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COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

1 Chronicles

by Matthew Henry

To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:

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AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST BOOK OF

CHRONICLES

In common things repetition is thought needless and nauseous; but, in sacred things, *precept must be upon precept and line upon line. To me, says the apostle, to write the same things is not grievous, but for you it is safe,* ^{<303E>}Philippians 3:1. These books of Chronicles are in a great measure repetition; so are much of the second and third of the four evangelists: and yet there are no tautologies either here or there no *vain repetitions*. We may be ready to think that of all the books of holy scripture we could best spare these two books of Chronicles. Perhaps we might, and yet we could ill spare them: for there are many most excellent useful things in them, which we find not elsewhere. And as for what we find here which we have already met with,

1. It might be of great use to those who lived when these books were first published, before the canon of the Old Testament was completed and the particles of it put together; for it would remind them of what was more fully related in the other books. Abstracts, abridgments, and references, are of use in divinity as well as law. That, perhaps, may not be said in vain which yet has been said before.

2. It is still of use, that *out of the mouth of two witnesses every word may be established*, and, being inculcated, may be remembered. The penman of these books is supposed to be Ezra, that *ready scribe in the law of the Lord,* ^{<303E>}Ezra 7:6. It is a groundless story of that apocryphal writer (2 Esdr. 14:21, etc.) that, all the law being burnt, Ezra was divinely inspired to write it all over again, which yet might take rise from the books of Chronicles, where we find, though not all the same story repeated, yet the names of all those who were the subjects of that story. These books are called in the Hebrew *words of days* — journals or annals, because, by divine direction, collected out of some public and authentic records. The collection was made after the captivity, and yet the language of the originals, written before, it sometimes retained, as ^{<41E>}2 Chronicles 5:9,

there it is unto this day, which must have been written before the destruction of the temple. The Septuagint calls it a book *Paraleipomenon* — of *things left*, or overlooked, by the preceding historians; and several such things there are in it. It is the reward, the gathering host, of this sacred camp, which gathers up what remained, that nothing might be lost. In this first book we have,

I. A collection of sacred genealogies, from Adam to David: and they are none of those which the apostle calls *endless genealogies*, but have their use and end in Christ, 1 Chronicles 1-9. Divers little passages of history are here inserted which we had not before.

II. A repetition of the history of the translation of the kingdom from Saul to David, and of the triumph of David's reign, with large additions, 1 Chronicles 10-21.

III. An original account of the settlement David made of the ecclesiastical affairs, and the preparation he made for the building of the temple, 1 Chronicles 22-29. These are *words of days*, of the oldest days, of the best days, of the Old-Testament church. The reigns of kings and dates of kingdoms, as well as the lives of common persons, are reckoned by *days*; for a little time often gives a great turn, and yet all time is nothing to eternity.