

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE SECOND

BOOK OF KINGS

The revolt of Moab-Sickness of Ahaziah, king of Israel. (1-8) Fire called from heaven by Elijah-Death of Ahaziah. (9-18)

CHAPTER 1

2 Kings 1:1

Vs. 1-8: When Ahaziah rebelled against the Lord, Moab revolted from him. Sin weakens and impoverishes us. Man's revolt from God is often punished by the rebellion of those who owe subjection to him. Ahaziah fell through a lattice, or railing. Wherever we go, there is but a step between us and death. A man's house is his castle, but not to secure him against God's judgments. The whole creation, which groans under the burden of man's sin, will, at length, sink and break under the weight like this lattice. He is never safe that has God for his enemy. Those that will not inquire of the word of God for their comfort, shall hear it to their terror, whether they will or no.

2 Kings 1:9

Vs. 9-18: Elijah called for fire from heaven, to consume the haughty, daring sinners; not to secure himself, but to prove his mission, and to reveal the wrath of God from heaven, against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Elijah did this by a Divine impulse, yet our Savior would not allow the disciples to do the like, ¹⁸⁸¹Luke 9:54. The dispensation of the Spirit and of grace by no means allowed it. Elijah was concerned for God's glory, those for their own reputation. The Lord judges men's practices by their principles, and his judgment is according to truth. The third captain humbled himself, and cast himself upon the mercy of God and Elijah.

There is nothing to be got by contending with God; and those are wise for themselves, who learn submission from the fatal end of obstinacy in others. The courage of faith has often struck terror into the heart of the proudest sinner. So thunderstruck is Ahaziah with the prophet's words, that neither he, nor any about him, offer him violence. Who can harm those whom God shelters? Many who think to prosper in sin, are called hence like Ahaziah, when they do not expect it. All warns us to seek the Lord while he may be found.

CHAPTER 2

Elijah divides Jordan. (1-8) Elijah is taken up into heaven. (9-12) Elisha is manifested to be Elijah's successor. (13-18) Elisha heals the waters of Jericho, Those that mocked Elisha destroyed. (19-25)

2 Kings 2:1

Vs. 1-8: The Lord had let Elijah know that his time was at hand. He therefore went to the different schools of the prophets to give them his last exhortations and blessing. The removal of Elijah was a type and figure of the ascension of Christ, and the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Elisha had long followed Elijah, and he would not leave him now when he hoped for the parting blessing. Let not those who follow Christ come short by tiring at last. The waters of Jordan, of old, yielded to the ark; now, to the prophet's mantle, as a token of God's presence. When God will take up his faithful ones to heaven, death is the Jordan which they must pass through, and they find a way through it. The death of Christ has divided those waters, that the ransomed of the Lord may pass over. O death, where is thy sting, thy hurt, thy terror!

2 Kings 2:9

Vs. 9-12: That fullness, from whence prophets and apostles had all their supply, still exists as of old, and we are told to ask large supplies from it. Diligent attendance upon Elijah, particularly in his last hours, would be proper means for Elisha to obtain much of his spirit. The comforts of departing saints, and their experiences, help both to gild our comforts and to strengthen our resolutions. Elijah is carried to heaven in a fiery chariot. Many questions might be asked about this, which could not be answered. Let it suffice that we are told, what his Lord, when he came, found him doing. He was engaged in serious discourse, encouraging and directing Elisha about the kingdom of God among men. We mistake, if we think preparation for heaven is carried on only by contemplation and acts of devotion. The chariot and horses appeared like fire, something very glorious, not for burning, but brightness. By the manner in which Elijah and Enoch were taken from this world, God gave a glimpse of the eternal life brought to light by the gospel, of the glory reserved for the bodies of

the saints, and of the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. It was also a figure of Christ's ascension. Though Elijah was gone triumphantly to heaven, yet this world could ill spare him. Surely their hearts are hard, who feel not, when God, by taking away faithful, useful men, calls for weeping and mourning. Elijah was to Israel, by his counsels, reproofs, and prayers, better than the strongest force of chariot and horse, and kept off the judgments of God. Christ bequeathed to his disciples his precious gospel, like Elijah's mantle; the token of the Divine power being exerted to overturn the empire of Satan, and to set up the kingdom of God in the world. The same gospel remains with us, though the miraculous powers are withdrawn, and it has Divine strength for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

2 Kings 2:13

Vs. 13-18: Elijah left his mantle to Elisha; as a token of the descent of the Spirit upon him; it was more than if he had left him thousands of gold and silver. Elisha took it up, not as a sacred relic to be worshipped, but as a significant garment to be worn. Now that Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha inquired,

1. After God; when our creature-comforts are removed, we have a God to go to, who lives for ever.
2. After the God that Elijah served, and honored, and pleaded for. The Lord God of the holy prophets is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; but what will it avail us to have the mantles of those that are gone, their places, their books, if we have not their spirit, their God? See Elisha's dividing the river; God's people need not fear at last passing through the Jordan of death as on dry ground.

The sons of the prophets made a needless search for Elijah. Wise men may yield to that, for the sake of peace, and the good opinion of others, which yet their judgment is against, as needless and fruitless. Traversing hills and valleys will never bring us to Elijah, but following the example of his holy faith and zeal will, in due time.

2 Kings 2:19

Vs. 19-25: Observe the miracle of healing the waters. Prophets should make every place to which they come better for them, endeavoring to sweeten bitter spirits, and to make barren souls fruitful, by the word of God, which is like the salt cast into the water by Elisha. It was an apt emblem of the effect produced by the grace of God on the sinful heart of man. Whole families, towns, and cities, sometimes have a new appearance through the preaching of the gospel; wickedness and evil have been changed into fruitfulness in the works of righteousness, which are, through Christ, to the praise and glory of God. Here is a curse on the youths of Bethel, enough to destroy them; it was not a curse causeless, for it was Elisha's character, as God's prophet, that they abused. They bade him "go up," reflecting on the taking up of Elijah into heaven. The prophet acted by Divine impulse. If the Holy Spirit had not directed Elisha's solemn curse, the providence of God would not have followed it with judgment. The Lord must be glorified as a righteous God who hates sin, and will reckon for it. Let young persons be afraid of speaking wicked words, for God notices what they say. Let them not mock at any for defects in mind or body; especially it is at their peril, if they scoff at any for well doing. Let parents that would have comfort in their children, train them up well, and do their utmost betimes to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts. And what will be the anguish of those parents, at the day of judgment, who witness the everlasting condemnation of their offspring, occasioned by their own bad example, carelessness, or wicked teaching!

CHAPTER 3

Jehoram, king of Israel. (1-5) War with Moab, The intercession of Elisha. (6-19) Water supplied, Moab overcome. (20-27)

2 Kings 3:1

Vs. 1-5: Jehoram took warning by God's judgment, and put away the image of Baal, yet he maintained the worship of the calves. Those do not truly repent or reform, who only part with the sins they lose by, but continue to love the sins that they think to gain by.

2 Kings 3:6

Vs. 6-19: The king of Israel laments their distress, and the danger they were in. He called these kings together, yet he charges it upon Providence. Thus the foolishness of man perverteth his way, and then his heart fretteth against the Lord, ^{
}Proverbs 19:3. It was well that Jehoshaphat inquired of the Lord now, but it had been much better if he had done it before he engaged in this war. Good men sometimes neglect their duty, till necessity and affliction drive them to it. Wicked people often fare the better for the friendship and society of the godly. To try their faith and obedience, Elisha bids them make the valley full of pits to receive water. Those who expect God's blessings, must dig pools for the rain to fill, as in the valley of Baca, and thus make even that a well, ^{
}Psalms 84:6. We need not inquire whence the water came. God is not tied to second causes. They that sincerely seek for the dew of God's grace, shall have it, and by it be made more than conquerors.

2 Kings 3:20

Vs. 20-27: It is a blessing to be favored with the company of those who have power with God, and can prevail by their prayers. A kingdom may be upheld and prosper, in consequence of the fervent prayers of those who are dear to God. May we place our highest regard upon such as are most precious in his account. When sinners are saying Peace, peace, destruction comes upon them: despair will follow their mad presumption. In Satan's service and at his suggestion, such horrid deeds have been done, as cause

the natural feelings of the heart to shudder; like the king of Moab's sacrificing his son. It is well not to urge the worst of men to extremities; we should rather leave them to the judgment of God.

CHAPTER 4

Elisha multiplies the widow's oil. (1-7) The Shunammite obtains a son. (8-17) The Shunammite's son restored to life. (18-37) The miracle of healing the pottage, and of feeding the sons of the prophets. (38-44)

2 Kings 4:1

Vs. 1-7: Elisha's miracles were acts of real charity: Christ's were so; not only great wonders, but great favors to those for whom they were wrought. God magnifies his goodness with his power. Elisha readily received a poor widow's complaint. Those that leave their families under a load of debt, know not what trouble they cause. It is the duty of all who profess to follow the Lord, while they trust to God for daily bread, not to tempt him by carelessness or extravagance, nor to contract debts; for nothing tends more to bring reproach upon the gospel, or distresses their families more when they are gone. Elisha put the widow in a way to pay her debt, and to maintain herself and her family. This was done by miracle, but so as to show what is the best method to assist those who are in distress, which is, to help them to improve by their own industry what little they have. The oil, sent by miracle, continued flowing as long as she had empty vessels to receive it. We are never straitened in God, or in the riches of his grace; all our straitness is in ourselves. It is our faith that fails, not his promise. He gives more than we ask: were there more vessels, there is enough in God to fill them; enough for all, enough for each; and the Redeemer's all-sufficiency will only be stayed from the supplying the wants of sinners and saving their souls, when no more apply to him for salvation. The widow must pay her debt with the money she received for her oil. Though her creditors were too hard with her, yet they must be paid, even before she made any provision for her children. It is one of the main laws of the Christian religion, that we pay every just debt, and give every one his own, though we leave ever so little for ourselves; and this, not of constraint, but for conscience' sake. Those who bear an honest mind, cannot with pleasure eat their daily bread, unless it be their own bread. She and her children must live upon the rest; that is, upon the money received for the oil, with which they must put themselves into a

way to get an honest livelihood. We cannot now expect miracles, yet we may expect mercies, if we wait on God, and seek to him. Let widows in particular depend upon him. He that has all hearts in his hand, can, without a miracle, send as effectual a supply.

2 Kings 4:8


Vs. 8-17: Elisha was well thought of by the king of Israel for his late services; a good man can take as much pleasure in serving others, as in raising himself. But the Shunammite needed not any good offices of this kind. It is a happiness to dwell among our own people, that love and respect us, and to whom we are able to do good. It would be well with many, if they did but know when they are really well off. The Lord sees the secret wish which is suppressed in obedience to his will, and he will hear the prayers of his servants in behalf of their benefactors, by sending unasked-for and unexpected mercies; nor must the professions of men of God be supposed to be delusive like those of men of the world.

2 Kings 4:18

Vs. 18-37: Here is the sudden death of the child. All the mother's tenderness cannot keep alive a child of promise, a child of prayer, one given in love. But how admirably does the prudent, pious mother, guard her lips under this sudden affliction! Not one peevish word escapes from her. Such confidence had she of God's goodness, that she was ready to believe that he would restore what he had now taken away. O woman, great is thy faith! He that wrought it, would not disappoint it. The sorrowful mother begged leave of her husband to go to the prophet at once. She had not thought it enough to have Elisha's help sometimes in her own family, but, though a woman of rank, attended on public worship. It well becomes the men of God, to inquire about the welfare of their friends and their families. The answer was, It is well. All well, and yet the child dead in the house! Yes! All is well that God does; all is well with them that are gone, if they are gone to heaven; and all well with us that stay behind, if, by the affliction, we are furthered in our way thither. When any creature-comfort is taken from us, it is well if we can say, through grace, that we did not set our hearts too much upon it; for if we did, we have reason to fear it was given in anger, and taken away in wrath. Elisha cried unto God in faith; and the beloved son was restored alive to his mother.

Those who would convey spiritual life to dead souls, must feel deeply for their case, and labor fervently in prayer for them. Though the minister cannot give Divine life to his fellow-sinners, he must use every means, with as much earnestness as if he could do so.

2 Kings 4:38

Vs. 38-44: There was a famine of bread, but not of hearing the word of God, for Elisha had the sons of the prophets sitting before him, to hear his wisdom. Elisha made hurtful food to become safe and wholesome. If a mess of pottage be all our dinner, remember that this great prophet had no better for himself and his guests. The table often becomes a snare, and that which should be for our welfare, proves a trap: this is a good reason why we should not feed ourselves without fear. When we are receiving the supports and comforts of life, we must keep up an expectation of death, and a fear of sin. We must acknowledge God's goodness in making our food wholesome and nourishing; I am the Lord that healeth thee. Elisha also made a little food go a great way. Having freely received, he freely gave. God has promised his church, that he will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread,  Psalm 132:15; whom he feeds, he fills; and what he blesses, comes to much. Christ's feeding his hearers was a miracle far beyond this, but both teach us that those who wait upon God in the way of duty, may hope to be supplied by Divine Providence.

CHAPTER 5

Naaman's leprosy. (1-8) The cure of it. (9-14) Elisha refuses Naaman's gifts. (15-19) Gehazi's covetousness and falsehood. (20-27)

2 Kings 5:1

Vs. 1-8: Though the Syrians were idolaters, and oppressed God's people, yet the deliverance of which Naaman had been the means, is here ascribed to the Lord. Such is the correct language of Scripture, while those who write common history, plainly show that God is not in all their thoughts. No man's greatness, or honor, can place him out of the reach of the sorest calamities of human life: there is many a sickly, crazy body under rich and gay clothing. Every man has some but or other, something that blemishes and diminishes him, some allay to his grandeur, some damp to his joy. This little maid, though only a girl, could give an account of the famous prophet the Israelites had among them. Children should be early told of the wondrous works of God, that, wherever they go, they may talk of them. As became a good servant, she desired the health and welfare of her master, though she was a captive, a servant by force; much more should servants by choice, seek their masters' good. Servants may be blessings to the families where they are, by telling what they know of the glory of God, and the honor of his prophets. Naaman did not despise what she told, because of her meanness. It would be well if men were as sensible of the burden of sin as they are of bodily disease. And when they seek the blessings which the Lord sends in answer to the prayers of his faithful people, they will find nothing can be had, except they come as beggars for a free gift, not as lords to demand or purchase.

2 Kings 5:9

Vs. 9-14: Elisha knew Naaman to be a proud man, and he would let him know, that before the great God all men stand upon the same level. All God's commands make trial of men's spirits, especially those which direct a sinner how to apply for the blessings of salvation. See in Naaman the folly of pride; a cure will not content him, unless he be cured with pomp and parade. He scorns to be healed, unless he be humored. The way by

which a sinner is received and made holy, through the blood, and by the Spirit of Christ, through faith alone in his name, does not sufficiently humor or employ self, to please the sinner's heart. Human wisdom thinks it can supply wiser and better methods of cleansing. Observe, masters should be willing to hear reason. As we should be deaf to the counsel of the ungodly, though given by great and respected names, so we are to have our ears open to good advice, though brought by those below us. Wouldst thou not do any thing? When diseased sinners are content to do any thing, to submit to any thing, to part with any thing, for a cure, then, and not till then, is there any hope of them. The methods for the healing of the leprosy of sin, are so plain, that we are without excuse if we do not observe them. It is but, Believe, and be saved; Repent, and be pardoned; Wash, and be clean. The believer applies for salvation, not neglecting, altering, or adding to the Savors directions; he is thus made clean from guilt, while others, who neglect them, live and die in the leprosy of sin.

2 Kings 5:15

Vs. 15-19: The mercy of the cure affected Naaman more than the miracle. Those are best able to speak of the power of Divine grace, who themselves experience it. He also shows himself grateful to Elisha the prophet. Elijah refused any recompense, not because he thought it unlawful, for he received presents from others, but to show this new convert that the servants of the God of Israel looked upon worldly wealth with a holy contempt. The whole work was from God, in such a manner, that the prophet would not give counsel when he had no directions from the Lord. It is not well violently to oppose the lesser mistakes which unite with men's first convictions; we cannot bring men forward any faster than the Lord prepares them to receive instruction. Yet as to us, if, in covenanting with God, we desire to reserve any known sin, to continue to indulge ourselves in it, that is a breach of his covenant. Those who truly hate evil, will make conscience of abstaining from all appearances of evil.

2 Kings 5:20

Vs. 20-27: Naaman, a Syrian, a courtier, a soldier, had many servants, and we read how wise and good they were. Elisha, a holy prophet, a man of God, has but one servant, and he proves a base liar. The love of money, that root of all evil, was at the bottom of Gehazi's sin. He thought to

impose upon the prophet, but soon found that the Spirit of prophecy could not be deceived, and that it was in vain to lie to the Holy Ghost. It is folly to presume upon sin, in hopes of secrecy. When thou goest aside into any by-path, does not thy own conscience go with thee? Does not the eye of God go with thee? He that covers his sin, shall not prosper; particularly, a lying tongue is but for a moment. All the foolish hopes and contrivances of carnal worldliness are open before God. It is not a time to increase our wealth, when we can only do it in such ways as are dishonorable to God and religion, or injurious to others. Gehazi was punished. If he will have Naaman's money, he shall have his disease with it. What was Gehazi profited, though he gained two talents, when thereby he lost his health, his honor, his peace, his service, and, if repentance prevented not, his soul for ever? Let us beware of hypocrisy and covetousness, and dread the curse of spiritual leprosy remaining on our souls.

CHAPTER 6

The sons of the prophets enlarge their habitations, Iron made to swim. (1-7) Elisha discloses the counsels of the Syrians. (8-12) Syrians sent to seize Elisha. (13-23) Samaria besieged, A famine, The king sends to slay Elisha. (24-33)

2 Kings 6:1

Vs. 1-7: There is that pleasantness in the converse of servants of God, which can make those who listen to them forget the pain and the weariness of labor. Even the sons of the prophets must not be unwilling to labor. Let no man think an honest employment a burden or a disgrace. And labor of the head, is as hard, and very often harder, than labor with the hands. We ought to be careful of that which is borrowed, as of our own, because we must do as we would be done by. This man was so respecting the axe-head. And to those who have an honest mind, the sorest grievance of poverty is, not so much their own want and disgrace, as being rendered unable to pay just debts. But the Lord cares for his people in their smallest concerns. And God's grace can thus raise the stony iron heart, which is sunk into the mud of this world, and raise up affection, naturally earthly.

2 Kings 6:8


Vs. 8-12: The king of Israel regarded the warnings Elisha gave him, of danger from the Syrians, but would not heed the warnings of danger from his sins. Such warnings are little heeded by most; they would save themselves from death, but will not from hell. Nothing that is done, said, or thought, by any person, in any place, at any time, is out of God's knowledge.

2 Kings 6:13

Vs. 13-23: What Elisha said to his servant is spoken to all the faithful servants of God, when without are fightings, and within are fears. Fear not, with that fear which has torment and amazement; for they that are with us, to protect us, are more than they that are against us, to destroy us. The eyes of his body were open, and with them he saw the danger. Lord, open

the eyes of our faith, that with them we may see thy protecting hand. The clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of Heaven, the less we shall fear the troubles of earth. Satan, the God of this world, blinds men's eyes, and so deludes them unto their own ruin; but when God enlightens their eyes, they see themselves in the midst of their enemies, captives to Satan, and in danger of hell, though, before, they thought their condition good. When Elisha had the Syrians at his mercy, he made it appear that he was influenced by Divine goodness as well as Divine power. Let us not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. The Syrians saw it was to no purpose to try to assault so great and so good a man.

2 Kings 6:24

Vs. 24-33: Learn to value plenty, and to be thankful for it; see how contemptible money is, when in time of famine it is so freely parted with for any thing that is eatable! The language of Jehoram to the woman may be the language of despair. See the word of God fulfilled; among the threatenings of God's judgments upon Israel for their sins, this was one, that they should eat the flesh of their own children,  Deuteronomy 28:53-57. The truth and the awful justice of God were displayed in this horrible transaction. Alas! what miseries sin has brought upon the world! But the foolishness of man perverts his way, and then his heart frets against the Lord. The king swears the death of Elisha. Wicked men will blame any one as the cause of their troubles, rather than themselves, and will not leave their sins. If rending the clothes, without a broken and contrite heart, would avail, if wearing sackcloth, without being renewed in the spirit of their mind, would serve, they would not stand out against the Lord. May the whole word of God increase in us reverent fear and holy hope, that we may be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

CHAPTER 7

*Elisha prophesies plenty. (1,2) The flight of the Syrian army. (3-11)
Samaria plentifully supplied. (12-20)*

2 Kings 7:1

Vs. 1, 2: Man's extremity is God's opportunity of making his own power to be glorious: his time to appear for his people is when their strength is gone. Unbelief is a sin by which men greatly dishonor and displease God, and deprive themselves of the favors he designed for them. Such will be the portion of those that believe not the promise of eternal life; they shall see it at a distance, but shall never taste of it. But no temporal deliverances and mercies will in the end profit sinners, unless they are led to repentance by the goodness of God.

2 Kings 7:3

Vs. 3-11: God can, when he pleases, make the stoutest heart to tremble; and as for those who will not fear God, he can make them fear at the shaking of a leaf. Providence ordered it, that the lepers came as soon as the Syrians were fled. Their consciences told them that mischief would befall them, if they took care of themselves only. Natural humanity, and fear of punishment, are powerful checks on the selfishness of the ungodly. These feelings tend to preserve order and kindness in the world; but they who have found the unsearchable riches of Christ, will not long delay to report the good tidings to others. From love to him, not from selfish feelings, they will gladly share their earthly good things with their brethren.

2 Kings 7:12

Vs. 12-20: Here see the wants of Israel supplied in a way they little thought of, which should encourage us to depend upon the power and goodness of God in our greatest straits. God's promise may be safely relied on, for no word of his shall fall to the ground. The nobleman that questioned the truth of Elisha's word, saw the plenty, to silence and shame his unbelief, and therein saw his own folly; but he did not eat of the plenty he saw. Justly do those find the world's promises fail them, who

think that the promises of God will disappoint them. Learn how deeply God resents distrust of his power, providence, and promise: how uncertain life is, and the enjoyments of it: how certain God's threatenings are, and how sure to come on the guilty. May God help us to inquire whether we are exposed to his threatenings, or interested in his promises.

CHAPTER 8

A famine in Israel, The Shunammite obtains her land. (1-6) Elisha consulted by Hazael, Death of Benhadad. (7-15) Jehoram's wicked reign in Judah. (16-24) Ahaziah's wicked reign in Judah. (25-29)

2 Kings 8:1

Vs. 1-6: The kindness of the good Shunammite to Elisha, was rewarded by the care taken of her in famine. It is well to foresee an evil, and wisdom, when we foresee it, to hide ourselves if we lawfully may do so. When the famine was over, she returned out of the land of the Philistines; that was no proper place for an Israelite, any longer than there was necessity for it. Time was when she dwelt so securely among her own people, that she had no occasion to be spoken for to the king; but there is much uncertainty in this life, so that things or persons may fail us which we most depend upon, and those befriend us which we think we shall never need. Sometimes events, small in themselves, prove of consequence, as here; for they made the king ready to believe Gehazi's narrative, when thus confirmed. It made him ready to grant her request, and to support a life which was given once and again by miracle.

2 Kings 8:7

Vs. 7-15: Among other changes of men's minds by affliction, it often gives other thoughts of God's ministers, and teaches to value the counsels and prayers of those whom they have hated and despised. It was not in Hazael's countenance that Elisha read what he would do, but God revealed it to him, and it fetched tears from his eyes: the more foresight men have, the more grief they are liable to. It is possible for a man, under the convictions and restraints of natural conscience, to express great abhorrence of a sin, yet afterwards to be reconciled to it. Those that are little and low in the world, cannot imagine how strong the temptations of power and prosperity are, which, if ever they arrive at, they will find how deceitful their hearts are, how much worse than they suspected. The devil ruins men, by saying they shall certainly recover and do well, so rocking them asleep in security. Hazael's false account was an injury to the king, who lost the benefit of the prophet's warning to prepare for death, and an

injury to Elisha, who would be counted a false prophet. It is not certain that Hazael murdered his master, or if he caused his death it may have been without any design. But he was a dissembler, and afterwards proved a persecutor to Israel.

2 Kings 8:16

Vs. 16-24: A general idea is given of Jehoram's badness. His father, no doubt, had him taught the true knowledge of the Lord, but did ill to marry him to the daughter of Ahab; no good could come of union with an idolatrous family.

2 Kings 8:25

Vs. 25-29: Names do not make natures, but it was bad for Jehoshaphat's family to borrow names from Ahab's. Ahaziah's relation to Ahab's family was the occasion of his wickedness and of his fall. When men choose wives for themselves, let them remember they are choosing mothers for their children. Providence so ordered it, that Ahaziah might be cut off with the house of Ahab, when the measure of their iniquity was full. Those who partake with sinners in their sin, must expect to partake with them in their plagues. May all the changes, troubles, and wickedness of the world, make us more earnest to obtain an interest in the salvation of Christ.

CHAPTER 9

*Elisha sends to anoint Jehu. (1-10) Jehu and the captains. (11-15)
Joram and Ahaziah slain by Jehu. (16-29) Jezebel eaten by dogs.
(30-37)*

2 Kings 9:1

Vs. 1-10: In these and the like events, we must acknowledge the secret working of God, disposing men to fulfill his purposes respecting them. Jehu was anointed king over Israel, by the Lord's special choice. The Lord still had a remnant of his people, and would yet preserve his worship among them. Of this Jehu was reminded. He was commanded to destroy the house of Ahab, and, as far as he acted in obedience to God, and upon right principles, he needed not to regard reproach or opposition. The murder of God's prophets is strongly noticed. Jezebel persisted in idolatry and enmity to Jehovah and his servants, and her iniquity was now full.

2 Kings 9:11

Vs. 11-15: Those who faithfully deliver the Lord's message to sinners, have in all ages been treated as madmen. Their judgment, speech, and conduct are contrary to those of other men; they endure much in pursuit of objects, and are influenced by motives, into which the others cannot enter. But above all, the charge is brought by the worldly and ungodly of all sorts, who are mad indeed; while the principles and practice of the devoted servants of God, prove to be wise and reasonable. Some faith in the word of God, seems to have animated Jehu to this undertaking.

2 Kings 9:16

Vs. 16-29: Jehu was a man of eager spirit. The wisdom of God is seen in the choice of those employed in his work. But it is not for any man's reputation to be known by his fury. He that has rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty. Joram met Jehu in the portion of Naboth. The circumstances of events are sometimes ordered by Divine Providence to make the punishment answer to the sin, as face answers to face in a glass. The way of sin can never be the way of peace, ²⁵⁷²¹Isaiah 57:21. What peace

can sinners have with God? No peace so long as sin is persisted in; but when it is repented of and forsaken, there is peace. Joram died as a criminal, under the sentence of the law. Ahaziah was joined with the house of Ahab. He was one of them; he had made himself so by sin. It is dangerous to join evil-doers; we shall be entangled in guilt and misery by it.

 **2 Kings 9:30**

Vs. 30-37: Instead of hiding herself, as one afraid of Divine vengeance, Jezebel mocked at fear. See how a heart, hardened against God, will brave it out to the last. There is not a surer presage of ruin, than an unhumbled heart under humbling providence. Let those look at Jezebel's conduct and fate, who use arts to seduce others to commit wickedness, and to draw them aside from the ways of truth and righteousness. Jehu called for aid against Jezebel. When reformation-work is on foot, it is time to ask, Who sides with it? Her attendants delivered her up. Thus she was put to death. See the end of pride and cruelty, and say, The Lord is righteous. When we pamper our bodies, let us think how vile they are; shortly they will be a feast for worms under ground, or beasts above ground. May we all flee from that wrath which is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

CHAPTER 10

Ahab's sons and Ahaziah's brethren put to death. (1-14) Jehu destroys the worshippers of Baal. (15-28) Jehu follows Jeroboam's sins. (29-36)

~~2K10~~ **2 Kings 10:1**

Vs. 1-14: In the most awful events, though attended by the basest crimes of man, the truth and justice of God are to be noticed; and he never did nor can command any thing unjust or unreasonable. Jehu destroyed all that remained of the house of Ahab; all who had been partners in his wickedness. When we think upon the sufferings and miseries of mankind, when we look forward to the resurrection and last judgment, and think upon the vast number of the wicked waiting their awful sentence of everlasting fire; when the whole sum of death and misery has been considered, the solemn question occurs, Who slew all these? The answer is, SIN. Shall we then harbor sin in our bosoms, and seek for happiness from that which is the cause of all misery?

~~2K15~~ **2 Kings 10:15**

Vs. 15-28: Is thine heart right? This is a question we should often put to ourselves. I make a fair profession, have gained a reputation among men, but, is my heart right? Am I sincere with God? Jehonadab owned Jehu in the work, both of revenge and of reformation. An upright heart approves itself to God, and seeks no more than his acceptance; but if we aim at the applause of men, we are upon a false foundation. Whether Jehu looked any further we cannot judge. The law of God was express, that idolaters were to be put to death. Thus idolatry was abolished for the present out of Israel. May we desire that it be rooted out of our hearts.

~~2K29~~ **2 Kings 10:29**

Vs. 29-36: It is justly questionable whether Jehu acted from a good principle, and whether he did not take some false steps in doing it; yet no services done for God shall go unrewarded. But true conversion is not only from gross sin, but from all sin; not only from false gods, but from false

worships. True conversion is not only from wasteful sins, but from gainful sins; not only from sins which hurt our worldly interests, but from those that support and befriend them; in forsaking which is the great trial whether we can deny ourselves and trust God. Jehu showed great care and zeal for rooting out a false religion, but in the true religion he cared not, took no heed to please God and do his duty. Those that are heedless, it is to be feared, are graceless. The people were also careless, therefore it is not strange that in those days the Lord began to cut Israel short. They were short in their duty to God, therefore God cut them short in their extent, wealth, and power.

CHAPTER 11

Athaliah usurps the government of Judah, Jehoash made king. (1-12) Athaliah put to death. (13-16) The worship of the Lord restored. (17-21)

2 Kings 11:1

Vs. 1-12: Athaliah destroyed all she knew to be akin to the crown. Jehoash, one of the king's sons, was hid. Now was the promise made to David bound up in one life only, and yet it did not fail. Thus to the Son of David, the Lord, according to his promise, will secure a spiritual seed, hidden sometimes, and unseen, but hidden in God's pavilion, and unhurt. Six years Athaliah tyrannized. Then the king was brought forward. A child indeed, but he had a good guardian, and, what was better, a good God to go to. With such joy and satisfaction must the kingdom of Christ be welcomed into our hearts, when his throne is set up there, and Satan the usurper is cast out. Say, Let the King, even Jesus, live, for ever live and reign in my soul, and in all the world.

2 Kings 11:13

Vs. 13-16: Athaliah hastened her own destruction. She herself was the greatest traitor, and yet was first and loudest in crying, Treason, treason! The most guilty are commonly the most forward to reproach others.

2 Kings 11:17

Vs. 17-21: King and people would cleave most firmly to each other, when both had joined themselves to the Lord. It is well with a people, when all the changes that pass over them help to revive, strengthen, and advance the interests of religion among them. Covenants are of use, both to remind us of, and bind us to, the duties already binding on us. They immediately abolished idolatry; and, pursuant to the covenant with one another, they expressed mutual readiness to help each other. The people rejoiced, and Jerusalem was quiet. The way for people to be joyful and at peace, is to engage fully in the service of God; for the voice of joy and thanksgiving is in the dwellings of the righteous, but there is no peace for the wicked.

CHAPTER 12

Jehoash orders the repair of the temple. (1-16) He is slain by his servants. (17-21)

~~12:1~~ 2 Kings 12:1

Vs. 1-16: It is a great mercy to young people, especially to all young men of rank, like Jehoash, to have those about them who will instruct them to do what is right in the sight of the Lord; and they do wisely and well for themselves, when willing to be counseled and ruled. The temple was out of repair; Jehoash orders the repair of the temple. The king was zealous. God requires those who have power, to use it for the support of religion, the redress of grievances, and repairing of decays. The king employed the priests to manage, as most likely to be hearty in the work. But nothing was done effectually till the twenty-third year of his reign. Another method was therefore taken. When public distributions are made faithfully, public contributions will be made cheerfully. While they were getting all they could for the repair of the temple, they did not break in upon the stated maintenance of the priests. Let not the servants of the temple be starved, under color of repairing the breaches of it. Those that were entrusted did the business carefully and faithfully. They did not lay it out in ornaments for the temple, till the other work was completed; hence we may learn, in all our expenses, to prefer that which is most needful, and, in dealing for the public, to deal as we would for ourselves.

~~12:17~~ 2 Kings 12:17

Vs. 17-21: Let us review the character of Jehoash, and consider what we may learn from it. When we see what a sad conclusion there was to so promising a beginning, it ought to make us seek into our spiritual declinings. If we know any thing of Christ as the foundation of our faith and hope, let us desire to know nothing but Christ. May the work of the blessed Spirit on our souls be manifest; may we see, feel, and be earnest, in seeking after Jesus in all his fullness, suitableness, and grace, that our souls may be brought over from dead works to serve the living and true God.

CHAPTER 13

Reign of Jehoahaz. (1-9) Jehoash, king of Israel, Elisha dying. (10-19) Elisha's death, The victories of Jehoash. (20-25)

2 Kings 13:1

Vs. 1-9: It was the ancient honor of Israel that they were a praying people. Jehoahaz, their king, in his distress, besought the Lord; applied himself for help, but not to the calves; what help could they give him? He sought the Lord. See how swift God is to show mercy; how ready to hear prayer; how willing to find a reason to be gracious; else he would not look so far back as the ancient covenant Israel had so often broken, and forfeited. Let this invite and engage us for ever to him; and encourage even those who have forsaken him, to return and repent; for there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared. And if the Lord answer the mere cry of distress for temporal relief, much more will he regard the prayer of faith for spiritual blessings.

2 Kings 13:10

Vs. 10-19: Jehoash, the king, came to Elisha, to receive his dying counsel and blessing. It may turn much to our spiritual advantage, to attend the sickbeds and death-beds of good men, that we may be encouraged in religion by the living comforts they have from it in a dying hour. Elisha assured the king of his success; yet he must look up to God for direction and strength; must reckon his own hands not enough, but go on, in dependence upon Divine aid. The trembling hands of the dying prophet, as they signified the power of God, gave this arrow more force than the hands of the king in his full strength. By contemning the sign, the king lost the thing signified, to the grief of the dying prophet. It is a trouble to good men, to see those to whom they wish well, forsake their own mercies, and to see them lose advantages against spiritual enemies.

2 Kings 13:20

Vs. 20-25: God has many ways to chastise a provoking people. Trouble comes sometimes from that point whence we least feared it. The mention

of this invasion on the death of Elisha, shows that the removal of God's faithful prophets is a presage of coming judgments. His dead body was a means of giving life to another dead body. This miracle was a confirmation of his prophecies. And it may have reference to Christ, by whose death and burial, the grave is made a safe and happy passage to life to all believers. Jehoash was successful against the Syrians, just as often as he had struck the ground with the arrows, then a stop was put to his victories. Many have repented, when too late, of distrusts and the straitness of their desires.

CHAPTER 14

Amaziah's good reign. (1-7) Amaziah provokes Jehoash king of Israel, and is overcome. (8-14) He is slain by conspirators. (15-22) Wicked reign of Jeroboam II. (23-29)

^{<241>}2 Kings 14:1

Vs. 1-7: Amaziah began well, but did not go on so. It is not enough to do that which our pious predecessors did, merely to keep up the common usage, but we must do it as they did, from the same principle of faith and devotion, and with the same sincerity and resolution.

^{<242>}2 Kings 14:8

Vs. 8-14: For some time after the division of the kingdoms, Judah suffered much from the enmity of Israel. After Asa's time, it suffered more by the friendship of Israel, and by the alliance made with them. Now we meet with hostility between them again. How may a humble man smile to hear two proud and scornful men set their wits on work, to vilify and undervalue one another! Unholy success excites pride; pride excites contentions. The effects of pride in others, are insufferable to those who are proud themselves. These are the sources of trouble and sin in private life; but when they arise between princes, they become the misery of their whole kingdoms. Jehoash shows Amaziah the folly of his challenge; Thine heart has lifted thee up. The root of all sin is in the heart, thence it flows. It is not Providence, the event, the occasion, whatever it is, that makes men proud, secure, discontented, or the like, but their own hearts do it.

^{<243>}2 Kings 14:15

Vs. 15-22: Amaziah survived his conqueror fifteen years. He was slain by his own subjects. Azariah, or Uzziah, seems to have been very young when his father was slain. Though the years of his reign are reckoned from that event, he was not fully made king till eleven years afterwards.

2 Kings 14:23

Vs. 23-29: God raised up the prophet Jonah, and by him declared the purposes of his favor to Israel. It is a sign that God has not cast off his people, if he continues faithful ministers among them. Two reasons are given why God blessed them with those victories:

1. Because the distress was very great, which made them objects of his compassion.

2. Because the decree was not yet gone forth for their destruction. Many prophets there had been in Israel, but none left prophecies in writing till this age, and their prophecies are part of the Bible. Hosea began to prophesy in the reign of this Jeroboam. At the same time

Amos prophesied; soon after Micah, then Isaiah, in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Thus God, in the darkest and most degenerate ages of the church, raised up some to be burning and shining lights in it; to their own age, by their preaching and living, and a few by their writings, to reflect light upon us in the last times.

CHAPTER 15

Reign of Azariah, or Uzziah, king of Judah. (1-7) The latter kings of Israel. (8-31) Jotham, king of Judah. (32-38)

<DIS> **2 Kings 15:1**

Vs. 1-7: Uzziah did for the most part that which was right. It was happy for the kingdom that a good reign was a long one.

<DIS> **2 Kings 15:8**

Vs. 8-31: This history shows Israel in confusion. Though Judah was not without troubles, yet that kingdom was happy, compared with the state of Israel. The imperfections of true believers are very different from the allowed wickedness of ungodly men. Such is human nature, such are our hearts, if left to themselves, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. We have reason to be thankful for restraints, for being kept out of temptation, and should beg of God to renew a right spirit within us.

<DIS> **2 Kings 15:32**

Vs. 32-38: Jotham showed great respect to the temple. If magistrates cannot do all they would, for the suppressing of vice and profaneness, let them do the more to support and advance piety and virtue.

CHAPTER 16

Ahaz, king of Judah, His wicked reign. (1-9) Ahaz takes a pattern from an idol's altar. (10-16) Ahaz spoils the temple. (17-20)

2 Kings 16:1

Vs. 1-9: Few and evil were the days of Ahaz. Those whose hearts condemn them, will go any where in a day of distress, rather than to God. The sin was its own punishment. It is common for those who bring themselves into straits by one sin, to try to help themselves out by another.

2 Kings 16:10

Vs. 10-16: God's altar had hitherto been kept in its place, and in use; but Ahaz put another in the room of it. The natural regard of the mind of man to some sort of religion, is not easily extinguished; but except it be regulated by the word, and by the Spirit of God, it produces absurd superstitions, or detestable idolatries. Or, at best, it quiets the sinner's conscience with unmeaning ceremonies. Infidels have often been remarkable for believing ridiculous falsehoods.

2 Kings 16:17

Vs. 17-20: Ahaz put contempt upon the Sabbath, and thus opened a wide inlet to all manner of sin. This he did for the king of Assyria. When those who have had a ready passage to the house of the Lord, turn it another way to please their neighbors, they are going down-hill apace to ruin.

CHAPTER 17

Reign of Hoshea in Israel, The Israelites carried captives by the Assyrians. (1-6) Captivity of the Israelites. (7-23) The nations placed in the land of Israel. (24-41)

2 Kings 17:1

Vs. 1-6: When the measure of sin is filled up, the Lord will forbear no longer. The inhabitants of Samaria must have endured great affliction. Some of the poor Israelites were left in the land. Those who were carried captives to a great distance, were mostly lost among the nations.

2 Kings 17:7

Vs. 7-23: Though the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes was but briefly related, it is in these verses largely commented upon, and the reasons of it given. It was destruction from the Almighty: the Assyrian was but the rod of his anger, ^{<3115>} Isaiah 10:5. Those that bring sin into a country or family, bring a plague into it, and will have to answer for all the mischief that follows. And vast as the outward wickedness of the world is, the secret sins, evil thoughts, desires, and purposes of mankind are much greater. There are outward sins which are marked by infamy; but ingratitude, neglect, and enmity to God, and the idolatry and impiety which proceed therefrom, are far more malignant. Without turning from every evil way, and keeping God's statutes, there can be no true godliness; but this must spring from belief of his testimony, as to wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and his mercy in Christ Jesus.

2 Kings 17:24

Vs. 24-41: The terror of the Almighty will sometimes produce a forced or feigned submission in unconverted men; like those brought from different countries to inhabit Israel. But such will form unworthy thoughts of God, will expect to please him by outward forms, and will vainly try to reconcile his service with the love of the world and the indulgence of their lusts. May that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, possess our hearts, and influence our conduct, that we may be ready for

every change. Worldly settlements are uncertain; we know not whither we may be driven before we die, and we must soon leave the world; but the righteous hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from him.

CHAPTER 18

Good reign of Hezekiah in Judah, Idolatry. (1-8) Sennacherib invades Judah. (9-16) Rabshakeh's blasphemies. (17-37)

2 Kings 18:1

Vs. 1-8: Hezekiah was a true son of David. Some others did that which was right, but not like David. Let us not suppose that when times and men are bad, they must needs grow worse and worse; that does not follow: after many bad kings, God raised one up like David himself. The brazen serpent had been carefully preserved, as a memorial of God's goodness to their fathers in the wilderness; but it was idle and wicked to burn incense to it. All helps to devotion, not warranted by the word of God, interrupt the exercise of faith; they always lead to superstition and other dangerous evils. Human nature perverts every thing of this kind. True faith needs not such aids; the word of God, daily thought upon and prayed over, is all the outward help we need.

2 Kings 18:9

Vs. 9-16: The descent Sennacherib made upon Judah, was a great calamity to that kingdom, by which God would try the faith of Hezekiah, and chastise the people. The secret dislike, the hypocrisy, and lukewarmness of numbers, require correction; such trials purify the faith and hope of the upright, and bring them to simple dependence on God.

2 Kings 18:17

Vs. 17-37: Rabshakeh tries to convince the Jews, that it was to no purpose for them to stand it out. What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? It were well if sinners would submit to the force of this argument, in seeking peace with God. It is, therefore, our wisdom to yield to him, because it is in vain to contend with him: what confidence is that which those trust in who stand out against him? A great deal of art there is in this speech of Rabshakeh; but a great deal of pride, malice, falsehood, and blasphemy. Hezekiah's nobles held their peace. There is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak; and there are those to whom to offer

any thing religious or rational, is to cast pearls before swine. Their silence made Rabshakeh yet more proud and secure. It is often best to leave such persons to rail and blaspheme; a decided expression of abhorrence is the best testimony against them. The matter must be left to the Lord, who has all hearts in his hands, committing ourselves unto him in humble submission, believing hope, and fervent prayer.

CHAPTER 19

Hezekiah receives an answer of peace. (1-7) Sennacherib's letter. (8-19) His fall is prophesied. (20-34) The Assyrian army destroyed, Sennacherib slain. (35-37)

2 Kings 19:1

Vs. 1-7: Hezekiah discovered deep concern at the dishonor done to God by Rabshakeh's blasphemy. Those who speak from God to us, we should in a particular manner desire to speak to God for us. The great Prophet is the great Intercessor. Those are likely to prevail with God, who lift up their hearts in prayer. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. While his servants can speak nothing but terror to the profane, the proud, and the hypocritical, they have comfortable words for the discouraged believer.

2 Kings 19:8

Vs. 8-19: Prayer is the never-failing resource of the tempted Christian, whether struggling with outward difficulties or inward foes. At the mercy-seat of his almighty Friend he opens his heart, spreads his case, like Hezekiah, and makes his appeal. When he can discern that the glory of God is engaged on his side, faith gains the victory, and he rejoices that he shall never be moved. The best pleas in prayer are taken from God's honor.

2 Kings 19:20

Vs. 20-34: All Sennacherib's motions were under the Divine cognizance. God himself undertakes to defend the city; and that person, that place, cannot but be safe, which he undertakes to protect. The invasion of the Assyrians probably had prevented the land from being sown that year. The next is supposed to have been the sabbatical year, but the Lord engaged that the produce of the land should be sufficient for their support during those two years. As the performance of this promise was to be after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, it was a sign to Hezekiah's faith, assuring him of that present deliverance, as an earnest of the Lord's future care of the kingdom of Judah. This the Lord would perform, not for

their righteousness, but his own glory. May our hearts be as good ground, that his word may strike root therein, and bring forth fruit in our lives.

2 Kings 19:35

Vs. 35-37: That night which followed the sending of this message to Hezekiah, the main body of their army was slain. See how weak the mightiest men are before Almighty God. Who ever hardened himself against Him and prospered? The king of Assyria's own sons became his murderers. Those whose children are undutiful, ought to consider whether they have not been so to their Father in heaven? This history exhibits a strong proof of the good of firm trust and confidence in God. He will afflict, but not forsake his people. It is well when our troubles drive us to our knees. But does it not reprove our unbelief? How unwilling are we to rest on the declaration of Jehovah! How desirous to know in what way he will save us! How impatient when relief is delayed! But we must wait for the fulfilling of his word. Lord, help our unbelief.

CHAPTER 20

*Hezekiah's sickness, His recovery in answer to prayer. (1-11)
Hezekiah shows his treasures to the ambassadors from Babylon,
His death. (12-21)*

2 Kings 20:1

Vs. 1-11: Hezekiah was sick unto death, in the same year in which the king of Assyria besieged Jerusalem. A warning to prepare for death was brought to Hezekiah by Isaiah. Prayer is one of the best preparations for death, because by it we fetch in strength and grace from God, to enable us to finish well. He wept sorely: some gather from hence that he was unwilling to die; it is in the nature of man to dread the separation of soul and body. There was also something peculiar in Hezekiah's case; he was now in the midst of his usefulness. Let Hezekiah's prayer, see **Isaiah 38**, interpret his tears; in that is nothing which is like his having been under that fear of death, which has bondage or torment. Hezekiah's piety made his sickbed easy. "O Lord, remember now;" he does not speak as if God needed to be put in mind of any thing by us; nor, as if the reward might be demanded as due; it is Christ's righteousness only that is the purchase of mercy and grace. Hezekiah does not pray, Lord, spare me; but, Lord, remember me; whether I live or die, let me be thine. God always hears the prayers of the broken in heart, and will give health, length of days, and temporal deliverances, as much and as long as is truly good for them. Means were to be used for Hezekiah's recovery; yet, considering to what a height the disease was come, and how suddenly it was checked, the cure was miraculous. It is our duty, when sick, to use such means as are proper to help nature, else we do not trust God, but tempt him. For the confirmation of his faith, the shadow of the sun was carried back, and the light was continued longer than usual, in a miraculous manner. This work of wonder shows the power of God in heaven as well as on earth, the great notice he takes of prayer, and the great favor he bears to his chosen.

2 Kings 20:12

Vs. 12-21: The king of Babylon was at this time independent of the king of Assyria, though shortly after subdued by him. Hezekiah showed his

treasures and armor, and other proofs of his wealth and power. This was the effect of pride and ostentation, and departing from simple reliance on God. He also seems to have missed the opportunity of speaking to the Chaldeans, about Him who had wrought the miracles which excited their attention, and of pointing out to them the absurdity and evil of idolatry. What is more common than to show our friends our houses and possessions? But if we do this in the pride of our hearts, to gain applause from men, not giving praise to God, it becomes sin in us, as it did in Hezekiah. We may expect vexation from every object with which we are unduly pleased. Isaiah, who had often been Hezekiah's comforter, is now his reprover. The blessed Spirit is both, ~~John~~ John 16:7,8. Ministers must be both, as there is occasion. Hezekiah allowed the justice of the sentence, and God's goodness in the respite. Yet the prospect respecting his family and nation must have given him many painful feelings. Hezekiah was indeed humbled for the pride of his heart. And blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

CHAPTER 21

Wicked reign of Manasseh. (1-9) The prophetic denunciations against Judah. (10-18) Wicked reign and death of Amon. (19-26)

2 Kings 21:1

Vs. 1-9: Young persons generally desire to become their own masters, and to have early possession of riches and power. But this, for the most part, ruins their future comfort, and causes mischief to others. It is much happier when young persons are sheltered under the care of parents or guardians, till age gives experience and discretion. Though such young persons are less indulged, they will afterwards be thankful. Manasseh wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, as if on purpose to provoke him to anger; he did more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed. Manasseh went on from bad to worse, till carried captive to Babylon. The people were ready to comply with his wishes, to obtain his favor and because it suited their depraved unequaled. In the reformation of large bodies, numbers are mere time-servers, and in temptation fall away.

2 Kings 21:10

Vs. 10-18: Here is the doom of Judah and Jerusalem. The words used represent the city emptied and utterly desolate, yet not destroyed thereby, but cleansed, and to be kept for the future dwelling of the Jews: forsaken, yet not finally, and only as to outward privileges, for individual believers were preserved in that visitation. The Lord will cast off any professing people who dishonor him by their crimes, but never will desert his cause on earth. In the book of Chronicles we read of Manasseh's repentance, and acceptance with God; thus we may learn not to despair of the recovery of the greatest sinners. But let none dare to persist in sin, presuming that they may repent and reform when they please. There are a few instances of the conversion of notorious sinners, that none may despair; and but few, that none may presume.

2 Kings 21:19

Vs. 19-26: Amon profaned God's house with his idols; and God suffered his house to be polluted with his blood. How unrighteous soever they were that did it, God was righteous who suffered it to be done. Now was a happy change from one of the worst, to one of the best of the kings of Judah. Once more Judah was tried with a reformation. Whether the Lord bears long with presumptuous offenders, or speedily cuts them off in their sins, all must perish who persist in refusing to walk in his ways.

CHAPTER 22

Josiah's good reign, His care for repairing the temple, The book of the law found. (1-10) Josiah consults Huldah the prophetess. (11-20)

2 Kings 22:1

Vs. 1-10: The different event of Josiah's early succession from that of Manasseh, must be ascribed to the distinguishing grace of God; yet probably the persons that trained him up were instruments in producing this difference. His character was most excellencies. Had the people joined in the reformation as heartily as he persevered in it, blessed effects would have followed. But they were wicked, and had become fools in idolatry. We do not obtain full knowledge of the state of Judah from the historical records, unless we refer to the writings of the prophets who lived at the time. In repairing the temple, the book of the law was found, and brought to the king. It seems, this book of the law was lost and missing; carelessly mislaid and neglected, as some throw their Bibles into corners, or maliciously concealed by some of the idolaters. God's care of the Bible plainly shows his interest in it. Whether this was the only copy in being or not, the things contained in it were new, both to the king and to the high priest. No summaries, extracts, or collections out of the Bible, can convey and preserve the knowledge of God and his will, like the Bible itself. It was no marvel that the people were so corrupt, when the book of the law was so scarce; they that corrupted them, no doubt, used arts to get that book out of their hands. The abundance of Bibles we possess aggravates our national sins; for what greater contempt of God can we show, than to refuse to read his word when put into our hands, or, reading it, not to believe and obey it? By the holy law is the knowledge of sin, and by the blessed gospel is the knowledge of salvation. When the former is understood in its strictness and excellencies, the sinner begins to inquire, What must I do to be saved? And the ministers of the gospel point out to him Jesus Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

2 Kings 22:11

Vs. 11-20: The book of the law is read before the king. Those best honor their Bibles, who study them; daily feed on that bread, and walk by that light. Convictions of sin and wrath should put us upon this inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? Also, what we may expect, and must provide for. Those who are truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath, cannot but be very anxious how they may be saved. Huldah let Josiah know what judgments God had in store for Judah and Jerusalem. The generality of the people were hardened, and their hearts unhumbled, but Josiah's heart was tender. This is tenderness of heart, and thus he humbled himself before the Lord. Those who most fear God's wrath, are least likely to feel it. Though Josiah was mortally wounded in battle, yet he died in peace with God, and went to glory. Whatever such persons suffer or witness, they are gathered to the grave in peace, and shall enter into the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

CHAPTER 23

Josiah reads the law, and renews the covenant. (1-3) He destroys idolatry. (4-14) The reformation extended to Israel, A Passover kept. (15-24) Josiah slain by Pharaoh-nechoh. (25-30) Wicked reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim. (31-37)

2 Kings 23:1

Vs. 1-3: Josiah had received a message from God, that there was no preventing the ruin of Jerusalem, but that he should only deliver his own soul; yet he does his duty, and leaves the event to God. He engaged the people in the most solemn manner to abolish idolatry, and to serve God in righteousness and true holiness. Though most were formal or hypocritical herein, yet much outward wickedness would be prevented, and they were accountable to God for their own conduct.

2 Kings 23:4

Vs. 4-14: What abundance of wickedness in Judah and Jerusalem! One would not have believed it possible, that in Judah, where God was known, in Israel, where his name was great, in Salem, in Zion, where his dwelling-place was, such abominations should be found. Josiah had reigned eighteen years, and had himself set the people a good example, and kept up religion according to the Divine law; yet, when he came to search for idolatry, the depth and extent were very great. Both common history, and the records of God's word, teach, that all the real godliness or goodness ever found on earth, is derived from the new-creating Spirit of Jesus Christ.

2 Kings 23:15

Vs. 15-24: Josiah's zeal extended to the cities of Israel within his reach. He carefully preserved the sepulchre of that man of God, who came from Judah to foretell the throwing down of Jeroboam's altar. When they had cleared the country of the old leaven of idolatry, then they applied themselves to the keeping of the feast. There was not holden such a Passover in any of the foregoing reigns. The revival of a long-neglected

ordinance, filled them with holy joy; and God recompense their zeal in destroying idolatry with uncommon tokens of his presence and favor. We have reason to think that during the remainder of Josiah's reign, religion flourished.

2 Kings 23:25

Vs. 25-30: Upon reading these verses, we must say, Lord, though thy righteousness be as the great mountains, evident, plainly to be seen, and past dispute; yet thy judgments are a great deep, unfathomable, and past finding out. The reforming king is cut off in the midst of his usefulness, in mercy to him, that he might not see the evil coming upon his kingdom: but in wrath to his people, for his death was an inlet to their desolations.

2 Kings 23:31

Vs. 31-37: After Josiah was laid in his grave, one trouble came on another, till, in twenty-two years, Jerusalem was destroyed. The wicked perished in great numbers, the remnant were purified, and Josiah's reformation had raised up some to join the few who were the precious seed of their future church and nation. A little time, and slender abilities, often suffice to undo the good which pious men have, for a course of years, been laboring to effect. But, blessed be God, the good work which he begins by his regenerating Spirit, cannot be done away, but withstands all changes and temptations.

CHAPTER 24

Jehoiakim subdued by Nebuchadnezzar. (1-7) Jehoiachin captive in Babylon. (8-20)

~~1241~~ **2 Kings 24:1**

Vs. 1-7: If Jehoiakim had served the Lord, he had not been servant to Nebuchadnezzar. If he had been content with his servitude, and true to his word, his condition had been no worse; but, rebelling against Babylon, he plunged himself into more trouble. See what need nations have to lament the sins of their fathers, lest they smart for them. Threatenings will be fulfilled as certainly as promises, if the sinner's repentance prevent not.

~~1248~~ **2 Kings 24:8**

Vs. 8-20: Jehoiachin reigned but three months, yet long enough to show that he justly smarted for his fathers' sins, for he trod in their steps. His unequaled was entrusted with the government. This Zedekiah was the last of the kings of Judah. Though the judgments of God upon the three kings before him might have warned him, he did that which was evil, like them. When those entrusted with the counsels of a nation act unwisely, and against their true interest, we ought to notice the displeasure of God in it. It is for the sins of a people that God hides from them the things that belong to the public peace. And in fulfilling the secret purposes of his justice, the Lord needs only leave men to the blindness of their own minds, or to the lusts of their own hearts. The gradual approach of Divine judgments affords sinners space for repentance, and believers leisure to prepare for meeting the calamity, while it shows the obstinacy of those who will not forsake their sins.

CHAPTER 25

Jerusalem besieged, Zedekiah taken. (1-7) The temple burnt, The people carried into captivity. (8-21) The rest of the Jews flee into Egypt, Evil-merodach relieves the captivity of Jehoiachin. (22-30)

2 Kings 25:1

Vs. 1-7: Jerusalem was so fortified, that it could not be taken till famine rendered the besieged unable to resist. In the prophecy and Lamentations of Jeremiah, we find more of this event; here it suffices to say, that the impiety and misery of the besieged were very great. At length the city was taken by storm. The king, his family, and his great men escaped in the night, by secret passages. But those deceive themselves who think to escape God's judgments, as much as those who think to brave them. By what befell Zedekiah, two prophecies, which seemed to contradict each other, were both fulfilled. Jeremiah prophesied that Zedekiah should be brought to Babylon, ^{<2815>}Jeremiah 32:5; ^{<2816>}34:3; Ezekiel, that he should not see Babylon, ^{<2817>}Ezekiel 12:13. He was brought thither, but his eyes being put out, he did not see it.

2 Kings 25:8

Vs. 8-21: The city and temple were burnt, and, it is probable, the ark in it. By this, God showed how little he cares for the outward pomp of his worship, when the life and power of religion are neglected. The walls of Jerusalem were thrown down, and the people carried captive to Babylon. The vessels of the temple were carried away. When the things signified were sinned away, what should the signs stand there for? It was righteous with God to deprive those of the benefit of his worship, who had preferred false worships before it; those that would have many altars, now shall have none. As the Lord spared not the angels that sinned, as he doomed the whole race of villainy men to the grave, and all unbelievers to hell, and as he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, we need not wonder at any miseries he may bring upon guilty nations, churches, or persons.

2 Kings 25:22

Vs. 22-30: The king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah to be the governor and protector of the Jews left in their land. But the things of their peace were so hidden from their eyes, that they knew not when they were well off. Ishmael basely slew him and all his friends, and, against the counsel of Jeremiah, the rest went to Egypt. Thus was a full end made of them by their own folly and disobedience; see Jeremiah chap. 40 to 45. Jehoiachin was released out of prison, where he had been kept 37 years. Let none say that they shall never see good again, because they have long seen little but evil: the most miserable know not what turn Providence may yet give to their affairs, nor what comforts they are reserved for, according to the days wherein they have been afflicted. Even in this world the Savior brings a release from bondage to the distressed sinner who seeks him, bestowing foretastes of the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. Sin alone can hurt us; Jesus alone can do good to sinners.