about the *spring* of the year, as the most proper season for military operations. Calmet thinks they made *two campaigns*, one in *autumn* and the other in *spring*; the *winter* being in many respects inconvenient, and the *summer* too hot.

**Verse 2. In an evening-tide-David arose]** He had been reposing on the roof of his house, to enjoy the breeze, as the noonday was too hot for the performance of business. This is still a constant custom on the flat-roofed houses in the East.

**He saw a woman washing herself]** How could any woman of delicacy expose herself where she could be so fully and openly viewed? Did she not know that she was at least in view of the king's terrace? Was there no *design* in all this? *Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri.* In a Bengal town pools of water are to be seen everywhere, and women *may be seen* morning and evening *bathing* in them, and carrying water home. Thus David might have seen Bath-sheba, and no blame attach to her.

Ver. 4 shows us that this washing was at the termination of a particular period.

**Verse 3. The daughter of Eliam]** Called, <sup><1385></sup>**1 Chronicles 3:5**, Ammiel; a word of the same meaning, *The people of my God, The God of my people*. This name expressed the covenant-*I will be your God; We will be thy people*.

**Verse 4. And she came in unto him]** We hear nothing of her reluctance, and there is no evidence that she was taken by force.

**Verse 5. And the woman conceived]** A proof of the observation on <sup><10104></sup>**2 Samuel 11:4**; as that is the time in which women are most apt to conceive.

**Verse 8. Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.]** Uriah had come off a journey, and needed this refreshment; but David's design was that he should go and lie with his wife, that the child now conceived should pass for his, the honour of Bath-sheba be screened, and his own crime concealed. At this time he had no design of the murder of Uriah, nor of taking Bath-sheba to wife.

**A mess of meat from the king.]** All this was artfully contrived.

**Verse 9. Slept at the door]** That is, in one of the apartments or niches in the court of the king's house. But in Bengal servants and others generally sleep on the verandahs or porches in face of their master's house.

**Verse 10. Camest thou not from thy journey?]** It is not *thy* duty to keep watch or guard; thou art come from a journey, and needest rest and refreshment.

**Verse 11. The ark, and Israel-abide in tents]** It appears therefore that they had taken the ark with them to battle.

This was the answer of a brave, generous and disinterested man. I will not indulge myself while all my fellow soldiers are exposed to hardships, and even the ark of the Lord in danger. Had Uriah no suspicion of what had been done in his absence?

**Verse 13. He made him drunk]** Supposing that in this state he would have been off his guard, and hastened down to his house.

**Verse 14. David wrote a letter]** This was the sum of treachery and villany. He made this most noble man the carrier of letters which prescribed the mode in which he was to be murdered. This case some have likened to that of Bellerophon, son of Glaucus, king of Ephyra, who being in the

court of Prætus, king of the Argives, his queen Antia, or as others Sthenobœa, fell violently in love with him; but he, refusing to gratify her criminal passions, was in revenge accused by her to Prætus her husband, as having attempted to corrupt her. Prætus not willing to violate the laws of hospitality by slaying him in his own house, wrote letters to Jobates, king of Lycia, the father of Sthenobœa, and sent them by the hand of Bellerophon, stating his crime, and desiring Jobates to put him to death. To meet the wishes of his son-in-law, and keep his own hands innocent of blood, he sent him with a small force against a very warlike people called the *Solyms*; but, contrary to all expectation, he not only escaped with his life, but gained a complete victory over them. He was afterwards sent upon several equally dangerous and hopeless expeditions, but still came off with success; and to reward him Jobates gave him one of his daughters to wife, and a part of his kingdom. Sthenobœa, hearing this, through rage and despair killed herself.

I have given this history at large, because many have thought it not only to be parallel to that of Uriah, but to be a fabulous formation from the Scripture fact: for my own part, I scarcely see in them any correspondence, but in the simple circumstance that both carried those letters which contained their own condemnation. From the fable of Bellerophon came the proverb, *Bellerophontis literas portare*, “to carry one’s own condemnation.”

**Verse 17. Uriah the Hitite died also.]** He was led to the attack of a place defended by valiant men; and in the heat of the assault, Joab and his men retired from this brave soldier, who cheerfully gave up his life for his king and his country.

**Verse 20. If-the king’s wrath arise]** It is likely that Joab had by some indiscretion suffered loss about this time; and he contrived to get rid of the odium by connecting the transaction with the death of Uriah, which he knew would be so pleasing to the king.

**Verse 25. The sword devoureth one as well as another]** What abominable hypocrisy was here! He well knew that Uriah’s death was no *chance-medley*; he was by his own order thrust on the edge of the sword.

**Verse 26. She mourned for her husband.]** The whole of her conduct indicates that she observed the *form* without feeling the *power* of *sorrow*.

She lost a *captain* and got a *king* for her spouse; this must have been deep affliction indeed: and therefore:—

——— *Lachrymas non sponte cadentes  
Effudit; gemitusque expressit pectore laeto.*

“*She shed reluctant tears,  
and forced out groans from a joyful heart.*”

**Verse 27. When the mourning was past]** Probably it lasted only *seven days*.

**She became his wife]** This hurried marriage was no doubt intended on both sides to cover the pregnancy.

**But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.]** It was necessary to add this, lest the splendour of David’s former virtues should induce any to suppose his crimes were passed over, or looked on with an indulgent eye, by the God of purity and justice. Sorely he sinned, and sorely did he suffer for it; he sowed one *grain* of sweet, and reaped a long *harvest* of calamity and wo.

ON a review of the whole, I hesitate not to say that the preceding chapter is an illustrious proof of the truth of the sacred writings. Who that intended to deceive, by trumping up a religion which he designed to father on the purity of God, would have inserted such an account of one of its most zealous advocates, and once its brightest ornament? God alone, whose character is impartiality, has done it, to show that his religion, *librata ponderibus suis*, will ever stand independently of the conduct of its professors.

Drs. Delaney, Chandler, and others, have taken great pains to excuse and varnish this conduct of David; and while I admire their ingenuity, I abhor the tendency of their doctrine, being fully convinced that he who writes on this subject should write like the inspired penman, who tells the TRUTH, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

*David* may be *pitied* because he had fallen from great eminence; but who can help *deploring* the fate of the brave, the faithful, the incorruptible *Uriah*? *Bath-sheba* was probably *first* in the transgression, by a too public display of her charms; by which accidentally, the heart of David was affected wounded, and blinded. He committed one crime which he employed many shifts to conceal; these all failing, he is led from step to

step to the highest degree of guilt. Not only does he feel that his and her *honour*, but even their *lives*, are at stake; for death, by the law of Moses, was the punishment of adultery. He thought therefore that either Uriah must die, or he and Bath-sheba perish for their iniquity; for that law had made no provision to save the life of even a *king* who transgressed its precepts. He must not imbrue his own hands in the blood of this brave man; but he employs him on a service from which his bravery would not permit him to shrink; and it which, from the nature of his circumstances, he must inevitably perish. The awful trial is made, and it succeeds. The criminal king and his criminal paramour are for a moment concealed; and one of the bravest of men falls an affectionate victim for the safety and support of him by whom his spotless blood is shed! But what shall we say of *Joab*, the wicked executor of the base commands of his fallen master? He was a *ruffian*, not a *soldier*; base and barbarous beyond example, in his calling; a pander to the vices of his monarch, while he was aware that he was outraging every law of religion, piety, honour, and arms! It is difficult to state the characters, and sum up and apportion the quantity of vice chargeable on each.

Let *David*, once a pious, noble, generous, and benevolent hero, who, when almost perishing with thirst, would not taste the water which his brave men had acquired at the hazard of their lives; let this David, I say, be considered an awful example of *apostasy* from religion, justice, and virtue; *Bath-sheba*, of lightness and conjugal infidelity; *Joab*, of base, unmanly, and cold-blooded cruelty; *Uriah*, of untarnished heroism, inflexible fidelity, and unspotted virtue; and then justice will be done to each character. For my own part, I must say, I *pity* David; I *venerate* Uriah; I *detest* Joab, and *think meanly* of Bath-sheba. Similar crimes have been repeatedly committed in similar circumstances. I shall take my leave of the whole with:—

*Id commune malum; semel insanivimus omnes;  
Aut sumus, aut fuimus, aut possumus, omne quod hic est.*

God of purity and mercy! save the reader from the *ευπεριστατος αμαρτια*, *well circumstanced sin*; and let him learn,

*“Where many mightier have been slain,  
By thee unsaved, he falls.”*

See the notes on the succeeding chapter.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 12

*The Lord sends Nathan the prophet to reprove David; which he does by means of a curious parable, 1-4. David is led, unknowingly, to pronounce his own condemnation, 5, 6. Nathan charges the guilt home on his conscience; and predicts a long train of calamities which should fall on him and his family, 7-12. David confesses his sin; and Nathan gives him hope of God's mercy, and foretells the death of the child born in adultery, 13, 14. The child is taken ill; David fasts and prays for its restoration, 15-17. On the seventh day the child dies, and David is comforted, 18-24. Solomon is born of Bath-sheba, 25, 26. Joab besieges Rabbah of the Ammonites, takes the city of waters, and sends for David to take Rabbah, 27, 28. He comes, takes it, gets much spoil, and puts the inhabitants to hard labor, 29-31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. There were two men in one city]** See a *discourse* on *fables* at the end of <sup><07086></sup>**Judges 9:56**, and a discourse on parabolic writing at the end of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

There is nothing in this parable that requires illustration; its bent is evident; and it was construed to make David, unwittingly, pass sentence on himself. It was in David's hand, what his own letters were in the hands of the brave but unfortunate Uriah.

**Verse 3. And lay in his bosom]** This can only mean that this lamb was what we call a *pet* or *favourite* in the family, else the circumstance would be very *unnatural*, and most likely would have prevented David from making the application which he did, as otherwise it would have appeared absurd. It is the only part of this parable which is at variance with *nature* and *fact*.

**Verse 5. The man-shall surely die]** Literally *twm ʿb ben maveth*, "he is a son of death," a very *bad man*, and one who *deserves to die*. But the law did not sentence a sheep-stealer to death; let us hear it: *If a man steal an ox or a sheep, he shall restore FIVE OXEN for an ox, and FOUR SHEEP for a sheep,* <sup><02201></sup>**Exodus 22:1**; and hence David immediately says, *He shall restore the lamb FOURFOLD.*

**Verse 7. Thou art the man.]** What a terrible word! And by it David appears to have been transfixed, and brought into the dust before the messenger of God.

THOU ART *this son of death*, and thou shalt restore this lamb FOURFOLD. It is indulging fancy too much to say David was called, in the course of a just Providence to pay this fourfold debt? to lose *four sons* by untimely deaths, viz., this son of Bath-sheba, on whom David had set his heart, was slain by the Lord; *Amnon*, murdered by his brother Absalom; *Absalom*, slain in the oak by Joab; and *Adonijah*, slain by the order of his brother Solomon, even at the altar of the Lord! The sword and calamity did not depart from his house, from the murder of wretched *Amnon* by his brother to the slaughter of the sons of *Zedekiah*, before their father's eyes, by the king of Babylon. His *daughter* was dishonoured by her own brother, and his *wives* contaminated publicly by his own son! How dreadfully, then, was David punished for his sin! Who would repeat his transgression to share in its penalty? Can his conduct ever be an inducement to, or an encouragement in, sin? Surely, No. It must ever fill the reader and the hearer with horror. Behold the goodness and severity of God! Reader, lay all these solemn things to heart.

**Verse 8. Thy master's wives into thy bosom]** Perhaps this means no more than that he had given him *absolute power* over every thing possessed by Saul; and as it was the custom for the new king to succeed even to the *wives* and *concubines*, the *whole harem* of the deceased king, so it was in this case; and the possession of the wives was a sure proof that he had got all regal rights. But could David, as the *son-in-law* of Saul, take the wives of his *father-in-law*? However, we find delicacy was seldom consulted in these cases; and Absalom lay with his own father's wives in the most public manner, to show that he had seized on the kingdom, because the wives of the preceding belonged to the succeeding king, and to none other.

**Verse 9. Thou hast killed Uriah]** THOU art the MURDERER, as having planned his death; the sword of the Ammonites was THY *instrument* only.

**Verse 11. I will take thy wives]** That is, In the course of my providence I will *permit* all this to be done. Had David been faithful, God, by his providence, would have turned all this aside; but now, by his sin, he has made that providence his enemy which before was his friend.

**Verse 13. The Lord-hath put away thy sin]** Many have supposed that David's sin was *now actually pardoned*, but this is perfectly erroneous; David, as an adulterer, was *condemned to death by the law of God*; and he had according to that law passed sentence of death upon himself. God alone, whose law that was could revoke that sentence, or dispense with its execution; therefore Nathan, who had charged the guilt home upon his conscience, is authorized to give him the assurance that he should not die a *temporal death* for it: *The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die*. This is all that is contained in the assurance given by Nathan: Thou shalt not die that temporal death; thou shalt be preserved alive, that thou mayest have time to repent, turn to God, and find mercy. If the fifty-first Psalm, as is generally supposed, was written on this occasion, then it is evident (as the Psalm must have been written *after* this interview) that David had not received pardon for his sin from God at the time he composed it; for in it he confesses the crime in order to find mercy.

There is something very remarkable in the words of Nathan: *The Lord also hath PUT AWAY thy sin; thou shalt not die; twmt al Ētacj ryb[h hwby μg gam Jehovah heebir chattathecha lo thamuth, Also Jehovah HATH CAUSED thy sin TO PASS OVER, or transferred thy sin; THOU shalt not die. God has transferred the legal punishment of this sin to the child; HE shall die, THOU shalt not die; and this is the very point on which the prophet gives him the most direct information: The child that is born unto thee shall SURELY die; twmy twm moth yamuth, dying he shall die-he shall be in a dying state seven days, and then he shall die. So God immediately struck the child, and it was very sick.*

**Verse 16. David-besought God for the child]** How could he do so, after the solemn assurance that he had from God that the child should die? The justice of God absolutely required that the penalty of the law should be exacted; either the *father* or the *son* shall die. This could not be reversed.

**Verse 20. David arose from the earth, and washed]** Bathing, anointing the body, and changing the apparel, are the first outward signs among the Hindoos of coming out of a state of *mourning* or sickness.

**Verse 22. Who can tell]** David, and indeed all others under the Mosaic dispensation, were so satisfied that all God's *threatenings* and *promises* were *conditional*, that even in the most positive assertions relative to judgments, &c., they sought for a change of purpose. And notwithstanding



the positive declaration of Nathan, relative to the death of the child, David sought for its life, not knowing but that might depend on some unexpressed *condition*, such as earnest *prayer, fasting, humiliation, &c.*, and in these he continued while there was hope. When the child *died*, he ceased to grieve, as he now saw that this must be fruitless. This appears to be the sole reason of David's importunity.

**Verse 23. I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.]** It is not clear whether David by this expressed his faith in the *immortality of the soul; going to him* may only mean, *I also shall die, and be gathered to my fathers, as he is*. But whether David expressed this or not, we know that the thing is true; and it is one of the most solid grounds of consolation to surviving friends that they shall by and by be joined to them in a state of conscious existence. This doctrine has a very powerful tendency to *alleviate* the miseries of human life and reconcile us to the death of most beloved friends. And were we to admit the contrary, grief, in many cases, would wear out its subject before it wore out itself. Even the heathens derived consolation from the reflection that they should meet their friends in a state of conscious existence. And a saying in Cicero *Deuteronomy Senectute*, which he puts in the mouth of Cato of Utica, has been often quoted, and is universally admired:—

O prælarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cætumque proficiscar, cumque ex hac turba et colluvione discedam! Proficiscar enim non ad eos solum viros de quibus ante dixi; sed etiam ad Catonem meum quo nemo vir melior natus est, nemo pietate præstantior: cujus a me corpus crematum est; quod contra decuit ab illo meum. Animus vero non me deserens, sed respectans, in ea profecto loca discessit, quo mihi ipsi cernebat esse veniendum: quem ego meum catum fortiter ferre visus sum: non quod æquo animo ferrem: sed me ipse consolabar, existimans, non longinquum inter nos digressum et discessum fore.

CATO MAJOR, *Deuteronomy Senectute*, in fin.

“O happy day, (says he,) when I shall quit this impure and corrupt multitude, and join myself to that divine company and council of souls who have quitted the earth before me! There I shall find, not only those illustrious personages to whom I have spoken, but also my Cato, who I can say was one of the best men ever born, and whom none ever excelled in virtue and piety. I have placed his body

on that funeral pyre whereon he ought to have laid mine. But his soul has not left me; and, without losing sight of me, he has only gone before into a country where he saw I should soon rejoin him. This my lot I seem to bear courageously; not indeed that I do bear it with resignation, but I shall comfort myself with the persuasion that the interval between his departure and mine will not be long.”

And we well know who has taught us *not to sorrow as those without hope* for departed friends.

**Verse 24. David comforted Bath-sheba]** His extraordinary attachment to this beautiful woman was the cause of all his misfortunes.

**He called his name Solomon]** This name seems to have been given prophetically, for **hml v sholomah** signifies *peaceable*, and there was almost uninterrupted *peace* during his reign.

**Verse 25. Called-Jedidiah]** **hydydy**, literally, *the beloved of the Lord*. This is the first instance I remember of a minister of God being employed to give a name to the child of one of his servants. But it is strange that the name given by the father was that alone which prevailed.

**Verse 26. And took the royal city.]** How can this be, when Joab sent to David to come to take the city, in consequence of which David did come and take that city? The explanation seems to be this: Rabbah was composed of a *city* and *citadel*; the former, in which was the king’s residence, Joab had taken, and supposed he could soon render himself master of the latter, and therefore sends to David to come and take it, lest, he taking the whole, the city should be called after his name.

**Verse 27. And have taken the city of waters.]** The city where the *tank* or *reservoir* was that supplied the city and suburbs with water. Some think that the original, **μυμη ry[ ta ytdkl** *lachadti eth ir hammayim*, should be translated *I have intercepted, or cut off, the waters of the city*: and Houbigant translates the place, *et aquas ab urbe jam derivavi*; “And I have already drawn off the waters from the city.” This perfectly agrees with the account in *Josephus*, who says **των τε υδατων αυτους αποτεμνομενος**, *having cut off their waters*, Antiq., lib. vii., cap. 7. This was the reason why David should come speedily, as the citadel, *deprived of water*, could not long hold out.

**Verse 30. The weight whereof was a talent of gold]** If this talent was only *seven pounds*, as Whiston says, David might have carried it on his head with little difficulty; but this weight, according to common computation, would amount to more than *one hundred pounds!*

If, however, **hl qvm** *mishkalah* be taken for the *value*, not the *weight* then all is plain as the worth of the crown will be about £5075 15s. 7d. sterling. Now this seems to be the true sense, because of the added words *with the precious stones*; i.e., the *gold* of the crown, and the *jewels* with which it was adorned, were equal in *value* to a talent of gold.

**Verse 31. He brought forth the people]** And put them *under saws*. From this representation a great cry has been raised against “David’s unparalleled, if not diabolic, cruelty.” I believe this interpretation was chiefly taken from the parallel place, <sup><1301B></sup>**1 Chronicles 20:3**, where it is said, *he cut them with saws, and with axes, &c.* Instead of **rcyw** *vaiyasar*, *he sawed*, we have here (in Samuel) **μcyw** *vaiyasem*, *he put them*; and these two words differ from each other only in a *part of a single letter*, **r** *resh* for **μ** *mem*. And it is worthy of remark, that instead of **rcyw** *vaiyasar*, *he sawed*, in <sup><1301B></sup>**1 Chronicles 20:3**, six or seven MSS. collated by Dr. Kennicott have **μcyw** *vaiyasem*, *he put them*; nor is there found any various reading in all the MSS. yet collated for the text in this chapter, that favours the common reading in Chronicles. The meaning therefore is, He made the people *slaves*, and employed them in *sawing, making iron harrows, or mining*, (for the word means both,) and in *hewing of wood, and making of brick*. Sawing asunder, hacking, chopping, and hewing human beings, have no place in this text, no more than they had in David’s conduct towards the Ammonites.

It is surprising, and a thing to be deplored, that in this and similar cases our translators had not been more careful to sift the sense of the original words by which they would have avoided a profusion of exceptionable meanings with which they have clothed many passages of the sacred writings. Though I believe our translation to be by far the best in any language, ancient or modern, yet I am satisfied it stands much in need of revision. Most of the advantages which our unbelievers have appeared to have over certain passages of Scripture, have arisen from an inaccurate or false translation of the terms in the original; and an appeal to this has generally silenced the gainsayers. But in the time in which our translation was made,

Biblical criticism was in its infancy, if indeed it did exist; and we may rather wonder that we find things so well, than be surprised that they are no better.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 13

*Amnon falls in love with his half-sister Tamar, and feigns himself sick, and requests her to attend him, 1-6. David sends her to him, and he violates her, 7-14. He then hates her, and expels her from his house, 15-17, She rends her garments, puts ashes on her head, and goes forth weeping, 18, 19. She is met by Absalom her brother, who, understanding her case, determines the death of Amnon, 20-22. Two years after, he invites all his brothers to a sheep-shearing, when he orders his servants to murder Amnon, 23-29. Tidings come to David that Absalom has slain all the king's sons, which fill him with the bitterest distress, 30, 31. The rest soon arrive, and he finds that Amnon only is killed, 32-36. Absalom flees to Talmai, king of Geshur, where he remains three years, 37, 38. David longs after Absalom, having become reconciled to the death of Amnon, 39.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. Whose name was Tamar]** Tamar was the daughter of David and Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur, and the uterine sister of Absalom. Amnon was David's eldest son by Ahinoam. She was therefore sister to Amnon only by the father's side, i.e., *half-sister*; but *whole sister* to Absalom.

**Verse 2. Amnon was so vexed-for she was a virgin]** It has been well remarked that "the passion of love is nowhere so wasting and vexatious, as where it is unlawful. A quick sense of guilt, especially where it is enormous, as in the present instance, strikes the soul with horror; and the impossibility of an innocent gratification loads that horror with desperation: a conflict too cruel and too dreadful for human bearing."—*Delaney*.

**Verse 3. Jonadab was a very subtle man.]** And most diabolic advice did he give to his cousin. We talk of the simplicity and excellence of primitive times! "Say not thou what is *the cause* that the former days were better than these." Take them altogether, we may thank God that they are past, and pray him that they may never return.

**Verse 12. Nay, my brother]** There is something exceedingly tender and persuasive in this speech of Tamar; but Amnon was a mere brute, and it was all lost on him.

**Verse 13. Speak unto the king]** So it appears that she thought that the king, her father, would give her to him as wife. This is another strong mark of indelicacy in those simple but barbarous times. There might have been some excuse for such connections under the patriarchal age, but there was none now. But perhaps she said this only to divert him from his iniquitous purpose, that she might get out of his hands.

**Verse 15. Hated her exceedingly]** Amnon's conduct to his sister was not only brutal but inexplicable. It would be easy to form *conjectures* concerning the *cause*, but we can arrive at no certainty.

**Verse 18. A garment of divers colours]** See Clarke's note on "<sup>40157B</sup>Genesis 37:3", where the same words occur.

**Verse 21. But when King David heard]** To this verse the *Septuagint* add the following words: *Και ουκ ελυπησε το πνευμα Αμνων του υιου αυτου, οτι ηγαπα αυτον, οτι πρωτοτοκος αυτου ην*; "But he would not grieve the soul of Amnon his son, for he loved him, because he was his first-born." The same addition is found in the *Vulgate* and in *Josephus*, and it is possible that this once made a part of the Hebrew text.

**Verse 23. Absalom had sheep-shearers]** These were times in which feasts were made, to which the neighbours and relatives of the family were invited.

**Verse 26. Let my brother Amnon go]** He urged this with the more plausibility, because Amnon was the first-born, and presumptive heir to the kingdom; and he had disguised his resentment so well before, that he was not suspected.

**Verse 30. Absalom hath slain all the king's sons]** *Fame* never *lessens* but always *magnifies* a fact. *Report*, contrary to the nature of all other things, *gains strength by going*.

Virgil has given, in his best manner, a fine personification of *Fame* or *Evil Report*.-ÆN. iv., 173.

*Extemplo Libyæ magnas it Fama per urbes;  
Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum,  
Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo, &c.*

*“Now Fame, tremendous fiend! without delay,  
Through Libyan cities took her rapid way;  
Fame, the swift plague, that every moment grows,  
And gains new strength and vigour as she goes,” &c.*

**Verse 32. And Jonadab-said-Amnon only is dead]** This was a very bad man, and here speaks coolly of a most bloody tragedy, which himself had contrived.

**Verse 37. Absalom fled]** As he had committed wilful murder, he could not avail himself of a city of refuge, and was therefore obliged to leave the land of Israel, and take refuge with Talmai, king of Geshur, his grandfather by his mother’s side. See ~~1000~~ **2 Samuel 3:3.**

**Verse 39. David longed to go forth unto Absalom]** We find that he had a very strong paternal affection for this young man, who appears to have had little to commend him but the beauty of his person. David wished either to go to him, or to bring him back; for the hand of time had now wiped off his tears for the death of his son Amnon. Joab had marked this disposition, and took care to work on it, in order to procure the return of Absalom. It would have been well for all parties had Absalom ended his days at Geshur. His return brought increasing wretchedness to his unfortunate father. And it may be generally observed that those undue, unreasonable paternal attachments are thus rewarded.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 14

*A woman of Tekoah, by the advice of Joab, comes to the king; and by a fictitious story persuades him to recall Absalom, 1-20. Joab is permitted to go to Geshur, and bring Absalom from thence, 21-23. Absalom comes to Jerusalem to his own house, but is forbidden to see the king's face, 24. An account of Absalom's beauty, and the extraordinary weight of his hair, 25, 26. His children, 27. He strives to regain the king's favour, and employs Joab as an intercessor, 28-32. David is reconciled to him, 33.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 14

**Verse 2. Joab sent to Tekoah]** Tekoah, according to St. *Jerome*, was a little city in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles from Jerusalem.

There are several circumstances relative to this woman and her case which deserve to be noticed:—

1. She was a *widow*, and therefore her condition of life was the better calculated to excite compassion.
2. She lived at some *distance* from Jerusalem, which rendered the case difficult to be readily inquired into; and consequently there was the less danger of detection.
3. She was *advanced in years*, as *Josephus* says, that her application might have the more weight.
4. She put on *mourning*, to heighten the idea of distress.
5. She framed a *case similar to that in which David stood*, in order to convince him of the reasonableness of sparing Absalom.
6. She did not make the similitude *too plain and visible*, lest the king should see her intention before she had obtained a grant of pardon. Thus her circumstances, her mournful tale, her widow's needs, her aged person, and her impressive manner, all combined to make one united impression on the king's heart. We need not wonder at her success. See Bishop *Patrick*.

**Verse 5. I am indeed a widow woman]** It is very possible that the principal facts mentioned here were real, and that Joab found out a person



whose circumstances bore a near resemblance to that which he wished to represent.

**Verse 7. The whole family is risen]** They took on them the part of the *avenger of blood*; the nearest akin to the murdered person having a right to slay the murderer.

**They shall quench my coal which is left]** A man and his descendants or successors are often termed in Scripture *a lamp* or *light*. So, <sup><10217></sup>**2 Samuel 21:17**, the men of David said, when they swore that he should no more go out with them to battle, *That thou QUENCH not the LIGHT of Israel*. See also <sup><19217></sup>**Psalm 132:17**. And to *raise up a lamp* to a person signifies his having a posterity to continue his name and family upon the earth: thus, *quench my coal that is left* means destroying all hope of posterity, and extinguishing the family from among the people. The heathens made use of the same similitude. The few persons who survived the deluge of Deucalion are termed ζῶπυρα *living coals*, because by them the *vital flame* of the human race was to be *rekindled* on the earth.

**Verse 8. I will give charge concerning thee.]** This would not do, it was too distant; and she could not by it bring her business to a conclusion: so she proceeds:—

**Verse 9. The iniquity be on me]** She intimates that, if the king should suppose that the not bringing the offender to the assigned punishment might reflect on the administration of justice in the land, she was willing that all blame should attach to her and her family, and the king and his throne be guiltless.

**Verse 10. Whosoever saith aught unto thee]** Neither did this bring the matter to such a bearing that she could come to her conclusion, which was, to get the king pledged by a *solemn promise* that all proceedings relative to the case should be stopped.

**Verse 11. Let the king remember the Lord thy God]** Consider that when God is earnestly requested to show mercy, he does it in the promptest manner; he does not wait till the case is hopeless: the danger to which my son is exposed is imminent; if the king do not decide the business instantly, it may be too late.

**And he said, As the Lord liveth]** Thus he binds himself by a most solemn promise and oath; and this is what the woman wanted to extort.

**Verse 13. Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing]** The woman, having now got the king's promise confirmed by all oath, that her son should not suffer for the murder of his brother, comes immediately to her conclusion: Is not the king to blame? Does he now act a consistent part? He is willing to pardon the meanest of his subjects the murder of a brother at the instance of a poor widow, and he is not willing to pardon his son Absalom, whose restoration to favour is the desire of the whole nation. Is that clemency to be refused to the king's son, the hope of the *nation* and heir to the throne, which is shown to a private individual, whose death or life can only be of consequence to one family? Why, therefore, dost thou not bring back thy banished child?

**Verse 14. For we must needs die]** Whatever is done must be done quickly; all must die; God has not exempted any person from this common lot. Though Amnon be dead, yet the death of Absalom cannot bring him to life, nor repair this loss. Besides, for his crime, he justly deserved to die; and thou, in this case didst not administer justice. Horrible as this fratricide is, it is a pardonable case: the crime of Amnon was the most flagitious; and the offense to Absalom, the ruin of his beloved sister, indescribably great. Seeing, then, that the thing is so, and that Amnon can be no more recalled to life than water spilt upon the ground can be gathered up again; and that God, whose vicegerent thou art, and whose example of clemency as well as justice thou art called to imitate, devises means that those who were banished from him by sin and transgression, may not be finally expelled from his mercy and his kingdom; restore thy son to favour, and pardon his crime, as thou hast promised to restore my son, and the Lord thy God will be with thee. This is the sum and sense of the woman's argument.

The argument contained in this 14th verse is very elegant, and powerfully persuasive; but one clause of it has been variously understood, *Neither doth God respect any person*; the Hebrew is, **וְנִי מַיְחִל אֶצְמַל וְנֶלְוִיִּסָּא אֱלֹהִים נֶפֶשׁ**, "And God doth not take away the soul." The Septuagint has it, **καὶ ληψεται ο θεος την ψυχην**; *And God will receive the soul*. This intimates that, after human life is ended, the soul has a state of separate existence with God. This was certainly the opinion of these translators, and was the opinion of the ancient Jews, at least *three hundred years* before the incarnation; about which time this translation was made. The Vulgate has, *Nec volt Deus perire animam*, "Nor does God will the destruction of the soul." God is not the author of death; neither hath he

pleasure in the destruction of the living; imitate him; pardon and recall thy son.

**Verse 20. According to the wisdom of an angel of God]** This is quite in the style of Asiatic flattery. A European is often addressed, “*Saheb can do every thing*; we can do nothing; none can prevent the execution of Saheb’s commands; Saheb is God.” See WARD.

**Verse 21. And the king said unto Joab]** It appears that Joab was present at the time when the woman was in conference with the king, and no doubt others of David’s courtiers or officers were there also.

**Verse 24. Let him not see my face.]** He would not at once restore him to favour, though he had now remitted his crime; so that he should not die for it. It was highly proper to show this detestation of the crime, and respect for justice.

**Verse 25. None to be so much praised as Absalom]** It was probably his *personal* beauty that caused the people to interest themselves so much in his behalf; for the great mass of the public is ever caught and led by *outward appearances*.

**There was no blemish in him.]** He was perfect and regular in all his features, and in all his proportions.

**Verse 26. When he polled his head]** Not at any particular period, but when the hair became too heavy for him. On this account of the extraordinary weight of Absalom’s hair, see the observations at the end of this chapter. See Clarke “~~<10143>~~ **2 Samuel 14:30**”.

**Verse 27. Unto Absalom there were born]** These children did not survive him; see ~~<10188>~~ **2 Samuel 18:18**.

**Tamar]** The Septuagint adds, *And she became the wife of Roboam, the son of Solomon, and bare to him Abia*; see ~~<10107>~~ **Matthew 1:7**. Josephus says the same. This addition is not found in the other versions.

**Verse 30. Go and set it on fire]** This was strange conduct, but it had the desired effect. He had not used his influence to get Absalom to court; now he uses it, and succeeds.

ADDITIONAL observations on ver. 26:—

“And at every year’s end, he (Absalom) polled his head; and he weighed the hair at *two hundred shekels*.”

The very learned *Bochart* has written a dissertation on this subject (vide *Bocharti Opera*, vol. iii., col. 883, edit. Lugd. 1692) in a letter to his friend *M. Faukell*. I shall give the substance in what follows.

There is nothing more likely than that corruptions in the Scripture numerals have taken place. *Budæus de Asse* (lib. ii., p. 49 and 51, also lib. iii., p. 67 &c.) complains loudly of this.

This might easily have happened, as in former times the numbers in the sacred writings appear to have been expressed by single letters. The letter **ρ** *resh* stands for *two hundred*, and might in this place be easily mistaken for **δ** *daleth* which signifies *four*; but this may be thought to be too little, as it would not amount to more than a quarter of a pound; yet, if the *two hundred shekels* be taken in the amount will be utterly incredible; for *Josephus* says, (Antiq. lib. vii., cap. 8,) **Σικλους διακοσιους, αυτοι δε εισι πεντε μναι**, i.e., “Two hundred shekels make five minæ,” and in lib. xiv., cap. 12. he says, **Η δε μνα παρ ημιν ισχει λιτρας β και ημισυ**; “And a mina with us (i.e., the Jews) weighs two pounds and a half.” This calculation makes Absalom’s hair weigh *twelve pounds and a half*! *Credat Judæus Apella!*

Indeed, the same person tells us that the hair of *Absalom* was so thick, &c., **ως μολις αυτην ημεραις αποκειρειν οκτω**, “that eight days were scarcely sufficient to cut it off in! “This is rabbinism, with a witness.

*Epiphanius*, in his treatise *Deuteronomy Ponderibus et Mensuris*, casts much more light on this place, where he says, **Σικλος ο λεγεται και κοδραντης τεταρτον μεν εστι της ουγκιας, ημισυ δε του στατηρος, δυο δραχμας εχων**; “A shekel, (i.e., a *common* or *king’s* shekel, equal to half a shekel *of the sanctuary*,) which is called also a *quarter*, is the fourth part of an ounce, or half a stater; which is about two drachms.” This computation seems very just, as the half-shekel, (i.e., of the sanctuary),

<sup><12313></sup>**Exodus 30:13**, which the Lord commanded the children of Israel to give as an offering for their souls, is expressly called in <sup><41724></sup>**Matthew 17:24**, **το διδραχμον**, “two drachms:” and our Lord wrought a miracle to pay this, which the Romans then exacted by way of tribute: and Peter took out of the fish’s mouth a *stater*, which contained exactly four drachms or one shekel, (of the sanctuary), the tribute money for our Lord and himself.

The king's shekel was about the fourth part of an ounce, according to what *Epiphanius* says above; and *Hesychius* says the same: **δυναται δε ο σικλος δυο οραχμας Αττικας**; "A shekel is equal to, or worth, two Attic drachms." The whole amount, therefore, of the *two hundred* shekels is about *fifty ounces*, which make *four pounds two ounces*, Troy weight, or *three pounds two ounces*, Avoirdupois. This need not, says my learned author, be accounted incredible, especially as abundance of *oil* and *ointments* were used by the ancients in dressing their heads; as is evident, not only from many places in the Greek and Roman writers, but also from several places in the sacred writings. See <sup><19235></sup>**Psalm 23:5**; <sup><1008></sup>**Ecclesiastes 9:8**; <sup><1067></sup>**Matthew 6:17**.

*Josephus* also informs us that the Jews not only used *ointments*, but that they put *gold dust* in their hair, that it might flame in the sun; and this they might do in considerable quantities, as gold was so plentiful among them. I must own I have known an instance that makes much for Bochart's argument: an *officer*, who had upwards of *two pounds* of powder and ointments put on his head daily, whose hair did not weigh a fourth part of that weight. And *Absalom*, being exceedingly vain, might be supposed to make a very extensive use of these things. There are some, however, who endeavour to solve the difficulty by understanding **l qv shakal** to mean rather the *value* than the *weight*.

*Bochart* concludes this elaborate dissertation, in which he appears to have ransacked all the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman authors for proofs of his opinion, by exhorting his friend in these words of *Horace*:—

—————*Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

To me the above is quite unsatisfactory; and, with due deference to so great a character, I think I have found out *something better*.

I believe the text is not here in its original form; and that a mistake has crept into the numeral letters. I imagine that **l lamed**, THIRTY, was first written; which, in process of time, became changed for **r resh**, TWO HUNDRED, which might easily have happened from the similarity of the letters. But if this be supposed to be *too little*, (which I think it is not,) being only *seven ounces and a half* in the course of a year; let it be observed that the sacred text does not limit it to that quantity of time, for

μyml μyml xqm *mikkets yamim laiyamim* signifies literally, “From the end of days to days;” which *Jonathan* properly renders,  $\hat{d}[l \hat{d}[ \hat{mzm}$  *mizzeman iddan leiddan*, “at proper or convenient times,” viz., when it grew too long or weighty, which it might be several times in the year. Besides, this was not all his hair; for his head was not *shaved* but *polled*, i.e., the redundancy cut off.

But how was it probable that these two numerals should be interchanged? Thus; if the upper stroke of the  $l$  *lamed* were but a little impaired, as it frequently is both in MSS. and printed books, it might be very easily taken for  $r$  *resh*, and the remains of the upper part of the *lamed* might be mistaken for the stroke over the  $r$ , which makes it the character of *two hundred*.

But how could  $\mu ytam$  *mathayim*, *two hundred*, in the text, be put in the place of  $\mu yvl v$  *sheloshim*, *thirty*? Very easily, when the numbers became expressed by words *at length* instead of *numeral letters*.

The common reading of the text appears to me irreconcilable with truth; and I humbly hope that what I have offered above solves every difficulty, and fully accounts for all that the sacred historian speaks of this vain-comely lad.

Ver. 27. “Absalom had a daughter, whose name was *Tamar*.”

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 15

*Absalom conspires against his father, and uses various methods to seduce the people from their allegiance to their king, 14. Under pretence of paying a vow at Hebron, he obtains leave from David to go thither; and, by emissaries sent through the land, prepares the people for revolt, 7-11. He gains over Ahithophel, David's counsellor, 12. David is informed of the general defection of the people; on which he, and his life-guards and friends, leave the city, and go towards the wilderness, 13-18. The steadfast friendship of Ittai, the Gittite, 19-22. David's affecting departure from the city, 23. He sends Zadok and Abiathar with the ark back to Jerusalem, 24-29. He goes up Mount Olivet; prays that the counsel of Ahithophel may be turned into foolishness, 30-31. He desires Hushai to return to Jerusalem, and to send him word of all that occurs, 32-37.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 15

**Verse 1. Absalom prepared him chariots and horses]** After all that has been said to prove that *horses* here mean *horsemen*, I think it most likely that the writer would have us to understand *chariots* drawn by *horses*; not by *mules* or such like cattle.

**Fifty men to run before him.]** Affecting in every respect the regal state by this establishment. Of this man *Calmet* collects the following character: "He was a bold, violent, revengeful, haughty, enterprising, magnificent, eloquent, and popular prince; he was also rich, ambitious, and vain of his personal accomplishments: after the death of Amnon, and his reconciliation to his father, he saw no hindrance in his way to the throne. He despised Solomon because of the meanness of his birth, and his tender years. He was himself of the blood royal, not only by his father David, but also by his mother Maacah, daughter to Talmai, king of Geshur: and, doubtless, in his own apprehension, of sufficient age, authority, and wisdom, to sustain the weight of government. There was properly now no competitor in his way: Amnon, David's *first-born*, was dead. Of Chileab, his *second* son by Abigail, we hear nothing; and Absalom was the *third*: see ~~<100>~~ **2 Samuel 3:2-5**. He, therefore, seemed to stand *nearest to the throne*; but his sin was, that he sought it during his father's life, and endeavoured to dethrone him in order to sit in his stead."

**Verse 6. So Absalom stole the hearts]** His manner of doing this is circumstantially related above. He was thoroughly versed in the arts of the *demagogue*; and the common people, the vile mass, heard him gladly. He used the *patriot's* arguments, and was every thing of the kind, as far as *promise* could go. He found fault with men in power; and he only wanted their place, like all other pretended patriots, that he might act as they did, or worse.

**Verse 7. After forty years]** There is no doubt that this reading is corrupt, though supported by the commonly printed *Vulgate*, the *Septuagint*, and the *Chaldee*. But the *Syriac* has [Syriac] *arba shanin*, FOUR years; the Arabic the same [Arabic] *arba shinin*, FOUR years; and *Josephus* has the same; so also the *Sixtine edition* of the *Vulgate*, and several MSS. of the same version. *Theodoret* also reads *four*, not *forty*; and most learned men are of opinion that  $\mu\upsilon$ [*bra arbaim*, FORTY, is an error for [*rba arba*, FOUR; yet this reading is not supported by any Hebrew MS. yet discovered. But two of those collated by Dr. *Kennicott* have  $\mu\upsilon\omega\upsilon$  *yom* instead of  $hnv$  *shanah*, i.e., *forty* DAYS, instead of *forty* YEARS; and this is a reading more likely to be true than that in the commonly received text. We know that Absalom did stay THREE years with his grandfather at Geshur, <sup><101338></sup>2 **Samuel 13:38**; and this probably was *a year after his return*: the era, therefore, may be the time of his slaying his brother Amnon; and the *four* years include the time from his flight till the conspiracy mentioned here.

**Verse 8. While I abode at Geshur in Syria]** Geshur, the country of Talmai, was certainly not in *Syria*, but lay on the south of *Canaan*, in or near *Edom*, as is evident from <sup><07010></sup>**Judges 1:10**; <sup><02708></sup>1 **Samuel 27:8**; <sup><101337></sup>2 **Samuel 13:37**. Hence it is probable that  $\mu\alpha$  *Aram, Syria*, is a mistake for  $\mu\delta$  *Edom*;  $d$  *daleth* and  $r$  *resh* being easily interchangeable. *Edom* is the reading both of the *Syriac* and *Arabic*.

**I will serve the Lord.]** Here he pretended to be a strict follower of Jehovah, even while he was in a *heathen* country; and now he desires liberty to go and perform a vow at Hebron, which he pretends to have made while he was resident at Geshur. And all this was the more perfectly to organize his system of rebellion against his venerable father.

**Verse 10. Absalom sent spies]** These persons were to go into every tribe; and the trumpet was to be blown as a signal for all to arise, and proclaim Absalom in every place. The trumpet was probably used as a kind of



*telegraph* by the spies: trumpet exciting trumpet from place to place; so that, in a few minutes all Israel would hear the proclamation.

**Verse 11. Went two hundred men]** These were probably soldiers, whom he supposed would be of considerable consequence to him. They had been seduced by his specious conduct, but knew nothing of his present *design*.

**Verse 12. Sent for Ahithophel]** When Absalom got *him*, he in effect got the *prime minister* of the kingdom to join him.

**Verse 13. The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.]** It is very difficult to account for this general defection of the people. Several reasons are given: 1. David was old or afflicted, and could not well attend to the administration of justice in the land. 2. It does appear that the king did not attend to the affairs of state, and that there were no properly appointed judges in the land; see <sup><1015B></sup> **2 Samuel 15:3**. 3. Joab's power was overgrown; he was wicked and insolent, oppressive to the people, and David was afraid to execute the laws against him. 4. There were still some partisans of the house of Saul, who thought the crown not fairly obtained by David. 5. David was under the displeasure of the Almighty, for his adultery with Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah; and God let his enemies loose against him. 6. There are always troublesome and disaffected men in every state, and under every government; who can never rest, and are ever hoping for something from a change. 7. Absalom appeared to be the real and was the *undisputed* heir to the throne; David could not, in the course of nature, live very long; and most people are more disposed to hail the beams of the *rising*, than exult in those of the *setting*, sun. No doubt some of these causes operated, and perhaps most of them exerted less or more influence in this most scandalous business.

**Verse 14. David said-Arise-let us flee]** This, I believe, was the first time that David turned his back to his enemies. And why did he now flee? Jerusalem, far from not being in a state to sustain a siege, was so strong that even the blind and the lame were supposed to be a sufficient defence for the walls, see <sup><1016B></sup> **2 Samuel 5:6**. And he had still with him his faithful *Cherethites* and *Pelethites*; besides six hundred faithful Gittites, who were perfectly willing to follow his fortunes. There does not appear any reason why such a person, in such circumstances, should not act on the *defensive*; at least till he should be fully satisfied of the real complexion of affairs. But he appears to take all as *coming from the hand of God*; therefore he humbles himself, weeps, goes barefoot, and covers his head! He does not

even *hasten* his departure, for the habit of mourners is not the habit of those who are *flying* before the face of their enemies. He sees the storm, and he yields to what he conceives to be the tempest of the Almighty.

**Verse 17. And tarried in a place]** He probably waited till he saw all his friends safely out of the city.

**Verse 19. Thou art a stranger, and also an exile.]** Some suppose that Ittai was the son of Achish, king of Gath, who was very much attached to David, and banished from his father's court on that account. He and his *six hundred* men are generally supposed to have been proselytes to the Jewish religion.

**Verse 20. Mercy and truth be with thee.]** May God ever show thee mercy, as thou showest it to me, and his truth ever preserve thee from error and delusion!

**Verse 23. The brook Kidron]** This was an inconsiderable brook, and only furnished with water in *winter*, and in the *rains*. See <sup><B180></sup>**John 18:1**.

**Verse 24. Bearing the ark]** The priests knew that God had given the kingdom to David; they had no evidence that he had deposed him: they therefore chose to accompany him, and take the ark, the object of their charge, with them.

**Verse 25. Carry back the ark]** David shows here great confidence in God, and great humility. The ark was too precious to be exposed to the dangers of his migrations; he knew that God would restore him if he delighted in him, and he was not willing to carry off from the city of God that without which the *public worship* could not be carried on. He felt, therefore, more for this public worship and the honour of God, than he did for his own personal safety.

**Verse 27. Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace]** That is, As thou art the only organ of the public worship, that worship cannot be carried on without thee; and as thou art the *priest of God*, thou hast no cause to fear for thy personal safety: the nation has not abandoned their God, though they have abandoned their king. It appears also, that he wished these priests, by means of their sons, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, to send him frequent intelligence of the motions and operations of the enemy.

**Verse 30. Had his head covered]** This was not only the attitude of a *mourner*, but even of a *culprit*; they usually had their heads covered when condemned. See the case of Haman. When the king had pronounced his condemnation, they immediately covered his face, and led him out to punishment; <sup><1707></sup>**Esther 7:8**. See also Quintus Curtius, Deuteronomy Philota, cap. vi.: *I, Lictor; caput obnubito*.

**Verse 31. Turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.]** Ahithophel was a wise man, and well versed in state affairs; and God alone could confound his devices.

**Verse 32. Where he worshipped God]** Though in danger of his life, he stops on the top of Mount Olivet for prayer! How true is the adage, *Prayer and provender never hinder any man's journey!* Reader, dost thou do likewise?

**Hushai the Archite]** He was the particular friend of David, and was now greatly affected by his calamity.

**Verse 33. Then thou shalt be a burden unto me.]** It appears that Hushai was not a warrior, but was a wise, prudent, and discreet man, who could well serve David by gaining him intelligence of Absalom's conspiracy; and he directs him to form a strict confederacy with the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and to make use of their sons as couriers between Jerusalem and David's place of retreat.

**Verse 37. Absalom came into Jerusalem.]** It is very probable that he and his partisans were not far from the city when David left it, and this was one reason which caused him to hurry his departure.

READER, behold in the case of David a sad vicissitude of human affairs, and a fearful proof of their instability. Behold a king, the greatest that ever lived, a profound politician, an able general, a brave soldier, a poet of the most sublime genius and character, a prophet of the Most High God, and the deliverer of his country, driven from his dominions by his own son, abandoned by his fickle people, and for a time even by his God! See in his desolate state that there is none so exalted that God cannot abase, and none so abased that God cannot exalt. He was forsaken for a time, and his enemies triumphed; God returned, and his enemies were confounded. His crime, it is true, was great and God had declared by Nathan what had now come to pass. God is just, and in numberless instances sees right to show

his displeasure even at those sins which his mercy has forgiven. In all cases it is a fearful and bitter thing to sin against the Lord.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 16

*Ziba, servant of Mephibosheth, meets David with provisions, and by false insinuations obtains the grant of his masters property, 1-4. Shimei abuses and curses David, who restrains Abishai from slaying him, 5-14. Hushai makes a feigned tender of his services to Absalom, 15-19. Absalom calls a council and Ahithophel advises him to go in to his father's concubines, 20-22. Character of Ahithophel as a counselor, 23.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 16

**Verse 1. Two hundred loaves of bread]** The word *loaf* gives us a false idea of the ancient Jewish bread; it was *thin cakes*, not *yeasted* and *raised* like ours.

**Bunches of raisins]** See on ~~1 Samuel 25:18~~ **1 Samuel 25:18**.

**Summer fruits]** These were probably *pumpions*, *cucumbers*, or *watermelons*. The two latter are extensively used in those countries to refresh travellers in the burning heat of the summer. Mr. Harmer supposes they are called *summer fruits* on this very account.

**A bottle of wine.]** A *goat's skin full of wine*; this I have already shown was the general *bottle* in the Eastern countries; see on ~~1 Samuel 25:18~~ **1 Samuel 25:18**.

**Verse 2. The asses be for the king's household]** This is the Eastern method of speaking when any thing is presented to a great man: "This and this is for the slaves of the servants of your majesty," when at the same time the presents are intended for the sovereign himself, and are so understood. It is a high Eastern compliment: These presents are not worthy of your acceptance; they are only fit for the slaves of your slaves.

**Verse 3. To-day shall the house of Israel]** What a base wretch was Ziba! and how unfounded was this accusation against the peaceable, loyal and innocent Mephibosheth!

**Verse 4. Thine are all]** This conduct of David was very rash; he spoiled an honourable man to reward a villain, not giving himself time to look into the circumstances of the case. But David was in heavy afflictions, and these sometimes make even a *wise man* mad. Nothing should be done rashly; he

who is in the habit of obeying the first impulse of his passions or feelings, will seldom do a right action, and never keep a clear conscience.

**Verse 5. David came to Bahurim]** This place lay northward of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. It is called *Almon*, <sup><06218></sup>**Joshua 21:18**; and *Alemeth*, <sup><13660></sup>**1 Chronicles 6:60**. Bahurim signifies *youths*, and Almuth *youth*; so the names are of the same import.

**Cursed still as he came.]** Used imprecations and execrations.

**Verse 10. Because the Lord hath said]** The particle *ykw vechi* should be translated *for if*, not *because*. FOR IF *the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so!*

**Verse 11. Let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.]** No soul of man can suppose that ever God bade one man to curse another, much less that he commanded such a wretch as Shimei to curse such a man as David; but this is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language, which does not always distinguish between *permission* and *commandment*. Often the Scripture attributes to God what he only *permits* to be done; or what in the course of his providence he does not *hinder*. David, however, considers all this as being permitted of God for his chastisement and humiliation. I cannot withhold from my readers a very elegant poetic paraphrase of this passage, from the pen of the Rev. *Charles Wesley*, one of the first of Christian poets:—

*“Pure from the blood of Saul in vain,  
He dares not to the charge reply:  
Uriah’s doth the charge maintain,  
Uriah’s doth against him cry!  
Let Shimei curse: the rod he bears  
For sins which mercy had forgiven:  
And in the wrongs of man reveres  
The awful righteousness of heaven.  
Lord, I adore thy righteous will,  
Through every instrument of ill  
My Father’s goodness see;  
Accept the complicated wrong  
Of Shimei’s hand and Shimei’s tongue  
As kind rebukes from THEE.”*

**Verse 15. The men of Israel]** These words are wanting in the *Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic*, and in two of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.*

**Verse 18. Whom the Lord and this people-choose]** Here is an *equivocation*; Hushai meant *in his heart* that God and all the people of Israel had chosen *David*; but he spake so as to make Absalom believe that he spoke of *him*: for whatever of insincerity may appear in this, Hushai is alone answerable. What he says afterwards may be understood in the same way.

**Verse 21. Go in unto thy father's concubines]** It may be remembered that David left *ten* of them behind to take care of the house, see <sup><101516></sup>**2 Samuel 15:16**. Ahithophel advised this infernal measure, in order to prevent the possibility of a *reconciliation* between David and his son; thus was the prophecy to Nathan fulfilled, <sup><10121></sup>**2 Samuel 12:11**. And this was probably transacted in the very same place where David's eye took the adulterous view of Bath-sheba; see <sup><101102></sup>**2 Samuel 11:2**.

The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom. *Herodotus* informs us that Smerdis, having seized on the Persian throne after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor, lib. iii., c. 68. But for a son to take his father's wives was the sum of abomination, and was *death* by the law of God, <sup><13011></sup>**Leviticus 20:11**. This was a sin rarely found, even among the *Gentiles*.

Every part of the conduct of Absalom shows him to have been a most profligate young man; he was proud, vindictive, adulterous, incestuous, a parricide, and, in fine, reprobate to every good word and work. We still however recollect that David had grievously sinned, and we should also recollect that he suffered grievously for it; and that his humiliation, repentance, and amendment, were most decisive and exemplary. Reader, God is as *just* as he is *merciful*.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 17

*Ahithophel counsels Absalom to pursue his father with twelve thousand men, 14. Hushai gives a different counsel, and is followed, 5-14. Hushai informs Zadok and Abiathar; and they send word to David, 15-21. David and his men go beyond Jordan, 22. Ahithophel, finding his counsel slighted, goes home, sets his house in order, and hangs himself, 23. David moves to Mahanaim; and Absalom follows him over Jordan, 24-26. Several friends meet David at Mahanaim with refreshments and provisions, 27-29.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 17

**Verse 1. Let me now choose out twelve thousand men]** Had this counsel been followed, David and his little troop would soon have been destroyed; nothing but the miraculous interposition of God could have saved them. *Twelve thousand* chosen troops coming against him, in his totally unprepared state, would have soon settled the business of the kingdom. Ahithophel well saw that, this advice neglected, all was lost.

**Verse 3. The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned]** Only secure David, and all Israel will be on thy side. He is the soul of the whole; destroy him, and all the rest will submit.

**Verse 8. As a bear robbed of her whelps]** All wild beasts are very furious when robbed of their young; but we have some remarkable instances of the maternal affection of the bear in such circumstances; see one at the end of the chapter. See Clarke “<sup>←101728→</sup>2 Samuel 17:28”.

**Verse 13. Shall all Israel bring ropes to that city]** The original word μϋλ bj *chabalim*, which signifies *ropes*, and from which we have our word *cable*, may have some peculiarity of meaning here; for it is not likely that any city could be pulled down with ropes. The *Chaldee*, which should be best judge in this case, translates the original word by ^yrvm *mashreyan*, *towers*: this gives an easy sense.

**Verse 17. En-rogel]** The *fullers' well*; the place where they were accustomed to *tread* the clothes with their *feet*; hence the name ^y[ *ein*, a *well*, and l gr *regel*, the *foot*, because of the *treading* above mentioned.



**And a wench went and told them]** The word *wench* occurs nowhere else in the Holy Scriptures: and, indeed, has no business here; as the Hebrew word **hj pv** *shiphchah*, should have been translated *girl*, *maid*, *maid-servant*. The word either comes from the Anglo-Saxon [A.S.] a *maid*, or the Belgic *wunch*, *desire*, *a thing wished for*: *multum enim ut plurimum Puellæ a Juvenibus desiderantur, seu appetuntur*. So *Minsheu*. Junius seems more willing to derive it from *wince*, to frisk, to be skittish, &c., for reasons sufficiently obvious, and which he gives at length. After all, it may as likely come from the Gothic *wens* or *weins*, a word frequently used in the gospels of the Codex Argenteus for *wife*. *Coverdale's Bible*, 1535, has *damsell*. *Becke's Bible*, 1549, has *wenche*. The same in *Cardmarden's Bible*, 1566; but it is *maid* in *Barker's Bible*, 1615. *Wench* is more of a Scotticism than *maid* or *damsel*; and King James probably restored it, as he is said to have done *lad* in <sup>-012112-</sup>**Genesis 21:12**, and elsewhere. In every other place where the word occurs, our translators render it *handmaid*, *bondmaid*, *maiden*, *womanservant*, *maidservant*, and *servant*. Such is the latitude with which they translate the same Hebrew term in almost innumerable instances.

**Verse 23. Put his household in order]** This self-murder could not be called *lunacy*, as every step to it was deliberate. He foresaw Absalom's ruin; and he did not choose to witness it, and share in the disgrace: and he could expect no mercy at the hands of David. He was a very bad man, and died an unprepared and accursed death.

**Verse 25. Amasa captain of the host]** From the account in this verse, it appears that Joab and Amasa were sisters' children, and both nephews to David.

**Verse 28. Brought beds]** These no doubt consisted in *skins* of beasts, *mats*, *carpets*, and such like things.

**Basons]** **twps** *sappoth*. Probably *wooden bowls*, such as the Arabs still use to eat out of, and to knead their bread in.

**Earthen vessels]** **rxwy yl k** *keley yotser*. Probably clay vessels, baked in the sun. These were perhaps used for lifting water, and boiling those articles which required to be cooked.

**Wheat, and barley, &c.]** There is no direct mention of *flesh-meat* here; little was eaten in that country, and it would not keep. Whether the *sheep* mentioned were brought for their *flesh* or their *milk*. I cannot tell.

According to Mr. Jones, “the Moors of west Barbary use the flour of parched barley, which is the chief provision they make for their *journeys*, and often use it at *home*; and this they carry in a leathern satchel.” These are ordinarily made of *goat-skins*. One of them now lies before me: it has been drawn off the animal before it was cut up; the places where the fore-legs, the tail, and the anus were, are elegantly closed, and have leathers thongs attached to them, by which it can be slung over the back of man, ass, or camel. The place of the neck is left open, with a running string to draw it up, purse-like, when necessary. The skin itself is tanned; and the upper side is curiously embroidered with red, black, blue, yellow, and flesh-coloured leather, in very curious and elegant forms and devices. Bags of this kind are used for carrying wine, water, milk, butter, grain, flour, clothes, and different articles of merchandise. This is, as I have before stated, the Scripture *bottle*. Mr. Jones farther says: “Travellers use *zumeet*, *tumeet*, and *limereece*. *Zumeet* is flour mixed with honey, butter, and spice; *tumeet* is flour done up with organ oil; and *limereece* is flour mixed with water for drink. This quenches the thirst much better than water alone; satisfies a hungry appetite; cools and refreshes tired and weary spirits; overcoming those ill effects which a hot sun and fatiguing journey might well occasion.”

This flour might be made of grain or pulse of any kind: and probably may be that which we here term *parched corn* and *parched pulse*; and in the forms above mentioned was well calculated, according to Mr. Jones’s account, for *the people hungry, weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness*. This was a timely supply for David and his men, and no doubt contributed much to the victory mentioned in the following chapter.

A REMARKABLE account of maternal affection in a she-bear: “In the year 1772, the *Seahorse* frigate and *Carcass* bomb, under the command of the Hon. Captain C. J. Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave, were sent on a voyage of discovery to the north seas. In this expedition the late celebrated admiral Lord Nelson served as midshipman. While the *Carcass* lay locked in the ice, early one morning, the man at the masthead gave notice that three bears were making their way very fast over the frozen sea, and were directing their course towards the ship. They had no doubt been invited by

the scent of some blubber of a seahorse that the crew had killed a few days before, which had been set on fire, and was burning on the ice at the time of their approach. They proved to be a she-bear and her two cubs, but the cubs were nearly as large as the dam. They ran eagerly to the fire, and drew out from the flames part of the flesh of the seahorse that remained unconsumed, and ate voraciously. The crew from the ship threw great lumps of flesh of the seahorse, which they had still left upon the ice, which the old bear fetched away singly, laid every lump before her cubs as she brought it, and dividing it, gave each a share, reserving but a small portion to herself. As she was fetching away the last piece, they levelled their muskets at the cubs, and shot them both dead; and in her retreat they wounded the dam, but not mortally. It would have drawn tears of pity from any but unfeeling minds, to have marked the affectionate concern expressed by this poor beast in the dying moments of her expiring young. Though she was sorely wounded, and could but just crawl to the place where they lay, she carried the lump of flesh she had fetched away, as she had done the others before, tore it in pieces and laid it down before them; and when she saw that they refused to eat, she laid her paws first upon one, and then upon the other, and endeavoured to raise them up; all this while it was piteous to hear her moan. When she found she could not move them, she went off; and being at some distance, looked back and moaned. This not availing to entice them away, she returned, and smelling around them, began to lick their wounds. She went off a second time, as before; and having crawled a few paces, looked again behind her, and for some time stood moaning. But still her cubs not rising to follow her, she returned to them again, and with signs of inexpressible fondness went round one, and round the other, pawing them and moaning. Finding at last that they were cold and lifeless, she raised her head towards the ship, and growled a curse upon the murderers, which they returned with a volley of musket balls. She fell between her cubs, and died licking their wounds.”

Had this animal got among the destroyers of her young, she would have soon shown what was implied in the *chafed mind of a bear robbed of her whelps*.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 18

*David reviews and arranges the people, and gives the command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, 1, 2. On his expressing a desire to accompany them to the battle, they will not permit him, 3. He reviews them as they go out of the city, and gives commandment to the captains to save Absalom, 4, 5. They join battle with Absalom and his army, who are discomfited with the loss of twenty thousand men, 6-8. Absalom, fleeing away, is caught by his head in an oak; Joab finds him, and transfixes him with three darts, 9-15. The servants of David are recalled, and Absalom buried, 16-18. Ahimaaz and Cushie bring the tidings to David, who is greatly distressed at hearing of the death of Absalom, and makes bitter lamentation for him, 19-33.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 18

**Verse 1. And set captains of thousands]** By this time David's small company was greatly recruited; but what its number was we cannot tell. Josephus says it amounted to *four thousand* men. Others have supposed that they amounted to *ten thousand*; for thus they understand a clause in ~~1018B~~ **2 Samuel 18:3**, which they think should be read, *We are now ten thousand strong*.

**Verse 3. But now thou art worth ten thousand of us]** The particle *hty attah, now*, is doubtless a mistake for the pronoun *hta attah, thou*; and so it appears to have been read by the *Septuagint*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Chaldee*, and by two of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.

**Verse 5. Deal gently-with the young man]** David was the *father* of this worthless young man; and is it to be wondered at that he feels *as a father*? Who in his circumstances, that had such feelings as every man should have, would have felt, or acted otherwise?

**Verse 7. Twenty thousand men.]** Whether these were slain on the field of battle, or whether they were reckoned with those slain in the *wood* of Ephraim, we know not.

**Verse 8. The wood devoured more people]** It is generally supposed that, when the army was broken, they betook themselves to the wood, fell into pits, swamps, &c., and, being entangled, were hewn down by David's men;

but the *Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic*, state that they were *devoured by wild beasts* in the wood.

**Verse 9. And his head caught hold of the oak]** It has been supposed that Absalom was caught by the *hair*, but no such thing is intimated in the text. Probably his neck was caught in the fork of a strong bough, and he was nearly dead when Joab found him; for it is said, <sup><101814></sup> **2 Samuel 18:14**, *he was yet alive*, an expression which intimates he was *nearly dead*.

**Verse 10. I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.]** He must have hung there a considerable time. this man saw him hanging; how long he had been hanging *before* he saw him, we cannot tell. He came and informed Joab; this must have taken up a considerable time. Joab *went* and pierced him through with three darts; this must have taken up still more time. It is therefore natural to conclude that his life must have been nearly gone after having been so long suspended, and probably was past recovery, even if Joab had taken him down.

**Verse 11. And a girdle.]** The military belt was the chief ornament of a soldier, and was highly prized in all ancient nations; it was also a rich present from one chieftain to another. *Jonathan* gave his to *David*, as the highest pledge of his esteem and perpetual friendship, <sup><091804></sup> **1 Samuel 18:4**. And *Ajax* gave his to *Hector*, as a token of the highest respect. -*Hom.* II. vii., ver. 305.

**Verse 13. Thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.]** This is a strong appeal to Joab's loyalty, and respect for the orders of David; but he was proof against every fine feeling, and against every generous sentiment.

**Verse 14. I may not tarry thus with thee]** He had nothing to say in vindication of the purpose he had formed.

**Thrust them through the heart of Absalom]** He was determined to make sure work, and therefore he pierced his *heart*.

Joab should have obeyed the king's commandment: and yet the safety of the state required the sacrifice of Absalom. But independently of this, his life was quadruply forfeited to the law:-1. In having murdered his brother Amnon. 2. In having excited an insurrection in the state. 3. In having taken up arms against his own father, <sup><052118></sup> **Deuteronomy 21:18, 21**. 4. In having lain with his father's concubines, <sup><031829></sup> **Leviticus 18:29**. Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice; and now all his crimes are visited on him

in his last act of rebellion. Yet, in the present circumstances, Joab's act was base and disloyal, and a cowardly murder.

**Verse 15. Ten young men-smote Absalom and slew him.]** That is, they all pierced the body; but there could be no life in it after three darts had been thrust through the heart: but they added as much as would have killed him had he been alive.

**Verse 16. Joab blew the trumpet]** He knew that the rebellion was now extinguished by the death of Absalom; and was not willing that any farther slaughter should be made of the deluded people.

**Verse 17. And laid a very great heap of stones]** This was the method of burying heroes, and even traitors, the heap of stones being designed to perpetuate the memory of the event, whether good or bad. The ancient *cairns* or heaps of stones, in different parts of the world, are of this kind. The various *tumuli* or *barrows* in England are the same as the *cairns* in different parts of Ireland and Scotland. In the former, *stones* were not plenty; hence they heaped up great *mounds of earth*.

**Verse 18. Reared up for himself a pillar]** There was a marble pillar in the time of Josephus called *Absalom's pillar*: and there is one shown to the present day under this name; but it is comparatively a modern structure.

**Absalom's place.]** Literally *Absalom's HAND*. See Clarke's note on <sup><091512></sup>**1 Samuel 15:12**".

**Verse 21. Tell the king what thou hast seen]** At this time the death of Absalom was not publicly known; but Joab had given Cushite private information of it. This Ahimaaz had not, for he could not tell the king whether Absalom were dead. To this Joab seems to refer, <sup><101822></sup>**2 Samuel 18:22**: "Thou hast no tidings ready."

**Verse 24. David sat between the two gates]** He was probably in the seat of justice. Before the gate of the city it is supposed there was an enclosure, which had its gate also; David sat in the space between these two doors. Over the larger gate there appears to have been a turret, on which a sentinel or watchman stood continually, and gave information of what he saw in the country.

**Verse 25. If he be alone,** there is **tidings**] That is, *good tidings*. For if the battle had been lost men would have been running in different directions through the country.

**Verse 29. I saw a great tumult**] It was very probable that Ahimaaz did not know of the death of Absalom; he had seen the rout of his army, but did not know of his death. Others think he knew all, and told this untruth that he might not be the messenger of bad news to David.

**Verse 30. Stand here.**] He intended to confront two messengers, and compare their accounts.

**Verse 32. Is the young man Absalom safe?**] This was the utmost of his solicitude, and it well merited the reproof which Joab gave him, <sup><10905></sup>2  
**Samuel 19:5.**

**Verse 33. O my son Absalom**] It is allowed by the most able critics that this lamentation is exceedingly pathetic. In what order the words were pronounced, for much depends on this, we cannot say. Perhaps it was the following:—

ynb μwl vba ynb

Beni Abshalom, beni!

My son Absalom! O my son!

μwl vba ynb

Beni Abshalom!

O my son Absalom!

Ëytj t yna ytwm ^ty ym

Mi yitten muthi ani thachteicha.

O that I had died in thy stead!

ynb ynb μwl vba

Abshalom, beni! beni!

O Absalom, my son, my son!

Is there no hope for the soul of this profligate young man? He died in his iniquity: but is it not possible that he implored the mercy of his Maker while he hung in the tree? And is it not possible that the mercy of God was extended to him? And was not that suspension a respite, to the end that he might have time to deprecate the wrath of Divine justice?

This is at least a charitable conjecture, and humanity will delight in such a case to lay hold even on *possibilities*. If there be any room for *hope* in such a death, who that knows the worth of an immortal soul, would not wish to indulge in it?



## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 19

*David continues his lamentation for his son, and the people are greatly discouraged, 1-4. Joab reproves and threatens him with the general defection of the people, 5-7. David lays aside his mourning, and shows himself to the people, who are thereby encouraged, 8. The tribes take counsel to bring the king back to Jerusalem, 9-12. He makes Amasa captain of the host in place of Joab, 13. The king, returning, is met by Judah at Gilgal, 14, 15. Shimei comes to meet David, and entreats for his life, which David grants, 16-23. Mephibosheth also meets him, and shows how he had been slandered by Ziba, 24-30. David is met by Barzillai, and between them there is an affecting interview, 31-40. Contention between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, about bringing back the king, 41-43.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 19

**Verse 2. The victory-was turned into mourning]** Instead of rejoicing that a most unnatural and ruinous rebellion had been quashed, the people mourned over their own success, because they saw their king so immoderately afflicted for the loss of his worthless son.

**Verse 4. The king covered his face]** This was the custom of mourners.

**O my son Absalom]** Calmet has properly remarked that the frequent repetition of the name of the defunct, is common in the language of lamentation. Thus VIRGIL, act. v., ver. 51:—

———*Daphnin que team tollemus ad astra;  
Daphnin ad astra feremus: amavit nos quoque Daphnis.*

*“With yours, my song I cheerfully shall join,  
To raise your Daphnis to the powers Divine.  
Daphnis I’ll raise unto the powers above,  
For dear to me was Daphnis’ well tried love.”*

See the notes on the preceding chapter.

**Verse 5. Thou hast shamed this day]** Joab’s speech to David on his immoderate grief for the death of his rebellious son is not only remarkable for the *insolence of office*, but also for good sense and firmness. Every man who candidly considers the state of the case, must allow that David

acted imprudently at least; and that Joab's firm reproof was necessary to arouse him to a sense of his duty to his people. But still, in his *manner*, Joab had far exceeded the bonds of that reverence which a servant owes to his master, or a subject to his prince. Joab was a good soldier, but in every respect a bad man, and a dangerous subject.

**Verse 8. The king-sat in the gate.]** The place where justice was administered to the people.

**Verse 11. Speak unto the elders of Judah]** David was afraid to fall out with this tribe: they were in possession of Jerusalem, and this was a city of great importance to him. They had joined Absalom in his rebellion; and doubtless were now ashamed of their conduct. David appears to take no notice of their infidelity, but rather to place confidence in them, that their confidence in him might be naturally excited: and, to oblige them yet farther, purposes to make Amasa captain of the host in the place of Joab.

**Verse 14. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah]** The measures that he pursued were the best calculated that could be to accomplish this salutary end. Appear to distrust those whom you have some reason to suspect, and you increase their caution and distrust. Put as much confidence in them as you safely can, and this will not fail to excite their confidence towards you.

**Verse 16. Shimei the son of Gera]** It appears that Shimei was a powerful chieftain in the land; for he had here, in his retinue, no less than a thousand men.

**Verse 18. There went over a ferry-boat]** This is the first mention of any thing of the kind. Some think a bridge or raft is what is here intended.

**Verse 20. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned]** This was all he could do; his subsequent conduct alone could prove his sincerity. On such an avowal as this David could not but grant him his life.

**Verse 24. Neither dressed his feet]** He had given the fullest proof of his sincere attachment to David and his cause; and by what he had done, amply refuted the calumnies of his servant Ziba.

**Verse 27. The king is as an angel of God]** As if he had said, I state my case plainly and without guile; thou art too wise not to penetrate the

motives from which both myself and servant have acted. I shall make no appeal; with whatsoever thou determinest I shall rest contented.

**Verse 29. I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.]** At first, David gave the land of Saul to Mephibosheth; and Ziba, his sons, and his servants, were to work that land; and to Mephibosheth, as the lord, he was to give the *half of the produce*. Ziba met David in his distress with provisions, and calumniated Mephibosheth: David, too slightly trusting to his misrepresentation, and supposing that Mephibosheth was actually such a traitor as Ziba represented him, made him on the spot a grant of his master's land. Now he finds that he has acted too rashly, and therefore confirms the *former grant*; i.e. that Ziba should cultivate the ground, and still continue to give to Mephibosheth, as the lord, the half of the produce. This was merely placing things *in statu quo*, and utterly annulling the gift that he had made to Ziba. But why did he leave this treacherous man any thing? Answer, 1. He was one of the domestics of Saul, and David wished to show kindness to that house. 2. He had supplied him with the necessaries of life when he was in the greatest distress; and he thinks proper to continue him in his old office, by way of remuneration. But it was certainly too great a compensation for his services, however then important, when all the circumstances are considered.

**Verse 32. Barzillai was a very aged man]** This venerable person had given full proof of his attachment to David by the supplies he had given him when he lay at Mahanaim, where his case was all but desperate; the sincerity of his congratulations now none can suspect. David's offer to him was at once noble and liberal: he wished to compensate *such a man*, and he wished to have at hand *such a friend*.

**Verse 35. Can thy servant taste what I eat]** Here is at once an affecting description of the infirmities of old age; and a correct account of the mode of living at an Eastern court in ancient times.

Barzillai was fourscore years old; his *ear* was become dull of hearing, and his *relish* for his food was gone: he therefore appears to have been not only an old man, but an *infirm* old man. Besides *delicate meats* and *drinks*, we find that *vocal music* constituted a principal part of court entertainments: male and female singers made a necessary appendage to these banquets, as they do in most Eastern courts to the present day. As David was a most sublime poet, and emphatically styled the *sweet singer of Israel*, he no doubt had his court well supplied with vocal as well as *instrumental*

performers; and, probably, with *poets* and *poetesses*; for it is not likely that *he* was the only poet of his time, though he undoubtedly was the most excellent.

**Verse 37. Thy servant Chimham]** It is generally understood that this was Barzillai's son; and this is probable from <sup><11037></sup>**1 Kings 2:7**, where, when David was dying, he said, *Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai*: and it is very probable that this Chimham was one of them. In <sup><24117></sup>**Jeremiah 41:17** mention is made of the *habitation of Chimham*, which was near to Bethlehem; and it is reasonably conjectured that David had left that portion, which was probably a part of his paternal estate, to this son of Barzillai.

**Verse 39. The king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him]** The *kiss* was the token of *friendship* and *farewell*; the *blessing* was a *prayer to God* for his prosperity, probably a prophetic benediction.

**Verse 42. Wherefore then be ye angry for this matter?]** We have not done this for our own advantage; we have gained nothing by it; we did it through loyal attachment to our king.

**Verse 43. We have ten parts in the king, and-more right]** We are ten tribes to one, or we are ten times so many as you; and consequently should have been consulted in this business.

**The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.]** They had more weight, for they had more reason on their side.

It is pleasant when every province, canton, district, and county, vie with each other in personal attachment to the prince, and loyal attachment to his government. From such contentions as these civil wars are never likely to arise. And how blessed it must be for the country where the king merits all this! where the prince is the pastor and father of his people, and in all things the minister of and to them for good!

It is criminal in the prince not to endeavour to deserve the confidence and love of his people; and it is highly criminal in the people not to repay such endeavours with the most loyal and affectionate attachment.

Where the government is not *despotic*, the king acts by the counsels of his ministers, and while he does so he is not chargeable with miscarriages and

misfortunes; they either came through bad counsels, or directly thwarting providences. On this ground is that political maxim in our laws formed, *the king can do no wrong*. Sometimes God will have things otherwise than the best counsels have determined, because he sees that the results will, on the whole, be better for the peace and prosperity of that state. “God is the only Ruler of princes.” And as the peace of the world depends much on civil government, hence kings and civil governors are peculiar objects of the Almighty’s care. Wo to him who labours to bring about a general disaffection; as such things almost invariably end in general disappointment and calamity. It is much easier to unsettle than to settle; to pull down than to build up.

## II SAMUEL

### CHAPTER 20

*Sheba raises an insurrection, and gains a party in Israel, 1, 2. David shuts up the ten concubines who were defiled by Absalom, 3. Amasa is sent to assemble the men of Judah, 4, 5. And in the mean time Abishai is sent to pursue Sheba, 6, 7. Joab treacherously murders Amasa, 8-12. Joab and the army continue the pursuit of Sheba, 13, 14. He is besieged in Abel; and, by the counsels of a wise woman, the people of Abel cut off his head, and throw it over the wall to Joab; who blows the trumpet of peace, and he and his men return to Jerusalem, 15-22. Account of David's civil and military officers, 23-26.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. 20

**Verse 1. Sheba, the son of Bichri]** As this man was a *Benjamite*, he probably belonged to the family of Saul; and he seems to have had considerable influence in Israel to raise such an insurrection: but we know nothing farther of him than what is related in this place.

**We have no part in David]** We of Israel, we of the ten tribes, are under no obligation to the house of David. Leave him, and let every man fall into the ranks under his own leader.

**Verse 3. The ten women]** He could not well divorce them; he could not punish them, as they were not in the transgression; he could no more be familiar with them, because they had been defiled by his son; and to have married them to other men might have been dangerous to the state: therefore he shut them up and *fed them*-made them quite comfortable, and they continued as widows to their death.

**Verse 4. Then said the king to Amasa]** Thus he invests him with the command of the army, and sends him to collect the men of Judah, and to come back to receive his orders in relation to Sheba, in three days. It appears that Amasa found more difficulty in collecting his country-men than was at first supposed; and this detaining him beyond the three days, David, fearing that Sheba's rebellion would get head, sent Abishai, who it appears was accompanied by Joab, to pursue after Sheba.

Amasa, it seems, got up with them at Gibeon, ~~<10MS>~~ **2 Samuel 20:8**, where he was treacherously murdered by the execrable Joab.

**Verse 8. Joab's garment]** It appears that this was not a military garment; and that Joab had no arms but a short sword, which he had concealed in his girdle; and this *sword*, or *knife*, was so loose in its sheath that it could be easily drawn out. It is thought farther, that Joab, in passing to Amasa, stumbled, (for so some of the versions, and able critics, understand the words *it fell out*.) and that the sword fell down when he stumbled; that he took it up with his left hand as if he had no bad intention; and then, taking Amasa by the beard with his right hand, pretending to kiss him, he, with his sword in his left hand, ripped up his bowels. This seems to be the meaning of this very obscure verse. It is worthy of remark that in the Eastern country it is the *beard*, not the *man*, which is usually kissed.

**Verse 10. In the fifth rib]** I believe *vmj chomesh*, which we render here and elsewhere the *fifth rib*, means any part of the abdominal region. The *Septuagint* translate it *την ψοαν*, *the groin*; the *Targum*, *the right side of the thigh*, i.e., (the phrase of the Targumist being interpreted,) *the privy parts*. That it means some part of the abdominal region, is evident from what follows, *And shed out his bowels to the ground*. It appears from this that, in plain English, he ripped up his belly.

**Verse 11. He that favoureth Joab]** As if he had said, There is now no other commander besides Joab; and Joab is steadily attached to David: let those therefore who are loyal follow Joab.

**Verse 12. Amasa wallowed in blood]** It is very likely that Amasa did not immediately die; I have known instances of persons living several hours after their bowels had been shed out.

**Verse 14. Unto Abel]** This is supposed to have been the capital of the district called Abilene in St. Luke's Gospel, ~~ABR~~ **Luke 3:1**.

**Beth-maachah]** Is supposed to have been in the northern part of the Holy Land, on the confines of Syria, and probably in the tribe of Naphtali.

**Verse 15. They cast up a bank against the city]** The word *hl l s solelah*, which we render *bank*, means, most probably, a *battering engine* of some kind, or a *tower* overlooking the walls, on which archers and slingers could stand and annoy the inhabitants, while others of the besiegers could proceed to sap the walls. That it cannot be a *bank that stood in the trench*, is evident from the circumstance thus expressed.

**Verse 16. A wise woman]** She was probably governess.

**Verse 18. They shall surely ask counsel at Abel]** This is a proverb, but from what it originated we know not; nor can we exactly say what it means: much must be supplied to bring it to speak sense. Abel was probably famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants; and parties who had disputes appealed to their judgment, which appears to have been in such high reputation as to be final by consent of all parties. To this the wise woman refers, and intimates to Joab that he should have proceeded in this way before he began to storm the city, and destroy the peaceable inhabitants.

**Verse 19. I-peaceable and faithful in Israel]** I am for peace, not contention of any kind; I am *faithful*-I adhere to David, and neither seek nor shall sanction any rebellion or anarchy in the land. Why then dost thou proceed in such a violent manner? Perhaps the woman speaks here in the *name* and on *behalf* of the *city*: “I am a peaceable city, and am faithful to the king.”

**A mother in Israel]** That is, a chief city of a district; for it is very likely that the woman speaks of the city, not of herself.

**Verse 21. His head shall be thrown to thee]** Thus it appears she had great sway in the counsels of the city; and that the punishment of a state rebel was then, what it is now in this kingdom, *beheading*.

**Verse 23. Joab was over all the host]** He had murdered Amasa, and seized on the supreme command: and such was his power at present, and the service which he had rendered to the state by quelling the rebellion of Sheba, that David was obliged to continue him; and dared not to call him to account for his murders without endangering the safety of the state by a civil war.

**Benaiah-over the Cherethites]** Benaiah was over the *archers* and *slingers*. See Clarke’s notes on “~~10018~~2 Samuel 8:18”.

**Verse 24. Adoram was over the tribute]** Probably the chief receiver of the taxes; or *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, as we term it.

**Jehoshaphat-recorder]** The registrar of public events.

**Verse 25. Shevah was scribe]** The king’s secretary.



**Verse 26. Ira-was a chief ruler about David.]** The Hebrew is **dywdl**  
**hk** *cohen ledavid, a priest to David*; and so the *Vulgate, Septuagint,*  
*Syriac, and Arabic.* The *Chaldee* has **br** *rab, a prince, or chief.* He was  
 probably a sort of *domestic chaplain* to the king. We know that the kings  
 of Judah had their *seers*, which is nearly the same: Gad was David's seer,  
 <10241>**2 Samuel 24:11**, and Jeduthun was the seer of King Josiah, <143516>**2**  
**Chronicles 35:16.**

The conclusion of this chapter is very similar to the conclusion of <10816>**2**  
**Samuel 8:16-18**, where see the notes.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 21

*A famine taking place three successive years in Israel, David inquired of the Lord the cause; and was informed that it was on account of Saul and his bloody house, who had slain the Gibeonites, 1. David inquires of the Gibeonites what atonement they require, and they answer, seven sons of Saul, that they may hang them up in Gibeah, 2-6. Names of the seven sons thus given up, 7-9. Affecting account of Rizpah, who watched the bodies through the whole of the time of harvest, to prevent them from being devoured by birds and beasts of prey, 10. David is informed of Rizpah's conduct, and collects the bones of Saul, Jonathan, and the seven men that were hanged at Gibeah, and buries them; and God is entreated for the land, 11-14. War between the Israelites and Philistines, in which David is in danger of being slain by Ishbi-benob, but is succoured by Abishai, 15-17. He, and several gigantic Philistines, are slain by David and his servants, 18-22.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 21

**Verse 1. Then there was a famine]** Of this famine we know nothing; it is not mentioned in any part of the history of David.

**Because he slew the Gibeonites.]** No such fact is mentioned in the life and transactions of Saul; nor is there any reference to it in any other part of Scripture.

**Verse 2. The remnant of the Amorites]** The Gibeonites were *Hivites*, not Amorites, as appears from <sup><06119></sup>**Joshua 11:19**; but *Amorites* is a name often given to the Canaanites in general, <sup><011516></sup>**Genesis 15:16**; <sup><3009></sup>**Amos 2:9**, and elsewhere.

**Verse 3. Wherewith shall I make the atonement]** It is very strange that a choice of this kind should be left to such a people. Why not ask this of God himself?

**Verse 6. Seven men of his sons]** Meaning sons, grandsons, or other near branches of his family. It is supposed that the persons chosen were principal in assisting Saul to exterminate the Gibeonites. But where is the proof of this?

**Verse 8. Five sons of Michal-whom she brought up]** Michal, Saul's daughter, was never married to *Adriel*, but to David, and afterwards to Phaltiel; though it is here said *she bore hdl y yaledah*, not *brought up*, as we falsely translate it: but we learn from <sup><091819></sup>**1 Samuel 18:19**, that *Merab*, one of Saul's daughters, was married to Adriel.

Two of Dr. *Kennicott's* MSS. have *Merab*, not Michal; the *Syriac* and *Arabic* have *Nadab*; the *Chaldee* has properly *Merab*; but it renders the passage thus:-*And the five sons of Merab which Michal the daughter of Saul brought up, which she brought forth to Adriel the son of Barzillai.* This cuts the knot.

**Verse 9. In the beginning of barley harvest.]** This happened in Judea about the vernal equinox, or the 21st of *March*.

**Verse 10. Rizpah-took sackcloth]** Who can read the account of Rizpah's maternal affection for her sons that were now hanged, without feeling his mind deeply impressed with sorrows?

Did God require this sacrifice of Saul's sons, probably all innocent of the alleged crime of their father? Was there no other method of averting the Divine displeasure? Was the requisition of the Gibeonites to have Saul's sons sacrificed to God, to be considered as an oracle of God? Certainly not; God will not have man's blood for sacrifice, no more than he will have swine's blood. The famine might have been removed, and the land properly purged, by offering the sacrifices prescribed by the law, and by a general humiliation of the people.

**Until water dropped upon them]** Until the time of the *autumnal* rains, which in that country commence about October. Is it possible that this poor broken-hearted woman could have endured the fatigue, (and probably in the open air,) of watching these bodies for more than five months? Some think that the *rain dropping on them out of heaven* means the removal of the famine which was occasioned by *drought*, by now sending *rain*, which might have been shortly after these men were hanged; but this by no means agrees with the manner in which the account is introduced: "They were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah-took sackcloth, and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped upon them out of heaven." No casual or immediately providential rain can be here intended; the reference must be to the *periodical* rains above mentioned.

**Verse 12. Took the bones of Saul]** The reader will recollect that the men of Jabesh-gilead burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, and buried the remaining bones under a tree at Jabesh. See <sup><1311></sup>**1 Samuel 31:12, 13**. These David might have dugged up again, in order to bury them in the family sepulchre.

**Verse 15. Moreover the Philistines had yet war]** There is no mention of this war in the parallel place, <sup><1310></sup>**1 Chronicles 20:4**, &c.

**David waxed faint.]** This circumstance is nowhere else mentioned.

**Verse 16. Being girded with a new sword]** As the word *sword* is not in the original, we may apply the term *new* to his *armour* in general; he had got new arms, a new coat of mail, or something that defended him well, and rendered him very formidable: or it may mean a strong or sharp sword.

**Verse 17. That thou quench not the light of Israel.]** David is here considered as the *lamp* by which all Israel was guided, and without whom all the nation must be involved in darkness. The lamp is the emblem of *direction* and *support*. Light is used in this sense by Homer:—

Ουδε τι Πατροκλω γενομην φαος, αυδ εταροισι  
Τοις αλλοις, οι δη πολεες δαμεν Εκτορι διω.  
*Iliad*, lib. xviii. ver. 102.

*“I have neither been a LIGHT to Patroclus nor to his  
companions, who have been slain by the noble Hector.”*

**Verse 18. A battle-at Gob]** Instead of *Gob*, several editions, and about forty of *Kennicott’s* and *Deuteronomy Rossi’s* MSS., have *nob*; but *Gezer* is the name in the parallel place, <sup><1310></sup>**1 Chronicles 20:4**.

**Verse 19. Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim-slew-Goliath the Gittite]** Here is a most manifest corruption of the text, or gross mistake of the transcriber; *David*, not *Elhanan*, slew *Goliath*. In <sup><1310></sup>**1 Chronicles 20:5**, the parallel place, it stands thus: “Elhanan, the son of Jair, slew Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear-staff *was* like a weaver’s beam.” This is plain; and our translators have *borrowed* some words from *Chronicles* to make both texts agree. The corruption may be easily accounted for by considering that *μygra oregim*, which signifies *weavers*, has slipped out of one line into the other; and that *ymj l h tyb beith hallachmi*, the *Beth-lehemite*, is corrupted from *ymj l ta eth Lachmi*;

then the reading will be the same as in Chronicles. Dr. *Kennicott* has made this appear very plain in his *First Dissertation on the Hebrew Text*, p. 78, &c.

**Verse 20. On every hand six fingers]** This is not a solitary instance: *Tavernier* informs us that the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in 1648, had *six fingers* on each hand, and *six toes* on each foot. And *Maupertuis*, in his seventeenth letter, says that he met with two families near Berlin, where *sedigitism* was equally transmitted on both sides of father and mother. I saw once a young girl, in the county of Londonderry, in Ireland, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, but her stature had nothing gigantic in it. The daughters of *Caius Horatius*, of patrician dignity, were called *sedigitæ*, because they had *six fingers* on each hand. *Volcatius*, a poet, was called *sedigitus* for the same reason. See *Pliny's Hist. Nat.*, lib. xi., cap. 43.

THERE are evidently many places in this chapter in which the text has suffered much from the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers; and indeed I suspect the whole has suffered so materially as to distort, if not misrepresent the principal facts. It seems as if a Gibeonite has had something to do with the copies that are come down to us, or that the first fourteen verses have been inserted from a less authentic document than the rest of the book. I shall notice some of the most unaccountable, and apparently exceptionable particulars:—

1. The *famine*, <sup><Q210></sup>**2 Samuel 21:1**, is not spoken of anywhere else, nor at all referred to in the books of *Kings* or *Chronicles*; and, being of three years' duration, it was too remarkable to be omitted in the history of David.
2. The circumstance of Saul's *attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites* is nowhere else mentioned; and, had it taken place, it is not likely it would have been passed over in the history of Saul's transgressions. Indeed, it would have been such a breach of the good faith by which the whole nation was bound to this people, that an attempt of the kind could scarcely have failed to raise an insurrection through all Israel.
3. The wish of David that the Gibeonites, little better than a heathenish people, *should bless the inheritance of the Lord*, is unconstitutional and unlikely.

4. That God should leave the choice of the atonement to such a people, or indeed to any people, seems contrary to his established laws and particular providence.

5. That he should require seven innocent men to be hung up in place of their offending father, in whose iniquity they most likely never had a share, seems inconsistent with justice and mercy.

6. In ~~<102108>~~ **2 Samuel 21:8**, there is mention made of *five sons of Michal*, which she bore (**hdi y yaledah**) unto Adriel. Now, 1. Michal was never the wife of Adriel, but of David and Phaltiel. 2. She never appears to have had any children, see ~~<101623>~~ **2 Samuel 6:23**; this I have been obliged to correct in the preceding notes by putting *Merab* in the place of *Michal*.

7. The seven sons of Saul, mentioned here, are represented as a *sacrifice* required by God, to make an *atonement* for the sin of Saul. Does God in any case require *human blood* for sacrifice? And is it not *such a sacrifice* that is represented here? Dr. Delaney and others imagine that these seven sons were *principal agents* in the execution of their father's purpose; but of this there is *no proof*. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, certainly had no hand in this projected massacre, he was ever *lame*, and could not be so employed; and yet he would have been one of the seven had it not been for the covenant made before with his father: *But the king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan-because of the Lord's oath that was between them*, ~~<102107>~~ **2 Samuel 21:7**.

8. The circumstance of Rizpah's watching the bodies of those victims, upon a rock, and probably in the open air, both day and night, from March to October, or even *for a much less period*, is, as it is here related, very extraordinary and improbable.

9. The hanging the bodies *so long* was against an express law of God, which ordained that those who were hanged on a tree should be taken down before sunset, and *buried the same day, lest the land should be defiled*, (~~<162122>~~ **Deuteronomy 21:22, 23**.) Therefore, 1. God did not command a breach of his own law. 2. David was too exact an observer of that law to require it. 3. The people could not have endured it; for, in that sultry season, the land would indeed have been *defiled* by the *putrefaction* of the dead bodies; and this would, in all likelihood, have added *pestilence* to *famine*.

10. The story of collecting and *burying the bones* of Saul and Jonathan is not very likely, considering that the men of Jabesh-gilead had burned their bodies, and buried the remaining bones under a tree at Jabesh, ~~<08112>~~ **1 Samuel 31:12, 13**; yet still it is possible.

11. Josephus takes as much of this story as he thinks proper, but says not one word about Rizpah, and her long watching over her slaughtered sons.

12. Even the *facts* in this chapter, which are mentioned in other places, (see ~~<13704>~~ **1 Chronicles 20:4**, &c.,) are greatly distorted and corrupted; for we have already seen that *Elhanan* is made here to *kill Goliath the Gittite*, whom it is well known David slew; and it is only by means of the parallel place above that we can restore this to historical truth.

That there have been attempts to remove some of these objections, I know; and I know also that these attempts have been in general without success.

Till I get farther light on the subject, I am led to conclude that the whole chapter is not *now* what it would be, coming from the pen of an inspired writer; and that this part of the Jewish records has suffered much from rabbinical glosses, alterations, and additions. The *law*, the *prophets*, and the *hagiographa*, including *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, &c., have been ever considered as possessing the *highest title to Divine inspiration*; and therefore have been most carefully preserved and transcribed; but the historical books, especially *Samuel*, *Kings*, and *Chronicles*, have not ranked so high, have been less carefully preserved, and have been the subjects of frequent alteration and corruption. Yet still the great foundation of God standeth sure and is sufficiently attested by his own broad seal of consistency, truth, and holiness.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 22

*David's psalm of thanksgiving for God's powerful deliverance and manifold blessings, including prophetic declarations relative to the humiliation and exaltation of the Messiah, 1-51.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 22

**Verse 1. David spake unto the Lord the words of this song]** This is the same in *substance*, and almost in *words*, with <sup><19180></sup>Psalm 18:1-50, and therefore the exposition of it must be reserved till it occurs in its course in that book, with the exception of a very few observations, and Dr. *Kennicott's* general view of the subject.

**Verse 5. When the waves of death compassed me]** Though in a primary sense many of these things belong to David, yet generally and fully they belong to the Messiah alone.

**Verse 11. He rode upon a cherub, and did fly-he was seen upon the things of the wind.]** In the *original* of this sublime passage, *sense* and *sound* are astonishingly well connected. I shall insert the *Hebrew*, represent it in *English letters* for the sake of the unlearned reader, and have only to observe, he must read from the right to the left.

j wr ypnk l [ aryw ã[yw bwrk l [ bkryw  
*ruach canphey al vaiyera :vaiyaoph kerub al vayirkab*

*wind the of wings the upon seen was he and  
 fly did and cherub a upon rode he*

The *clap* of the *wing*, the *agitation* and *rush* through the air are expressed here in a very extraordinary manner.

Other beauties of this kind will be noted in the exposition of the Psalm alluded to above.

I now subjoin Dr. *Kennicott's* remarks on this chapter:-

“The very sublime poetry contained in this chapter is universally admired, and yet it cannot be perfectly understood, till it is known



WHO is the *speaker*, who the person thus triumphant over mighty enemies, *whose* sufferings occasioned such a dreadful convulsion of nature, and, who, upon his deliverance, inflicted such vengeance on his own people, and also became thus a king over the heathen. Should we be told that this person was *David*, it will be very difficult to show how this description can possibly agree with that character: but if it did in fact agree, yet would it contradict St. Paul, who quotes part of it as predicting *the conversion of the Gentiles under Christ the Messiah*. ~~6150~~ **Romans 15:9**; ~~8213~~ **Hebrews 2:13**; and see *Peirce's Commentary*, p. 50. Now if the person represented as speaking through this Divine ode be *David only*, the Messiah is excluded. In consequence of the difficulties resulting from each of these suppositions, the general idea has been that it relates *both to David and to the Messiah as a prophecy of a double sense*; first, as spoken by David of *himself*, and yet to be understood in a secondary sense, of the *Messiah*. But it must be remarked here, that if spoken only of David, it is not a *prediction* of any thing future, but a *thanksgiving* for favours past, and therefore is no *prophecy* at all. And farther, it could not be a prophecy descriptive of David unless the particulars agreed to David, which they evidently do not. If then David be here necessarily excluded from the *single* sense, he must be excluded also from the *double* sense, because nothing can be intended by any sacred writer, to relate to *two* persons, unless it be TRUE of *both*; but it not being the case here as to David, we must conclude that this song relates only to the Messiah; and on this subject an excellent Dissertation, by the late Mr. *Peirce*, is subjoined to his comment on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. It may be necessary to add here two remarks: the twenty-fourth verse now ends with, *I have kept myself from mine iniquity*, which words, it is objected, are not proper, if applied to the Messiah. But this difficulty is removed, in part, by the context, which represents the speaker as *perfectly innocent and righteous*; and this exactly agrees with the proof arising from the *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, that this word was anciently  $\mu\gamma\eta\omega$  [*m ab iniquitatibus*]; consequently, this is one of the many instances where the  $\mu$  final *mem* is improperly omitted by the Jewish transcribers. See my *General Dissertation*, p. 12. Lastly, the difficulty arising from the *title*, which ascribes the Psalm to *David*, and which seems to make

*him* the speaker in it, may be removed, either by supposing that the title here, like those now prefixed to several Psalms, is of no sufficient authority; or *rather*, by considering this title as only meant to describe *the time* when David composed this prophetic hymn, that *when delivered from all his other enemies as well as from the hand of Saul*, he *then* consecrated his leisure by composing this sublime prophecy concerning MESSIAH, his son, *whom* he represents here as *speaking*, (just as in Psa. 22, 40, and other places,) and as describing, 1. His triumph over death and hell; 2. The manifestations of Omnipotence in his favour, earth and heaven, trembling at God's awful presence; 3. The speaker's innocence thus divinely attested; 4. The vengeance he was to take on his own people the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and, 5. The adoption of the *heathen*, over whom he was to be the head and ruler.

“Another instance of a *title* denoting only *the time* of a prophecy, occurs in the very next chapter; where a prophecy concerning the Messiah is entitled, *The LAST words of David*; i.e., a hymn which he composed a little before his death, *after all his other prophecies*. And perhaps this ode in 2 Sam. 22, which immediately precedes that in 2 Sam. 23, was composed but a little while before; namely, *when all his wars were over*. Let it be added, that *Josephus*, immediately before he speaks of David's mighty men, which follow in this same chapter of Samuel, considers the two hymns in 2 Sam. 22 and 23, as both written after his wars were over—*James Davides, bellis et periculis perfunctus, pacemque deinceps profundam agitans, odas in Deum hymnosque composuit*. Tom. i., page 401.”

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 23

*The last words of David, 1-7. The names and exploits of his thirty-seven worthies, 8-39.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 23

**Verse 1. These be the last words of David.]** I suppose the *last poetical composition* is here intended. He might have spoken many words after these in *prose*, but none in *verse*. Other meanings are given; this I prefer.

The words of this song contain a glorious prediction of the Messiah's kingdom and conquests, in highly poetic language.

**The sweet psalmist of Israel]** This character not only belonged to him as the finest poet in *Israel*, but as the finest and most Divine poet of the whole Christian world. The sweet *psalmist of Israel* has been the sweet psalmist of every part of the habitable world, where religion and piety have been held in reverence.

**Verse 2. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me]** Hence the matter of his writing came by direct and immediate inspiration.

**His word was in my tongue.]** Hence the *words* of this writing were as directly inspired as the *matter*.

**Verse 3. The Rock of Israel]** The *Fountain* whence Israel was derived.

**He that ruleth over men must be just]** More literally, **qydx udab**  
 | **vwm** *moshel baadam tsaddik, He that ruleth in man is the just one; or, The just one is the ruler among men.*

**Ruling in the fear of God.]** It is by God's fear that Jesus Christ rules the hearts of all his followers; and he who has not the fear of God before his eyes, can never be a Christian.

**Verse 4. He shall be as the light of the morning]** This verse is very obscure, for it does not appear from it *who* the person is of whom the prophet speaks. As the Messiah seems to be the whole subject of these last words of David, he is probably the person intended. One of Dr. *Kennicott's*

MSS. Supplies the word *hwhy Yehovah*; and he therefore translates, *As the light of the morning ariseth Jehovah* (see below) He shall be the Sun of righteousness, bringing salvation in his rays, and *shining*-illuminating the children of men, with increasing splendour, as long as the sun and moon endure.

**As the tender grass]** The effects of this *shining*, and of the rays of his grace, shall be like the shining of the sun upon the young grass or corn, after a plentiful shower of rain.

**Verse 5. Although my house be not so with God]** Instead of <sup>^</sup>K *ken*, so, read <sup>^</sup>K *kun, established*; and let the whole verse be considered as an *interrogation*, including a positive *assertion*; and the sense will be at once clear and consistent: “for is not my house (family) *established* with God; because he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all, and preserved? For this (He) is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it (or him) not to spring up.” All is sure relative to my spiritual successor, though he do not *as yet* appear; the covenant is firm, and it will spring forth in due time. See the observations at the end of the chapter. See Clarke “<sup><1033></sup>2 Samuel 23:39”.

**Verse 6. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns]** There is no word in the text for *sons*; it is simply *Belial*, the *good-for-nothing man*, and may here refer-first to Saul, and secondly to the enemies of our Lord.

**As thorns thrust away]** A metaphor taken from *hedging*; the workman thrusts the thorns aside either with his *bill* or hand, protected by his impenetrable *mitten* or glove, till, getting a fair blow at the roots, he cuts them all down. The man is *fenced with iron*, and the handle of his bill is *like the staff of a spear*. This is a good representation of the *dubbing-bill*, with which they *slash the thorn hedge* on each side before they level the tops by the *pruning-shears*. The handle is five or six feet long. This is a perfectly natural and intelligible image.

**Verse 8. These be the names of the mighty men]** This chapter should be collated with the parallel place, <sup><3111></sup>1 Chronicles 11:11-47; and see *Kennicott's* First Dissertation on the printed Hebrew text, pages 64-471.

**The Tachmonite that sat in the seat]** Literally and properly, *Jashobeam the Hachmonite*. See <sup><3111></sup>1 Chronicles 11:11.

**The same was Adino the Eznite]** This is a corruption for *he lift up his spear*. See <sup><13111></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:11**.

**Eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.]** THREE *hundred* is the reading in Chronicles, and seems to be the true one. The word ללך *chalal*, which we translate *slain*, should probably be translated *soldiers*, as in the *Septuagint*, στρατιωτας; he withstood *three hundred* SOLDIERS at one time. See the note on David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, See **Clarke** "<sup><10021></sup>**2 Samuel 1:21**", and *Kennicott's* First Dissertation, p. 101. Dr. Kennicott observes: "This one verse contains three great corruptions in the Hebrew text: 1. The proper name of the hero *Jashobeam* is turned into two common words, rendered, *that sat in the seat*. 2. The words, *he lift up his spear*, wtynj ta rrw [ awh hu orer eth chanitho, are turned into two proper names wholly inadmissible here: wnyd [ awh ynx [ h hu *Adino haetsni*, *he was Adino the Eznite*; it being nearly as absurd to say that *Jashobeam the Hachmonite* was the same with *Adino the Eznite*, as that *David the Beth-lehemite* was the same with *Elijah the Tishbite*. 3. The number *eight hundred* was probably at first *three hundred*, as in <sup><13111></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:11**." See *Kennicott*, ubi supr.

**Verse 9. When they defied the Philistines that were there gathered]** This is supposed to refer to the war in which David slew Goliath.

**Verse 11. A piece of ground full of lentiles]** In <sup><13113></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:13** it is *a parcel of ground full of barley*. There is probably a mistake of μυvd [ *adashim*, *lentiles*, for μυrw [ c *seorim*, *barley*, or *vice versa*. Some think there were both *lentiles* and *barley* in the field, and that a marauding party of the Philistines came to destroy or carry them off, and these worthies defeated the whole, and saved the produce of the field. This is not unlikely.

**Verse 13. And three of the thirty]** The word μυvl v *shalishim*, which we translate *thirty*, probably signifies an *office* or *particular description* of men. Of these *shalishim* we have here *thirty-seven*, and it can scarcely be said with propriety that we have *thirty-seven* out of *thirty*; and besides, in the parallel place, <sup><13111></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:11-47**, there are *sixteen* added. The *captains* over Pharaoh's chariots are termed μυvl v *shalishim*,  
<sup><12147></sup>**Exodus 14:7**.

**The Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.]** This is the same war which is spoken of <sup><10517></sup>**2 Samuel 5:17**, &c.

**Verse 15. The water of the well of Bethlehem]** This was David's city, and he knew the excellence of the water which was there; and being near the place, and parched with thirst, it was natural for him to wish for a draught of water out of that well. These three heroes having heard it, though they received no command from David, broke through a company of the Philistines, and brought away some of the water. When brought to David he refused to drink it: for as the men got it at the hazard of their lives, he considered it as their blood, and gave thereby a noble instance of self-denial. There is no evidence that David had requested them to bring it; they had gone for it of their own accord, and without the knowledge of David.

**Verse 16. Poured it out unto the Lord.]** To make *libations*, both of *water* and *wine*, was a frequent custom among the heathens. We have an almost similar account in *Arrian's* Life of Alexander: "When his army was greatly oppressed with heat and thirst, a soldier brought him a cup of water; he ordered it to be carried back, saying, I cannot bear to drink alone while so many are in want, and this cup is too small to be divided among the whole." Tunc poculo pleno sicut oblatum est reddito: Non solus, inquit, bibere sustineo, nec tam exiguum dividere omnibus possum.-ARRIAN, lib. vi.

The example was noble in both cases, but David added *piety* to *bravery*; he poured it out unto the Lord.

**Verse 20. Two lion-like men of Moab]** Some think that two *real lions* are meant; some that they were two savage *gigantic* men; others, that two *fortresses* are meant. The words *bawm l ara ynv sheney ariel Moab* may signify, as the Targum has rendered it, *bawm ybrbr `yrt ty yath terein rabrebey Moab*, "The two princes of Moab."

**Verse 21. He slew an Egyptian]** This man in <sup><13123></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:23** is stated to have been *five cubits high*, about *seven feet six inches*.

**He went down to him with a staff]** I have known men who, with a *staff* only for their defence, could render the sword of the best practised soldier of no use to him. I have seen even a parallel instance of a man with his staff being attacked by a soldier with his hanger; he soon beat the weapon out of the soldier's hand, and could easily have slain him with his own sword.

We have a good elucidation of this in a duel between *Dioxippus* the Athenian and *Horratas* a Macedonian, before Alexander: “The Macedonian, proud of his military skill, treated the naked Athenian with contempt, and then challenged him to fight with him the ensuing day. The Macedonian came armed *cap-a-pie* to the place; on his left arm he had a brazen shield, and in the same hand a spear called *sarissa*; he had a javelin in his right hand, and a sword girded on his side; in short, he appeared armed as though he were going to contend with a host. Dioxippus came into the field with a chaplet on his head, a purple sash on his left arm, his body naked, smeared over with oil, and in his right hand a strong knotty club, (*dextra validum nodosumque stipitem præferabat.*) Horratas, supposing he could easily kill his antagonist while at a distance, threw his javelin, which Dioxippus, suddenly stooping, dexterously avoided, and, before Horratas could transfer the spear from his left to his right hand, sprang forward, and with one blow of his club, broke it in two. The Macedonian being deprived of both his spears, began to draw his sword; but before he could draw it out Dioxippus seized him, tripped up his heels, and threw him with great violence on the ground, (*pedibus repente subductis arietavit in terram.*) He then put his foot on his neck, drew out his sword, and lifting up his club, was about to dash out the brains of the overthrown champion, had he not been prevented by the king.”-*Q. Curt.* lib. ix., cap. 7.

How similar are the two cases! *He went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian’s hands, and slew him with his own spear.* Benaiah appears to have been just such another *clubsman* as Dioxippus.

**Verse 23. David set him over his guard.]** The *Vulgate* renders this, *Fecitque eum sibi David auricularium a secreto*, “David made him his privy counsellor;” or, according to the Hebrew, *He put him to his ears*, i.e., confided his secrets to him. Some think he made him a *spy* over the rest. It is supposed that the meaning of the fable which attributes to *Midas very long ears*, is, that this king carried the system of *espionage* to a great length; that he had a multitude of spies in different places.

**Verse 24. Asahel-was one of the thirty]** Asahel was one of those officers, or troops, called the *shalishim*. This Asahel, brother of Joab, was the same that was killed by Abner, <sup><40123></sup>**2 Samuel 2:23.**

**Verse 25. Shammah the Harodite]** There are several varieties in the names of the following *shalishim*; which may be seen by comparing these verses with <sup><3127></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:27**.

**Verse 39. Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.]** To these the author of <sup><3144></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:41** adds *Zabad* son of *Ahlai*.

<sup><3144></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:42** -*Adina* the son of *Shiza* the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.

<sup><3144></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:43** -*Hanan* the son of *Maachah*, and *Joshaphat* the Mithnite,

<sup><3144></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:44** -*Uzzia* the Ashterathite, *Shama* and *Jehiel* the sons of *Hothan* the Aroerite,

<sup><3145></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:45** -*Jediael* the son of *Shimri*, and *Joha* his brother, the Tizite,

<sup><3146></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:46** -*Eliel* the Mahavite, and *Jeribai*, and *Joshaviah*, the sons of *Elnaam*, and *Ithmah* the Moabite,

<sup><3147></sup>**1 Chronicles 11:47** -*Eliel*, and *Obed*, and *Jasiel* the Mesobaite.

THE 4th and 5th verses { <sup><10234></sup>**2 Samuel 23:4, 5** } are very obscure; *L. Deuteronomy Dieu* gives them a good meaning, if not the true one:—

“The *perpetuity* of his kingdom David amplifies by a comparison to three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not *constant* and *stable*. For the *sun* arises and goes down again; the *morning* may be clear, but clouds afterwards arise; and the *tender grass* springs up, but afterwards withers. Not so, said he, is my kingdom before God; it is flourishing like all these, but *perpetual*, for he has made an everlasting covenant with me, though some afflictions have befallen me; and he has not made all my *salvation* and *desire* to grow.”

*Deuteronomy Dieu* repeats **k ke**, the note of similitude, *thrice*; and the following is his version:—

“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake unto me, (or concerning me:) The just man ruleth among men; he ruleth in the fear of God. And, as the sun ariseth with a shining light; as the



morning is without clouds by reason of its splendour; as, from rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth; truly so is not my house with God: because he hath made an *everlasting* covenant with me; disposed in all things, and well *kept* and *preserved* in that order.

Although he doth not make all my deliverance and desire to grow, i.e., though some adversities happen to me and my family; yet, *that* always remains, which, in the covenant of God made with me, is in all things orderly, disposed, and preserved.”

See Bishop *Patrick* on the place.

Once more I must beg the reader to refer to the *First Dissertation* of Dr. *Kennicott*, on the *present state of the printed Hebrew text*; in which there is not only great light cast on this subject, several corruptions in the Hebrew text being demonstrated, but also many valuable criticisms on different texts in the sacred writings. There are two *Dissertations*, 2 vols. 8vo.; and both very valuable.

## II SAMUEL

## CHAPTER 24

*David is tempted by Satan to number Israel and Judah, 1. Joab remonstrates against it, but the king determines that it shall be done; and Joab and the captains accomplish the work, and bring the sum total to the king: viz.: eight hundred thousand warriors in Israel, and five hundred thousand in Judah, 2-9. David is convinced that he has done wrong; and the prophet Gad is sent to him, to give him his choice of three judgments, one of which God is determined to inflict upon the nation, 10-13. David humbles himself before God; and a pestilence is sent, which destroys seventy thousand men, 14, 15. The angel of the Lord being about to destroy Jerusalem, David makes intercession, and the plague is stayed, 16, 17. Gad directs him to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing-floor of Araunah, where the plague was stayed, 18. He purchases this place for the purpose, and offers burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. 19-25.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 24

**Verse 1. He moved David against them]** God could not be angry with David for numbering the people if *he moved him to do it*; but in the parallel place (<sup><13210></sup> **1 Chronicles 21:1**) it is expressly said, *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel*. David, in all probability, slackening in his piety and confidence toward God, and meditating some extension of his dominions without the Divine counsel or command, was naturally curious to know whether the number of fighting men in his empire was sufficient for the work which he had projected. See more on <sup><10410></sup> **2 Samuel 24:10**. He therefore orders Joab and the captains to take an exact account of all the effective men in Israel and Judah. God is justly displeased with this conduct, and determines that the *props* of his vain ambition shall be taken away, either by *famine, war, or pestilence*.

**Verse 3. Joab said unto the king]** This very bad man saw that the measure now recommended by the king was a wrong one, and might be ruinous to the people, and therefore he remonstrates against it in a very sensible speech; but the king was infatuated, and would hear no reason.

**Verse 5. And pitched in Aroer]** This was beyond Jordan, on the river Arnon, in the tribe of Gad: hence it appears, says *Calmet*, that they began their census with the most *eastern* parts of the country beyond Jordan.

**Verse 6. Tahtim-hodshi]** Where this place was is not exactly known: some think that the words refer to a newly conquered country, as our margin, *the nether land newly inhabited*; and if so, this was probably the country *eastward* of Gilead, which the Israelites, in the time of Saul, had conquered from the Hagarites, and dwelt in themselves. See <sup><1350></sup>**1 Chronicles 5:10**, where this transaction is recorded.

**To Dan-jaan]** Or, to *Dan of the woods*. This is the place so frequently mentioned, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, near to the source of the Jordan, the most *northern* city of all the possessions of the Israelites in what was called the promised land, as Beer-sheba was the most *southern*: hence the common form of speech, *From Dan to Beer-sheba*, i.e., from *north to south*.

**Verse 7. The strong hold of Tyre]** This must have been the old city of Tyre, which was built on the main land: the new city was built on a rock in the sea.

**Verse 8. Nine months and twenty days.]** This was a considerable time; but they had much work to do, nor did they complete the work, as appears from <sup><1310></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:6; 27:24**. *William the Conqueror* made a survey of all England, particularizing “how many hides or carucates the land is taxed at; whose it was in the time of his predecessor Edward; who the present owners and sub-tenants; what and how much arable land, meadow, pasture, and wood there is, how much in demesne, i.e., held and cultivated by the landowners; how much in tenancy, and what number of ploughs it will keep; what mills and fisheries; how many sockmen, freemen, co-liberti, cotarii, bordarii, radmanni, radchenisters, villains, maid-servants, and bondmen, there are; how many hogs the woods would support; how many churches, priests, or parsons; what customary rents, prestations, and services, are to be paid and rendered out of the lands; what has been added to the manor; what has been withheld from it, and by whom; what land is waste, and what the whole was let for in the time of King Edward; and what the nett rent, and whether it was too dear rented, and whether it might be improved.” This survey was begun in the year 1080, and was finished in the year 1086, *six years* having been employed in the work. This most important document is still preserved; it is in the *Chapter House, Westminster*, in two volumes, one in *folio*, on *three hundred and eighty-two* leaves of vellum. the other in *quarto*, on *four hundred and fifty* leaves; and is in as good preservation as it was *seven hundred* years ago.

This work was much more difficult than that which was performed by Joab and his fellows. The work itself is known by the name *Domesday Book*.

**Verse 9. In Israel eight hundred thousand-the men of Judah were five hundred thousand]** In the parallel place, <sup><132105></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:5**, the sums are widely different: in Israel *one million one hundred thousand*, in Judah *four hundred and seventy thousand*. Neither of these sums is too great, but they cannot be both correct; and which is the true number is difficult to say. The former seems the most likely; but more corruptions have taken place in the *numbers* of the historical books of the Old Testament, than in any other part of the sacred records. To attempt to reconcile them in every part is lost labour; better at once acknowledge what cannot be successfully denied, that although the original writers of the Old Testament wrote under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet we are not told that the same influence descended on all *copiers* of their words, so as absolutely to prevent them from making mistakes. They might mistake, and they did mistake; but a careful collation of the different historical books serves to correct all essential errors of the scribes. See the *Dissertations* of Dr. *Kennicott* mentioned at the conclusion of the preceding chapter. See **Clarke** “<sup><102339></sup>**2 Samuel 23:39**”.

**Verse 10. David said-I have sinned greatly]** We know not exactly in what this sin consisted. I have already hinted, <sup><102401></sup>**2 Samuel 24:1**, that probably David now began to covet an extension of empire, and purposed to unite some of the neighbouring states with his own; and having, through the suggestions of Satan or some other *adversary*, (for so the word implies,) given way to this covetous disposition, he could not well look to God for help, and therefore wished to know whether the thousands of Israel and Judah might be deemed equal to the conquests which he meditated. When God is offended and refuses assistance, vain is the help of man.

**Verse 11. For when David was up]** It is supposed that David's contrition arose from the reproof given by Gad, and that in the order of time the reproof came before the confession stated in the 10th verse. { <sup><102410></sup>**2 Samuel 24:10** }

**David's seer]** A holy man of God, under the Divine influence, whom David had as a domestic chaplain.

**Verse 13. Shall seven years of famine]** In <sup><13212></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:12**, the number is *three*, not *seven*; and here the *Septuagint* has *three*, the same as in *Chronicles*: this is no doubt the true reading, the letter **z zain**, SEVEN, being mistaken for **g gimel**, THREE. A mistake of this kind might be easily made from the similarity of the letters.

**Verse 14. I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord]** David acted nobly in this business. Had he chosen *war*, his own *personal safety* was in no danger, because there was already an ordinance preventing him from going to battle. Had he chosen *famine*, his own wealth would have secured his and his own family's support. But he showed the greatness of his mind in choosing the *pestilence*, to the ravages of which himself and household were exposed equally with the meanest of his subjects.

**Verse 15. From the morning-to the time appointed]** That is, from the morning of the day after David had made his election till the *third day*, according to the condition which God had proposed, and he had accepted: but it seems that the plague was terminated before the conclusion of the third day, for Jerusalem might have been destroyed, but it was not. Throughout the land, independently of the city, *seventy thousand* persons were slain! This was a terrible mortality in the space of less than three days.

**Verse 16. The angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem]** By what means this destruction took place, we know not: it appears that an angel was employed in it, and that this minister of Divine justice actually appeared as an object. of sight; for it is said, <sup><10247></sup>**2 Samuel 24:17**, *When David saw the angel that smote the people, he said, &c.*; and both Ornan and his four sons saw him and were affrighted, <sup><13212></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:20**.

**The threshing-place of Araunah]** These *threshing-places*, we have already seen, were made in the open air. In the parallel place, <sup><13215></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:15, 20**, &c., this person is called *Ornan*. The word that we render *Araunah* is written in this very chapter **hnrwa Auarnah**, <sup><10246></sup>**2 Samuel 24:16**, **hynra Araniah**, <sup><10248></sup>**2 Samuel 24:18**, **hnwra Araunah** or *Araunah*, <sup><10249></sup>**2 Samuel 24:20**, and the following: but in every place in <sup><13210></sup>**1 Chronicles 21:1-30** where it occurs it is written **^nra Ornan**. It is likely he had both names, *Araunah* and *Ornan*: but the *varieties* of spelling in 2 Sam. must arise from the blunders of transcribers.

**Verse 17. But these sheep, what have they done?]** It seems that in the order of Providence there is no way of punishing kings in their *regal* capacity, but by afflictions on their land, in which the people must necessarily suffer. If the king, therefore, by his own personal offenses, in which the people can have no part, bring down God's judgments upon his people, (though they suffer innocently,) grievous will be the account that he must give to God. The people generally suffer for the miscarriages of their governors: this has been observed in every age.

*Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*

————— “*When doting monarchs urge  
Unsound resolves, their subjects feel the scourge.*”  
*HOR. Ep. lib. i., ep. 2, ver. 14.*

**Against my father's house.]** That is, against his own family; even to cut it off from the face of the earth.

**Verse 18. Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord]** This place is supposed to be Mount Moriah: on which, according to the rabbins, Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices; where Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac, and where the temple of Solomon was afterwards built.

**Verse 22. Here be oxen for burnt-sacrifice]** He felt for the *king*; and showed his loyalty to him by this offer. He felt for the *people*; and was willing to make any sacrifice to get the plague stayed. He felt for *his own personal safety*; and therefore was willing to give up all to save his life. He felt for the *honour of God*; and therefore was glad that he had a sacrifice to offer, so that God might magnify both his justice and mercy.

**Verse 23. As a king, give unto the king.]** Literally, *All these did King Araunah give unto the king.* That there could not be a king of the Jebusites on Mount Moriah, is sufficiently evident; and that there was no other king than David in the land, is equally so: the word *Ēl mh hammelech*, “the king,” given here to Araunah, is wanting in the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*; in *three* of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., and in the parallel place in *Chronicles*: and, it is very probable, never made a part of the text. Perhaps it should be read, *All these did Arnunah give unto the king.*

There is, however, a difficulty here. David had taken the fortress of the Jebusites many years before; yet it is evident that Araunah was proprietor

of the soil at this time. It is not clear that he was a subject of David; but he paid him respect as a neighbour and a king. This is merely *possible*.

**Verse 24. Neither will I offer burnt-offerings]** It is a maxim from heaven, “Honour the Lord with thy substance.” He who has a religion that *costs him nothing*, has a religion that is *worth nothing*: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing. Had Araunah’s noble offer been accepted, it would have been *Araunah’s sacrifice*, not *David’s*; nor would it have answered the end of turning away the displeasure of the Most High. It was David that sinned, not Araunah: therefore David must offer sacrifice, and at his own expense too.

**Verse 25. David-offered burnt-offerings]** And that these sacrifices were pleasing to the Lord, is evident from a circumstance marked in the parallel place, ~~13126~~ **1 Chronicles 21:26:** *David called upon the Lord, and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.*

**The plague was stalled]** Jerusalem did not share in the common calamity, seventy thousand being the whole that were slain throughout the land.

THIS book is unfinished, and requires 1 Chr. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, to complete it. A few things relative to this history may be found in the beginning of the following book; but the information in 1 Chr. is much more extensive and satisfactory.

### MASORETIC NOTES ON THE TWO BOOKS OF SAMUEL

IN the time of the Masoretes the two books of Samuel were considered but as one, and thus divided:—

Number of *verses* in these two books, 1506.

Number of *Masoretic sections*, 34.

The *middle verse* is ~~01234~~ **1 Samuel 28:24:** *And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hasted and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.*