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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
2 KINGS

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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THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

OTHERWISE CALLED THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS

- Year from the Creation, according to the English Bible, 3108.
- Year before the birth of Christ, 892.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity 896.
- Year since the Deluge, according to Archbishop Usher and the English Bible, 1452.
- Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2206.
- Chronologers vary very considerably in their calculations of the time which elapsed between the flood and the birth of Abraham, the difference of the two extremes amounting to *nine hundred* years! Archbishop Usher's computation is from the common Hebrew text, with the single exception of fixing the birth of Abraham in the *one hundred and thirtieth* year of the life of his father, instead of the *seventieth*, in order to reconcile ^{<01126>}**Genesis 11:26, 32**, with ^{<4470>}**Acts 7:4**. But these passages are better reconciled, in the opinion of Dr. *Kennicott*, by stating (with the Samaritan Pentateuch) the whole life of Terah to have been *one hundred and forty-five* years, instead of *two hundred and five*, as in our common Bibles.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 289.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 115.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 79.
- Year before the era of Iphitus, who re-established the Olympic Games, *three hundred and thirty-eight* years after their institution by Hercules, or about *eight hundred and eighty-four* years before the commencement of the Christian era, 12.
- Year before the conquest of Corcebus at Elis, usually styled the first Olympiad, (being the 28th Olympiad after their re-establishment by Iphitus,) 120.

- Year before the Varronian or generally received era of the building of Rome, 143.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Cato and the *Fasti Consulares*, 144.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Polybius, the historian, 145.
- Year before the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, who lived about *two hundred and twenty-five* years before the Christian era, 149.
- Year before the commencement of the Nabonassarean era, 149.
- The years of this epoch contained uniformly 365 days, so that 1461 Nabonassarean were equal to 1460 Julian years. This era commenced on the fourth of the calends of March, (Feb. 26,) B.C. 747; which was the year in which Romulus laid the foundation of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor.
- Year of the Julian Period, 3818.
- Year of the Dionysian Period, 94.
- Cycle of the Sun, 10.
- Cycle of the Moon, 18.
- Year of Megacles, the sixth perpetual archon of the Athenians, 26.
- Ocrazeres, the immediate predecessor of Sardanapalus, was king over the Assyrians about this time, according to Strauchius: but when this king reigned is very uncertain, Scaliger fixing the fall of Sardanapalus, which ended the Assyrian empire, in the year of the Julian Period, 3841; Langius, in 3852 of the same epocha; and Eusebius, in the year before Christ, 820.
- Year of Agrippa Silvius, the eleventh king of the Latins, 20.
- Year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, 18.
- Year of Ahaziah, king of Israel, 2.
- Last year of the Prophet Elijah.
- Tenth year of Elisha.

CHAPTER 1

Ahaziah, being hurt by a fall, sends messengers to Baal-zebul to inquire whether he shall recover, 1, 2. They are met by Elijah, who sends them back with the information that he shall surely die, 3-8. The king sends a captain and fifty men, to bring Elijah to Samaria, on which fire comes down from heaven, and destroys both him and his men, 9, 10. Another captain and fifty men are sent, who are likewise destroyed, 11, 12. A third is sent, who behaves himself humbly, and Elijah is commanded to accompany him; he obeys, comes to the king, reproves his idolatry, and announces his death, 13-16. Ahaziah dies and Jehoram reigns in his stead, 17, 18.

In the *preface* to the First Book of Kings, I have spoken at large concerning both these books, the author, time of writing, &c., &c., to which I must refer my readers, as that preface is *common* to both. See **Clarke** “~~<1010>~~ **1 Kings 1:1**”.

The Second Book of Kings contains the history of *three hundred and eight* years, from the rebellion of Moab, A.M. 3108, to the ruin of the kingdom of Judah, A.M. 3416.

The history, on the whole, exhibits little less than a series of crimes, disasters, Divine benefits, and Divine judgments. In the *kingdom of Judah* we meet with a few kings who feared God, and promoted the interests of pure religion in the land; but the major part were idolaters and profligates of the highest order.

The *kingdom of Israel* was still more corrupt: all its kings were determined idolaters; profligate, vicious, and cruel tyrants. *Elijah* and *Elisha* stood up in the behalf of God and truth in this fallen, idolatrous kingdom, and bore a strong testimony against the corruptions of the princes, and the profligacy of the people: their powerful ministry was confined to the *ten tribes*; Judah had its own prophets, and those in considerable number.

At length the avenging hand of God fell first upon Israel, and afterwards upon *Judah*. Israel after many convulsions, torn by domestic and foreign wars, was at length wholly subjugated by the king of Assyria, the people led away into captivity, and the land re-peopled by strangers, A.M. 3287.

The kingdom of Judah continued some time longer, but was at last overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar; Zedekiah, its last king, was taken prisoner; his eyes put out; and the principal part of the people were carried

into captivity, which lasted about *seventy* years. The captivity began under Jehoiakim, A.M. 3402, and ended under Belshazzar, A.M. 2470 or 3472. There was after this a partial restoration of the Jews, but they never more rose to any consequence among the nations; and at last their civil polity was finally dissolved by the Romans, and their temple burnt, A.D. 70; and from that time until now they became fugitives and vagabonds over the face of the earth, universally detested by mankind. But should they not be loved for their fathers' *sake*? Are they not men and brothers? Will persecution and contempt convert them to *Christianity*, or to any thing that is good?

NOTES ON CHAP. 1

Verse 1. Moab rebelled] The Moabites had been subdued by David, and laid under tribute, ^{<12101>}**2 Kings 3:4**, and ^{<10802>}**2 Samuel 8:2**. After the division of the two kingdoms, the Moabites fell *partly* under the dominion of Israel, and partly under that of Judah, until the death of Ahab, when they arose and shook off this yoke. Jehoram confederated with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, in order to reduce them. See this war, ^{<12101>}**2 Kings 3:5**.

Verse 2. Fell down through a lattice] Perhaps either through the flat roof of his house, or over or through the balustrades with which the roof was surrounded.

Go, inquire of Baal-zebub] Literally, the *fly-god*, or *master of flies*. The *Septuagint* has βααλ μυιαν, *Baal the fly*. He was the tutelary god of Ekron, and probably was used at first as a kind of *telesm*, to *drive away flies*. He became afterwards a very respectable devil, and was supposed to have great power and influence. In the New Testament Beelzebub is a common name for Satan himself, or the prince of devils. **See Clarke's notes on** ^{<41025>}**Matthew 10:25**".

Verse 4. But shalt surely die.] The true God tells you this; he in whose hands are both life and death, who can kill and make alive. Baal-zebub can do nothing; God has determined that your master shall die.

Verse 8. He was a hairy man] That is, he wore a *rough garment*, either made of camels' hair, as his successor John Baptist's was, or he wore a skin *dressed with the hair on*. Some think that the meaning is, he had very *long hair* and a *long beard*. The ancient prophets all wore rough garments,

or upper coats made of the *skins of beasts*: *They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins*, says the apostle, ⁸¹⁵⁷ **Hebrews 11:37**.

Verse 9. A captain of fifty with his fifty.] It is impossible that such a man as Ahaziah, in such circumstances, could have had any *friendly* designs in sending a *captain and fifty soldiers* for the prophet; and the manner in which they are treated shows plainly that they went with a *hostile* intent.

And he spake unto him, Thou man of God] Thou prophet of the Most High.

Verse 10. And there came down fire] Some have blamed the prophet for destroying these men, by bringing down fire from heaven upon them. But they do not consider that it was no more possible for *Elijah* to bring down fire from heaven, than for *them* to do it. *God alone* could send the fire; and as he is *just* and *good*, he would not have destroyed these men had there not been a *sufficient cause* to justify the act. It was not to *please Elijah*, or to *gratify any vindictive humour* in him, that God thus acted; but to show his own *power* and *justice*. No entreaty of *Elijah* could have induced God to have performed an act that was *wrong* in itself. *Elijah*, personally, had no concern in the business. God led him simply to *announce* on these occasions what he himself had determined *to do*. *If I be a man of God*, i.e., as surely as I am a man of God, *fire SHALL come down from heaven, and SHALL consume thee and thy fifty*. This is the literal meaning of the original; and by it we see that *Elijah's* words were only *declarative*, and not *imprecatory*.

Verse 15. And the angel of the Lord said-Go down with him] This is an additional proof that *Elijah* was then acting under *particular inspirations*: he had neither *will* nor *design* of his own. He waited to know the counsel, declare the will, and obey the command, of his God.

And he arose, and went down] He did not even regard his personal safety or his life; he goes without the least hesitation to the king, though he had reason to suppose he would be doubly irritated by his prediction, and the death of *one hundred* of his men. But with all these consequences *he* had nothing to do; he was the ambassador of the King eternal, and his honour and life were in the hands of his Master.

Verse 17. And Jehoram reigned in his stead] The *Vulgate*, *Septuagint*, and *Syriac* say, *Jehoram HIS BROTHER reigned in his stead, in the second*

year of Jehoram. There were two Jehorams who were contemporary: the first, the son of Ahab, brother to Ahaziah, and his successor in the kingdom of Israel; the second, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, who succeeded his father in Judah. But there is a difficulty here: “How is it that Jehoram the brother of Ahaziah began to reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, seeing that, according to ^{<1281>}**2 Kings 3:1**, he began his reign in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat; and, according to ^{<12816>}**2 Kings 8:16**, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel?” Calmet and others answer thus: “Jehoram king of Israel began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, which was the second year after this same Jehoshaphat had given the viceroyalty to his son Jehoram; and afterwards Jehoshaphat communicated the royalty to Jehoram his successor, two years before his death, and the fifth year of Jehoram, king of Israel.” Dr. Lightfoot takes another method:—“Observe,” says he, “these texts, ^{<1251>}**1 Kings 22:51**: Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years; and ^{<12117>}**2 Kings 1:17**: And Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken, and Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; and ^{<1281>}**2 Kings 3:1**: Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. By these scriptures it is most plain, that both Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, and Ahaziah the son of Ahab, began to reign in the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat; for who sees not in these texts that Jehoshaphat’s eighteenth, when Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign, is called the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat? Now Jehoshaphat’s reign was not yet expired by eight or nine years, for this was in his seventeenth year, and he reigned twenty-five years, ^{<1222>}**1 Kings 22:42**; nor was Ahab’s reign expired by two or three years, for this was in his twentieth year, and he reigned twenty-two years. ^{<11629>}**1 Kings 16:29**. But the reason why both their sons came thus into their thrones in their lifetime, and both in the same year, was because their fathers, Jehoshaphat and Ahab, were both engaged in the war against the Syrians about Ramoth-gilead: and while they were providing for it, and carrying it on, they made their sons viceroys, and set them to reign in their stead, while they were absent or employed upon that expedition.” This is very probable, and seems well supported by the above texts, and would solve all the difficulties with which many have been puzzled and not a few stumbled, had we sufficient

evidence for the vicerealty here mentioned.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 2

Elijah, about to be taken up to heaven, goes in company with Elisha from Gilgal to Beth-el, 1, 2. Thence to Jericho, 3-5. And thence to Jordan, 6, 7. Elijah smites the waters with his mantle; they divide, and he and Elisha pass over on dry ground, 8. Elijah desires Elisha to ask what he should do for him; who requests a double portion of his spirit, which is promised on a certain condition, 9, 10. A chariot and horses of fire descend; and Elijah mounts, and ascends by a whirlwind to heaven, 11. Elisha gets his mantle, comes back to Jordan, smites the waters with it, and they divide, and he goes over, 12-14. The sons of the prophets see that the spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha, 15. They propose to send fifty men to seek Elijah, supposing the Spirit of the Lord might have cast him on some mountain or valley; after three days' search, they return not having found him, 16-18. The people of Jericho apply to Elisha to heal their unwholesome water, 19. He casts salt into the spring in the name of Jehovah, and the water becomes wholesome, 20-22. Forty-two young persons of Bethel, mocking him, are slain by two she-bears, 23, 24. He goes to Carmel, and returns to Samaria, 25.

NOTES ON CHAP. 2

Verse 1. When the Lord would take up Elijah] It appears that God had revealed this intended translation, not only to Elijah himself, but also to Elisha, and to the schools of the prophets, both at Beth-el and Jericho, so that they were all expecting this solemn event.

Verse 2. Tarry here, I pray thee] He either made these requests through *humility*, not wishing any person to be witness of the honour conferred on him by God, or with the desire to prove the fidelity of Elisha, whether he would continue to follow and serve him.

Verse 3. Knowest thou that the Lord] Thus we see that it was a matter well known to all the sons of the prophets. This day the Lord will take thy master and instructor from thee.

Verse 7. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets] They fully expected this extraordinary event, and they could have known it only from Elijah himself, or by a direct revelation from God.

Verse 8. Took his mantle] *την μηλωτην αυτου*, *his sheep-skin*, says the *Septuagint*. The skins of beasts, dressed with the hair on, were formerly worn by *prophets* and *priests* as the simple insignia of their office. As the *civil authority* was often lodged in the hands of such persons, particularly among the Jews, *mantles* of this kind were used by *kings* and *high civil officers* when they bore no sacred character. The custom continues to the present day; a *lamb's skin hood* or *cloak* is the badge which certain graduates in our universities wear; and the royal robes of kings and great officers of state are adorned with the *skins* of the animal called the *ermine*.

They were divided hither and thither] This was a most astonishing miracle, and could be performed only by the almighty power of God.

Verse 9. A double portion of thy spirit be upon me.] This in reference to the law, ^{<21:17>}**Deuteronomy 21:17:** *He shall acknowledge the first-born, by giving him a DOUBLE PORTION of all that he hath—the right of the first-born is his.* Elisha considered himself the only child or first-born of Elijah, as the disciples of eminent teachers were called their children; so here he claims a double portion of his spiritual influence, any other disciples coming in for a *single share* only. *Sons of the prophets* means no more than the *disciples* or *scholars* of the prophets. The original words *μῦνν γρ* *pi shenayim*, mean rather *two parts*, than *double the quantity*.

Verse 10. A hard thing] This is what is not in *my* power, God alone can give this; yet *if thou see me taken away from thee, it shall be so*. Perhaps this means no more than, “If thou continue with me till I am translated, God will grant this to thee;” for on the mere *seeing* or *not seeing* him in the moment in which he was taken away, this Divine gift could not depend.

Verse 11. A chariot of fire, and horses of fire] That is a chariot and horses of the most *resplendent glory*, which, manifesting itself in *coruscations* or *shooting rays*, seemed to be like blazing fire, or like the sun in his strength. Some think that this circumstance, known in the heathen world, gave rise to the fable of *Apollo*, or the *sun*, being seated in a *blazing chariot*, drawn by *horses which breathed and snorted fire*. These horses were *four*, and called *Pyrœis*, *Eous*, *Æthon*, and *Phlegon*; all which words signify *fire* or *resplendent light*. So OVID:—

*Nec tibi quadrupedes animosos ignibus illis
Quos in pectore habent, quos ore et naribus efflant,
In promptu regere est: vix me patimur, ut acres
Incaluere animi; cervixque repugnat habenis.
OVID, Met. Lib. ii., 84.*

*Interea volucres Pyræis, Eous, et Æthon,
Solis equi, quartusque Phlegon, hinnitibus auras
Flammiferis implent, pedibusque repagula pulsant
Ib. 153.*

*Meanwhile the restless horses neighed aloud,
Breathing out fire and pawing where they stood,
Nor would you find it easy to compose
The mettled steeds, when from their nostrils flows
The scorching fire, that in their entrils glows.
Even I their headstrong fury scarce restrain,
When they grow worm, and restiff to the rein.
DRYDEN.*

Perhaps the whole of this fable, which represents Phæthon son of Apollo requesting to drive the chariot of his father (the horses and chariot of fire) for one day, was borrowed from the request of Elisha to his spiritual father Elijah, whom he afterwards saw borne away by a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire drawn by fiery steeds.

Elijah went up-into heaven] He was truly *translated*; and the words here leave us no room to indulge the conjecture of Dr. Priestley, who supposes that as “*Enoch*, (probably *Moses*.) *Elijah*, and *Christ*, had no relation to any other world or planet, they are no doubt in this;” for we are told that *Elijah went up into heaven*; and we know, from the sure testimony of the Scripture, that our blessed Lord is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ever living to make intercession for us.

Verse 12. The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.] The Chaldee translates these words thus: ‘My master, my master! who, by thy intercession, wast of more use to Israel than horses and chariots.’ This is probably the *sense*.

In the Book of **Ecclesiasticus 48:1**, &c., the fiery horses and chariot are considered as an *emblem* of that *burning zeal* which Elijah manifested in the whole of his ministry: “Then stood up Elijah the prophet *as fire*, and his word *burned as a lamp*,” &c.

And rent them in two pieces.] As a sign of *sorrow* for having lost so good and glorious a master.

Verse 13. He took-the mantle] The same with which he had been called by Elijah to the prophetic office, and the same by which Elijah divided Jordan. His having the *mantle* was a proof that he was *invested* with the authority and influence of his master.

Verse 14. Where is the Lord God of Elijah?] The Vulgate gives a strange turn to this verse: *Et percussit aquas, et non sunt divisæ; et dixit, Ubi est Deus Eliæ etiam nunc? Percussitque aquas, et divisæ sunt huc et illuc.* “And he smote the waters, *but they did not divide*; and he said, Where is the God of Elijah even now? And he struck the waters and they were divided hither and thither.” The act of striking the waters seems to be twice repeated in the verse, though we get rid of the *second striking* by rendering the second clause, *when he also had smitten the waters*: which has the same Hebrew words as the first, and which we translate, *he smote the waters*. The Vulgate supposes he smote *once in vain*, perhaps confiding too much in his own strength; and then, having invoked the God of Elijah, he *succeeded*. This distinction is not followed by any of the other versions; nor is the clause, *et non sunt divisæ*, “and they divided not,” expressed by the *Hebrew* text.

Verse 15. The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.] This was a natural conclusion, from seeing him with the *mantle*, and working the same miracle. This disposed them to yield the same obedience to him they had done to his master: and in token of this, *they went out to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him*.

Verse 16. Fifty strong men] Probably the *same fifty* who are mentioned ~~<1007>~~ **2 Kings 2:7**, and who saw Elijah taken up in the whirlwind.

Cast him upon some mountain] Though they saw him *taken up towards heaven*, yet they thought it possible that the Spirit of the Lord might have *descended* with him, and left him on some remote mountain or valley.

Ye shall not send.] He knew that he was translated to heaven, and that therefore it would be useless.

Verse 17. Till he was ashamed] He saw they would not be satisfied unless they made the proposed search; he felt therefore that he could not, with any good grace, resist their importunity any longer.

Verse 19. The water is naught, and the ground barren.] The barrenness of the ground was the effect of the badness of the water.

Verse 21. And cast the salt in there] He cast in the salt at the place where the waters sprang out of the earth. *Jarchi* well observes here, “Salt is a thing which corrupts water; therefore, it is evident that this was a true miracle.” What Elisha did on this occasion, getting the new cruse and throwing in the salt, was only to make the miracle more conspicuous. If the salt could have had any *natural* tendency to render the water salubrious, it could have acted only for a *short time*, and only on that *portion* of the *stream* which now arose from the spring; and in a few moments its effects must have disappeared. But the miracle here was *permanent*: the death of men and cattle, which had been occasioned by the insalubrity of the waters, ceased, the land was no longer barren; and the waters became permanently fit for all agricultural and domestic uses.

Verse 23. There came forth little children out of the city] These were probably the school of some celebrated teacher; but under his instruction they had learned neither piety nor good manners.

Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.] *j r q h l [j r q h l [aleh kereach, aleh kereach.* Does not this imply the grossest insult? *Ascend, thou empty skull, to heaven,* as it is pretended thy master did! This was blasphemy against God; and their punishment (for they were Beth-elite idolaters) was only proportioned to their guilt. Elisha *curst them*, i.e., pronounced a curse upon them, *in the name of the Lord*, *hwhy μvb beshem Yehovah, by the name or authority of Jehovah.* The spirit of their offense lies in their *ridiculing a miracle* of the Lord: the offense was against *Him*, and *He* punished it. It was no petulant humour of the prophet that caused him to pronounce this curse; it was God alone: had it proceeded from a wrong disposition of the prophet, no miracle would have been wrought in order to gratify it.

“But was it not a cruel thing to destroy *forty-two little children*, who, in mere childishness, had simply called the prophet *bare skull*, or *bald head*?” I answer, *Elisha* did not destroy them; he had no power by which he could bring two she-bears out of the wood to destroy them. It was evidently either accidental, or a Divine judgment; and if a judgment, God must be the sole author of it. Elisha’s *curse* must be only *declaratory* of what God was about to do. See on ^{<2>}**2 Kings 1:10**. “But then, as they were *little*

children, they could scarcely be accountable for their conduct; and consequently, it was cruelty to destroy them.” If it was a judgment of God, it could neither be *cruel* nor *unjust*; and I contend, that the prophet had no power by which he could bring these she-bears to fall upon them. But were they *little children*? for *here* the strength of the objection lies. Now I suppose the objection means *children* from *four* to *seven* or *eight* years old; for so we use the word: but the original, $\mu\upsilon\eta\sigma\sigma\ \mu\upsilon\gamma\ \lceil\ n$ *nearim ketannim*, may mean *young men*, for $\hat{\text{c}}\text{q}$ *katon* signifies to be *young*, in opposition to *old*, and is so translated in various places in our Bible; and $\text{r}\ \lceil\ n$ *naar* signifies, not only a *child*, but a *young man*, a *servant*, or even a *soldier*, or one fit to go out to battle; and is so translated in a multitude of places in our common English version. I shall mention but a few, because they are sufficiently decisive: Isaac was called $\text{r}\ \lceil\ n$ *naar* when *twenty-eight* years old, ^{<01216>}**Genesis 21:5-12**; and Joseph was so called when he was *thirty-nine*, ^{<04112>}**Genesis 41:12**. Add to these ^{<12014>}**1 Kings 20:14**: “And Ahab said, By whom [shall the Assyrians be delivered into my hand?] And he said, Thus saith the Lord, by the YOUNG MEN, $\text{yr}\ \lceil\ \text{nb}$ *benaarey*, of the *princes of the provinces*.” That these were *soldiers*, probably *militia*, or a selection from the militia, which served as a *bodyguard* to Ahab, the event sufficiently declares; and the persons that mocked Elisha were perfectly accountable for their conduct.

But is it not possible that these *forty-two* were a set of unlucky young men, who had been employed in the *wood*, destroying the *whelps* of these same *she-bears*, who now pursued them, and tore them to pieces, for the injury they had done? We have already heard of the ferocity of *a bear robbed of her whelps*; see at the end of ^{<10172>}**2 Samuel 17:28**. The mention of *SHE-bears* gives some colour to the above conjecture; and, probably, at the time when these young fellows insulted the prophet, the bears might be tracing the footsteps of the murderers of their young, and thus came upon them in the midst of their insults, God’s providence ordering these occurrences so as to make this natural effect appear as a Divine cause. If the conjecture be correct, the bears were prepared by their loss to execute the curse of the prophet, and God’s justice guided them to the spot to punish the iniquity that had been just committed.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 3

The reign and idolatry of Jehoram, king of Israel, 1-3. Mesha, king of Moab, rebels against Israel, 4, 5. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom join against the Moabites, and are brought into great distress for want of water, 6-10. The three kings go to Elisha to inquire of the Lord; who promises them water, and a complete victory, 11-19. Water comes the next morning, and fills the trenches which these kings had made in the valley, 20. The Moabites arm against them; and suppose, when they see the sun shining upon the waters, which look like blood, that the confederate kings have fallen out, and slain each other; and that they have nothing to do but take the spoil, 21-23. The Israelites attack and completely rout them, beat down their cities, and mar their land, 24, 25. The king of Moab, having made an unsuccessful attack on the king of Edom, takes his eldest son, and offers him for a burnt-offering upon the wall; and there is great indignation against Israel, 26, 27.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3

Verse 2. He put away the image of Baal] He abolished his worship; but he continued that of the *calves* at Dan and Beth-el.

Verse 4. Was a sheepmaster] The original is **דִּקְן** *naked*, of which the Septuagint could make nothing, and therefore retained the Hebrew word **וּקְנֵה־שֶׁה**: but the Chaldee has **ytyg yrm** *marey githey*, “a sheepmaster;” *Aquila* has **ποιμνιοτροφος**; and *Symmachus*, **τρεφων βοσκηματα**; all to the same sense. The original signifies one who *marks* or *brands*, probably from the *marking* of sheep. He fed many sheep, &c., and had them *all marked* in a particular way, in order to ascertain his property.

A hundred thousand lambs] The *Chaldee* and *Arabic* have *a hundred thousand fat oxen*.

Verse 7. My people as thy people] We find that Jehoshaphat maintained the same friendly intercourse with the *son*, as he did with the *father*. See ^{<11220>}**1 Kings 22:4**.

Verse 8. Through the wilderness of Edom.] Because he expected the king of Edom to join them, as we find he did; for, being tributary to Judah, he was obliged to do it.

Verse 9. A compass of seven days' journey] By taking a circuitous route, to go round the southern part of the Dead Sea, they probably intended to surprise the Moabites; but it appears their journey was ill planned, as they at last got into a country in which it was impossible to obtain *water*, and they were brought in consequence to the utmost extremity.

Verse 10. The Lord hath called these three kings together] That is, This is a Divine judgment; God has judicially blinded us, and permitted us to take this journey to our destruction.

Verse 11. Is there not here a prophet of the Lord] The kings of Judah still acknowledged the true God, and him only.

Poured water on the hands of Elijah] That is, was his constant and confidential *servant*.

Verse 12. The word of the Lord is with him.] He has the gift of prophecy.

Verse 13. Get thee to the prophets of thy father] This was a just, but cutting reproof.

Nay] The Chaldee adds here, *I beseech thee, do not call the sins of this impiety to remembrance, but ask mercy for us*; because the Lord hath called, &c. The Arabic has, *I beseech thee, do not mention of our transgressions, but use kindness towards us*. It is very likely that some such words were spoken on the occasion; but these are the only *versions* which make this addition.

Verse 14. Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat] He worshipped the true God; Jehoram was an idolater.

Verse 15. Bring me a minstrel.] A person who played on the *harp*. The rabbins, and many Christians, suppose that Elisha's mind was considerably irritated and grieved by the bad behaviour of the young men at Beth-el, and their tragical end, and by the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel; and therefore called for Divine psalmody, that it might calm his spirits, and render him more susceptible of the prophetic influence. To be able to discern the voice of God, and the operation of his hand, it is necessary that the *mind be calm*, and the *passions all in harmony*, under the direction of *reason*; that reason may be under the influence of the Divine Spirit.

The hand of the Lord came upon him.] The playing of the harper had the desired effect; his mind was calmed, and the power of God descended upon him. This effect of music was generally acknowledged in every civilized nation. *Cicero*, in his *Tusculan Questions*, lib. iv., says, that “the Pythagoreans were accustomed to calm their minds, and soothe their passions, by singing and playing upon the harp.” *Pythagoræi mentes suas a cogitationum intentione cantu fidibusque ad tranquillitatem traducebant.* I have spoken elsewhere of the heathen priests who endeavoured to imitate the true prophets, and were as *actually filled with the devil* as the others were *with the true God*. The former were thrown into *violent agitations* and *contortions* by the influence of the demons which possessed them, while the *latter* were in a state of the utmost serenity and composure.

Verse 16. Make this valley full of ditches.] The word *l j n nachal* may be translated *brook*, as it is by the *Vulgate* and *Septuagint*. There probably was a *river* here, but it was now *dry*; and the prophet desires that they would enlarge the channel, and cut out various canals from it, and reservoirs, where water might be collected for the refreshment of the army and of the cattle; and these were to be made so wide that the reflection of the sun’s rays from this water might be the means of confounding and destroying the Moabites.

Verse 17. Ye shall not see wind] There shall be no *wind* to collect vapours, and there shall be no *showers*, and yet the *whole* bed of this river, and all the *new made canals*, shall be filled with water.

Verse 19. Shall fell every good tree] Every tree by which your enemies may serve themselves for fortifications, &c. But surely *fruit trees* are not intended here; for this was positively against the law of God,

<63019>**Deuteronomy 20:19, 20:** “When thou shalt besiege a city-thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof-for the tree of the field is man’s life-only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down.”

Stop all wells of water] In those hot countries this would lead sooner than any thing else to reduce an enemy.

Mar every good piece of land with stones.] Such a multitude of men, each throwing a stone on a good field as they passed, would completely destroy it.

Verse 20. When the meat-offering was offered] This was the first of all offerings, and was generally made at sun-rising.

There came water] This supply was altogether miraculous, for there was neither *wind* nor *rain*, nor any other natural means by which it could be supplied.

Verse 22. Saw the water on the other side as red as blood] This might have been an optical deception; I have seen the like sight when there was no reason to suspect supernatural agency. The Moabites had never seen that valley full of water, and therefore did not suspect that their eyes deceived them, but took it for the blood of the confederate hosts, who they thought might have fallen into confusion in the darkness of night and destroyed each other, as the Midianites had formerly done, ^{<0722>}**Judges 7:22**, and the Philistines lately, ^{<0940>}**1 Samuel 14:20**.

Verse 23. Therefore, Moab, to the spoil.] Thus they came on in a disorderly manner, and fell an easy prey to their enemies.

Verse 25. On every good piece of land] On all cultivated ground, and especially fields that were sown.

Only in Kir-haraseth] This was the royal city of the Moabites, and, as we learn from Scripture, exceedingly strong; (see ^{<2367>}**Isaiah 16:7, 11**;) so that it is probable the confederate armies could not easily reduce it. The *slingers*, we are informed, *went about the wall*, and smote all the men that appeared on it, while no doubt the besieging army was employed in sapping the foundations.

Verse 26. Seven hundred men] These were no doubt the *choice* of all his troops, and being afraid of being hemmed up and perhaps taken by his enemies, whom he found on the eve of gaining possession of the city, he made a desperate sortie in order to regain the open country; and supposing that the quarter of the Edomites was weakest, or less carefully guarded, he endeavoured to make his impression there; but they were so warmly received by the king of Edom that they failed in the attempt, and were driven back into the city. Hence he was led to that desperate act mentioned in the following verse.

Verse 27. Took his eldest son] The rabbins account for this horrible sacrifice in the following way:—

When the king of Moab found himself so harassed, and the royal city on the point of being taken, he called a council of his servants, and asked them how it was these Israelites could perform such prodigies, and that such miracles were wrought for them? His servants answered, that it was owing to their progenitor Abraham, who, having an only son, was commanded by Jehovah to offer him in sacrifice. Abraham instantly obeyed, and offered his only son for a burnt-offering; and the Israelites being his descendants, through his merits the holy blessed God wrought such miracles in their behalf. The king of Moab answered, I also have an only son, and I will go and offer him to my God. Then he offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall.

Upon the wall] *hmj h l* [*al hachamah*. Rab. Sol. Jarchi says that the letter *w vau* is wanting in this word, as it should be written *hmvj chomah*, to signify a wall; *but hmj chammah* signifies the *sun*, and this was the god of the king of Moab: “And he offered his first-born son for a burnt-offering unto the *sun*.” This is not very solid.

There was great indignation] The Lord was displeased with them for driving things to such an extremity: or the surrounding nations held them in abomination on the account; and they were so terrified themselves at this most horrid sacrifice, that they immediately raised the siege and departed. In cases of great extremity it was customary in various heathen nations to offer *human sacrifices*, or to *devote* to the infernal gods the most precious or excellent thing or person they possessed. This was frequent among the *Phœnicians, Romans, and Greeks*; and it was the natural fruit of a religious system which had for the objects of its worship cruel and merciless divinities. How different the Christian system! “Wilt thou that we shall bring down fire from heaven and destroy them? Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of; the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

II KINGS

CHAPTER 4

A widow of one of the prophets, oppressed by a merciless creditor, applies to Elisha, who multiplies her oil; by a part of which she pays her debt, and subsists on the rest, 1-7. His entertainment at the house of a respectable woman in Shunem, 8-10. He foretells to his hostess the birth of a son, 11-17. After some years the child dies, and the mother goes to Elisha at Carmel; he comes to Shunem, and raises the child to life, 18-37. He comes to Gilgal, and prevents the sons of the prophets from being poisoned by wild gourds, 38-41. He multiplies a scanty provision, so as to make it sufficient to feed one hundred men, 42-44.

NOTES ON CHAP. 4

Verse 1. Now there cried a certain woman] This woman, according to the Chaldee, Jarchi, and the rabbins, was the wife of Obadiah.

Sons of the prophets] *ayybn ydym l t talmidey nebiyaiya*, “disciples of the prophets:” so the *Targum* here, and in all other places where the words occur, and properly too.

The creditor is come] This, says *Jarchi*, was *Jehoram* son of Ahab, who lent money on usury to Obadiah, because he had in the days of Ahab fed the Lord’s prophets. The *Targum* says he borrowed money to feed these prophets, because he would not support them out of the property of Ahab.

To take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.] Children, according to the laws of the *Hebrews*, were considered the property of their parents, who had a right to dispose of them for the payment of their debts. And in cases of poverty, the law permitted them, expressly, to sell both themselves and their children; ^{<12107>}**Exodus 21:7**, and ^{<12539>}**Leviticus 25:39**. It was by an extension of this law, and by virtue of another, which authorized them to sell the *thief* who could not make restitution, ^{<12218>}**Exodus 22:3**, that creditors were permitted to take the children of their debtors in payment. Although the law has not determined any thing precisely on this point, we see by this passage, and by several others, that this custom was common among the *Hebrews*. *Isaiah* refers to it very evidently, where he says, *Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves;* ^{<28101>}**Isaiah 50:1**. And our Lord alludes

to it, ^{<1085>}**Matthew 18:25**, where he mentions the case of an insolvent debtor, *Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded HIM to be SOLD, and his WIFE and CHILDREN, and all that he had;* which shows that the custom continued among the Jews to the very end of their republic. The *Romans, Athenians, and Asiatics* in general had the same authority over their children as the Hebrews had: they sold them in time of poverty; and their creditors seized them as they would a sheep or an ox, or any household goods. *Romulus* gave the Romans an *absolute power* over their children which extended through the whole course of their lives, let them be in whatever situation they might. They could *cast them into prison, beat, employ them as slaves in agriculture, sell them for slaves, or even take away their lives!*-*Dionys. Halicarn. lib. ii., pp. 96, 97.*

Numa Pompilius first moderated this law, by enacting, that if a son married with the consent of his father, he should no longer have power to sell him for debt.

The emperors *Diocletian* and *Maximilian* forbade *freemen* to be sold on account of debt: *Obadiah* *aes alienum servire liberos creditoribus, jura non patiuntur.*-*Vid. Lib. ob. aes C. de obligat.* The ancient *Athenians* had the same right over their children as the *Romans*; but *Solon* reformed this barbarous custom.-*Vid. Plutarch in Solone.*

The people of Asia had the same custom, which *Lucullus* endeavoured to check, by moderating the laws respecting usury.

The *Georgians* may alienate their children; and their creditors have a right to sell the wives and children of their debtors, and thus exact the uttermost farthing of their debt.-*Tavernier, lib. iii., c. 9.* And we have reason to believe that this custom long prevailed among the inhabitants of the British isles. See *Calmet* here.

In short, it appears to have been the custom of all the inhabitants of the earth. We have some remains of it yet in this country, in the senseless and pernicious custom of throwing a man into prison for debt, though his own industry and labour be absolutely necessary to discharge it, and these cannot be exercised within the loathsome and contagious walls of a prison.

Verse 2. Save a pot of oil.] Oil was used as *aliment*, for anointing the *body* after bathing, and to anoint the *dead*. Some think that this pot of oil was what this widow had kept for her burial: see ^{<1082>}**Matthew 26:12.**

Verse 6. And the oil stayed.] While there was a vessel to fill, there was oil sufficient; and it only ceased to flow when there was no vessel to receive it. This is a good emblem of the grace of God. While there is an empty, longing heart, there is a continual overflowing fountain of salvation. If we find in any place or at any time that the oil ceases to flow, it is because there are no empty vessels there, no souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We find fault with the dispensations of God's mercy, and ask, Why were the former days better than these? Were we as much in earnest for our salvation as our *forefathers* were for theirs, we should have equal supplies, and as much reason to sing aloud of Divine mercy.

Verse 7. Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt] He does not inveigh against the cruelty of this creditor, because the law and custom of the country gave him the authority on which he acted; and rather than permit a poor honest widow to have her children sold, or that even a Philistine should suffer loss who had given credit to a genuine Israelite, he would work a miracle to pay a debt which, in the course of providence, it was out of her power to discharge.

Verse 8. Elisha passed to Shunem] This city was in the tribe of Issachar, to the south of the brook Kishon, and at the foot of Mount Tabor.

Where was a great woman] In *Pirkey Rab. Eliezer*, this woman is said to have been the sister of Abishag, the Shunammite, well known in the history of David.

Instead of *great woman*, the Chaldee has, *a woman fearing sin*; the Arabic, *a woman eminent for piety before God*. This made her truly *great*.

Verse 9. This is a holy man of God] That is, *a prophet*, as the *Chaldee* interprets it.

Which passeth by us continually.] It probably lay in his way to some school of the prophets that he usually attended.

Verse 10. Let us make a little chamber] See Clarke's note upon "~~6-10~~ Judges 3:20". As the woman was convinced that Elisha was a prophet, she knew that he must have need of more privacy than the general state of her house could afford; and therefore she proposes what she knew would be a great acquisition to him, as he could live in this little chamber in as much privacy as if he were in his own house. The *bed*, the *table*, the

stool, and the *candlestick*, were really every thing he could need, by way of accommodation, in such circumstances.

Verse 12. Gehazi his servant] This is the first time we hear of this very indifferent character.

Verse 13. Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king] Elisha must have had considerable influence with the king, from the part he took in the late war with the Moabites. Jehoram had reason to believe that the prophet, under God, was the sole cause of his success, and therefore he could have no doubt that the king would grant him any reasonable request.

Or to the captain of the host?] As if he had said, Wilt thou that I should procure thee and thy husband a place at court, or get any of thy *friends* a *post* in the *army*?

I dwell among mine own people.] I am perfectly satisfied and contented with my lot in life; I live on the best terms with my neighbours, and am here encompassed with my kindred, and feel no disposition to change my connections or place of abode.

How few are there like this woman on the earth! Who would not wish to be recommended to the king's notice, or get a post for a relative in the army, &c.? Who would not like to change the country for the town, and the rough manners of the inhabitants of the villages for the polished conversation and amusements of the court? Who is so contented with what he has as not to desire more? Who trembles at the prospect of riches; or believes there are any snares in an elevated state, or in the company and conversation of the great and honourable? How few are there that will not sacrifice every thing—peace, domestic comfort, their friends, their conscience, and their God—for *money*, *honours*, *grandeur*, and *parade*?

Verse 14. What then is to be done for her?] It seems that the woman retired as soon as she had delivered the answer mentioned in the preceding verse.

Verse 16. Thou shalt embrace a son.] This *promise*, and the *circumstances* of the parties, are not very dissimilar to that relative to the birth of Isaac, and those of Abraham and Sarah.

Do not lie] That is, Let thy words become true; or, as the rabbins understand it, Do not mock me by giving me a son that shall soon be removed by death; but let me have one that shall survive me.

Verse 18. When the child was grown] We know not of what age he was, very likely *four* or *six*, if not more years; for he could go out to the reapers in the harvest field, converse, &c.

Verse 19. My head, any head.] Probably affected by the *coup de soleil*, or *sun stroke*, which might, in so young a subject, soon occasion death, especially in that hot country.

Verse 21. Laid him on the bed of the man of God] She had no doubt heard that Elijah had raised the widow's son of Zarephath to life; and she believed that he who had obtained this gift from God for her, could obtain his restoration to life.

Verse 23. Wherefore wilt thou go] She was a very prudent woman; she would not harass the feelings of her husband by informing him of the death of his son till she had tried the power of the prophet. Though the religion of the true God was not the religion of the state, yet there were no doubt multitudes of the people who continued to worship the true God alone, and were in the habit of going, as is here intimated, on *new moons* and *Sabbaths*, to consult the prophet.

Verse 24. Drive, and go forward] It is customary in the East for a servant to walk *along side* or *drive* the ass his master rides. Sometimes he walks *behind*, and goads on the beast; and when it is to turn, he directs its head with the long pole of the goad. It is probably to this custom that the wise man alludes when he says, "I have seen servants on horses, and princes *walking as servants* on the earth," on the *ground*.

Verse 26. It is well.] How strong was her faith in God and submission to his authority! Though the heaviest family affliction that could befall her and her husband had now taken place; yet, believing that it was a dispensation of Providence which was in itself neither *unwise* nor *unkind*, she said, *It is well with me*, with my *husband*, and with my *child*. We may farther remark that, in her days, the doctrine of *reprobate infants* had not disgraced the pure religion of the God of endless compassion. She had no doubts concerning the welfare of her child, even with respect to another world; and who but a pagan or a stoic can entertain a contrary doctrine?

Verse 27. The Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.] In reference to this point he had not now the *discernment of spirits*. This, and the *gift of prophecy*, were influences which God gave and suspended as his infinite wisdom saw good.

Verse 28. Did I desire a son of my lord?] I expressed no such wish to thee; I was contented and happy; and when thou didst promise me a son, *did I not say, Do not deceive me?* Do not mock me with a child which shall grow up to be attractive and engaging, but of whom I shall soon be deprived by death.

Verse 29. Salute him not] Make all the haste thou possibly canst, and lay my staff on the face of the child; he probably thought that it might be a case of mere *suspended animation* or a *swoon*, and that laying the staff on the face of the child might act as a *stimulus* to excite the animal motions.

Verse 30. I will not leave thee.] The prophet it seems had no design to accompany her; he intended to wait for Gehazi's return; but as the woman was well assured the child was *dead*, she was determined not to return till she brought the prophet with her.

Verse 32. Behold, the child was dead] The prophet then saw that the body and spirit of the child were separated.

Verse 33. Prayed unto the Lord.] He had no power of his own by which he could restore the child.

Verse 34. Lay upon the child] Endeavoured to convey a portion of his own natural warmth to the body of the child; and probably endeavoured, by blowing into the child's mouth, to inflate the lungs, and restore respiration. He uses every natural means in his power to restore life, while praying to the Author of it to exert a miraculous influence. Natural means are in our power; those that are supernatural belong to God. We should always do our own work, and beg of God to do his.

Verse 35. The child sneezed seven times] That is, it sneezed *abundantly*. When the nervous influence began to act on the muscular system, before the circulation could be in every part restored, particular muscles, if not the whole body, would be thrown into strong contractions and shiverings, and *sternutation* or sneezing would be a natural consequence; particularly as obstructions must have taken place in the *head* and its *vessels*, because of the disorder of which the child died. Most people, as well as philosophers

and physicians, have remarked how beneficial sneezings are to the removal of obstructions in the head. *Sternutamenta*, says Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxviii., cap. 6, *gravedinem capitis emendant*; “Sneezing relieves disorders of the head.”

Verse 37. She went in and fell at his feet] Few can enter into the feelings of this noble woman. What suspense must she have felt during the time that the prophet was employed in the slow process referred to above! for slow in its own nature it must have been, and exceedingly exhausting to the prophet himself.

Verse 38. Came again to Gilgal] He had been there before with his master, a short time prior to his translation.

Set on the great pot and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.] It was in a time of *dearth*, and all might now stand in need of refreshment; and it appears that the prophet was led to put forth the power he had from God to make a plentiful provision for those who were present. The father of the celebrated Dr. Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*, preaching a charity sermon for the benefit of the *sons of the clergy*, took the above words for his text; nor could they be said to be inappropriate.

Verse 39. Wild gourds] This is generally thought to be the *coloquintida*, the fruit of a plant of the same name, about the size of a large orange. It is brought hither from the Levant, and is often known by the name of the *bitter apple*; both the seeds and pulp are intensely bitter, and violently purgative. It ranks among vegetable poisons, as all intense bitters do; but, judiciously employed, it is of considerable use in medicine.

Verse 40. There is death in the pot.] As if they had said, “We have here a deadly mixture; if we eat of it, we shall all die.”

Verse 41. Bring meal.] Though this might, in some measure, correct the strong acrid and purgative quality; yet it was only a miracle which could make a lapful of this fruit shred into pottage salutary.

Verse 42. Bread of the first-fruits] This was an offering to the prophet, as the first-fruits themselves were an offering to God.

Corn in the husk] Probably parched corn or corn to be parched, a very frequent food in the East; full ears, before they are ripe, parched on the fire.

Verse 43. Thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.]

It was God, not the prophet, who fed *one hundred* men with these *twenty* loaves, &c. This is something like our Lord's feeding the multitude miraculously. Indeed, there are many things in this chapter similar to facts in our Lord's history: and this prophet might be more aptly considered a type of our Lord, than most of the other persons in the Scriptures who have been thus honoured.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 5

The history of Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, a leper; who was informed by a little Israelitish captive maid that a prophet of the Lord, in Samaria, could cure him, 1-4. The king of Syria sends him, with a letter and rich presents, to the king of Israel, that he should recover him of his leprosy, 5, 6. On receiving the letter, the king of Israel is greatly distressed, supposing that the Syrian king designed to seek a quarrel with him; in desiring him to cleanse a leper, when it was well known that none could cure that disorder but God, 7. Elisha, hearing this, orders Naaman to be sent to him, 8. He comes to Elisha's house in great state, 9. And the prophet sends a messenger to him, ordering him to wash in Jordan seven times, and he should be made clean, 10. Naaman is displeased that he is received with so little ceremony, and departs in a rage, 11, 12. His servants reason with him; he is persuaded, goes to Jordan, washes, and is made clean, 13, 14. He returns to Elisha; acknowledges the true God; and offers him a present, which the prophet refuses, 15, 16. He asks directions, promises never to sacrifice to any other god, and is dismissed, 17-19. Gehazi runs after him, pretends he is sent by his master for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment; which he receives, brings home, and hides, 20-24. Elisha questions him; convicts him of his wickedness; pronounces a curse of leprosy upon him, with which he is immediately afflicted; and departs from his master a leper, as white as snow, 25-27.

NOTES ON CHAP. 5

Verse 1. Naaman, captain of the host] Of Naaman we know nothing more than is related here. *Jarchi* and some others say that he was the man who *drew the bow at a venture*, as we term it, and slew Ahab: see ^{<1223>}**1 Kings 22:34**, and the notes there. He is not mentioned by *Josephus*, nor has he any reference to this history; which is very strange, as it exists in the *Chaldee*, *Septuagint*, and *Syriac*.

King of Syria] The Hebrew is **מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם** *melech Aram*, king of Aram; which is followed by the *Chaldee* and *Arabic*. The *Syriac* has [Syriac] *Adom*; but as the *Syriac* [Syriac] *dolath* is the same element as the *Syriac* [Syriac] *rish*, differing only in the position of the *diacritic point*, it may have been originally *Aram*. The *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* have *Syria*, and this is a common meaning of the term in Scripture. If the king of *Syria* be meant, it must be *Ben-hadad*; and the contemporary king of Israel was *Jehoram*.

A great man] He was held in the highest esteem.

And honourable] Had the peculiar favour and confidence of his master; and was promoted to the highest trusts.

Had given deliverance unto Syria] That is, as the rabbins state, by his slaying Ahab, king of Israel; in consequence of which the Syrians got the victory.

A mighty man in valour] *He was a giant, and very strong*, according to the *Arabic*. He had, in a word, all the qualifications of an able general.

But he was a **leper.**] Here was a heavy tax upon his grandeur; he was afflicted with a disorder the most loathsome and the most humiliating that could possibly disgrace a human being. God often, in the course of his providence, permits great defects to be associated with great eminence, that he may hide pride from man; and cause him to think soberly of himself and his acquirements.

Verse 2. The Syrians had gone out by companies] *μυδωδg gedudim, troops.* When *one hundred* or *two hundred* men go out by themselves to make prey of whatever they can get, that is called, says *Jarchi*, *δωδg gedud*, a *troop*. They had gone out in marauding parties; and on such occasions they bring away *grain, cattle*, and such of the inhabitants as are proper to make *slaves*.

A little maid] Who, it appears, had pious parents, who brought her up in the knowledge of the true God. Behold the goodness and the *severity* of the Divine providence! affectionate parents are deprived of their promising daughter by a set of lawless freebooters, without the smallest prospect that she should have any lot in life but that of misery, infamy, and wo.

Waited on Naaman's wife.] Her decent orderly behaviour, the consequence of her sober and pious education, entitled her to this place of distinction; in which her servitude was at least easy, and her person safe.

If God permitted the parents to be deprived of their pious child by the hands of ruffians, he did not permit the child to be without a *guardian*. In such a case, were even the father and mother to forsake her, God would take her up.

Verse 3. Would God my lord] *yl j a achaley, I wish*; or, as the Chaldee, Syrian, and Arabic have, “*Happy would it be for my master if he were with the prophet,*” &c.

Here the mystery of the Divine providence begins to develop itself. By the captivity of this little maid, one Syrian family at least, and that one of the most considerable in the Syrian empire, is brought to the knowledge of the true God.

Verse 4. Thus and thus said the maid] So well had this little pious maid conducted herself, that her words are credited; and credited so fully, that an embassy from the king of Syria to the king of Israel is founded upon them!

Verse 5. The king of Syria said] He judged it the best mode of proceeding to send immediately to the *king*, under whose control he supposed the prophet must be, that he would order the prophet to cure his general.

Ten talents of silver] This, at £353 11s. 10 1/2*d.* the talent, would amount to £3,535 18s. 9*d.*

Six thousand pieces of gold] If *shekels* are here meant, as the *Arabic* has it, then the *six thousand shekels*, at £1 16s. 5*d.* will amount to £10,925; and the whole, to £14,460 18s. 9*d.* sterling: besides the value of the ten *caftans*, or *changes of raiment*. This was a princely present, and shows us at once how high Naaman stood in the esteem of his master.

Verse 7. Amos I God, to kill and to make alive] He spoke thus under the conviction that God alone could cure the leprosy; which, indeed, was universally acknowledged: and must have been as much a maxim among the Syrians as among the Israelites, for the disorder was equally prevalent in both countries; and in both equally incurable. See the notes on Leviticus 13 and 14. And it was this that led the king of Israel to infer that the Syrian king sought a quarrel with him, in desiring him to do a work which God only could do; and then declaring war upon him because he did not do it.

Verse 8. Let him come now to me] Do not be afflicted; the matter belongs to me, as the prophet of the Most High; send him to me, and he shall know that I am such.

Verse 9. Came with his horses and with his chariot] In very great pomp and state. Closely inspected, this was preposterous enough; a *leper* sitting in state, and affecting it!

Verse 10. Sent a messenger] Did not come out to speak with him: he had got his orders from God, and he transmitted them to Naaman by his servant.

Wash in Jordan seven times] The waters of Jordan had no tendency to remove this disorder but God chose to make them the means by which he *would* convey his healing power. He who is the author of life, health, and salvation, has a right to dispense, convey, and maintain them, by whatsoever means he pleases.

Verse 11. Naaman was wroth] And why? Because the prophet treated him without ceremony; and because he appointed him an expenseless and simple mode of cure.

Behold, I thought] God's ways are not as our ways; he appoints that mode of cure which he knows to be best. Naaman expected to be treated with great ceremony; and instead of humbling himself before the Lord's prophet, he expected the prophet of the Lord to humble himself before *him!* *Behold I thought;*-and what did he think? Hear his words, for they are all very emphatic:-1. "*I thought, He will surely come OUT to ME.* He will never make his servant the medium of communication between ME and himself. 2. *And stand-present himself before me, and stand as a servant to hear the orders of his God.* 3. *And call on the name of Jehovah HIS God;* so that both his God and himself shall appear to do me service and honour. 4. *And strike his hand over the place;* for can it be supposed that any healing virtue can be conveyed without contact? Had he done these things, then the leper might have been recovered."

Verse 12. Are not Abana and Pharpar] At present these rivers do not exist by these names; and where they are we know not; nor whether they were the *Orontes* and *Chrysorroes*. Mr. Maundrell, who travelled over all this ground, could find no vestige of the names *Abana* and *Pharpar*. The river *Barrady* he accurately describes: it has its source in Antilibanus; and, after having plentifully watered the city of Damascus and the gardens, dividing into three branches, (one of which goes through the city, and the two others are distributed among the gardens,) it is lost in the marshy country about five or six leagues from Damascus. Two of these branches

were doubtless called in the time of Elisha *Abana*, or *Amana*, as many copies have it; and *Pharpar*. And in the time in which the *Arabic* version was made, one of these branches were called [Arabic] *Barda* and *Toura*, for these are the names by which this version translates those of the text.

May I not wash in them, and be clean?] No, for God has directed thee to Jordan! and by *its* waters, or none, shalt thou be cleansed. *Abana* and *Pharpar* may be as good as Jordan; and in respect to thy cleansing, the simple difference is, God will convey his influence by the *latter*, and not by the *former*.

There is often contention among the people of Bengal and other places, concerning the superior efficacy of rivers; though the Ganges bears the bell in Bengal, as the Thames does in England, and the Nile in Egypt.

Verse 13. My father] A title of the highest respect and affection.

Had bid thee do some great thing] If the prophet had appointed thee to do something very *difficult* in itself, and very *expensive* to thee, wouldst thou not have done it? With much greater reason shouldst thou do what will occupy *little time*, be no *expense*, and is *easy* to be performed.

Verse 14. Then went he down] He felt the force of this reasoning, and made a trial, probably expecting little success.

Like unto the flesh of a little child] The loathsome scurf was now entirely removed; his flesh assumed the appearance and health of youth; and the whole mass of his blood, and other juices, became purified, refined, and exalted! How mighty is God! What great things can he do by the simplest and feeblest of means!

Verse 15. He returned to the man of God] He saw that the hand of the Lord was upon him; he felt gratitude for his cleansing; and came back to acknowledge, in the most public way, his obligation to God and his servant.

Stood before him] He was now truly humbled, and left all his state behind him. It is often the case that those who have least to value themselves on are proud and haughty; whereas the most excellent of the earth are the most humble, knowing that they have nothing but what they have received. Naaman, the *leper*, was more proud and dictatorial than he was when *cleansed* of his leprosy.

There is **no God in all the earth**] Those termed gods are no gods; the God of Israel is sole God in all the earth. See my sermon on this subject.

Take a blessing] Accept a present. *Take an expiatory gift.*-*Arabic*. He desired to offer something *for his cleansing*. He thought it right thus to acknowledge the hand from which he had received his healing, and thus honour the Lord by giving something to his servant.

Verse 16. I will receive none.] It was very common to give presents to all great and official men; and among these, *prophets* were always included: but as it might have appeared to the Syrians that he had taken the offered presents as a remuneration for the cure performed, he refused; for as God alone did the work, he alone should have all the glory.

Verse 17. Shall there not then, I pray thee] This verse is understood two different ways. I will give them both in a paraphrase:—

1. *Shall there not then be given unto thy servant [viz., Naaman] two mules' burden of this Israelitish earth, that I may build an altar with it, on which I may offer sacrifices to the God of Israel? For thy servant, &c.*

2. *Shall there not be given to thy [Elisha's] servant [Gehazi] two mules' burden of this earth? i.e., the gold and silver which he brought with him; and which he esteemed as earth, or dust, in comparison of the cure he received. For thy servant [Naaman] will henceforth, &c.*

Each of these interpretations has its difficulties. Why Naaman should *ask* for *two mules' burden of earth*, which he might have taken up any where on the confines of the land, without any such liberty, is not easy to see. As to the *prophet's permission*, though the boon was ever so small, it was not *his* to give; only the king of Israel could give such a permission: and what sort of an altar could he build with two mules' burden of earth, carried from Samaria to Damascus? If this be really the meaning of the place, the request was exceedingly foolish, and never could have come from a person enjoying the right use of his reason. The second opinion, not without its difficulties, seems less embarrassed than the former. It was natural for Naaman to wish to give something to the prophet's servant, as the master had refused his present. Again, impressed with the vast importance of the cure he had received, to take away all feeling of obligation, he might call *two or ten talents of silver* by the name of *earth*, as well as Habakkuk, ³⁰⁶ **Habakkuk 2:6**, calls silver and gold *thick clay*; and by terms of this

kind it has been frequently denominated, both by *prophets* and heathen writers: “Tyrus heaped up *silver* as the *dust*, and *fine gold* as the *mire of the streets*;” **Zecariah 9:3**. And the king made *silver and gold* at Jerusalem as stones; ^{<14015>}**2 Chronicles 1:15**. Which is agreeable to the sentiments of the heathen: **Χρυσος τις κονις εστι, και αργυρος**, *Gold and silver* are only a *certain kind of earth*.-ARIST. *Eth. Nicomach*.

Should it be said, The gold and silver could not be *two mules’ burden*; I answer, Let the quantity that Naaman brought with him be only considered, and it will be found to be as much, when put into two bags, as could be well lifted upon the backs of two mules, or as those beasts could conveniently carry. The silver itself would weigh 233lbs. 9oz. 15 1/2dwts., and the gold 1,140lbs. 7oz. 10dwts.; in the whole 1,374lbs. 5oz. 5 1/2dwts. Troy weight. Should it be objected that, taken in this sense, there is no visible connection between the former and latter clauses of the verse, I answer that there is as much connection between the words taken in this sense as in the other, for something must be brought in to supply both; besides, this makes a more complete sense than the other: “Shall there not, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of this silver and gold, [to apply it as he may think proper; I regard it not,] for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, [for the cure he has now received; or by way of worship at any time;] but unto Jehovah.” The reader may choose which of these interpretations he pleases.

Verse 18. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant] It is useless to enter into the controversy concerning this verse. By no rule of right reasoning, nor by any legitimate mode of interpretation, can it be stated that Naaman is asking pardon for offenses which he *may commit*, or that he could ask or the prophet grant *indulgence* to bow himself in the temple of Rimmon, thus performing a decided act of *homage*, the very essence of that worship which immediately before he solemnly assured the prophet he would never practise. The original may legitimately be read, and *ought* to be read, in the *past*, and not in the *future* tense. “For this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, for that when my master HATH GONE into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he HATH LEANED upon mine hand, that I also HAVE BOWED myself in the house of Rimmon; for my worshipping in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” This is the translation of Dr. *Lightfoot*, the most able Hebraist of his time in Christendom.

To admit the common interpretation is to admit, in effect, the doctrine of *indulgences*; and that we may do *evil* that *good* may come of it; that the *end* sanctifies the *means*; and that for political purposes we may do unlawful acts.

Verse 19. And he said unto him] There is a most singular and important reading in one of Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., which he numbers 191. It has in the margin **q al** that is, "read **al lo**, *not*, instead of **wl lo**, *to him*." Now this reading supposes that Naaman *did* ask permission from the prophet to worship in Rimmon's temple; to which the prophet answers, *No; go in peace*: that is, maintain thy holy resolutions, be a consistent worshipper of the true God, and avoid all idolatrous practices. Another MS., No. 383, appears first to have written **wl to him**, but to have corrected it immediately by inserting an **a aleph** after the **w vau**; and thus, instead of making it **al no**, it has made it **awl lu**, which is no word.

Verse 20. My master hath spared-this Syrian] He has neither taken any thing from him for himself, nor permitted him to give any thing to me.

Verse 21. He lighted down from the chariot] He treats even the prophet's servant with the profoundest respect, alights from his chariot, and goes to meet him.

Is all well?] **µwl vh** *hashalom*; *Is it peace, or prosperity?*

Verse 22. And he said] **µwl v** *shalom*. *It is peace; all is right*. This was a common mode of address and answer.

There be come to me from mount Ephraim] There was probably a school of the prophets at this mount.

Verse 23. He-bound two talents of silver] It required two servants to carry these two talents, for, according to the computation above, each talent was about 120lbs. weight.

Verse 24. When he came to the tower] The Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic understand the word **l p** [*ophel*, which we translate *tower*, as signifying a *secret, dark, or hiding place*. He was doing a deed of darkness, and he sought darkness to conceal it. He no doubt put them in a place little frequented, or one to which few had access besides himself. But the prophet's discerning spirit found him out.

Verse 26. Went not mine heart with thee] The *Chaldee* gives this a good turn: *By the prophetic spirit it was shown unto me, when the man returned from his chariot to meet thee.*

Is it **a time to receive money**] He gave him farther proof of this all-discerning prophetic spirit in telling him what he designed to do with the money; he intended to set up a splendid establishment, to have men-servants and maid-servants, to have oliveyards and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, This, as the *Chaldee* says, *he had thought in his heart to do.*

Verse 27. The leprosy of Naaman-shall cleave unto thee] Thou hast got much money, and thou shalt have much to do with it. Thou hast got Naaman's silver, and thou shalt have Naaman's leprosy. Gehazi is not the last who has got money in an unlawful way, and has got God's curse with it.

A leper as white as snow.] The moment the curse was pronounced, that moment the *signs* of the leprosy began to appear. The *white shining* spot was the sign that the infection had taken place. See on ^{<0130>}**Leviticus 13:2**, and the notes at the end of that chapter. See **Clarke** "^{<0133>}**Leviticus 13:58**".

1. SOME have thought, because of the prophet's curse, *The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever*, that there are persons still alive who are this man's real descendants, and afflicted with this horrible disease. Mr. Maundrell when he was in Judea made diligent inquiry concerning this, but could not ascertain the truth of the supposition. To me it appears absurd; the denunciation took place in the posterity of Gehazi till it should become extinct, and under the influence of this disorder this must *soon* have taken place. The *for ever* implies as long as any of his posterity should remain. This is the import of the word מל ו[I *leolam*. It takes in the whole extent or duration of the thing to which it is applied. The *for ever* of Gehazi was till his posterity became extinct.

2. The god *Rimmon*, mentioned ^{<1258>}**2 Kings 5:18**, we meet with nowhere else in the Scriptures, unless it be the same which Stephen calls *Remphan*. See ^{<4074>}**Acts 7:43**, and the note there. *Selden* thinks that *Rimmon* is the same with *Elion*, a god of the Phœnicians, borrowed undoubtedly from the ׀wyl [*Elion, the Most High*, of the Hebrews, one of the names of the supreme God, which *attribute* became a god of the Phœnicians. *Hesychius*

has the word **ραμας** *Ramas*, which he translates **ο υψιστος Θεος**, *the Most High God*, which agrees very well with the Hebrew **רמון** *Rimmon*, from **רמה** *ramah*, *to make high or exalt*. And all these agree with the sun, as being the *highest* or most *exalted* in what is called the solar system. Some think *Saturn* is intended, and others *Venus*. Much may be seen on this subject in Selden Deuteronomy *Diis Syris*.

3. Let us not suppose that the *offence* of Gehazi was too severely punished. 1. Look at the principle, *covetousness*. 2. *Pride and vanity*; he wished to become a great man. 3, His *lying*, in order to impose on Naaman: *Behold even now there be come to me, &c.* 4. He in effect *sells* the cure of Naaman for so much money; for if Naaman had not been cured, could he have pretended to ask the silver and raiment? 5. It was an act of *theft*; he applied that to his own use which Naaman gave him for his master. 6. He *dishonoured* his master by getting the money and raiment in his name, who had before so solemnly refused it. 7. He closed the whole by *lying to his master*, denying that he had gone after Naaman, or that he had received any thing from him. But was it not severe to *extend the punishment of his crime to his innocent posterity*? I answer, it does not appear that any of Gehazi's children, if he had any *prior* to this, were smitten with the leprosy; and as to those whom he might beget *after* this time, their leprosy must be the necessary consequence of their being engendered by a leprous father.

Reader, see the end of *avarice* and *ambition*; and see the truth of those words, "He that WILL be rich, shall fall into temptation, and a snare, and into divers hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."-St. Paul.

4. We have already remarked the *apparently severe* and *manifestly kind providence* of God in this business. 1. A marauding party was permitted to spoil the confines of the land of Israel. 2. They brought away, to reduce to captivity, a little maid, probably the hope of her father's house. 3. She became Naaman's property, and waited on his wife. 4. She announced God and his prophet. 5. Naaman, on the faith of her account, took a journey to Samaria. 6. Gets healed of his leprosy. 7. Is converted to the Lord; and, doubtless, brought at least his whole family to believe to the saving of their souls. What was *severe* to the *parents* of the little maid was most kind to *Naaman* and his *family*; and the parents lost their child only a little time,

that they might again receive her with honour and glory for ever. How true are the words of the poet!

“Behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.”

And see the benefits of a religious education! Had not this little maid been brought up in the knowledge of the true God, she had not been the instrument of so great a salvation. See my sermon on this subject ^{<12612>}**2**
Kings 5:12.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 6

The sons of the prophets wish to enlarge their dwelling-place, and go to the banks of Jordan to cut down wood, when one of them drops his axe into the water, which Elisha causes to swim. 1-7. Elisha, understanding all the secret designs of the king of Syria against Israel, informs the king of Israel of them, 8-10. The king of Syria, finding that Elisha had thus penetrated his secrets and frustrated his attempts, sends a great host to Dothan, to take the prophet; the Lord strikes them with blindness; and Elisha leads the whole host to Samaria, and delivers them up to the king of Israel, 11-19. The Lord opens their eyes, and they see their danger, 20. But the king of Israel is prevented from destroying them; and, at the order of the prophet, gives them meat and drink, and dismisses them to their master, 21-23. Ben-hadad besieges Samaria, and reduces the city to great distress, of which several instances are given, 24-30. The king of Israel vows the destruction of Elisha, and sends to have him beheaded, 31-33.

NOTES ON CHAP. 6

Verse 1. The place-is too strait for us.] Notwithstanding the general profligacy of Israel, the schools of the prophets increased. This was no doubt owing to the influence of Elisha.

Verse 2. Every man a beam] They made a sort of *log-houses* with their own hands.

Verse 5. Alas, master! for it was borrowed.] *I wav awhw ynda hha ahah adonia, vehu shaul! Ah! ah, my master; and it has been sought. It has fallen in, and I have sought it in vain. Or, it was borrowed, and therefore I am the more afflicted for its loss; and Jarchi adds, I have nothing wherewith to repay it.*

Verse 6. He cut down a stick] This had no natural tendency to raise the iron; it was only a sign or ceremony which the prophet chose to use on the occasion.

The iron did swim.] This was a real miracle; for the gravity of the metal must have for ever kept it at the bottom of the water,

Verse 8. The king of Syria warred against Israel] This was probably the same Ben-hadad who is mentioned ^{<1204>}**2 Kings 6:24**. What was the *real* or *pretended* cause of this war we cannot tell; but we may say, in numberless war cases, as Calmet says in this: “An ambitious and restless prince always finds a sufficiency of reasons to colour his enterprises.”

In such and such a place] The Syrian king had observed, from the disposition of the Israelitish army, in what direction it was about to make its movements; and therefore laid ambuscades where he might surprise it to the greatest advantage.

Verse 9. Beware that thou pass not such a place] Elisha must have had this information by immediate revelation from heaven.

Verse 10. Sent to the place] To see if it were so. But the *Vulgate* gives it quite a different turn: *Misit rex Israel ad locum, et præoccupavit eum*. The king of Israel sent previously to the place, and took possession of it; and thus the Syrians were disappointed. This is very likely, though it is not expressed in the Hebrew text. The prophet knew the Syrians marked such a place; he told the king of Israel, and he hastened and sent a party of troops to pre-occupy it; and thus the Syrians found that their designs had been detected.

Verse 13. Behold, he is in Dothan.] This is supposed to be the same place as that mentioned in ^{<01577>}**Genesis 37:17**. It lay about twelve miles from Samaria.

Verse 14. He sent thither horses] It is strange he did not think that he who could penetrate his secrets with respect to the Israelitish army, could inform himself of all his machinations against his own life.

Verse 16. For they that be with us are more, &c.] What astonishing intercourse had this man with heaven! It seems the whole heavenly host had it in commission to help him.

Verse 17. Lord-open his eyes] Where is heaven? Is it not above, beneath, around us? And were our eyes open as were those of the prophet’s servant, we should see the heavenly host in all directions. The horses and chariots of fire were there, before the eyes of Elisha’s servant were opened.

Verse 18. Smite this people-with blindness] Confound their sight so that they may not know what they see, and so mistake one place for another.

Verse 19. I will bring you to the man whom ye seek.] And he did so; he was their guide to Samaria, and showed himself to them fully in that city.

Verse 20. Open the eyes of these men] Take away their confusion of vision, that they may discern things as they *are*, and distinguish *where* they are.

Verse 21. My father, shall I smite] This was dastardly; the utmost he could have done with these men, when thus brought into his hand, was to make them prisoners of war.

Verse 22. Whom thou hast taken captive] Those who in open *battle* either lay down their arms, or are surrounded, and have their retreat cut off, are entitled to their lives, much more those who are thus providentially put into thy hand, without having been in actual hostility against thee. Give them meat and drink, and send them home to their master, and let them thus know that thou fearest him not, and art incapable of doing an ungenerous or unmanly action.

Verse 23. He prepared great provision for them] These, on the return to their master, could tell him strange things about the power of the God of Israel, and the magnanimity of its king.

So the bands of Syria came no more] Marauding parties were no more permitted by the Syrian king to make inroads upon Israel. And it is very likely that for some considerable time after this, there was no war between these two nations. What is mentioned in the next verse was more than a year afterwards.

Verse 25. And, behold, they besieged it] They had closed it in on every side, and reduced it to the greatest necessity.

An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver] I suppose we are to take the *ass's head* literally; and if the *head* sold for so much, what must other parts sell for which were much to be preferred? The famine must be great that could oblige them to eat any part of an animal that was proscribed by the law; and it must be still greater that could oblige them to purchase so *mean a part* of this *unclean* animal at so *high a price*. The *piece of silver* was probably the *drachm*, worth about *seven pence three farthings* of our money; the whole amounting to about *two pounds nine shillings*.

And the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung] The *cab* was about a *quart* or *three pints*. *Dove's dung*, μυνωρj *chiriyonim*. Whether this means *pigeon's dung* literally, or a kind of *pulse*, has been variously disputed by learned men. After having written much upon the subject, illustrated with quotations from east, west, north, and south, I choose to spare my reader the trouble of wading through them, and shall content myself with asserting that it is probable a *sort of pease* are meant, which the Arabs to this day call by this name. "The *garvancos*, *cicer*, or *chick pea*," says Dr. Shaw, "has been taken for the pigeon's dung, mentioned in the siege of Samaria; and as the *cicer* is *pointed* at one end, and acquires an *ash colour* in parching, the first of which circumstances answers to the *figure*, the second to the usual *colour* of *dove's dung*, the supposition is by no means to be disregarded."

I should not omit saying that *dove's dung* is of great value in the East, for its power in producing *cucumbers*, *melons*, &c., which has induced many learned men to take the words *literally*. *Bochart* has exhausted this subject, and concludes that a kind of *pulse* is meant. Most learned men are of his opinion.

Verse 27. If the Lord do not help thee] Some read this as an *imprecation*, *May God save thee not! how can I save thee?*

Verse 29. So we boiled my son] This is horrible; but for the sake of humanity we must allow that the children *died* through hunger, and then became food for their starved, desperate parents.

She hath hid her son.] He was already dead, says *Jarchi*; and she hid him, that she might eat him alone.

This very evil Moses had foretold should come upon them if they forsook God; see ⚡ **Deuteronomy 28:53, 57**. The same evil came upon this wretched people when besieged by Nebuchadnezzar; see ⚡ **Ezekiel 5:10**. And also when Titus besieged Jerusalem; see *Josephus*, Deuteronomy Bell. Judaic. lib. vi., cap. 3, and **Clarke's notes on** ⚡ **Matthew 24:19**".

Verse 30. He had sackcloth within upon his flesh.] The king was in deep mourning for the distresses of the people.

Verse 31. If the head of Elisha-shall stand on him] Either he attributed these calamities to the prophet, or else he thought he could remove them, and yet would not. The miserable king was driven to desperation.

Verse 32. This son of a murderer] Jehoram, the son of Ahab and Jezebel. But Ahab is called a *murderer* because of the murder of Naboth.

Shut the door] He was obliged to make use of this method for his personal safety, as the king was highly incensed.

The sound of his master's feet behind him?] That is, King Jehoram is following his messenger, that he may see him take off my head.

Verse 33. Behold, this evil is of the Lord] It is difficult to know whether it be the *prophet*, the *messenger*, or the *king*, that says these words. It might be the answer of the *prophet* from within to the messenger who was without, and who sought for admission, and gave his reason; to whom Elisha might have replied: "I am not the cause of these calamities; they are from the Lord; I have been praying for their removal; but why should I pray to the Lord any longer, for the time of your deliverance is at hand?" And *then Elisha said*, -see the following chapter, where the removal of the calamity is foretold in the most explicit manner; and indeed the chapter is unhappily divided from this. The seventh chapter should have begun with ~~1 Kings~~ **2 Kings 6:24** of this chapter, as, by the present division, the story is unnaturally interrupted.


How natural is it for men to lay the cause of their suffering on any thing or person but themselves! Ahab's iniquity was sufficient to have brought down God's displeasure on a whole nation; and yet he takes no blame to himself, but lays all on the prophet, who was the only *salt* that preserved the whole nation from corruption. How few take their sins to *themselves!* and till they do this, they cannot be true penitents; nor can they expect God's wrath to be averted till they feel themselves the chief of sinners.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 7

Elisha foretells abundant relief to the besieged inhabitants of Samaria, 1. One of the lords questions the possibility of it; and is assured that he shall see it on the morrow, but not taste of it, 2. Four lepers, perishing with hunger, go to the camp of the Syrians to seek relief and find it totally deserted, 3-5. How the Syrians were alarmed, and fled, 6, 7. The lepers begin to take the spoil, but at last resolve to carry the good news to the city, 8-11. The king, suspecting some treachery, sends some horsemen to scour the country, and see whether the Syrians are not somewhere concealed; they return, and confirm the report that the Syrians are totally fled, 12-15. The people go out and spoil the camp, in consequence of which provisions become as plentiful as Elisha had foretold, 16. The unbelieving lord, having the charge of the gate committed to him, is trodden to death by the crowd, 17-20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 7

Verse 1. To-morrow about this time] This was in reply to the desponding language of the king, and to vindicate himself from the charge of being author of this calamity. See the end of the preceding chapter. **See Clarke** “ **2 Kings 6:33**”.

A measure of fine flour-for a shekel] A *seah* of fine flour: the *seah* was about *two gallons and a half*; the *shekel*, *two shillings and four-pence* at the lowest computation. A wide difference between this and the price of the ass's head mentioned above.

Verse 2. Then a lord] *vyl v shalish*. This word, as a name of *office*, occurs often, and seems to point out one of the highest offices in the state. So unlikely was this prediction to be fulfilled, that he thought God must pour out wheat and barley from heaven before it could have a literal accomplishment.

But shalt not eat thereof.] This was a mere prediction of his *death*, but not as a judgment for his unbelief; any person in his circumstances might have spoken as he did. He stated in effect that nothing but a miracle could procure the plenty predicted, and by a miracle alone was it done; and any person in his place might have been trodden to death by the crowd in the gate of Samaria.

Verse 3. There were four leprous men] The *Gemara* in *Sota, R. Sol. Jarchi*, and others, say that these four lepers were *Gehazi and his three sons*.

At the entering in of the gate] They were not permitted to mingle in civil society.

Verse 5. The uttermost part of the camp] Where the Syrian advanced guards should have been.

Verse 6. The Lord had made the-Syrians to hear a noise] This threw them into confusion; they imagined that they were about to be attacked by powerful auxiliaries, which the king of Israel had hired against them.

Verse 12. The king arose in the night] This king had made a noble defence; he seems to have shared in all the sufferings of the besieged, and to have been ever at his post. Even in vile Ahab there were some good things!

They know that we be hungry] This was a very natural conclusion; the Syrians by the closest blockade could not induce them to give up the city, but knowing that they were in a starving condition, they might make use of such a stratagem as that imagined by the king, in order to get possession of the city.

Verse 13. And one of his servants answered] This is a very difficult verse, and the great variety of explanations given of it cast but little light on the subject. I am inclined to believe, with Dr. *Kennicott*, that there is an interpolation here which puzzles, if not destroys, the sense. “Several instances,” says he, “have been given of words improperly *repeated* by Jewish transcribers, who have been *careless* enough to make such *mistakes*, and yet *cautious* not to *alter* or *erase*, for fear of discovery. This verse furnishes another instance in a careless *repetition* of *seven Hebrew words*, thus:—

rca l arvy ^wmhh l kk μnh hb wracn rca μyracnh
ymt rca l arvy ^wmh l kk μnh hb wracn

The exact English of this verse is this: *And the servant said, Let them take now five of the remaining horses, which remain in it; behold they are as all the multitude of Israel, which [remain in it; behold they are as all the multitude of Israel which] are consumed; and let us send and see.*

“Whoever considers that the *second set* of these *seven words* is neither in the *Septuagint* nor *Syriac* versions, and that those translators who suppose these words to be genuine alter them to make them look like sense, will probably allow them to have been at first an improper *repetition*; consequently to be now an *interpolation* strangely continued in the Hebrew text.” They are wanting in more than *forty* of *Kennicott’s* and *Deuteronomy Rossi’s* MSS. In some others they are left *without points*; in others they have been *written in*, and afterwards *blotted out*; and in others *four*, in others *five*, of the *seven words* are omitted. *Deuteronomy Rossi* concludes thus: *Nec verba haec legunt LXX., Vulg., Syrus simplex, Syrus Heptaplaris Parisiensis, Targum.* They stand on little authority, and the text should be read, omitting the words enclosed by *brackets*, as above.

They are consumed] The words **wmt rva asher tamu** should be translated, *which are perfect*; i.e., fit for service. The rest of the horses were either *dead* of the famine, *killed* for the subsistence of the besieged, or so *weak* as not to be able to perform such a journey.

Verse 14. They took-two chariot horses] They had at first intended to send *five*; probably they found on examination that only two were effective. But if they sent two chariots, each would have two horses, and probably a single horse for crossing the country.

Verse 15. All the way was full of garments and vessels] A manifest proof of the hurry and precipitancy with which they fled.

Verse 17. And the people trode upon him] This officer being appointed by the king to have the command of the *gate*, the people rushing *out* to get spoil, and *in* to carry it to their houses, he was borne down by the multitude and trodden to death. This also was foreseen by the spirit of prophecy. The literal and exact fulfillment of such predictions must have acquired the prophet a great deal of credit in Israel.

DR. *Lightfoot* remarks that, between the *first* and *last year* of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, there are very many occurrences mentioned which are not referred nor fixed to their *proper year*; and, therefore, they must be calculated in a *gross sum*, as coming to pass *in one of these years*. These are the stories contained in chapters iv., v., vi., and vii., of this book; and in ^{<4210>}**2 Chronicles 21:6-19**. They may be calculated thus: In the *first* year of Jehoram, Elisha, returning out of Moab into the land of Israel, multiplies the widow’s oil; he is lodged in Shunem, and assures his hostess of a child.

The *seven years'* famine was then begun, and he gives the Shunammite warning of its continuance.

The *second* year she bears her child in the land of the Philistines, ~~<128D>~~ **2 Kings 8:2**. And Elisha resides among the disciples of the prophets at Gilgal, heals the poisoned pottage, and feeds *one hundred* men with *twenty* barley loaves and some ears of corn. That summer he cures Naaman of his leprosy, the only cure of this kind done till Christ came.

The *third* year he makes iron to swim, prevents the Syrians' ambushments, strikes those with blindness who were sent to seize him, and sends them back to their master.

The *fourth* year Jehoshaphat dies, and Edom rebels and shakes off the yoke laid upon them by David: Libnah also rebels.

The *fifth* year Samaria is besieged by Ben-hadad, the city is most grievously afflicted; and, after being nearly destroyed by famine, it is suddenly relieved by a miraculous interference of God, which had been distinctly foretold by Elisha.

The *sixth* year the Philistines and Arabians oppress Jehoram, king of Judah, and take captive his wives and children, leaving only one son behind.

The *seventh* year Jehoram falls into a grievous sickness, so that his bowels fall out, ~~<1219>~~ **2 Chronicles 21:19**. And in the same year the *seven years'* *famine ends* about the time of harvest; and at that harvest, the Shunammite's son dies, and is restored to life by Elisha, though the story of his birth and death is related together; and yet some years must have passed between them. Not long after this the Shunammite goes to the king to petition to be restored to her own land, which she had left in the time of the famine, and had sojourned in the land of the Philistines.

This year Elisha is at Damascus, Ben-hadad falls sick; Hazeal stifles him with a wet cloth, and reigns in his stead. All these things Dr. Lightfoot supposes happened between A.M. 3110 and 3117.-See *Lightfoot's Works*, vol. i., p. 88. In examining the facts recorded in these books, we shall always find it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to ascertain the exact chronology. The difficulty is increased by a custom common among these annalists, the giving the whole of a story *at once*, though several incidents took place at the *distance of some years from the commencement of the*

story: as they seem unwilling to have to recur to the same history in the chronological order of its facts.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 8

Account of the sojourning of the Shunammite in the land of the Philistines, during the seven years famine, 1, 2. She returns, and solicits the king to let her have back her land; which, with its fruits, he orders to be restored to her, 3-6. Elisha comes to Damascus, and finds Ben-hadad sick; who sends his servant Hazael to the prophet to inquire whether he shall recover, 7-9. Elisha predicts his death, tells Hazael that he shall be king, and shows him the atrocities he will commit, 10-14. Hazael returns, stifles his master with a wet cloth, and reigns in his stead, 15. Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, becomes king over Judah; his bad reign, 16-19. Edom and Libnah revolt, 20-22. Jehoram dies, and his son Ahaziah reigns in his stead, 23, 24. His bad reign, 23-24. He joins with Joram, son of Ahab, against Hazael; Joram is wounded by the Syrians, and goes to Jezreel to be healed, 28, 29.

NOTES ON CHAP. 8

Verse 1. Then spake Elisha] As this is the relation of an event far past, the words should be translated, “But Elisha *had spoken* unto the woman whose son he *had restored* unto life; and the woman *had arisen*, and acted according to the saying of the man of God, and *had gone* with her family, and *had sojourned* in the land of the Philistines seven years.” What is mentioned in these two verses happened several years before the time specified in the *third* verse. See the observations at the end of the preceding chapter. See Clarke “~~1377~~ 2 Kings 7:17”.

Verse 4. The king talked with Gehazi] This is supposed to have happened *before* the cleansing of Naaman, for is it likely that the king would hold conversation with a leprous man; or that, knowing Gehazi had been dismissed with the highest disgrace from the prophet’s service, he could hold any conversation with him concerning his late master, relative to whom he could not expect him to give either a true or impartial account?

Some think that this conversation might have taken place after Gehazi became leprous; the king having an insatiable curiosity to know the private history of a man who had done such astonishing things: and from whom could he get this information, except from the prophet’s own confidential servant? It agrees better with the chronology to consider what is here

related as having taken place *after* the cure of Naaman. As to the circumstance of Gehazi's disease, he might overlook that, and converse with him, keeping at a reasonable distance, as nothing but actual contact could defile.

Verse 5. This is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.] This was a very providential occurrence in behalf of the Shunammite. The relation given by Gehazi was now corroborated by the woman herself; the king was duly affected, and gave immediate orders for the restoration of her land.

Verse 7. Elisha came to Damascus] That he might lead Gehazi to repentance; according to *Jarchi* and some others.

Verse 8. Take a present in thine hand] But what an immense present was this—*forty camels' burden of every good thing of Damascus!* The prophet would need to have a very large establishment at Damascus to dispose of so much property.

Verse 10. Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.] That is, God has not *determined* thy death, nor will it be a *necessary consequence* of the *disease* by which thou art now afflicted; but this wicked man will abuse the power and trust thou hast reposed in him, and take away thy life. Even when God has not *designed* nor *appointed* the death of a person, he may nevertheless die, though not without the *permission* of God. This is a farther proof of the doctrine of *contingent events*: he might live for all his sickness, but thou wilt put an end to his life.

Verse 11. He settled his countenance steadfastly] Of whom does the author speak? Of Hazael, or of Elisha? Several apply this action to the prophet: he had a murderer before him and he saw the bloody acts he was about to commit, and was greatly distressed; but he endeavoured to conceal his feelings: at last his face reddened with anguish, his feelings overcame him, and he burst out and wept.

The *Septuagint*, as it stands in the *Complutensian* and *Antwerp* Polyglots, makes the text very plain: *Και εστη Αζαηλ κατα προσωπον αυτου, και παρεθηκεν ενωπιον αυτου δωρα, εως ησχυνετο, και εκλαυσε ο ανθρωπος του Θεου, And Hazael stood before his face, and he presented before him gifts till he was ashamed; and the man of God wept.*

The Codex *Vaticanus*, and the Codex *Alexandrinus*, are nearly as the Hebrew. The *Aldine* edition agrees in some respects with the *Complutensian*; but all the *versions* follow the *Hebrew*.

Verse 12. I know the evil that thou wilt do] We may see something of the accomplishment of this prediction, ^{<1210E>} **2 Kings 10:32, 33; 13:3, 7.**

Verse 13. But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great things] I believe this verse to be wrongly interpreted by the general run of commentators. It is generally understood that Hazael was struck with horror at the prediction; that these cruelties were most alien from his mind; that he then felt distressed and offended at the imputation of such evils to him; and yet, so little did he know his own heart, that when he got power, and had opportunity, he did the whole with a willing heart and a ready hand. On the contrary, I think he was *delighted* at the prospect; and his question rather implies a *doubt* whether a person so inconsiderable as he is shall ever have it in his power to do such *great*, not such *evil* things; for, in his sight, they had no turpitude. The Hebrew text stands thus: hzh l wdgh rbdh hc[y yk bl kh Ēdb[hm yk ki mah abdecha hakkeleb, ki yaaseh haddabar haggadol hazzeh? “But, what! thy servant, this dog! that he should do this great work!” Or, “Can such a poor, worthless fellow, such a *dead dog*, [ο κυων ο τεθνηκως, *Sept.*] perform such mighty actions? thou fillest me with surprise.” And that this is the true sense, his immediate murder of his master on his return fully proves. “Our common version of these words of Hazael,” as Mr. *Patten* observes, “has stood in the front of many a fine declamation utterly wide of his real sentiment. His exclamation was not the result of horror; his expression has no tincture of it; but of the unexpected glimpse of a crown! The prophet’s answer is plainly calculated to satisfy the astonishment he had excited. A *dog* bears not, in Scripture, the character of a *cruel*, but of a *despicable* animal; nor does he who is shocked with its barbarity call it a GREAT deed.”-*David Vindicated*.

Verse 15. A thick cloth] The versions, in general, understand this of a *hairy* or *woollen* cloth.

So that he died] He was smothered, or suffocated.

Verse 16. In the fifth year of Joram] This verse, as it stands in the present Hebrew text, may

be thus read: “And in the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, [and of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah,] reigned Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.” The three Hebrew words, **hdwhy Ēl m cpvwhyw**, and of *Jehoshaphat king of Judah*, greatly disturb the chronology in this place. It is certain that Jehoshaphat reigned *twenty-five* years, and that Jehoram his son reigned but *eight*; ^{<1124D>}**1 Kings 22:42**; ^{<12817>}**2 Kings 8:17**; ^{<14381>}**2 Chronicles 20:31; 21:5**. So that he could not have reigned during his father’s life without being king *twenty* years, and *eight* years! These words are wanting in *three* of *Kennicott’s* and *Deuteronomy Rossi’s* MSS. in the *Complutensian* and *Aldine* editions of the *Septuagint*, in the *Peshito Syriac*, in the *Parisian Heptapler Syriac*, the *Arabic*, and in many copies of the *Vulgate*, collated by *Dr. Kennicott* and *Deuteronomy Rossi*, both *printed* and *manuscript*; to which may be added *two* MSS. in my own library, one of the fourteenth, the other of the eleventh century, and in what I judge to be the *Editio Princeps* of the *Vulgate*. And it is worthy of remark that in this latter work, after the fifteenth verse, ending with *Quo mortuo regnavit Azahel pro eo*, the following words are in a smaller character, *Anno quinto Joram filii Achab regis Israhel, regnavit Joram filius Josaphat rex Juda. Triginta, &c.* We have already seen that it is supposed that Jehoshaphat associated his son with him in the kingdom; and that the *fifth year* in this place only regards *Joram* king of Israel, and not *Jehoshaphat* king of Judah. See **Clarke’s notes on “^{<12017>}2 Kings 1:17”**.

Verse 17. He reigned eight years in Jerusalem.] Beginning with the fifth year of Joram, king of Israel. He reigned *three years* with *Jehoshaphat* his father, and *five years* alone; i.e., from A.M. 3112 to 3119, according to Archbishop Usher.

Verse 18. The daughter of Ahab was his wife] This was the infamous *Athaliah*; and through this marriage Jehoshaphat and Ahab were confederates; and this friendship was continued after Ahab’s death.

Verse 19. To give him alway a light] To give him a *successor* in his own family.

Verse 21. Joram went over to Zair] This is the same as *Seir*, a chief city of Idumea. So ^{<22111>}**Isaiah 21:11**: *The burden of Dumah (Idumea.) He calleth to me out of Seir.*

Smote the Edomites] It appears that the Israelites were *surrounded* by the Idumeans; and that in the night Joram and his men cut their way through

them, and so got every man to his tent, for they were not able to make any farther head against these enemies; and therefore it is said, *that Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.*

Verse 23. Are they not written in the book of the chronicles] Several remarkable particulars relative to Joram may be found in 2 Chron. 21.

Verse 26. Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign] In ~~<1421>~~ 2 Chronicles 22:2, it is said, *forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign*; this is a heavy difficulty, to remove which several expedients have been used. It is most evident that, if we follow the reading in *Chronicles*, it makes the *son two years older* than his *own father*! for his father began to reign when he was *thirty-two* years old, and reigned *eight* years, and so died, being *forty* years old; see ~~<13817>~~ 2 Kings 8:17. Dr. Lightfoot says, “The original meaneth thus: *Ahaziah was the son of two and forty years*; namely, of the house of *Omri*, of whose seed he was by the mother’s side; and he walked in the ways of that house, and came to ruin at the same time with it. This the text directs us to look after, when it calleth his mother the *daughter of Omri*, who was indeed the *daughter of Ahab*. Now, these *forty-two* years are easily reckoned by any that will *count back* in the Chronicle to the *second of Omri*. Such another reckoning there is about *Jechoniah*, or *Jehoiachin*, ~~<12318>~~ 2 Kings 24:8: *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign*. But, ~~<14319>~~ 2 Chronicles 36:9, *Jehoiachin was the son of the eight years*; that is, the beginning of his reign fell in the *eighth* year of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and of *Judah’s* first captivity.”-Works, vol. i., p. 87.

After all, here is a most *manifest contradiction*, that cannot be removed but by having recourse to *violent modes* of solution. I am satisfied the reading in ~~<1421>~~ 2 Chronicles 22:2, is a *mistake*; and that we should read there, as here, *twenty-two* instead of *forty-two* years; see the note there. And may we not say with *Calmet*, Which is most dangerous, to acknowledge that *transcribers* have made some mistakes in copying the sacred books, or to acknowledge that there are *contradictions* in them, and then to have recourse to solutions that can yield no satisfaction to any unprejudiced mind? I add, that no mode of solution yet found out has succeeded in removing the difficulty; and of all the MSS. which have been collated, and they amount to *several hundred*, *not one* confirms the reading of *twenty-two years*. And to it all the *ancient versions* are equally unfriendly.

Verse 28. The Syrians wounded Joram] Ahaziah went with Joram to endeavour to wrest Ramoth-gilead out of the hands of the Syrians, which belonged to Israel and Judah. Ahab had endeavoured to do this before, and was slain there; see ^{<1127B>}**1 Kings 22:3**, &c., and the notes there.

Verse 29. Went back to be healed in Jezreel] And there he continued till Jehu conspired against and slew him there. And thus the blood of the innocents, which had been shed by Ahab and his wife Jezebel, was visited on them in the total extinction of their family. See the following chapters, where the bloody tale of Jehu's conspiracy is told at large.

I HAVE already had to remark on the chronological difficulties which occur in the historical books; difficulties for which copyists alone are responsible. To remove them by the plan of *reconciliation*, is in many cases impracticable; to conjectural criticism we must have recourse. And is there a single ancient author of any kind, but particularly those who have written on matters of *history* and *chronology*, whose works have been transmitted to us free of similar errors, owing to the negligence of transcribers?

II KINGS

CHAPTER 9

Elisha sends one of the disciples of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead, to anoint Jehu king of Israel, 1-3. He acts according to his orders, and informs Jehu that he is to cut off the whole house of Ahab, 4-10. Jehu's captains proclaim him king, 11-14. He goes again Jezreel; where he finds Joram and Ahaziah king of Judah, who had come to visit him; he slays them both: the former is thrown into the portion of Naboth; the latter, having received a mortal wound, gives to Megiddo, and dies there, and is carried to Jerusalem, and buried in the city of David, 15-29. He commands Jezebel to be thrown out of her window; and he treads her under the feet of his horses; and the dogs eat her, according to the word of the Lord, 30-37.

NOTES ON CHAP. 9

Verse 1. One of the children of the prophets] The Jews say that this was *Jonah* the prophet, the son of Amittai.

Gird up thy loins] What thou hast to do requires the utmost despatch.

Verse 4. The young man the prophet] This should be translated, *The servant of the prophet*; that is, the servant which Elisha now had in place of Gehazi.

Verse 6. King over the people of the Lord] This pointed out to Jehu that he was to rule that people according to God's law; and consequently, that he was to restore the pure worship of the Most High in Israel.

Verse 7. Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab] For their most cruel murders they have forfeited their own lives, according to that immutable law, "HE that sheddeth man's blood by man shall *his* blood be shed." This and the two following verses contain the *commission* which Jehu received from the Lord against the bloody house of Ahab.

Verse 10. The dogs shall eat Jezebel] How most minutely was this prophecy fulfilled! See ^{<1000>}2 Kings 9:33, &c.

Verse 11. Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?] Was it because he was a *holy man* of God that he was reputed by a club of irreligious officers to be a madman? In vain do such pretend that they fight for religion, and

are the guardians of the public welfare and morals, if they persecute religion and scoff at holy men. But this has been an old custom with all the *seed*-the sons, *of the serpent*. As to religious soldiers, *they are far to seek, and ill to find*, according to the old proverb.

Ye know the man, and his communication.] Ye know that he is a *madman*, and that his message must be a message of folly. Jehu did not appear willing to tell them what had been done, lest it should promote jealousy and envy.

Verse 12. They said, It is false] Or, as the Chaldee has it, *Thou liest*. Or, perhaps, it might be thus understood, “We know he has said nothing but folly and lies, nevertheless, let us hear what he has said.”

Verse 13. Took every man his garment] This was a ceremony by which they acknowledged him as *king*; and it was by such a ceremony that the multitudes acknowledged Jesus Christ for the *Messiah and King of Israel*, a little before his passion: see ^{<42107>}**Matthew 21:7**, and the note there. The ceremony was expressive: “As we put our garments under his feet, so we place every thing under his authority, and acknowledge ourselves his servants.”

On the top of the stairs] The *Chaldee*, the *rabbins*, and several interpreters, understand this of the *public sun-dial*; which in those ancient times, was formed of *steps* like *stairs*, each *step* serving to indicate, by its *shadow*, one *hour*, or such division of time as was commonly used in that country. This *dial* was, no doubt, in the most *public place*; and upon the top of it, or on the *platform* on the top, would be a very proper place to set Jehu, while they blew their trumpets, and proclaimed him *king*. The Hebrew **twl [m maaloth** is the same word which is used ^{<42109>}**2 Kings 20:9-11**, to signify the *dial* of Ahaz; and this was probably the very same dial on which that miracle was afterwards wrought: and this dial, **twl [m maaloth**, from **hl [alah**, to go up, ascend, was most evidently made of *steps*; the *shadows* projected on which, by a gnomon, at the different elevations of the sun, would serve to show the popular divisions of time. **See Clarke’s notes on “^{<42109>}2 Kings 20:9”**, &c., and the *diagram* at the end of that chapter.

Verse 14. Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead] The confederate armies appear to have taken this city; but they were obliged to watch their

conquests, as they perceived that Hazael was determined to retake it if possible.

Verse 16. Jehu-went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there.] From the preceding verse we learn, that Joram had been wounded in his attack on Ramoth-gilead, and had gone to Jezreel to be cured; and neither he nor Ahaziah knew any thing of the conspiracy in Ramoth-gilead, because Jehu and his captains took care to prevent any person from leaving the city; so that the two kings at Jezreel knew nothing of what had taken place.

Verse 17. A watchman on the tower] These watchmen, fixed on elevated places and generally within hearing of each other, served as a kind of *telegraphs*, to communicate intelligence through the whole country. But, in some cases, it appears that the intelligence was conveyed by a *horseman* to the next stage, as in the case before us. At this time, when the armies were at Ramoth-gilead, they were, no doubt, doubly watchful to observe the state of the country, and to notice every movement. See on ^{<01E34>} **2 Samuel 13:34.**

Verse 18. What hast thou to do with peace?] “What is it to thee whether there be peace or war? Join my company, and fall into the rear.”

Verse 20. He driveth furiously] Jehu was a bold, daring, prompt, and precipitate general. In his various military operations he had established his character; and now it was almost proverbial.

Verse 21. Joram-and Ahaziah-went out] They had no suspicion of what was done at Ramoth-gilead; else they would not have ventured their persons as they now did.

Verse 22. What peace, so long as the whoredoms] Though the words *whoredom*, *adultery*, and *fornication*, are frequently used to express *idolatry*, and *false religion*, in general; yet here they may be safely taken in their *common* and most *obvious* sense, as there is much reason to believe that Jezebel was the patroness and supporter of a very impure system of religion; and to this Jehu might refer, rather than to the *calf-worship*, to which himself was most favourably disposed.

Verse 23. There is treachery, O Ahaziah.] This was the first intimation he had of it: he feels for the safety of his friend Ahaziah, and now they fly for their lives.

Verse 24. Drew a bow with his full strength] The marginal reading is correct: *He filled his hand with a bow*. That is, “He immediately took up his bow, set his arrow, and let fly.” This is the only meaning of the passage.

Between his arms] That is, between his *shoulders*; for he was now *turned*, and was flying *from* Jehu.

Verse 25. Cast him in the portion of the field] This was predicted, 1 Kings 21; and what now happened to the son of Ahab is foretold in ^{<12129>}1 Kings 21:29 of that chapter.

Verse 26. The blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons] We are not informed in 1 Kings 21 that any of Naboth’s *family* was slain but himself: but as the object both of Ahab and Jezebel was to have Naboth’s vineyard entirely, and *for ever*, it is not likely that they would leave any of his posterity, who might at a future time reclaim it as their inheritance. Again, to secure this point, Jezebel had Naboth convicted of *treason* and *atheism*; in order that his whole family might be involved in his ruin.

Verse 27. Fled by the way of the garden] The account of the death of Ahaziah, as given in ^{<4218>}2 Chronicles 22:8, 9, is very different from that given here: *When Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab—he sought Ahaziah; and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu; and when they had slain him, they buried him*. “The current of the story at large is this,” says Dr. Lightfoot: “Jehu slayeth Joram in the *field of Jezreel*, as Ahaziah and Joram were together; Ahaziah, seeing this, flees, and gets into Samaria, and hides himself there. Jehu marcheth to Jezreel, and makes Jezebel dogs’ meat: from thence he sends to Samaria for the heads of Ahab’s children and posterity: which are brought him by night, and showed to the people in the morning. Then he marcheth to Samaria, and by the way slayeth *forty-two* of Ahab’s kinsmen; and findeth Jehonadab, the father of the Rechabites. Coming into Samaria, he maketh search for Ahaziah: they find him hid, bring him to Jehu, and he commands to carry him up towards *Gur*, by *Ibleam*, and there to slay him. It may be, his father Joram had slain *his brethren there*, as Ahab had done *Naboth*, in *Jezreel*. They do so; smite him there in his chariot; and his charioteer driveth away to *Megiddo* before he dies. The story in the book of Kings is short: but the book of Chronicles shows the order.” *Lightfoot’s Works*, vol. i., p. 88.

Verse 29. In the eleventh year of Joram] The note in our *margin* contains as good an account of this chronological difficulty as can be reasonably required: *Then he began to reign as viceroy to his father in his sickness;* ^{<1218>} **2 Chronicles 21:18, 19.** *But in Joram's twelfth year he began to reign alone;* ^{<1236>} **2 Kings 8:26.**

Verse 30. She painted her face, and tired her head] She endeavoured to improve the appearance of her *complexion* by paint, and the general effect of her countenance by a *tiara* or turban head-dress. *Jonathan*, the *Chaldee Targumist*, so often quoted, translates this *ahny[adydx b t l j kw vechachalath bitsdida eynaha*: “She stained her eyes with *stibium* or *antimony*.” This is a custom in *Astatic* countries to the present day. From a late traveller in Persia, I borrow the following account:—

“The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of *beauty* as they do in those of taste. *A large soft, and languishing black eye*, with them constitutes the perfection of beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women *use the powder of antimony*, which, although it *adds to the vivacity of the eye, throws a kind of voluptuous languor over it*, which makes it appear, (if I may use the expression,) *dissolving in bliss*. The Persian women have a curious custom of making *their eye-brows meet*; and if this charm be denied them, *they paint the forehead* with a kind of preparation made for that purpose.” *E. S. Waring's Tour to Sheeraz*, 4to., 1807, page 62.

This casts light enough on Jezebel's painting, &c., and shows sufficiently with what design she did it, to conquer and disarm Jehu, and *induce him to take her for wife*, as *Jarchi* supposes. This staining of the eye with *stibium* and painting was a universal custom, not only in Asiatic countries, but also in all those that bordered on them, or had connections with them. The Prophet Ezekiel mentions the painting of the eyes, ^{<2340>} **Ezekiel 23:40.**

That the *Romans painted their eyes* we have the most positive evidence. Pliny says, *Tanta est decoris affectatio, ut tinguantur oculi quoque*. *Hist. Nat. lib. xi., cap. 37.* “Such is their affection of ornament, that they paint their eyes also.” That this *painting* was with *stibium* or *antimony*, is plain from these words of *St. Cyprian*, *Deuteronomy Opere et Eleemosynis*, *Inunge aculos tuos non stibio diaboli, sed collyrio Christi*, “Anoint your eyes, not with the devil's antimony, but with the eye-salve of Christ.”

Juvenal is plain on the same subject. Men as well as women in Rome practiced it:—

*Ille supercilium madida fuligine tactum
Obliqua producit acu pingitque trementes
Attollens oculos.
SAT. ii., ver. 93.*

*“With sooty moisture one his eye-brows dyes,
And with a bodkin paints his trembling eyes.”*

The *manner* in which the women in Barbary do it Dr. Russel particularly describes:—“Upon the principle of *strengthening* the sight, as well as an *ornament*, it is become a general practice among the women to *black the middle of their eye-lids* by applying a powder called *ismed*. Their method of doing it is by a cylindrical piece of *silver, steel, or ivory*, about two inches long, made very smooth, and about the size of a *common probe*. This they wet with water, in order that the powder may stick to it, *and applying the middle part horizontally to the eye, they shut the eye-lids upon it, and so drawing it through between them, it blacks the inside, leaving a narrow black rim all round the edge*. This is sometimes practiced by the *men*, but is then regarded as foppish.” RUSSEL’S *Nat. Hist.* of Aleppo, page 102. See *Parkhurst, sub voc.* Ēp

Verse 31. Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?] Jarchi paraphrases this place thus: “If thou hast slain thy master, it is no new thing; for Zimri also slew Elah, the son of Baasha;” which words were rather intended to *conciliate* than to *provoke*. But the words are understood by most of the versions thus: Health to Zimri, the slayer of his master!

Verse 33. So they threw her down] What a terrible death! She was already, by the fall, almost dashed to pieces; and the brutal Jehu trampled her already mangled body under his horse’s feet!

Verse 34. She is a king’s daughter.] Jezebel was certainly a woman of a very *high lineage*. She was *daughter* of the king of Tyre; *wife* of Ahab, king of Israel; *mother* of Joram, king of Israel; *mother-in-law* of Joram, king of Judah; and *grandmother* of Ahaziah, king of Judah.

Verse 35. The skull-the feet, and the palms of her hands.] The dogs did not eat those parts, say *Jarchi* and *Kimchi*, because in her festal dances she danced like a dog, on her hands and feet, wantonly moving her head. What

other meaning these rabbins had, I do not inquire. She was, no doubt, guilty of the foulest actions, and was almost too bad to be *belied*.

How literally was the prediction delivered in the preceding book, (~~-12123-~~ **1 Kings 21:23**, *The dogs shall eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel.*) fulfilled! And how dearly did she and her husband Ahab pay for the murder of innocent Naboth!

Verse 37. And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung] As it was not *buried* under the earth, but was *eaten by the dogs*, this saying was also literally fulfilled.

They shall not say, This is Jezebel.] As she could not be buried, she could have no *funeral monument*. Though so great a woman by her birth, connections, and alliances, she had not the honour of a tomb! There was not even a *solitary stone* to say, *Here lies Jezebel!* not even a *mound of earth* to designate the place of her sepulture! Judgment is God's strange work; but when he contends, how terrible are his judgments! and when he ariseth to execute judgment, who shall stay his hand? How deep are his counsels, and how terrible are his workings!

II KINGS

CHAPTER 10

Jehu sends an ironical letter to the elders of Samaria, telling them to choose one of the best of their master's sons, and put him on the throne; to which they return a submissive answer, 1-6. He writes a second letter, and orders them to send him the heads of Ahab's seventy sons; they do so, and they are laid in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel, 7, 8. Jehu shows them to the people, and excuses himself, and states that all is done according to the word of the Lord, 9, 10. He destroys all the kindred of Ahab that remained in Jezreel, 11. He also destroys forty-two men, the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, 12-14. He meets with Jehonadab, and takes him with him in his chariot, 15, 16. He comes to Samaria, and destroys all that were of the kindred of Ahab there, 17. He pretends a great zeal for the worship of Baal, and gathers all his priests together, under the pretense of a grand sacrifice, and slays them all, 18-25. He burns Baal's images, and makes his temple a draught house, 26-28. But he does not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, and does not prosper, 29-31. Hazael vexes Israel, 32, 33. Jehu dies, having reigned over Israel, in Samaria, twenty-eight years, 34-36.

NOTES ON CHAP. 10

Verse 1. Ahab had seventy sons] As he had several wives, he might have many children. The Israelites, from the earliest part of their history, were remarkably fruitful. How amazingly did they multiply in Egypt, even under the hand of the severest oppression! And as to the individuals of whose families we have an account, they are quite remarkable: *Rehoboam* had *thirty-eight* sons; *Abdon* had *forty*; *Tola* had *thirty*; *Ahab*, *seventy*; and *Gideon*, *seventy-one*.

Unto the rulers of Jezreel] It certainly should be, *unto the rulers of Samaria*; for to *them* and to that *city* the whole context shows us the letters were sent. See ^{<12106>}**2 Kings 10:6**.

To them that brought up Ahab's children] It appears that the royal children of Israel and Judah were intrusted to the care of the nobles, and were brought up by them, (see ^{<12106>}**2 Kings 10:6**;) and to these, therefore, Jehu's letters are directed. It is supposed *Isaiah* (^{<234923>}**Isaiah 49:23**) alludes to this custom: *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers*.

Verse 2. A fenced city also] All here seems to refer to Samaria alone; in it were the magazines and implements of war, &c. No reader need be told that these letters were all *ironical*. It was the same as if he had said, “Ye have no means of defence; Israel is with *me*: if you yield not up yourselves and the city, I will put you all to the sword.”

Verse 4. Two kings stood not before him] That is Joram and Ahaziah.

Verse 5. He that was over the house, &c.] Thus all the constituted authorities agreed to submit.

Will do all that thou shalt bid us] They made no conditions, and stood pledged to commit the horrid murders which this most execrable man afterwards commanded.

Verse 6. Come to me to Jezreel] Therefore the letters were not written to Jezreel, but from Jezreel to Samaria.

Verse 7. Put their heads in baskets] What cold-blooded wretches were the whole of these people!

Verse 8. Lay ye them in two heaps] It appears that the heads of these princes had arrived at Jezreel in the *night time*: Jehu ordered them to be left at the gate of the city, a place of public resort, that all the people might see them, and be struck with terror, and conclude that all resistance to such authority and power would be vain.

Verse 9. Ye be righteous] Another irony, intended partly to excuse himself, and to involve them in the odium of this massacre, and at the same time to justify the conduct of both, by showing that all was done according to the commandment of the Lord.

Verse 11. Jehu slew all] So it appears that the *great men* who had so obsequiously taken off the heads of Ahab’s *seventy* sons, fell also a sacrifice to the ambition of this incomparably bad man.

Verse 12. The shearing house] Probably the place where the shepherds met for the annual sheep shearing.

Verse 13. The brethren of Ahaziah] The relatives of his family; for it does not appear that he had any *brethren*, properly so called: but we know that the term brethren among the Jews signified the relatives of the same

family, and especially *brothers'* and *sisters'* children: and that these-were such, see ⁻⁴²¹⁸2 Chronicles 22:8.

We go down to salute, &c.] So promptly had Jehu executed all his measures, that even the nearest relatives of the murdered kings had not heard of their death, and consequently had no time to escape. They were all taken as in a net.

Verse 14. The pit of the shearing house] Probably the place where they washed the *sheep* previously to shearing, or the *fleeces* after they were shorn off.

Verse 15. Jehonadab the son of Rechab] For particulars concerning this man, his *ancestry*, and *posterity*, see the notes on Jer. 35.

Is thine heart right] With me, in the prosecution of a reform in Israel; *as my heart* is *with thy heart* in the true religion of Jehovah, and the destruction of Baal?

It is.] I wish a reform in the religion of the country; I am his friend who shall endeavour to promote it.

Give me thine hand.] This has been generally considered as exacting a *promise* from Jehonadab; but does it mean any more than his taking him by the hand, to help him to step into his chariot, in which Jehu was then sitting? Jehonadab was doubtless a very honourable man in Israel; and by carrying him about with him in his chariot, Jehu endeavoured to acquire the public esteem. "Jehu must be acting right, for Jehonadab is with him, and approves his conduct."

Verse 16. Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.] O thou ostentatious and murderous hypocrite! Thou have zeal for Jehovah and his pure religion! Witness thy calves at Dan and Bethel, and the general profligacy of thy conduct. He who can call another to witness his zeal for religion, or his works of charity, has as much of both as serves his *own* turn.

Verse 18. Ahab served Baal a little] Jehu had determined to have no worship in Israel but that of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel; therefore he purposes to destroy all the worshippers of Baal: and that he may do it without *suspicion*, he proclaims a great sacrifice; and that he may do it the more *easily*, he gathers them all together into one place.

Verse 19. Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.] Because, as he will thereby show himself without zeal for the service of his God, he will justly forfeit his life. All this was done in the very spirit of deceit.

Verse 22. He said unto him that was over the vestry] The word *vestry* comes from *vestiarium*, and that from *vestes, garments*, from *vestio, I clothe*; and signifies properly the *place* where the *sacerdotal robes* and *pontifical ornaments* are kept. The priests of Baal had their robes as well as the priests of the Lord; but the garments were such that one could be easily distinguished from the other.

Verse 23. None of the servants of the Lord] Though he was not attached to that service, yet he would tolerate it; and as he was led to suppose that he was fulfilling the will of *Jehovah* in what he was doing, he would of course treat his worship and worshippers with the more respect.

He might have ordered the search to be made on pretense of expelling any of those whom they would consider *the profane*, especially as this was “a solemn assembly for Baal,” as was the custom with the heathen when any extraordinary exhibition of or for their god was expected; thus Callimachus, (Hymn to Apollo,) after imagining the temple and its suburbs to be shaken by the approach of Apollo, cries out, **Εκας, εκας, οστις, αλιτρος**. To prevent any suspicion of his real design, such might have been Jehu’s plea, else alarm must have been excited, and perhaps some would have escaped.

Verse 25. As soon as he had made an end of offering] Had Jehu been a man of any conscientious principle in religion, he would have finished the tragedy before he offered the *burnt-offering*; but to a man of no religion, the worship of *Jehovah* and of *Baal* are alike. If he prefers either, it is merely as a *statesman*, for political purposes.

To the guard and to the captains] **μυνη νη η μυχηη** *leratsim uleshalashim*; to the *couriers* or *runners*, and the *shalashim*, the men of the *third rank*, those officers who were next to the nobles, the king and these being only their superiors. The *runners* were probably a sort of *light infantry*.

The city of the house of Baal.] Does not this mean a sort of holy of holies, where the most sacred images of *Baal* were kept? A place separated

from the temple of Baal, as the *holy of holies* in the temple of Jehovah was separated from what was called *the holy place*.

Verse 27. Made it a draught house] A place for human excrement; so all the *versions* understand it. Nothing could be more degrading than this; he made it a *public necessary*.

Verse 30. Thy children of the fourth generation] These four descendants of Jehu were *Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam* the second, and *Zechariah*; see 2 Kings 14 and 15. This was all the compensation Jehu had in either world, as a recompense of *his zeal for the Lord*.

Verse 31. Jehu took no heed] He never made it his study; indeed, he never intended to walk in this way; it neither suited his *disposition* nor his *politics*.

Verse 32. The Lord began to cut Israel short] The *marginal* reading is best: *The Lord cut off the ends*; and this he did by permitting Hazael to seize on the *coasts*, to conquer and occupy the *frontier towns*. This was the commencement of those miserable ravages which Elisha predicted; see <12182> **2 Kings 8:12**. And we find from the next verse that he seized on *all the land of Gilead*, and that of *Reuben and Gad*, and the *half tribe of Manasseh*; in a word, whatever Israel possessed on the east side of Jordan.

Verse 34. Are they not written in the book of the chronicles] We have no chronicles in which there is any thing farther spoken of this bad man. His reign was long, *twenty-eight* years; and yet we know nothing of it but the commencement.

FOR *barbarity* and *hypocrisy* Jehu has few parallels; and the cowardliness and baseness of the *nobles of Samaria* have seldom been equalled. Ahab's bloody house must be cut off; but did God ever design that it should be done by these means? The men were, no doubt, profligate and wicked, and God permitted their iniquity to manifest itself in this way; and thus the purpose of God, that Ahab's house should no more reign, was completely accomplished: see <12119> **1 Kings 21:19, 21, 29**. And by this conduct Jehu is said to have executed what was right in God's eyes, <12103> **2 Kings 10:30**. The cutting off of Ahab's family was decreed by the Divine justice; the *means* by which it was done, or at least the *manner* of doing, were not entirely of his appointing: yet the commission given him by the young prophet, <12107> **2 Kings 9:7**, was very extensive. Yet still many things seem to

be attributed to God, as the *agent*, which he does not execute, but only permits to be done.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 11

Athaliah destroys all that remain of the seed royal of Judah, 1. Jehosheba hides Joash the son of Ahaziah, and he remains hidden in the house of the Lord six years; and Athaliah reigns over the land, 2, 3. Jehoiada, the high priest, calls the nobles privately together into the temple, shows them the king's son, takes an oath of them, arms them, places guards around the temple, and around the young king's person; they anoint and proclaim him, 4-12. Athaliah is alarmed, comes into the temple, is seized, carried forth, and slain, 13-16. Jehoiada causes the people to enter into a covenant with the Lord; they destroy Baal's house, priest, and images, 17, 18. Joash is brought to the king's house, reigns, and all the land rejoices, 19-21.

NOTES ON CHAP. 11

Verse 1. Athaliah] This woman was the daughter of Ahab, and grand-daughter of Omri, and wife of Joram king of Judah, and mother of Ahaziah.

Destroyed all the seed royal.] All that she could lay her hands on whom Jehu had left; in order that she might get undisturbed possession of the kingdom.

How dreadful is the lust of reigning! it destroys all the charities of life; and turns fathers, mothers, brothers, and children, into the most ferocious savages! Who, that has it in his power, makes any conscience

“To swim to sovereign rule through seas of blood?”

In what a dreadful state is that land that is exposed to political *revolutions*, and where the *succession* to the throne is not most positively settled by the clearest and most decisive law! Reader, beware of *revolutions*; there have been some useful ones, but they are in general the heaviest curse of God.

Verse 2. Daughter of-Joram, sister of Ahaziah] It is not likely that Jehosheba was the daughter of *Athaliah*; she was sister, we find, to Ahaziah the son of Athaliah, but probably by a different mother. The mother of Jehoash was Zibiah of Beer-sheba; see ^{<1210>}**2 Kings 12:1**.

Verse 3. He was-hid in the house of the Lord] This might be readily done, because none had access to the temple but the priests; and the high priest himself was the chief manager of this business.

Verse 4. And the seventh year Jehoiada sent] He had certainly sounded them all, and brought them into the interests of the young king, before this time; the plot having been laid, and now ripe for execution, he brings the chief officers of the army and those of the body guard into the temple, and there binds them by an oath of secrecy, and shows them the king's son, in whose behalf they are to rise.

Verse 5. That enter in on the Sabbath] It appears that Jehoiada chose the *Sabbath day* to proclaim the young king, because as that was a day of public concourse, the gathering together of the people who were in this secret would not be noticed; and it is likely that they all came *unarmed*, and were supplied by Jehoiada with the *spears* and *shields* which David had laid up in the temple, ^{<121110>}**2 Kings 11:10.**

The priests and Levites were divided into *twenty-four* classes by David, and each served a week by turns in the temple, and it was on the *Sabbath* that they began the weekly service, all this favoured Jehoiada's design.

Verse 10. King David's spears and shields] Josephus expressly says that David had provided an arsenal for the temple, out of which Jehoiada took those arms. His words are; **Ανοιξας δε Ιωαδος την εν τω ιερω οπλοθηκην, ην Δαβιδης κατεσκευασε, διεμερισε τοις εκατονταρχαις αμα και ιεροισι και Λευιταις απανθ οσα ευρεν εν αυτη δορατα τε και φαρετρας, και ει τι ετερον ειδος οπλου κατελαβε.** "And Jehoiada having opened the arsenal in the temple, which David had prepared, he divided among the centurions, priests, and Levites, the spears, (arrows,) and quivers, and all other kinds of weapons which he found there."-*Ant. lib. ix., c. 7, s. 8.*

Verse 12. Put the crown upon him] This was a *diadem* or *golden band* that went round the head.

And-the testimony] Probably the *book of the law*, written on a roll of vellum. This was his *sceptre*. Some think that it was placed *upon his head*, as well as the diadem. The *diadem*, the *testimony*, and the *anointing oil*, were essential to his consecration.

They clapped their hands] This I believe is the first instance on record of *clapping the hands* as a testimony of joy.

God save the king] *Ēl mh yj y yechi hannmelech; May the king live!* So the words should be translated wherever they occur.

Verse 14. The king stood by a pillar] *Stood ON a pillar or tribunal;* the place or throne on which they were accustomed to put the kings when they proclaimed them.

Treason, Treason.] *rvq rvq kesher, kasher; A conspiracy, A conspiracy!* from *kashar, to bind, unite together.*

Verse 15. Have her forth] She had pressed in among the guards into the temple.

And him that followeth] The person who takes her part, let him instantly be slain.

Verse 16. By the way-which the horses came] They probably brought her out near the king's stables. It has been supposed, from ^{<2640>}**Ezekiel 46:1, 2**, that the *east gate* of the inner court was that by which the king entered on the *Sabbath day*, whereas on all other days he entered by the *south gate*. And there was another gate, called the *horse gate*, in the wall of the city, (^{<2614>}**Jeremiah 31:40**,) for the king's horses to go out at from the stables at Millo, which is therefore called, ^{<14215>}**2 Chronicles 23:15**, *the horse gate toward the king's house*.

Verse 17. Jehoiada made a covenant] A *general* covenant was *first* made between the *Lord*, the Supreme King, the *king* his viceroy, and the *people*, that they should all be *the Lord's people*; each being equally bound to live according to the Divine law.

Then, *secondly*, a *particular* covenant was made between the *king* and the *people*, by which the *king* was bound to rule according to the laws and constitution of the kingdom, and to watch and live for the safety of the public. And the *people* were bound on their part, to love, honour, succour, and obey the king. Where these mutual and just agreements are made and maintained, there can be nothing else than prosperity in the Church and the state.

Verse 18. His altars and images brake they in pieces] It is probable that Athaliah had set up the worship of Baal in Judah, as Jezebel had done in Israel; or probably it had never been removed since the days of Solomon. It was no wonder that Jehoiada began his reform with this act, when we learn from ^{<14207>}**2 Chronicles 24:7**, that *the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim.*

Verse 20. The people-rejoiced] They were glad to get rid of the tyranny of Athaliah.

And the city was in quiet] She had no *partisans* to rise up and disturb the king's reign.

Verse 21. Seven years old was Jehoash] The first instance on record of making a child seven years old the king of any nation, and especially of such a nation as the Jews, who were at all times very difficult to be governed.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 12

Jehoash reigns well under the instructions of Jehoiada the priest, 1-3. He directs the repairing of the temple; the account of what was done, 4-16. Hazael takes Gath; and, proceeding to besiege Jerusalem, is prevented by Jehoash, who gives him all the treasures and hallowed things of the house of the Lord, 17, 18. The servants of Jehoash conspire against and slay him, 19-21.

NOTES ON CHAP. 12

Verse 2. Jehoash did-right in the sight of the Lord] While Jehoiada the priest, who was a pious, holy man, lived, Jehoash walked uprightly; but it appears from ^{<42417>}**2 Chronicles 24:17, 18**, that he departed from the worship of the true God after the death of this eminent high priest, lapsed into idolatry, and seems to have had a share in the murder of Zechariah, who testified against his transgressions, and those of the princes of Judah. See above, ^{<42420>}**2 Chronicles 24:20-22**.

O how *few* of the *few* who begin to live to God *continue unto the end!*

Verse 3. The high places were not taken away] Without the total destruction of these there could be no *radical* reform. The toleration of any species of idolatry in the land, whatever else was done in behalf of true religion, left, and in effect fostered, a seed which springing up, regenerated in time the whole infernal system. Jehoiada did not use his influence as he might have done; for as he had the king's heart and hand with him, he might have done what he pleased.

Verse 4. All the money of the dedicated things] From all this account we find that the temple was in a very ruinous state; the walls were falling down, some had perhaps actually fallen, and there was no person so zealous for the pure worship of God, as to exert himself to shore up the falling temple!

The king himself seems to have been the first who noticed these dilapidations, and took measures for the necessary repairs. The repairs were made from the following sources: 1. The *things* which pious persons *had dedicated* to the service of God. 2. The *free-will offerings* of strangers who had visited Jerusalem: *the money of every one that passeth*. 3. The

half-shekel which the males were obliged to pay from the age of *twenty* years (^{<123012>} **Exodus 30:12**) for the redemption of their *souls*, that is their *lives*, which is here called *the money that every man is set at*. All these sources had ever been in some measure open, but instead of repairing the dilapidations in the Lord's house, the priests and Levites had converted the income to their own use.

Verse 6. In the three and twentieth year] In what year Jehoash gave the orders for these repairs, we cannot tell; but the account here plainly intimates that they had been long given, and that nothing was done, merely through the inactivity and *negligence of the priests*; see ^{<14306>} **2 Chronicles 24:6**.

It seems that the people had brought money in abundance, and the pious Jehoiada was over the priests, and yet nothing was done! Though Jehoiada was a good man, he does not appear to have had much of the spirit of an active *zeal*; and simple *piety*, without zeal and activity, is of little use when a reformation in religion and manners is necessary to be brought about. *Philip Melancthon* was orthodox, pious, and learned, but he was a man of comparative *inactivity*. In many respects *Martin Luther* was by far his inferior, but in zeal and activity he was a flaming and consuming fire; and by him, under God, was the mighty Reformation, from the corruptions of popery, effected. Ten thousand *Jehoiadas* and *Melancthons* might have *wished* it in vain; *Luther worked*, and God worked *by him, in him, and for him*.

Verse 9. Jehoiada-took a chest] This chest was at first *set beside the altar*, as is here mentioned; but afterwards, for the convenience of the people, it was set *without the gate*; see ^{<14308>} **2 Chronicles 24:8**.

Verse 10. The king's scribe and the high priest] It was necessary to associate with the high priest some *civil authority* and activity, in order to get the neglected work performed.

Verse 13. Howbeit there were not made-bowls, &c.] That is, there were no vessels made for the service of the temple till all the outward repairs were completed; but after this was done, *they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels of gold and silver*; ^{<14314>} **2 Chronicles 24:14**.

Verse 15. They reckoned not with the men] They placed great confidence in them, and were not disappointed, *for they dealt faithfully*.

Verse 17. Hazael-fought against Gath, and took it] This city, with its satrapy or *lordship*, had been taken from the Philistines by David, (see ~~<1080>~~ **2 Samuel 8:1**, and ~~<1380>~~ **1 Chronicles 18:1**;) and it had continued in the possession of the kings of Judah till this time. On what pretence Hazael seized it, we cannot tell; he had the *ultima ratio regum*, *power* to do it, and he *wanted more territory*.

Verse 18. Took all the hallowed things] He dearly bought a peace which was of *short duration*, for the next year Hazael returned, and Jehoash, having no more treasures, was obliged to hazard a battle, which he lost, with the principal part of his nobility, so that Judah was totally ruined, and Jehoash shortly after slain in his bed by his own servants; ~~<1402>~~ **2 Chronicles 24:23**.

Verse 19. The rest of the acts of Joash] We have already seen that this man, so promising in the beginning of his reign, apostatized, became an idolater, encouraged idolatry among his subjects, and put the high priest Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada his benefactor, to death; and now God visited that blood upon him by the hands of the tyrannous king of Syria, and by his own servants.

Verse 20. The house of Millo] Was a royal palace, built by David; (see ~~<1080>~~ **2 Samuel 5:9**;) and *Silla* is supposed to be the name of the *road* or *causeway* that led to it. *Millo* was situated between the old city of Jerusalem, and the city of David.

Verse 21. For Jozachar] This person is called *Zabad* in ~~<1402>~~ **2 Chronicles 24:26**; and *Shimeath* his mother is said to be an *Ammonitess*, as *Jehozabad* is said to be the son, not of *Shomer*, but of *Shimrith*, a Moabitess.

They buried him with his fathers in the city of David] But they did not bury him in the *sepulchres of the kings*; this is supposed to express the popular disapprobation of his conduct. Thus ended a reign full of promise and hope in the beginning, but profligate, cruel, and ruinous in the end. Never was the hand of God's justice more signally stretched out against an apostate king and faithless people, than at this time. Now Hazael had a plenary commission; the king, the nobles, and the people, were food for his sword, and by a handful of Syrians the mighty armies of Israel were

overthrown: *For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God,* ~~1424~~ **2 Chronicles 24:24**. Thus, as righteousness exalteth a nation, so sin is the disgrace and confusion of any people. Sin destroys both counsel and strength; and the wicked flee when none pursue.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 13

Jehoahaz reigns in Israel seventeen years; his various acts, and wars with the Syrians, 1-8. He dies, and Joash reigns in his stead, and does evil in the sight of the Lord, 9-13. Elisha's last sickness; he foretells a three-fold defeat of the Syrians, and dies, 14-20. A dead man raised to life by touching the bones of Elisha, 21. Hazael dies, having long oppressed Israel; but Jehoash recovers many cities out of the hands of Ben-hadad, his successor, and defeats him three times, 22-25.

NOTES ON CHAP. 13

Verse 1. In the three and twentieth year of Joash] The chronology here is thus accounted for; Jehoahaz began his reign at the commencement of the *twenty-third* year of Joash, and reigned *seventeen* years, *fourteen* alone, and *three* years with his son Joash; the *fourteenth* year was but just begun.

Verse 5. And the Lord gave Israel a saviour] This was undoubtedly *Joash*, whose successful wars against the Syrians are mentioned at the conclusion of the chapter. *Houbigant* recommends to read the *seventh* verse after the *fourth*, then the *fifth* and *sixth*, and next the *eighth*, &c.

Verse 6. The grove also in Samaria] *Asherah*, or *Astarte*, remained in Samaria, and there was she worshipped, with all her abominable rites.

Verse 10. In the thirty and seventh year] Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, was associated with his father in the government two years before his death. It is this association that is spoken of here. He succeeded him two years after, a little before the death of Elisha. Joash reigned *sixteen* years, which include the years he governed *conjointly* with his father.-*Calmet*.

Verse 12. Wherewith he fought against Amaziah] This war with Amaziah may be seen in ample detail 2 Chron. 25; it ended in the total defeat of Amaziah, who was taken prisoner by Joash, and afterwards slain in a conspiracy at Lachish. Joash took Jerusalem, broke down *four hundred* cubits of the wall, and took all the royal treasures, and the treasures of the house of God. See ~~<4231>~~ **2 Chronicles 25:20-27**.

Verse 14. Now Elisha was fallen sick] This is supposed to have taken place in the *tenth* year of Joash; and if so, Elisha must have prophesied about *sixty-five* years.

O my father, my father] “What shall I do now thou art dying? thou art the only defense of Israel.” He accosts him with the same words which himself spoke to Elijah when he was translated; see ^{<1312>}**2 Kings 2:12**, and the note there.

Verse 15. Take bow and arrows.] The *bow*, the *arrows*, and the *smiting on the ground*, were all emblematical things, indicative of the *deliverance of Israel* from Syria.

Verse 17. Open the window eastward] This was towards the country beyond Jordan, which Hazael had taken from the Israelites.

The arrow of-deliverance from Syria] That is, As surely as that arrow is shot towards the lands conquered from Israel by the Syrians, so surely shall those lands be reconquered and restored to Israel.

It was an ancient custom to *shoot an arrow* or *cast a spear* into the country which an army intended to invade. *Justin* says that, as soon as Alexander the Great had arrived on the coasts of Iona, he threw a dart into the country of the Persians. “Cum delati in continentem essent, primus Alexander jaculum velut in hostilem terram jacit.”—Just. lib. ii.

The *dart*, *spear*, or *arrow* thrown, was an emblem of the commencement of hostilities. Virgil (*Æn.* lib. ix., ver. 51) represents *Turnus* as giving the signal of attack by *throwing a spear*:—

*Ecquis erit mecum, O Juvenes, qui primus in hostem?
En, ait: et jaculum intorquens emittit in auras,
Principium pugnae; et campo sese arduus infert.*

*“Who, first,” he cried, “with me the foe will dare?”
Then hurled a dart, the signal of the war.*

PITT.

Servius, in his note upon this place, shows that it was a custom to proclaim war in this stay: the *pater patratus*, or *chief* of the *Feciales*, a sort of *heralds*, went to the confines of the enemy’s country, and, after some solemnities, said with a loud voice, *I wage war with you, for such and such reasons*; and then *threw in a spear*. It was then the business of the parties

thus *defied* or *warned* to take the subject into consideration; and if they did not, within thirty days, come to some accommodation, the war was begun.

Thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek] This was a city of Syria, and probably the place of the *first* battle; and there, it appears, they had a total overthrow. They were, in the language of the text, *consumed* or *exterminated*.

Verse 18. Smite upon the ground] As he was ordered to take his *arrows*, the smiting on the ground must mean *shooting arrows into it*.

He smote thrice, and stayed.] The prophet knew that this shooting was *emblematical*: probably the king was not aware of what depended on the *frequency* of the action; and perhaps it was of the Lord that he smote only *thrice*, as he had determined to give Israel those three victories *only* over the Syrians. Elisha's being *wroth* because there were only *three* instead of *five* or *six* shots does not prove that God was wroth, or that he had intended to give the Syrians *five* or *six* overthrows.

Verse 20. And Elisha died] The two prophets, *Elijah* and *Elisha*, were both most extraordinary men. Of the former, it is difficult to say whether he was a *man*, or an *angel* in a *human body*. The arguments *for* this latter opinion are strong, the objections against it very feeble. His being *fed by an angel* is no proof that he was not an *angel incarnate*, for *God manifest in the flesh* was fed by the same ministry. Of him the following from **Ecclesiasticus 48:1-11** is a nervous character:—

1. Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp.
2. He brought a sore famine upon them, and by his zeal he diminished their number.
3. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire.
4. O Elias, how wast thou honoured in thy wondrous deeds! and who may glory like unto thee!
5. Who didst raise up a dead man from death, and his soul from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High:
6. Who broughtest kings to destruction, and honourable men from their bed:

7. Who heardest the rebuke of the Lord in Sinai, and in Horeb the judgment of vengeance:

8. Who anointedst kings to take revenge, and prophets to succeed after him:

9. Who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses:

10. Who wast ordained for reproofs in their times to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury; and to turn the heart of the father unto the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.

11. Blessed are they that saw thee, and slept in love; for we shall surely live.

Elisha was not less eminent than *Elijah*; the history of his ministry is more detailed than that of his master, and his miracles are various and stupendous. In many things there is a striking likeness between him and our blessed Lord, and especially in the very beneficent miracles which he wrought. Of him the same author gives this character, *ib. ver. 12-14: Elisha was filled with his spirit: whilst he lived he was not moved with the presence of any prince; neither could any bring him into subjection. Nothing could overcome him; and after his death his body prophesied, i.e., raised a dead man to life, as we learn from the following verse. He did wonders in his life, and at his death there his works marvellous; perhaps referring to his last acts with Joash.*

The bands of the Moabites] *Marauding parties*; such as those mentioned ~~<OR>~~ **2 Kings 5:2.**

Verse 21. They spied a band] They saw one of these *marauding parties*; and through fear could not wait to bury their dead, but threw the body into the grave of *Elisha*, which chanced then to be open; and as soon as it touched the bones of the prophet, the man was restored to life. This shows that the prophet did not perform his miracles by any powers of his *own*, but by the power of God; and he chose to honour his servant, by making even his *bones* the instrument of another miracle after his death. This is the *first*, and I believe the *last*, account of a *true miracle* performed by the bones of a dead man; and yet on it and such like the whole system of miraculous working *relics* has been founded by the popish Church.

Verse 23. And the Lord was gracious unto them] \hat{j} yw *vaiyachon*, he had tender affection for them, as a husband has for his wife, or a father for his own children.

And had compassion on them] $\mu m j$ $r y w$ *vairachamem*, his bowels yearned over them; he felt for them, he sympathized with them in all their distress: *Therefore are my bowels troubled; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord,* ^{<4613>} **Jeremiah 31:20.**

And had respect unto them] $\hat{p} y w$ *vaiyiphem*, he turned face towards them, he received them again into favour; and this because of his covenant with their fathers: they must not be totally destroyed; the Messiah must come from them, and through them must come *that light which is to enlighten the Gentiles*, and therefore he would not make an entire end of them.

Neither cast he them from his presence as yet.] But now they are cast out from his presence; they have sinned against the only remedy for their souls. They sit in darkness and the shadow of death; the veil is upon their face; but if they yet turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Verse 25. Three times did Joash beat him] The particulars of these battles we have not; but these three victories were according to the prediction of Elisha, ^{<121319>} **2 Kings 13:19.** That these victories were very *decisive* we learn from their fruits, for Joash took from the Syrians the cities which Hazael had taken from Israel: viz., Gilead, the possessions of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and the country of Bashan; see ^{<121033>} **2 Kings 10:33.**

Thus God accomplished his word of *judgment*, and his word of *mercy*. The Syrians found themselves to be but men, and the Israelites found they could do nothing without God. In the dispensations of his justice and mercy, God has ever in view, not only the comfort, support, and salvation of his followers, but also the conviction and salvation of his enemies; and by his judgments many of these have been awakened out of their sleep, turned to God, learned righteousness, and finally become as eminent for their *obedience*, as they were before for their *rebellion*.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 14

Amaziah begins to reign well; his victory over the Edomites, 1-7. He challenges Jehoash, king of Israel, 8. Jehoash's parable of the thistle and the cedar, 9, 10. The two armies meet at Beth-shemesh; and the men of Judah are defeated, 11, 12. Jehoash takes Jerusalem, breaks down four hundred cubits of the wall; takes the treasures of the king's house, and of the temple; and takes hostages, and returns to Samaria, 13, 14. The death and burial of both these kings, 15-20. Azariah, the son of Amaziah, made king; he builds Elath, 21, 22. Jeroboam the second is made king over Israel: his wicked reign and death, 23-29.

NOTES ON CHAP. 14

Verse 1. In the second year of Joash] This second year should be understood as referring to the time when his father Jehoahaz associated him with himself in the kingdom: for he reigned *two* years with his father; so this *second* year of Joash is the *first* of his absolute and independent government.-See *Calmet*.

Verse 5. As soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand] No doubt those wicked men, *Jozachar* and *Jehozabad*, who murdered his father, had considerable power and influence; and therefore he found it dangerous to bring them to justice, till he was assured of the loyalty of his other officers: when this was clear, he called them to account, and put them to death.

Verse 6. But the children of the murderers he slew not] Here he showed his conscientious regard for the law of Moses; for God had positively said, *The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin,* ^{<12316>} **Deuteronomy 24:16.**

Verse 7. He slew of Edom to the valley of salt] This war is more circumstantially related in ^{<12315>} **2 Chronicles 25:5**, &c. The Idumeans had arisen in the reign of Joram king of Judah, and shaken off the yoke of the house of David. Amaziah determined to reduce them to obedience; he therefore levied an army of *three hundred thousand* men in his own kingdom, and hired *a hundred thousand* Israelites, at the price of *one hundred* talents. When he was about to depart at the head of this numerous

army, a prophet came to him and ordered him to dismiss the Israelitish army, for God was not with *them*: and on the king of Judah expressing regret for the loss of his *hundred talents*, he was answered, that *the Lord could give him much more than that*. He obeyed, sent back the Israelites, and at the head of his own men attacked the Edomites in the valley of salt, slew *ten thousand* on the spot, and took *ten thousand* prisoners, all of whom he precipitated from the *rock*, or *Selah*, which was afterwards called *Joktheel*, a place or city supposed to be the same with *Petra*, which gave name to *Arabia Petræa*, where there must have been a great precipice, from which the place took its name of *Selah* or *Petra*.

Verse 8. Come, let us look one another in the face.] This was a real declaration of war; and the ground of it is most evident from this circumstance: that the *one hundred thousand* men of Israel that had been dismissed, though they had the *stipulated money*, taking the advantage of Amaziah's absence, fell upon the *cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-horon, and smote three thousand men, and took much spoil*, ^{<142510>}**2 Chronicles 25:10-13**. Amaziah no doubt remonstrated with Jehoash, but to no purpose; and therefore he declared war against him.

Verse 9. Jehoash-sent to Amaziah-saying] The meaning of this parable is plain. *The thistle that was in Lebanon*-Amaziah, king of Judah, *sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon*-Jehoash, king of Israel, *saying, Give thy daughter*-a part of thy kingdom, *to my son to wife*-to be united to, and possessed by the kings of Judah. *And there passed by a wild beast*-Jehoash and his enraged army, *and trode down the thistle*-utterly discomfited Amaziah and his troops, pillaged the temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem: see ^{<12412>}**2 Kings 14:12-14**. Probably Amaziah had required certain cities of Israel to be given up to Judah; if so, this accounts for that part of the parable, *Give thy daughter to my son to wife*.

Verse 10. Glory of this, and tarry at home] There is a vast deal of insolent dignity in this remonstrance of Jehoash: but it has nothing conciliatory; no proposal of making amends for the injury his army had done to the unoffending inhabitants of Judah. The ravages committed by the army of Jehoash were totally unprovoked, and they were base and cowardly; they fell upon women, old men, and children, and butchered them in cold blood, for all the *effective* men were gone off with their king against the Edomites. The quarrel of Amaziah was certainly *just*, yet he was put to the rout; he did *meddle to his hurt; he fell, and Judah fell with*

him, as Jehoash had said: but why was this? Why *it came of God*; for he had *brought the gods of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burnt incense to them*; therefore God *delivered them into the hands of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom,* ^{<142514>}**2 Chronicles 25:14, 20**. This was the reason why the Israelites triumphed.

Verse 13. Took Amaziah king of Judah] It is plain that Amaziah afterwards had his liberty; but how or on what terms he got it, is not known. See on the following verse.

Verse 14. And he took-hostages] *twbr* [*th* *hattaaruboth*, *pledges*; from *br* [*arab*, to *pledge*, give *security*, &c., for the performance of some *promise*. See the meaning of this word interpreted in **Clarke's note on** "^{<013817>}**Genesis 38:17**". It is likely that Amaziah gave some of the *nobles* or some of his own family as *hostages*, that he might regain his liberty; and they were to get their liberty when he had fulfilled his engagements; but of what kind these were we cannot tell, nor, indeed, how he got his liberty.

Verse 15. How he fought with Amaziah] The only fighting between them was the battle already mentioned; and this is minutely related in ^{<142521>}**2 Chronicles 25:21-24**.

Verse 19. They made a conspiracy against him] His defeat by Jehoash, and the consequent pillaging of the temple, and emptying the royal exchequer, and the dismantling of Jerusalem, had made him exceedingly unpopular; so that probably the whole of the last *fifteen* years of his life were a series of troubles and distresses.

Verse 21. Took Azariah] He is also called *Uzziah*, ^{<142526>}**2 Chronicles 26:1**. The former signifies, *The help of the Lord*; the latter, *The strength of the Lord*.

Verse 22. He built Elath] This city belonged to the *Edomites*; and was situated on the *eastern branch of the Red Sea*, thence called the *Elanitic Gulf*. It had probably suffered much in the late war; and was now rebuilt by *Uzziah*, and brought entirely under the dominion of Judah.

Verse 25. He restored the coast of Israel] From the description that is here given, it appears that Jeroboam reconquered all the territory that had been taken from the kings of Israel; so that *Jeroboam the second* left the

kingdom as ample as it was when the ten tribes separated under *Jeroboam the first*.

Verse 26. The Lord saw the affliction of Israel] It appears that about this time Israel had been greatly reduced; and great calamities had fallen upon all indiscriminately; even the *diseased* and *captives* in the dungeon had the hand of God heavy upon them, and there was *no helper*; and then God sent *Jonah* to encourage them, and to assure them of better days. He was the first of the prophets, after *Samuel*, whose writings are preserved; yet the prophecy delivered on this occasion is not extant; for what is now in the prophecies of *Jonah*, relates wholly to *Nineveh*.

Verse 28. How he warred, and-recovered Damascus] We learn from ^{<BIB>}**1 Chronicles 18:3-11**, that David had conquered *all Syria*, and put garrisons in Damascus and other places, and laid all the Syrians under *tribute*; but this yoke they had not only shaken off, but they had conquered a considerable portion of the Israelitish territory, and added it to Syria. These latter *Jeroboam* now recovered; and thus the places which anciently *belonged to Judah* by David's conquests, and were repossessed by Syria, he now conquered, and added to *Israel*.

Verse 29. Jeroboam slept with his fathers] He died a natural death; and was regularly succeeded by his son *Zachariah*, who, reigning badly, was, after *six months*, slain by *Shallum*, who succeeded him, and reigned but *one month*, being slain by *Menahem*, who succeeded him, and reigned *ten years* over Israel. *Amos* the prophet lived in the reign of *Jeroboam*; and was accused by *Amaziah*, one of the idolatrous priests of Beth-el, of having predicted the death of *Jeroboam* by the sword, but this was a slander: what he did predict, and which came afterwards to pass, may be seen ^{<OTD>}**Amos 7:10-17**. The *interregnum* referred to in the *margin* cannot be accounted for in a satisfactory manner.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 15

Azariah begins to reign over Judah, and acts well, but does not remove the high places, 1-4. He becomes leprous, and dies, after having reigned fifty-two years; and Jotham, his son, reigns in his stead, 5-7. Zachariah reigns over Israel, and acts wickedly; and Shallum conspires against him and slays him, after he had reigned six months, 8-12. Shallum reigns one month, and is slain by Menahem, 13-15. Menahem's wicked and oppressive reign; he subsidizes the king of Assyria, and dies, after having reigned ten years, 16-22. Pekahiah, his son, reigns in his stead; does wickedly; Pekah, one of his captains, conspires against and kills him, after he had reigned two years, 23-26. Pekah reigns in his stead, and acts wickedly, 27-28. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, carries into captivity the inhabitants of many cities, 29. Hoshea conspires against and slays Pekah, after he had reigned twenty years; and reigns in his stead, 30, 31. Jotham begins to reign over Judah; he reigns well; dies after a reign of sixteen years, and is succeeded by his son Ahaz, 32-38.

NOTES ON CHAP. 15

Verse 1. In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam] Dr. Kennicott complains loudly here, because of “the corruption in the name of this king of Judah, who is expressed by *four* different names in this chapter: *Ozriah*, *Oziah*, *Ozrihu*, and *Ozihu*. Our oldest Hebrew MS. relieves us here by reading truly, in ^{<12150>} **2 Kings 15:1, 6, 7, whyz** [*Uzziah*, where the printed text is differently corrupted. This reading is called *true*, 1. *Because* it is supported by the *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions in these three verses. 2. *Because* the printed text itself has it so in ^{<12152>} **2 Kings 15:32, 34** of this very chapter. 3. *Because* it is so expressed in the parallel place in *Chronicles*; and, 4. *Because* it is not **Αζαριας**, *Azariah*, but **Οζιας**, *Oziah*, (*Uzziah*,) in St. Matthew's genealogy.” There are insuperable difficulties in the chronology of this place. The marginal note says, “This is the *twenty-seventh* year of Jeroboam's partnership in the kingdom with his father, who made him consort at his going to the Syrian wars. It is the *sixteenth* year of Jeroboam's monarchy.” Dr. *Lightfoot* endeavours to reconcile this place with ^{<12146>} **2 Kings 14:16, 17**, thus: “At the death of Amaziah, his son and heir Uzziah was but *four* years old, for he was about *sixteen* in Jeroboam's *twenty-seventh* year; therefore, the throne must have been empty *eleven* years, and the government administered by protectors

while Uzziah was in his minority.” Learned men are not agreed concerning the mode of reconciling these differences; there is probably some mistake in the *numbers*. I must say to all the contending chronologers:—

*Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.
When such men disagree, I can't decide.*

Verse 3. He did that which was right] It is said, ~~14216~~ **2 Chronicles 26:5**, that he sought the Lord in the days of Zechariah the prophet, and God made him to prosper; that he fought against the *Philistines*; broke down the walls of *Gath*, *Jabneh*, and *Ashdod*; prevailed over the *Arabians* and *Mehunims*; and that the *Ammonites* paid him tribute; and his dominion extended abroad, even to the *entering in of Egypt*; that he built *towers* in Jerusalem, at the *corner gate*, *valley gate*, and *turning of the wall*; and built *towers* also in the *desert*, and digged many *wells*; that he had a very strong and well-regulated *military force*, which he provided with a well-stocked *arsenal*; and constructed many *military engines* to shoot *arrows* and project *great stones*; and that his fame was universally spread abroad.

Verse 5. The Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper] The reason of this plague is well told in the above quoted chapter, ~~142516~~ **2 Chronicles 26:16**. That his heart being elated, he went into the temple to burn incense upon the altar, assuming to himself the functions of the high priest; that Azariah the priest, with *fourscore* others, went in after him, to prevent him; and that while they were remonstrating against his conduct, the Lord struck him with the *leprosy*, which immediately appeared on his *forehead*; that they thrust him out as an unclean person; and that he himself *hurried to get out*, feeling that the Lord had smitten him; that he was obliged to dwell in a *house by himself*, being leprous, to the day of his death; and that during this time the affairs of the kingdom were administered by his son *Jotham*. A poet, ridiculing the conduct of those who, without an episcopal ordination, think they have authority from God to dispense all the ordinances of the Church, expresses himself thus:—

*But now the warm enthusiast cries,
The office to myself I take;
Offering the Christian sacrifice,
Myself a lawful priest I make:
To me this honour appertains,
No need of man when GOD ordains.*

[Some go into the contrary extreme, and in affect say, *no need of GOD when MAN ordains.*]

*Though kings may not so far presume,
 ‘Tis no presumption in a clown,
 And, lo, without a call from Rome,
 My flail or hammer I lay down;
 And if my order’s name ye seek,
 Come, see a new Melchisedek!
 Ye upstart (men-made) priests, your sentence know,
 The marks you can no longer hide;
 Your daring deeds too plainly show
 The loathsome leprosy of pride;
 And if ye still your crime deny,
 Who lepers live shall lepers die.
 CHARLES WESLEY.*

This is very severe, but applies to every man who, through pride, presumption, or the desire of gain, enters into the priest’s office, though he have the utmost authority that the highest ecclesiastical officer can confer.

Verse 10. Smote him before the people] In some public assembly: he probably became very unpopular.

Verse 12. This was the word of the Lord-unto Jehu] God had promised to Jehu that his sons should sit on the throne of Israel *to the fourth generation*; and so it came to pass, for *Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah*, succeeded Jehu, to whom this promise was made. But because he executed the Divine purpose with an uncommanded *cruelty*, therefore God *cut his family short*, according to his word by Hosea, *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu; and I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel,* ^{<2010>} **Hosea 1:4.**

Verse 13. He reigned a full month] Menahem is supposed to have been one of Zachariah’s *generals*. Hearing of the death of his master, when he was with the troops at *Tirzah*, he hastened to Samaria, and slew the murderer, and had himself proclaimed in his stead. But, as the people of *Tiphseh* did not open their gates to him, he took the place by assault; and as the text tells us, practised the most cruel barbarities, even *ripping up the women that were with child!*

Verse 19. Pul, the king of Assyria] This is the first time we hear of *Assyria* since the days of Nimrod, its founder, ^{<01101>}**Genesis 10:11**.

Dean *Prideaux* supposes that this *Pul* was father of the famous *Sardanapalus*, the son himself being called *Sardan*; to which, as was frequent in those times, the father's name, *Pul*, was added, making *Sardanpul* of which the Greeks and Latins made *Sardanapalus*; and this *Pul* is supposed to be the same that reigned in *Nineveh* when *Jonah* preached the terrors of the Lord to that city.

That his hand] That is, his *power* and *influence*, *might be with him*: in this sense is the word *hand* frequently used in Scripture.

Verse 20. Each man fifty shekels of silver] Upwards of *five pounds* sterling a man.

Verse 21. Are they not written in-the chronicles] There are no chronicles extant, in which there is any thing farther relative to this king.

Verse 25. Smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arie] Who Argob and Arie were we know not; some make them *men*, some make them *statues*. Pekah had *fifty* Gileadites in the conspiracy with him.

Verse 29. Came Tiglath-pileser] He is supposed to have been the successor of Sardanapalus: Dean *Prideaux* makes him the same with *Arbaces*, called by *Ælian Thilgamus*, and by *Usher Ninus junior*; who, together with *Belesis*, headed the conspiracy against *Sardanapalus*, and fixed his seat at *Nineveh*, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings; as did *Belesis*, who is called, in ^{<2390>}**Isaiah 39:1**, *Baladan*, fix his at *Babylon*.

Took Ijon] These places belonged to Israel; and were taken by Ben-hadad, king of Syria, when he was in league with Asa, king of Judah. See ^{<1150>}**1 Kings 15:20**. They were regained by *Jeroboam the second*; and now they are taken from Israel once more by *Tiglath-pileser*. From ^{<1366>}**1 Chronicles 5:26**, we learn that *Pul* and *Tiglath-pileser*, kings of Assyria, carried away into captivity the two tribes of *Reuben*, and *Gad*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*; all that belonged to Israel, on the other side of Jordan. These were never restored to Israel.

Verse 30. Hoshea the son of Elah-in the twentieth year of Jotham] There are many difficulties in the chronology of this place. To reconcile the

whole, *Calmet* says: “Hoshea conspired against Pekah, the *twentieth* year of the reign of this prince, which was the *eighteenth* after the beginning of the reign of Jotham, king of Judah. Two years after this, that is, the *fourth* year of Ahaz, and the *twentieth* of Jotham, Hoshea made himself master of a *part* of the kingdom, according to ^{<121530>}**2 Kings 15:30**. Finally, the *twelfth* year of Ahaz, Hoshea had peaceable possession of the *whole* kingdom, according to ^{<121701>}**2 Kings 17:1**.”

Verse 36. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham] These acts are distinctly stated in ^{<142701>}**2 Chronicles 27:1-9**. He built the high gate of the house of the Lord, and he built much on the wall of *Ophel*. He built cities in the mountains of Judah; and in the forests he built castles and towers. He overthrew the Ammonites; and obliged them to give him *one hundred* talents of silver, *ten thousand* measures of wheat, and *ten thousand* of barley, for *three* consecutive years. He was *twenty-five* years old when he began to reign, and he reigned *sixteen* years. These are the particulars which we learn from the place in Chronicles quoted above; few of which are mentioned in this place. As to the *higher gate* of the house of the Lord, commentators are not well agreed: some think it was a gate which he then made, and which did not exist before, and is the same that is called the *new gate*, ^{<243610>}**Jeremiah 26:10**, which is very likely.

Verse 37. In those days the Lord began to send] It was about this time that the Assyrian wars, so ruinous to the Jews, began; but it was in the following reigns that they arrived at their highest pitch of disaster to those unfaithful and unfortunate people. However much we may blame the Jews for their disobedience and obstinacy, yet we cannot help feeling for them under their severe afflictions. Grievously they have sinned, and grievously have they suffered for it. And if they be still objects of God’s judgments, there is revelation to believe that they will yet be objects of God’s goodness. Many think the signs of the times are favourable to this ingathering; but there is no evidence among the people themselves that the day of their redemption is at hand. They do not humble themselves; they do not seek the Lord.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 16

Ahaz begins to reign, acts wickedly, and restores idolatry in Judea, 1-4. Rezin, king of Syria, besieges Jerusalem, but cannot take it; he takes Elath, and drives the Jews thence, 5, 6. Ahaz hires Tiglath-pileser against the king of Syria and the king of Israel, and gives him the silver and gold that were found in the treasures of the house of the Lord, 7, 8. Tiglath-pileser takes Damascus and slays Rezin, 9. Ahaz goes to meet him at Damascus: sees an altar there, a pattern of which he sends to Urijah, the priest; and orders him to make one like it, which he does, 10-15. He makes several alterations in the temple; dies; and Hezekiah his son reigns in his stead, 16-20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 16

Verse 2. Twenty years old was Ahaz] Here is another considerable difficulty in the chronology. Ahaz was but *twenty years* old when he began to reign, and he died after he had reigned *sixteen years*; consequently his whole age amounted only to *thirty-six years*. But Hezekiah his son was *twenty-five years* old when he began to reign; and if this were so, then Ahaz must have been the father of Hezekiah when he was but *eleven years* of age! Some think that the *twenty years* mentioned here respect the beginning of the reign of Jotham, father of Ahaz; so that the passage should be thus translated: *Ahaz was twenty years of age when his father began to reign*; and consequently he was *fifty-two years* old when he died, seeing Jotham reigned *sixteen years*: and therefore Hezekiah was born when his father was *twenty-seven years* of age. This however is a violent solution, and worthy of little credit. It is better to return to the *text* as it stands, and allow that Ahaz might be only *eleven* or *twelve years* old when he had Hezekiah: this is not at all impossible; as we know that the youth of both sexes in the eastern countries are marriageable at *ten* or *twelve years* of age, and are frequently betrothed when they are but *nine*. I know a woman, an East Indian, who had the *second* of her *two* first children when she was only *fourteen years* of age, and must have had the *first* when between *eleven* and *twelve*. I hold it therefore quite a possible case that Ahaz might have had a son born to him when he was but *eleven* or *twelve years* old.

Verse 3. Made his son to pass through the fire] On this passage I beg leave to refer the reader to my notes on ^{<18182>}**Leviticus 18:21; 20:2, 14**, where the subject is considered at large.

Verse 5. But could not overcome him.] It is likely that this was the time when Isaiah was sent to console Ahaz; (see ^{<2170>}**Isaiah 7:1**;) and predicted the death both of Rezin and Pekah, his enemies.

Verse 6. Recovered Elath to Syria] See Clarke's note on ^{<12142>}**2 Kings 14:22**".

Verse 7. I am thy servant and thy son] I will *obey* thee in all, and become *tributary* to thee; only help me against Syria and Israel.

Verse 9. The king of Assyria hearkened unto him] It is said, ^{<14831>}**2 Chronicles 28:20**, that *Tilgath-pilneser distressed him, but strengthened him not*. Though he came against the Syrians, and took Damascus, and slew Rezin, yet he did *not help* Ahaz against the Philistines, nor did he lend him any forces to assist against Israel; and he distressed him by taking the royal treasures, and the treasures of the temple, and did him little service for so great a sacrifice. He helped him a little, but distressed him on the whole.

It appears that, about this time, Pekah king of Israel nearly ruined Judea: it is said, ^{<14806>}**2 Chronicles 28:6**, *that he slew one hundred thousand valiant men in one day*; and that he *carried away captive to Samaria two hundred thousand women and children, and much spoil*; but, at the instance of the prophet Oded, these were all sent back, fed and clothed, ^{<14818>}**2 Chronicles 28:8-16**.

Verse 10. Ahaz went to Damascus] He had received so much help on the defeat of Rezin, that he went to Damascus to meet the king of Assyria, and render him thanks.

Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar] This was some idolatrous altar, the *shape* and *workmanship* of which pleased Ahaz so well that he determined to have one like it at Jerusalem. For this he had no Divine authority, and the compliance of Urijah was both mean and sinful. That Ahaz did this for an idolatrous purpose, is evident from ^{<14831>}**2 Chronicles 28:21-25**: "For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus;-and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to

them, that they may help me. And he made high places to burn incense to other gods in every city of Judah.”

Verse 14. Put it on the north side] He seems to have intended to *conform* every thing in the Lord’s house as much as possible to the idolatrous temples which he saw at Damascus, and to model the Divine worship in the same way: in a word to honour and worship the gods of Syria, and not the God of heaven. All the alterations specified here were in contempt of the true God. Thus *he provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers,* ^{<14825>}**2 Chronicles 28:25.**

Verse 18. And the covert for the Sabbath] There are a great number of conjectures concerning this *covert*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, the *Ëswm musach, of the Sabbath*. As the word, and others derived from the same root, signify *covering* or *booths*, it is very likely that this means either a sort of *canopy* which was erected on the Sabbath days for the accommodation of the people who came to worship, and which Ahaz took away to discourage them from that worship; or a canopy under which the king and his family reposed themselves, and which he transported to some other place to accommodate the king of Assyria when he visited him. *Jarchi* supposes that it was a sort of *covert way* that the kings of Judah had to the temple, and Ahaz had it removed lest the king of Assyria, going by that way, and seeing the sacred vessels, should covet them. If that way had been open, he might have gone by it into the temple, and have seen the sacred vessels, and so have asked them from a man who was in no condition to refuse them, however unwilling he might be to give them up. The removing of this, whatever it was, whether *throne* or *canopy*, or *covered way*, cut off the communication between the king’s house and the temple; and the king of Assyria would not attempt to go into that sacred place by that other passage to which the priests alone had access.

Verse 20. Was buried with his fathers in the city of David] But it is expressly declared, ^{<14827>}**2 Chronicles 28:27**, that *he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel*; and this was undoubtedly intended as a mark of *degradation*.

His reign was *disastrous* and *impious*; and it was *disastrous* because it was *impious*. He had been a *scourge*, not a *blessing*, to his people. He had not only made illegal *alterations* in the temple, and in the mode of worship prescribed by the true God, but he had *polluted* all the cities of Judah with

idolatry, and brought ruin upon the nation. On the whole, a worse king than himself had not as yet sat on the Jewish throne; and yet he had many advantages: he had for *counsellor* one of the greatest men ever produced in the Jewish nation, ISAIAH *the prophet*; and God condescended to interpose especially for him when grievously straitened by the kings of *Israel* and *Syria*, both of whom were cut off according to the prediction of this prophet. But he would not lay it to heart, and therefore the wrath of God fell heavily upon him, and upon the stiff-necked and rebellious people whom he governed. He had sufficient warning and was without excuse. He *would* sin, and therefore he *must* suffer.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 17

Hoshea's wicked reign, 1, 2. Shalmaneser comes up against him, makes him tributary, and then casts him into prison, 3, 4. He besieges Samaria three years; and at last takes it, and carries Israel captive into Assyria, and places them in different cities of the Assyrians and Medes, 5, 6. The reason why Israel was thus afflicted; their idolatry, obstinacy, divination, &c., 7-18. Judah copies the misconduct of Israel, 19. The Lord rejects all the seed of Israel, 20-23. The king of Assyria brings different nations and places them in Samaria, and the cities from which the Israelites had been led away into captivity, 24. Many of these strange people are destroyed by lions, 25. The king of Assyria sends back some of the Israelitish priests to teach these nations the worship of Jehovah; which worship they incorporate with their own idolatry, 26-33. The state of the Israelites, and strange nations in the land of Israel, 34-41.

NOTES ON CHAP. 17

Verse 3. Shalmaneser] This was the son and successor of *Tiglath-pileser*. He is called *Shalman* by Hosea, ^{<28104>}**Hosea 10:14**, and *Enemessar*, in the book of Tobit, 1:2.

Gave him presents.] Became tributary to him.

Verse 4. Found conspiracy to Hoshea] He had endeavoured to shake off the Assyrian yoke, by entering into a treaty with So, King of Egypt; and having done so, he ceased to send the annual tribute to Assyria.

Verse 5. Besieged it three years.] It must have been well fortified, well provisioned, and well defended, to have held out so long.

Verse 6. Took Samaria] According to the prophets Hosea, ^{<28136>}**Hosea 13:16**, and Micah, ^{<30101>}**Micah 1:6**. He exercised great cruelties on this miserable city, ripping up the women with child, dashing young children against the stones, &c. &c.

Carried Israel away into Assyria] What were the places to which the unfortunate Israelites were carried, or where their successors are now situated, have given rise to innumerable conjectures, dissertations, discourses, &c. Some maintain that they are found on the coast of *Guinea*;

others, in *America*; the Indian tribes being the descendants of those carried away by the Assyrians. In vol. i. of the *Supplement* to Sir Wm. Jones's works, we find a translation of the *History of the Afghans*, by Mr. H. Vansittart; from which it appears that they derive their own descent from the Jews. On this history Sir Wm. Jones writes the following note:—

“This account of the *Afghans* may lead to a very interesting discovery. We learn from *Esdras*, that the ten tribes, after a wandering journey, came to a country called *Arsaret*, where we may suppose they settled. Now the *Afghans* are said by the best Persian historians to be descended from the *Jews*; they have traditions among themselves of such a descent, and it is even asserted that their families are distinguished by the names of *Jewish tribes*; although, since their conversion to the *Islam*, they studiously conceal their origin. The *Pushtoo*, of which I have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to the *Chaldaic*; and a considerable district under their dominion is called *Hazarek* or *Hazaret*, which might easily have been changed into the word used by *Esdras*. I strongly recommend an inquiry into the literature and history of the Afghans.” Every thing considered, I think it by far the most probable that the Afghans are the descendants of the Jews, who were led away captives by the Assyrian kings.

Thus ended the kingdom of Israel, after it had lasted *two hundred and fifty-four* years, from the death of Solomon and the schism of Jeroboam, till the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser, in the *ninth* year of *Hoshea*; after which the remains of the ten tribes were carried away beyond the river Euphrates.

The rest of this chapter is spent in vindicating the Divine providence and justice; showing the reason why God permitted such a desolation to fall on a people who had been so long his peculiar children.

Verse 9. Did secretly those things] There was much *hidden iniquity* and *private idolatry* among them, as well as public and notorious crimes.

From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.] That is, the idolatry was *universal*; every place was made a place for some idolatrous rite or act of worship; from the largest city to the smallest village, and from the public watchtower to the shepherd's cot.

Verse 10. Images and groves] Images of different idols, and places for the abominable rites of *Ashtaroth* or *Venus*.

Verse 13. Yet the Lord testified against Israel] What rendered their conduct the more inexcusable was, that the Lord had preserved among them a succession of prophets, who testified against their conduct, and preached repentance to them, and the readiness of God to forgive, provided they would return unto him, and give up their idolatries.

Verse 17. Sold themselves to do evil] Abandoned themselves to the will of the devil, to work all iniquity with greediness.

Verse 18. Removed them out of his sight] Banished them from the promised land, from the temple, and from every ordinance of righteousness, as wholly unworthy of any kind of good.

None left but the tribe of Judah only.] Under this name all those of *Benjamin* and *Levi*, and the *Israelites*, who abandoned their idolatries and joined with Judah, are comprised. It was the *ten tribes* that were carried away by the Assyrians.

Verse 24. The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon] He removed one people entirely, and substituted others in their place; and this he did to cut off all occasion for mutiny or insurrection; for the people being removed from their *own land*, had no *object* worthy of attention to contend for, and no *patrimony* in the land of their captivity to induce them to hazard any opposition to their oppressors.

By men *from Babylon*, we may understand some cities of *Babylonia* then under the Assyrian empire; for at this time Babylon had a king of its own; but some parts of what was called Babylonia might have been still under the Assyrian government.

From Cuthah] This is supposed to be the same as *Cush*, the Chaldeans and Syrians changing **v** *shin* into **t** *tau*; thus they make **v****wk** *Cush* into **t****wk** *Cuth*; and **r****w****v****a** *shshur*, *Assyria*, into **r****w****t****a** *Attur*. From these came the *Scythæ*; and from these the Samaritans were called *Cuthæans*, and their language *Cuthite*. The original language of this people, or at least the language they spoke after their *settlement* in Israel, is contained in the *Samaritan version* of the Pentateuch, printed under the *Hebræo-Samaritan* in vol. i. of the London Polyglot. This *Cuthah* was probably the country in the land of *Shinar*, first inhabited by *Cush*.

From Ava] The *Avim* were an ancient people, expelled by the Caphtorim from *Hazerim*, ^{<R122>}**Deuteronomy 2:23**.

From Hamath] This was *Hemath* or *Emath* of Syria, frequently mentioned in the sacred writings.

From Sepharvaim] There was a city called *Syphera*, near the Euphrates; others think the *Saspines*, a people situated between the *Colchians* and the *Medes*, are meant. There is much uncertainty relative to these places: all that we know is, that the Assyrians carried away the Israelites into Assyria, and placed them in cities and districts called *Halah* and *Habor by the river of Gozan*, and *in the cities of the Medes*, ^{<121706} **2 Kings 17:6**; and it is very likely that they brought some of the inhabitants of those places into the cities of Israel.

Verse 25. The Lord sent lions among them] The land being deprived of its inhabitants, wild beasts would necessarily increase, even without any supernatural intervention; and this the superstitious new comers supposed to be a plague sent upon them, because they did not know how to worship him who was the God of the land; for they thought, like other heathens that every district had its own *tutelary deity*. Yet it is likely that God did send lions as a scourge on this bad people.

Verse 26. The manner of the God of the land.] *cpvm mishpat*, the *judgment*; the way in which the God of the land is to be worshipped.

Verse 27. Carry thither one of the priests] Imperfect as this teaching was, it, in the end, overthrew the idolatry of these people, so that soon after the Babylonish captivity they were found to be as free from idolatry as the Jews themselves, and continue so to the present day. But they are now nearly annihilated: the small remains of them is found at *Naplouse* and *Jaffa*; they are about *thirty families*; and men, women, and children, amount to about *two hundred persons*! They have a synagogue, which they regularly attend every Sabbath; and they go thither clothed in white robes. The reader may find much curious information relative to this people, in a *Memoire sur L'Etat actuel des Samaritains*, by Baron *Sylvestre de Sacy*, 8vo., Paris, 1812.

Verse 29. Every nation made gods of their own] That is, they made gods after the fashion of those which they had worshipped in their own country.

Verse 30. The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth] This, literally, signifies *the tabernacles of the daughters* or *young women*, and most

evidently refers to those public prostitutions of young virgins at the temple of *Melitta* or *Venus* among the Babylonians. See at the end of the chapter. **See Clarke** “^{<-121731>}**2 Kings 17:31**”. From *benoth* it is probable that the word *Venus* came, the *B* being changed into *V*, as is frequently the case, and the *th* into *s*, *benoth*, *Venos*. The rabbins say that her emblem was a *hen with her chickens*; see *Jarchi* on the place.

The men of Cuth made Nergal] This is supposed to have been the *solar orb* or *light*. According to the rabbins, his emblem was a *cock*. See at the end of the chapter. **See Clarke** “^{<-121731>}**2 Kings 17:31**”.

The men of Hamath made Ashima] Perhaps *the fire*; from *µva asham*, *to make atonement* or *to purify*. *Jarchi* says this was in the form of a *goat*. See below. **See Clarke** “^{<-121741>}**2 Kings 17:41**”.

Verse 31. The Avites made Nibhaz] This was supposed to be the same as the *Anubis* of the Egyptians; and was in form partly of a *dog*, and partly of a *man*. A very ancient image of this kind now lies before me: it is cut out of stone, about *seven inches* high; has the *body*, *legs*, and *arms*, of a *man*; the *head* and *feet* of a *dog*; the *thighs* and *legs* covered with *scales*; the *head* crowned with a *tiara*; the *arms* crossed upon the breasts, with the fingers clenched. The figure stands upright, and the belly is very protuberant. See below. **See Clarke** “^{<-121741>}**2 Kings 17:41**”.

And Tartak] This is supposed by some to be another name of the same idol; *Jarchi* says it was in the shape of an *ass*. Some think these were the representations of the *sun* in his *chariot*; *Nibhaz* representing the solar orb, and *Tartak* the chariot. See below. **See Clarke** “^{<-121741>}**2 Kings 17:41**”.

Adrammelech] From *rda adar*, *glorious*, and *Ël m melech*, *king*. Probably the *sun*.

Anammelech] From *anah*, *to return*, and *Ël m melech*, *king*. Probably, the *Moloch* of the Ammonites. *Jarchi* says, the first was in the form of a *mule*, the second in the form of a *horse*; this was probably the *moon*.

Verse 32. Of the lowest of them priests] One priest was not enough for this motley population; and, as the priesthood was probably neither *respectable* nor *lucrative*, it was only the lowest of the people who would enter into the employment.

Verse 33. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods] They did not relinquish their own *idolatry* but *incorporated* the worship of the true God with that of their idols. They were *afraid* of Jehovah, who had sent lions among them; and therefore they offered him a sort of worship that he might not thus afflict them: but they *served* other gods, devoted themselves *affectionately* to them, because their worship was such as gratified their *grossest passions*, and most sinful propensities.

Verse 36. But the Lord] JEHOVAH, the supreme, self-existent, and eternal Being; author of all *being* and *life*. This was to be the sole *object* of their adoration.

Who brought you up] This was a *strong reason* why they should adore *Him* only: he had saved them from the hands of their enemies, and he did it in such a *way* as to show his *power* to be irresistible; in such a Being they might safely confide.

Him shall ye fear] Here is the *manner* in which he is to be worshipped. Him ye shall *reverence* as your *Lawgiver* and *Judge*; ye shall *respect* and keep all his commandments; doing what he has enjoined, and avoiding what he has forbidden.

Him shall ye worship] Before Him ye shall *bow the knee*; living in the spirit of *obedience*, and performing every religious act in the *deepest humility*.

And to him shall ye do sacrifice.] Ye shall consider that, as ye have *sinned*, so ye deserve *death*; ye shall therefore bring your *living victims* to the altar of the Lord, and let their *life's blood* be poured out there, as an *atonement* for your souls. We see in this verse *three* important points: 1. The *object* of their worship. 2. The *reasons* of that worship; and, 3. The *spirit* and *manner* in which it was to be performed: viz., 1. In fear, 2. Humility; and, 3. By sacrifice.

Verse 41. So do they unto this day.] This must have been written before the Babylonish captivity; because, after that time, none of the Israelites ever lapsed into idolatry. But this may chiefly refer to the *heathenish* people who were sent to dwell among the remains of the ten tribes.

ON these *nations* and the *objects of their worship*, I present my readers with the following extracts from *Dodd* and *Parkhurst*.

Ver. 30. *The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth.* We have here an account of the idols which were consecrated by the different nations, transplanted by the king of Assyria to Samaria. It is difficult, however, and has afforded a large field for conjecture, to give any satisfactory account concerning them. The reader will find in Selden, Vossius, and Jurieu, much upon the subject. Succoth-benoth may be literally translated, *The Tabernacles of the Daughters*, or *Young Women*; or if *Benoth* be taken as the name of a female idol, from *hnb* to build up, procreate children, then the words will express the tabernacles sacred to the productive powers feminine. And, agreeably to this latter exposition, the rabbins say that the emblem was a hen and chickens. But however this may be, there is no room to doubt that these *succoth* were *tabernacles* wherein young women exposed themselves to prostitution in honour of the Babylonish goddess *Melitta*. Herodotus, (lib. i., c. 199,) gives us a particular account of this detestable service. “Every young woman,” says he, “of the country of Babylon must once in her life sit at the temple of Venus, [whom he afterwards tells us the Assyrians called *Melitta*,] and prostitute herself to some stranger. Those who are rich, and so disdain to mingle with the crowd, present themselves before the temple in covered chariots, attended by a great retinue. But the generality of the women sit near the temple, having crowns upon their heads, and holding a cord, some continually coming, others going. [See *Baruch* vi. 43.] The cords are held by them in such a manner as to afford a free passage among the women, that the strangers may choose whom they like. A woman who has once seated herself in this place must not return home till some stranger has cast money into her lap, and led her from the temple, and defiled her. The stranger who throws the money must say, ‘I invoke the goddess *Melitta* for thee.’ The money, however small a sum it may be, must not be refused, because it is appointed to sacred uses. [See ⁴⁶²³¹⁸**Deuteronomy 23:18.**] The woman must follow the first man that offers, and not reject him; and after prostitution, having now duly honoured the goddess, she is dismissed to her own house. In Cyprus,” adds the historian, “they have the same custom.” This abomination, implied by *Succoth-benoth*, the men of Babylon brought with them into the country of Samaria; and both the name of the idol *Melitta*, and the execrable service performed to her honour, show that by *Melitta* was originally intended the procreative or productive power of nature, the *Venus* of the Greeks and Romans. See the beginning of Lucretius’s first book *De Rerum Natura*. Mr. Selden imagines that some traces of the *Succoth-benoth* may be found in *Sicca Veneria*, the name of a city of

Numidia, not far from the borders of Africa Propria. The name itself bears a near allusion to the obscene custom above taken notice of, and seems to have been transported from Phœnicia: nor can this well be disputed, when we consider that here was a temple where women were obliged to purchase their marriage-money by the prostitution of their bodies. See *Univ. Hist.*, vol. xvii., p. 295, and Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word **Ēs**.

The men of Cuth made Nergal.-*Cuth* was a province of Assyria, which, according to some, lies upon the Araxis: but others rather think it to be the same with *Cush*, which is said by Moses to be encompassed with the river Gihon; and must, therefore, be the same with the country which the Greeks call *Susiana*, and which to this day is called by the inhabitants *Chusesta*. Their idol, *Nergal*, seems to have been the *sun*, as the causer of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the planets; for it is naturally derived from **רן** *ner*, *light*, and by **לג** *gal*, *to revolve*. The rabbins say that the idol was represented in the shape of a cock; and probably they tell us the truth, for this seems a very proper emblem. Among the latter heathens we find the cock was sacred to Apollo or the sun, (see *Pierii Hieroglyph.*, p. 223,) "because," says Heliodorus, speaking of the time when cocks crow, "by a natural sensation of the sun's revolution to us, they are incited to salute the god." *Æthiop.* lib. i. And perhaps under this name, *Nergal*, they meant to worship the sun, not only for the diurnal return of its light upon the earth, but also for its annual return or revolution. We may observe that the emblem, a *cock*, is affected by the latter as well as by the former, and is frequently crowing both day and night, when the days begin to lengthen. See *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Parkhurst's Lexicon*.

The men of Hamath made Ashima.-There are several cities and countries which go under the name of *Hamath*; but what we take to be here meant is that province of Syria which lies upon the Orontes, wherein there was a city of the same name; which when Shalmaneser had taken, he removed the inhabitants from thence into Samaria. Their idol *Ashima* signifies the *atoner* or *expiator*, from **אשם** *asham*. The word is in a Chaldee form, and seems to be the same as **אשמת** *ashmath* *Shomeron*, the *sin of Samaria*, mentioned **אשמת** **Amos 8:14**, where *ashmath* is rendered by the LXX. *propitiation*. It is known to every one who has the least acquaintance with the mythology of the heathen, how strongly and universally they retained the tradition of an *atonement* or *expiation for sin*, although they expected it from a false object and wrong means. We find it

expressed in very clear terms among the Romans even so late as the time of Horace, lib. i., ode 2:—

*Cui dabit partes scelus expiandi
Jupiter?*

*And whom, to expiate the horrid guilt,
Will Jove appoint?*

The answer is, “Apollo,” the god of light. Some think that, as *Asuman* or *Suman*, [Persian] *asman*, in the Persian language, signifies *heaven*, the Syrians might from hence derive the name of this god; who, they suppose, was represented by a large stone pillar terminating in a conic or pyramidal figure, whereby they denoted *fire*. See *Parkhurst* on the word *muva asham*, *Calmet’s Dictionary*, and *Tennison* on Idolatry.

Ver. 31. *The Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak*.—It is uncertain who these Avites were. The most probable opinion seems to be that which Grotius has suggested by observing that there are a people in Bactriana, mentioned by Ptolemy, under the name of *Avidia*, who possibly might be those transported at this time into Palestine by Shalmaneser. *Nibhaz*, according to the rabbins, had the shape of a dog, much like the *Anubis* of the Egyptians. In *Pierius’s Hieroglyphics*, p. 53, is the figure of a *cunocephalus*, a kind of ape, with a head like a dog, standing upon his hinder feet, and *looking earnestly* at the moon. Pierius there teaches us that the *cunocephalus* was an animal eminently sacred amongst the Egyptians, hieroglyphical of the moon, and kept in their temples to inform them of the moon’s conjunction with the sun, at which time this animal is strangely affected, being deprived of sight, refusing food, and lying sick on the ground; but on the moon’s appearance seeming to return thanks, and congratulate the return of light both to himself and her. See *Johnston’s Nat. Hist. de Quadruped.*, p. 100. This being observed, the *zj bn nibchaz*, (which may well be derived from *j bn nabach*, to bark, and *hzj chazah*, to see,) gives us reason to conclude that this idol was in the shape of a *cunocephalus*, or a dog looking, barking, or howling at the moon. It is obvious to common observation that dogs in general have this property; and an idol of the form just mentioned seems to have been originally designed to represent the power or influence of the moon on all sublunary bodies, with which the *cunocephalus* and dogs are so eminently affected. So, as we have observed upon *Nergal*, the influence of the returning solar

light was represented by a *cock*; and the generative power of the heavens by *Dagon*, a *fishy* idol. See *Parkhurst* on **zj bn** who is of opinion that *Tartak qtrt* is compounded of **rt** *tar*, to *turn, go round*, and **qtr** *rathak*, to *chain, tether*; and plainly denotes the heavens, considered as confining the planets in their respective orbits, as if they were tethered. The Jews have a tradition that the emblem of this idol was an *ass*; which, considering the propriety of that animal when tethered to represent this idol, is not improbable; and from this idolatrous worship of the Samaritans, joined perhaps with some confused account of the cherubim, seems to have sprung that stupid story by the heathens, that the Jews had an ass's head in their holy of holies, to which they paid religious worship. See *Bochart*, vol. ii., p. 221. *Jurieu* is of opinion that as the word *Nibhaz*, both in the Hebrew and Chaldee, with a small variation, denotes *quick, swift, rapid*; and *tartak*, in the same languages, signifies a *chariot*, these two idols may both together denominate the *sun* mounted on his *car*, as the fictions of the poets and the notions of the mythologists were wont to represent that luminary.

The Sepharvites burned their children-to Adrammelech and Anammelech.-As these Sepharvites probably came from the cities of the Medes, whither the Israelites were carried captive, and as *Herodotus* tells us that between Colchis and Media are found a people called *Saspres*, in all likelihood they were the same with those here named *Sepharvites*. *Moloch, Milcom, and Melech*, in the language of different nations, all signify a *king*, and imply the *sun*, which was called the *king of heaven*; and consequently the addition of **rda** *adar*, which signifies *powerful, illustrious*, to the one, and of **hn[** *anah*, which implies to *return*, to *answer*, to the other, means no more than the *mighty* or the *oracular Moloch*. And as the children were offered to him, it appears that he was the same with the *Moloch* of the Ammonites. See *Univ. Hist.* and *Calmet*. Mr. *Locke* is also of opinion that these two names were expressive of one and the same deity. What they were, or in what form, and how worshipped, we have not light from antiquity to determine.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 18

Hezekiah begins to reign; he removes the high places, breaks to pieces the brazen serpent, and walks uprightly before God, 1-6. He endeavours to shake off the Assyrian yoke, and defeats the Philistines, 7, 8. Shalmaneser comes up against Samaria, takes it, and carries the people away into captivity, 9-12. And then comes against Judah, and takes all the fenced cities, 13. Hezekiah sends a message to him at Lachish to desist, with the promise that he will pay him any tribute he chooses to impose; in consequence of which Shalmaneser exacts three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold; to pay which Hezekiah is obliged to take all his own treasures, and those belonging to the temple, 14-16. The king of Assyria sends, notwithstanding, a great host against Jerusalem; and his general, Rab-shakeh, delivers an insulting and blasphemous message to Hezekiah, 17-35. Hezekiah and his people are greatly afflicted at the words of Rab-shakeh, 36, 37.

NOTES ON CHAP. 18

Verse 1. Now-in the third year of Hoshea] See the note on ~~<121601>~~ **2 Kings 16:1**, where this chronology is considered.

Verse 3. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord] In ~~<142901>~~ **2 Chronicles 29:1-36** of the second book of Chronicles, we have an account of what this pious king did to restore the worship of God. He caused the priests and Levites to cleanse the holy house, which had been shut up by his father Ahaz, and had been polluted with filth of various kinds; and this cleansing required no less than *sixteen* days to accomplish it. As the passover, according to the law, must be celebrated the *fourteenth* of the *first* month, and the Levites could not get the temple cleansed before the *sixteenth* day, he published the passover for the *fourteenth* of the *second* month, and sent through all Judah and Israel to collect all the men that feared God, that the passover might be celebrated in a proper manner. The concourse was great, and the feast was celebrated with great magnificence. When the people returned to their respective cities and villages, they began to throw down the idol altars, statues, images, and groves, and even to abolish the high places; the consequence was that a spirit of piety began to revive in the land, and a general reformation took place.

Verse 4. Brake in pieces the brazen serpent.] The history of this may be seen in ^{<02108>}**Numbers 21:8, 9**; see the notes there.

We find that this brazen serpent had become an object of idolatry, and no doubt was supposed to possess, as a *telesm* or *amulet*, extraordinary virtues, and that incense was burnt before it which should have been burnt before the true God.

And he called it Nehushtan.] ^{^ t vhn}. Not one of the *versions* has attempted to *translate* this word. *Jarchi* says, “He called it Nechustan, through contempt, which is as much as to say, *a brazen serpent*.” Some have supposed that the word is compounded of **vj n nachash**, to *divine*, and ^{^ t} *tan*, a *serpent*, so it signifies *the divining serpent*; and the *Targum* states that it was the *people*, not Hezekiah, that gave it this name. **vj n nachash** signifies to *view, eye attentively, observe, to search, inquire accurately, &c.*; and hence is used to express *divination, augury*. As a *noun* it signifies *brass or copper, filth, verdigris, and some sea animal*, ^{<008>}**Amos 9:3**; see also ^{<13251>}**Job 26:13**, and ^{<23301>}**Isaiah 26:1**. It is also frequently used for a *serpent*; and most probably for an animal of the genus *Simia*, in ^{<01001>}**Genesis 3:1**, where see the notes. This has been contested by some, ridiculed by a few, and believed by many. The objectors, because it signifies a *serpent* sometimes, suppose it must have the same signification *always*! And one to express his contempt and show his *sense*, has said, “Did Moses hang up an *ape* on a pole?” I answer, No, no more than he hanged up *you*, who ask the contemptible question. But this is of a piece with the conduct of the people of *Milan*, who show you to this day the brazen serpent which Moses hung up in the wilderness, and which Hezekiah broke in pieces *two thousand five hundred years ago*!

Of serpents there is a great variety. Allowing that **vj n nachash** signifies a *serpent*, I may ask in my turn, What kind of a serpent was it that tempted Eve? Of what species was that which Moses hung up on the pole, and which Hezekiah broke to pieces? Who of the *wise men* can answer these questions? Till this is done I *assert*, that the word, ^{<01001>}**Genesis 3:1**, &c., does *not* signify a serpent of *any kind*; and that with a creature of the genus *Simia* the whole account best agrees.

Verse 5. He trusted in the Lord] See the character of this good king: 1. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel*; 2. *He clave to the Lord*; 3. *He was steady in his religion; he departed not from following the Lord*; 4. *He kept*

God's commandments. And what were the consequences? 1. *The Lord was with him;* 2. *He prospered whithersoever he went.*

Verse 8. From the tower of the watchmen] See the same words, ^{<12170>}2 **Kings 17:9.** It seems a proverbial mode of expression: he reduced every kind of fortification; nothing was able to stand before him.

Verse 9. In the fourth year] This history has been already given, ^{<12170>}2 **Kings 17:3,** &c.

Verse 17. The king of Assyria sent Tartan, &c.] Calmet has very justly remarked that these are not the names of *persons*, but of *offices*. *Tartan*, ^{^trt} *tartan* or *tantan*, as in the parallel place in Isaiah, in the Greek version, signifies he who *presides* over the *gifts* or *tribute*; chancellor of the exchequer.

Rabsaris] ^{syr} *br*, the *chief of the eunuchs*. *Rab-shakeh*, ^{hqv} *br* *master* or *chief* over the *wine cellar*; or he who had the care of the *king's drink*.

From Lachish] It seems as if the Assyrian troops had been *worsted* before Lachish, and were obliged to raise the siege, from which they went and sat down before *Libnah*. While Sennacherib was there with the Assyrian army, he heard that *Tirhakah*, king of Ethiopia, had invaded the Assyrian territories. Being obliged therefore to hasten, in order to succour his own dominions, he sent a considerable force under the aforementioned officers against Jerusalem, with a most *fearful* and *bloody manifesto*, commanding Hezekiah to pay him tribute, to deliver up his kingdom to him, and to submit, he and his people, to be carried away captives into Assyria! This manifesto was accompanied with the vilest *insults*, and the highest *blasphemies*. God interposed and the evils threatened against others fell upon himself.

Manifestoes of this kind have seldom been honourable to the senders. The conduct of Rab-shakeh was unfortunately copied by the Duke of Brunswick, commander-in-chief of the allied army of the centre, in the French revolution, who was then in the plains of Champagne, August 27, 1792, at the head of *ninety thousand* men, *Prussians, Austrians, and emigrants*, on his way to Paris, which in his manifesto he threatened to reduce to ashes! This was the cause of the dreadful massacres which immediately took place. And shortly after this time the blast of God fell

upon him, for in Sept. 20 of the same year, (three weeks after issuing the manifesto,) almost all his army was destroyed by a fatal disease, and himself obliged to retreat from the French territories with shame and confusion. This, and some other injudicious steps taken by the allies, were the cause of the ruin of the royal family of France, and of enormities and calamities the most extensive, disgraceful, and ruinous, that ever stained the page of history. From all such revolutions God in mercy save mankind!

Conduit of the upper pool] The aqueduct that brought the water from the *upper* or *eastern reservoir*, near to the valley of *Kidron*, into the city. Probably they had seized on this in order to distress the city.

The fuller's field.] The place where the washermen stretched out their clothes to dry.

Verse 18. Called to the king] They wished him to come out that they might get possession of his person.

Eliakim-over the household] What we would call lord chamberlain.

Shebna the scribe] The king's *secretary*.

Joah-the recorder.] The writer of the public *annals*.

Verse 19. What confidence is this] *hzh ʿwj cbh hm ma habbittachon hazzeh*. The words are excessively insulting: *What little, foolish, or unavailing cause of confidence is it, to which thou trustest?* I translate thus, because I consider the word *ʿwj cb bittachon* as a *diminutive*, intended to express the utmost contempt for Hezekiah's God.

Verse 21. The staff of this bruised reed] Egypt had already been greatly *bruised* and *broken*, through the wars carried on against it by the Assyrians.

Verse 22. Whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away] This was artfully malicious. Many of the people sacrificed to Jehovah on the *high* places; Hezekiah had removed them, (^{<121804>}**2 Kings 18:4**), because they were incentives to idolatry: Rab-shakeh insinuates that by so doing he had offended Jehovah, deprived the people of their religious rights, and he could neither expect the blessing of God nor the cooperation of the people.

Verse 23. I will deliver thee two thousand horses] Another insult: Were I to give thee *two thousand* Assyrian horses, thou couldst not find riders for them. How then canst thou think that thou shalt be able to stand against even the *smallest division of my troops*?

Verse 25. Amos I now come up without the Lord] As Rab-shakeh saw that the Jews placed the utmost confidence in God, he wished to persuade them that by Hezekiah's conduct Jehovah had departed from them, and was become ally to the king of Assyria, and therefore they could not expect any help from that quarter.

Verse 26. Talk not with us in the Jews' language] The object of this blasphemous caitiff was to stir up the people to *sedition*, that the city and the king might be delivered into his hand.

Verse 27. That they may eat their own dung] That they may be duly apprised, if they hold on Hezekiah's side, Jerusalem shall be most straitly besieged, and they be reduced to such a state of *famine* as to be obliged to eat their own excrements.

Verse 28. Hear the word of the great king-of Assyria] This was all intended to cause the people to revolt from their allegiance to their king.

Verse 32. Until I come and take you away] This was well calculated to stir up a seditious spirit. Ye cannot be delivered; your destruction, if ye resist, is inevitable; Sennacherib will do with you, as he does with all the nations he conquers, lead you captive into another land: but if you will surrender without farther trouble, he will transport you into a land as good as your own.

Verse 34. Where are the gods of Hamath] Sennacherib is greater than any of the gods of the nations. The Assyrians have already overthrown the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Hena, and Ivah; therefore, Jehovah shall be like one of them, and shall not be able to deliver Jerusalem out of the hand of my master.

The impudent blasphemy of this speech is without parallel. Hezekiah treated it as he ought: it was not properly against *him*, but against the LORD; therefore he refers the matter to Jehovah himself, who punishes this blasphemy in the most signal manner.

Verse 36. Answer him not.] The blasphemy is too barefaced; *Jehovah* is insulted, not *you*; let him avenge his own quarrel. See the succeeding chapter.

Verse 37. Then came Eliakim-and Shebna-and Joah-to Hezekiah with their clothes rent] It was the custom of the Hebrews, when they heard any blasphemy, to rend their clothes, because this was the greatest of crimes, as it immediately affected the majesty of God, and it was right that a religious people should have in the utmost abhorrence every insult offered to the object of their religious worship. These three ambassadors lay the matter before the *king* as God's *representative*; he lays it before the *prophet*, as God's *minister*; and the prophet lays it before God, as the people's *mediator*.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 19

Hezekiah is greatly distressed, and sends to Isaiah to pray for him, 1-4. Isaiah returns a comfortable answer, and predicts the destruction of the king of Assyria and his army, 5-8. Sennacherib, hearing that his kingdom was invaded by the Ethiopians, sends a terrible letter to Hezekiah, to induce him to surrender, 9-13. Hezekiah goes to the temple, spreads the letter before the Lord, and makes a most affecting prayer, 14-19. Isaiah is sent to him to assure him that his prayer is heard; that Jerusalem shall be delivered; and that the Assyrians shall be destroyed, 20-34. That very night a messenger of God slays one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians, 35. Sennacherib returns to Nineveh, and is slain by his own sons, 36, 37.

NOTES ON CHAP. 19

Verse 2. To Isaiah the prophet] His fame and influence were at this time great in Israel; and it was well known that the word of the Lord was with him. Here both the Church and the state unite in fervent application to, and strong dependence upon, God; and behold how they succeed!

Verse 3. The children are come to the birth] The Jewish state is here represented under the emblem of a woman in travail, who has been so long in the pangs of parturition, that her strength is now entirely exhausted, and her deliverance is hopeless, without a miracle. The image is very fine and highly appropriate.

A similar image is employed by Homer, when he represents the agonies which Agamemnon suffers from his wound:—

Οφρα οι αιμί ετι θερμον ανηνοθεν εξ ωτειλης,
 Λυταρ επει το μεν ελκος ετερσετο παυσατο δ αιμα,
 Οξειαι οδυναι δυνον μενος Ατρειδαο,
 Ως δ οταν ωδινουσαν εχη βελος οξυ γυναικα,
 Δριμυ, το τε προεισι μογοστοκοι Ειλειθυιαι
 ἼΗρης θυγατερες πικ ρας ωδινας εχουσαι,
 Ὡς οξειί οδυναι δυνον μενος Ατρειδαο.

Il. xi., ver. 266.

*This, while yet warm, distill'd the purple flood;
But when the wound grew stiff with clotted blood,
Then grinding tortures his strong bosom rend.
Less keen those darts the fierce Ilythiæ send,
The powers that cause the teeming matron's throes,
Sad mothers of unutterable woes.*

POPE.

Better translated by *Macpherson*; but in neither *well*: "So long as from the gaping wound gushed forth, in its warmth, the blood; but when the wound became dry, when ceased the blood to flow amain, sharp pains pervade the strength of Atrides. Racking pangs glide through his frame; as when the Ilythiæ, who preside over *births*, the daughters of white armed Juno, fierce dealers of *bitter pains*, throw all their *darts* on hapless women, that travail with child. Such pains pervade the strength of Atrides."

Verse 4. The remnant that are left] That is, the *Jews*; the ten tribes having been already carried away captive by the kings of Assyria.

Verse 7. Behold, I will send a blast-and he shall hear a rumour] The *rumour* was, that Tirhakah had invaded Assyria. The *blast* was that which slew *one hundred and eighty-five thousand* of them in one night, see ~~<2195>~~ **2 Kings 19:35**.

Cause him to fall by the sword] Alluding to his death by the hands of his two sons, at Nineveh. See ~~<2195>~~ **2 Kings 19:35-37**.

Verse 8. Libnah-Lachish.] These two places were not very distant from each other; they were in the mountains of Judah, southward of Jerusalem.

Verse 10. Let not thy God in whom thou trustest] This letter is nearly the same with the speech delivered by Rab-shakeh. See ~~<2189>~~ **2 Kings 18:29**.

Verse 14. Spread it before the Lord] The temple was considered to be *God's dwelling-place*; and that whatever was there was peculiarly under his eye. Hezekiah spread the letter before the Lord, as he wished him to read the blasphemies spoken against himself.

Verse 15. Thou art the God, &c.] Thou art not only God of Israel, but God also of Assyria, and of all the nations of the world.

Verse 21. The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her

head at thee.] “So truly contemptible is thy power, and empty thy boasts, that even the *young women* of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Jehovah, shall be amply sufficient to discomfit all thy forces, and cause thee to return with shame to thy own country, where the most disgraceful death awaits thee.”

When Bishop *Warburton* had published his *Doctrine of Grace*, and chose to fall foul on some of the most religious people of the land, a *young woman* of the city of Gloucester exposed his *graceless* system in a pamphlet, to which she affixed the above words as a motto!

Verse 23. The tall cedar trees-the choice fir trees] Probably meaning the *princes* and *nobles* of the country.

The forest of his Carmel.] Better in the margin: *the forest* and *his fruitful field*.

Verse 24. I have digged and drunk strange waters] I have conquered *strange countries*, in which I have digged wells for my army; or, I have gained the *wealth* of strange countries.

With the sole of my feet] My *infantry* have been so numerous that they alone have been sufficient to drink up the rivers of the places I have besieged.

Verse 25. Hast thou not heard] Here *Jehovah* speaks, and shows this boasting king that what he had done was done by the *Divine appointment*, and that of his own counsel and might he could have done nothing. It was because God had appointed them to this civil destruction that he had overcome them; and it was not through *his* might; for God had made *their inhabitants of small power*, so that he only got the victory over men whom God had *confounded, dismayed, and enervated*, ^{<121926>} **2 Kings 19:26.**

Verse 28. I will put my hook in thy nose] This seems to be an allusion to the method of *guiding a buffalo*; he has a sort of ring put into his nose, to which a cord or bridle is attached, by which he can be *turned* to the *right*, or to the *left*, or *round about*, according to the pleasure of his driver.

Verse 29. This shall be a sign unto thee] To Hezekiah; for to him this part of the address is made.

Ye shall eat this year] Sennacherib had ravaged the country, and *seed-time* was now over, yet God shows them that he would so bless the

land, that what should *grow of itself that year*, would be quite sufficient to supply the inhabitants and prevent all *famine*; and though the *second year* was the *sabbatical rest* or *jubilee for the land*, in which it was unlawful to plough or sow; yet even then the land, by an especial blessing of God, should bring forth a sufficiency for its inhabitants; and in the *third year* they should sow and plant, &c. and have abundance, &c. Now this was to be a *sign* to Hezekiah, that his deliverance had not been effected by *natural* or *casual* means; for as without a *miracle* the ravaged and uncultivated land could not yield food for its inhabitants, so not without *miraculous* interference could the Assyrian army be cut off and Israel saved.

Verse 30. The remnant-shall yet again take root] As your *corn* shall take root in the soil, and bring forth and abundantly *multiply* itself, so shall the Jewish people; the population shall be greatly increased, and the desolations occasioned by the sword soon be forgotten.

Verse 31. Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant] The Jews shall be so multiplied as not only to fill *Jerusalem*, but all the adjacent country.

And they that escape out of Mount Zion] Some think that this refers to the going forth of the *apostles* to the Gentile world, and converting the nations by the preaching of the Gospel.

Verse 32. He shall not, &c.] Here follow the fullest proofs that Jerusalem shall not be taken by the Assyrians. 1. *He shall not come into this city*; 2. He shall not be able to get so near as to *shoot an arrow into it*; 3. He shall not be able to *bring an army* before it, 4. Nor shall he be able to raise any *redoubt* or *mound* against it; 5. No; not even an Assyrian *shield* shall be seen in the country; not even a foraging party shall come near the city.

Verse 33. By the way that he came] Though his army shall not return, yet *he* shall return to Assyria; for because of his blasphemy he is reserved for a more ignominious death.

Verse 35. That night] The very night after the blasphemous message had been sent, and this comfortable prophecy delivered.

The angel of the Lord went out] I believe this *angel* or *messenger of the Lord* was simply a *suffocating* or *pestilential* WIND; by which the Assyrian army was destroyed, as in a moment, without noise confusion or any warning. See Clarke's note "^{<1188>}1 Kings 20:30". Thus was the threatening, "^{<2197>}2 Kings 19:7, fulfilled, *I will send a BLAST upon him*; for

he had heard the *rumour* that his territories were invaded; and on his way to save his empire, in one night the whole of his army was destroyed, without any one even seeing who had hurt them. This is called an *angel* or *messenger of the Lord*: that is, *something immediately sent* by him to execute his judgments.

When they arose early] That is, *Sennacherib*, and probably a *few associates*, who were preserved as *witnesses* and *relaters* of this most dire *disaster*. Rab-shakeh, no doubt, perished with the rest of the army.

Verse 36. Dwelt at Nineveh.] This was the capital of the Assyrian empire.

Verse 37. Nisroch his god] We know nothing of this deity; he is nowhere else mentioned.

Smote him with the sword] The rabbins say that his sons had learned that he intended to sacrifice them to this god, and that they could only prevent this by slaying *him*.

The same writers add, that he consulted his wise men how it was that such miracles should be wrought for the Israelites; who told him that it was because of the merit of Abraham who had offered his only son to God: he then said, I will offer to him my two sons; which when *they* heard, they rose up and slew him. When a rabbin cannot untie a knot, he feels neither scruple nor difficulty to cut it.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 20

Hezekiah's sickness, and the message of the prophet to him, to prepare for death, 1. His distress and prayer to God, 2, 3. The Lord hears, and promises to add fifteen years to his life, and Isaiah prescribes a means of cure, 4-7.

Hezekiah seeks a sign; and to assure him of the truth of God's promise, the shadow on the dial of Ahaz goes back ten degrees, 8-11. The King of Babylon sends a friendly message to Hezekiah, to congratulate him on his recovery; and to these messengers he ostentatiously shows all his treasures, 12, 13.

Isaiah reproves him, and foretells that the Babylonians will come and take away all those treasures, and take the people into captivity; and degrade the royal family of Judah, 14-18. Hezekiah bows to the Divine judgment, 19. His acts and death, 20, 21.

NOTES ON CHAP. 20

Verse 1. Set thine house in order] It appears from the text that he was smitten with such a disorder as must *terminate in death*, without the miraculous interposition of God: and he is now commanded to *set his house in order*, or to *give charge concerning his house*; to dispose of his affairs, or in other words, to *make his will*; because his death was at hand. "This sickness," says *Jarchi*, "took place *three days* before the defeat of Sennacherib." That it must have been *before* this defeat, is evident. Hezekiah reigned only *twenty-nine* years, ^{<21812>}**2 Kings 18:2**. He had reigned *fourteen* years when the war with Sennacherib began, ^{<21813>}**2 Kings 18:13**, and he reigned *fifteen* years after this sickness, ^{<22016>}**2 Kings 20:6**; therefore 14+15=29, the term of his reign. Nothing can be clearer than this, that Hezekiah had reigned *fourteen* years before this time; and that he did live the *fifteen* years here promised. That Hezekiah's sickness happened before the destruction of Sennacherib's army, is asserted by the text itself: see ^{<22016>}**2 Kings 20:6**.

Verse 3. I beseech thee, O Lord] Hezekiah knew that, although the words of Isaiah were delivered to him in an *absolute* form, yet they were to be *conditionally* understood, else he could not have prayed to God to reverse a purpose which he knew to be irrevocable. Even this passage is a key to many prophecies and Divine declarations: see chap. 18 of Jeremiah.

Hezekiah pleads his uprightness and holy conduct in his own behalf. Was it *impious* to do so? No; but it certainly did not savour much either of *humility* or of a *due sense of his own weakness*. If he had a *perfect heart*, who made it such?-God. If he did good in God's sights who enabled him to do so?-God. Could he therefore plead in his behalf dispositions and actions which he could neither have felt nor practiced but by the *power of the grace of God*? I trow not. But the times of this ignorance God winked at. The Gospel teaches us a different lesson.

Wept sore.] How clouded must his prospects of another world have been! But it is said that, as he saw the nation in danger from the Assyrian army, which was then invading it, and threatened to destroy the religion of the true God, he was greatly affected at the news of his death, as he wished to live to see the enemies of God overthrown. And therefore God promises that he *will deliver the city out of the hands of the king of Assyria*, at the same time that he promises him a respite of *fifteen years*, ^{<12016>}**2 Kings 20:6**. His lamentation on this occasion may be seen in Isaiah, ^{<2330>}**Isaiah 38:9-22**.

Verse 4. Into the middle court] rxh *hatstser, the court*. This is the reading of the Masoretic *Keri*: ry[h *haair*, "of the city," is the reading of the text, and of most MSS.; but the *versions* follow the *Keri*.

Verse 6. I will add unto thy days fifteen years] This is the *first and only* man who was ever informed of the *term of his life*. And was this a *privilege*! Surely no. If Hezekiah was attached to life, as he appears to have been, how must his mind be affected to mark the *sinking years*! He knew he was to *die* at the end of *fifteen years*; and how must he feel at the end of every year, when he saw that so much was cut off from life? He must necessarily feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. I believe there would be nothing wanting to complete the misery of men, except the place of torment, were they informed of the precise time in which their lives *must* terminate. God, in his abundant mercy, has hidden this from their eyes.

Verse 7. Take a lump of figs-and laid it on the boil] We cannot exactly say in what Hezekiah's malady consisted. ^yj v *shechin* signifies any *inflammatory tumour, boil, abscess, &c*. The *versions* translate it *sore, wound, and such like*. Some think it was a *pleurisy*; others, that it was the *plague*; others, the *elephantiasis*; and others, that it was a *quinsey*. A poultice of figs might be very proper to maturate a boil, or to discuss any obstinate inflammatory swelling. This Pliny remarks, *Omnibus quæ*

maturanda ant discutienda sunt imponuntur. But we cannot pronounce on the propriety of the *application*, unless we were certain of the nature of the *malady*. This, however was the *natural* means which God chose to bless to the recovery of Hezekiah's health; and without this interposition he must have died.

Verse 8. What shall be the sign] He wished to be fully convinced that his cure was to be entirely supernatural; and, in order to this, he seeks one miracle to prove the truth of the other, that nothing might remain *equivocal*.

Verse 11. He brought the shadow ten degrees backward] We cannot suppose that these *ten degrees* meant *ten hours*; there were *ten divisions of time* on this dial: and perhaps it would not be right to suppose that the *sun* went ten degrees back in the heavens, or that the *earth* turned back upon its axis from *east* to *west*, in a contrary direction to its natural course. But the miracle might be effected by means of *refraction*, for a ray of light we know can be *varied* or *refracted* from a *right line* by passing through a dense medium; and we know also, by means of the refracting power of the atmosphere, the sun, when near rising and setting, seems to be higher above the horizon than he really is, and, by horizontal refraction, we find that the sun appears above the horizon when he is actually below it, and literally out of sight: therefore, by using dense clouds or vapours, the rays of light in that place might be *refracted* from their direct course *ten*, or any other number of degrees; so that the miracle might have been wrought by occasioning this extraordinary *refraction*, rather than by disturbing the course of the *earth*, or any other of the celestial bodies.

The dial of Ahaz.] See Clarke's note on "^{<1209>}2 Kings 9:13", and the observations and **diagram** at the end of this chapter. See Clarke "^{<1210>}2 Kings 20:20".

Verse 12. At that time Berodach-baladan] He is called *Merodach-Baladan*, ^{<2390>}**Isaiah 39:1**, and by the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* versions, and by several of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's* MSS.; and also by the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmuds*. The true reading seems to be *Merodach*; the **m** *mem* and **b** *beth* might be easily interchanged, and so produce the mistake.

Sent letters and a present] It appears that there was friendship between the king of Babylon and Hezekiah, when the latter and the Assyrians were

engaged in a destructive war. The king of Babylon had not only heard of his *sickness*, but he had heard of the *miracle*; as we learn from ^{<4323>}**2 Chronicles 32:31**.

Verse 13. Hezekiah hearkened unto them] Instead of [mvyw *vaiyishma*, *he hearkened*, j mvyw *vaiyismach*, *he rejoiced* or *was glad*, is the reading of *twelve* of Kennicott's and Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS., the *parallel* place, ^{<2310>}**Isaiah 39:2**, the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, *Arabic*, some copies of the *Targum*, and the *Babylonian Talmud*.

All the house of his precious things] Interpreters are not well agreed about the meaning of the original htkn *nechothoh*, which we here translate *precious things*, and in the margin *spicery* or *jewels*. I suppose the last to be meant.

There was nothing in his house] He showed them through a spirit of folly and exultation, all his treasures, and no doubt those in the house of the Lord. And it is said, ^{<4323>}**2 Chronicles 32:31**, that in this business *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart*; and this trial proved that in his heart there was little else than *pride* and *folly*.

Verse 17. Behold, the days come] This was fulfilled in the days of the latter Jewish kings, when the Babylonians had led the people away into captivity, and stripped the land, the temple, &c., of all their riches. See ^{<7010>}**Daniel 1:1-3**.

Verse 18. They shall be eunuchs] Perhaps this means no more than that they should become *household servants* to the kings of Babylon. See the fulfillment, ^{<12413>}**2 Kings 24:13-15**, and ^{<7010>}**Daniel 1:1-3**.

Verse 19. Good is the word of the Lord] *He* has spoken *right*, I have done *foolishly*. I submit to his judgments.

Is it **not good if peace and truth be in my days?** I believe Hezekiah inquires whether there shall be peace and truth in his days. And the question seems to be rather of an interested nature. He does not appear to deplore the calamities that were coming on the land, provided peace and truth might prevail in his days.

Verse 20. The rest of the acts of Hezekiah] See the parallel places in *Isaiah* and in *2 Chronicles*. In this latter book, ^{<4324>}**2 Chronicles 32:24-33**, we find several particulars that are not inserted here; especially concerning

his pride, the increase of his riches, his storehouses of corn, wine, and oil; his stalls for all manner of beasts; his cities, flocks, and herds, in abundance; and the bringing the upper water course of Gihon to the west side of the city of David, by which he brought a plentiful supply of water into that city, &c., &c., &c.

ON the subject of the *Babylonian embassy* I may say a few words. However we may endeavour to excuse Hezekiah, it is certain that he made an exhibition of his riches and power in a spirit of great vanity; and that this did displease the Lord. It was also ruinous to Judea: when those foreigners had seen such a profusion of wealth, such princely establishments, and such a fruitful land, it was natural for them to conceive the *wish* that they had such treasures, and from that to covet the very treasures they saw. They made their report to their king and countrymen, and the *desire* to possess the Jewish wealth became general; and in consequence of this there is little doubt that the conquest of Jerusalem was *projected*. History is not barren in such instances: the same kind of cause has produced similar effects. Take two or three notable instances.

When the barbarous *Goth* and *Vandal* nations saw the pleasant and fruitful plains and hills of *Italy*, and the vast treasures of the Roman people, the abundance of the necessaries, conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of life, which met their eyes in every direction; they were never at rest till their swords put them in possession of the whole, and brought the mistress of the world to irretrievable ruin.

Vortigern, a British king, unhappily invited the *Saxons*, in 445, to assist him against his rebellious subjects: they came, saw the land that it was good, and in the end took possession of it, having driven out, or into the mountains of Wales, all the original Britons.

The *Danes*, in the *ninth century*, made some inroads into England, found the land better than their own, and never rested till they established themselves in this country, and, after having ruled it for a considerable time, were at last, with the utmost difficulty, driven out.

These nations had only to *see* a better land in order to *covet* it, and their *exertions* were not wanting in order to *possess* it.

How far other nations, since those times, have imitated the most foolish and impolitic conduct of the Jewish king, and how far their conduct may have been or may yet be marked with the same *consequences*, the pages of

impartial history have shown and will show: God's ways are all equal, and the judge of all the earth will do right. But we need not wonder, after this, that the Jews fell into the hands of the Babylonians, for this was the political consequence of their own conduct: nor could it be otherwise, the circumstances of both nations considered, unless God, by a miraculous interposition, had saved them; and this it was inconsistent with his justice to do, because they had, in their pride and vanity, offended against him. To be lifted up with pride and vain glory in the possession of any blessings, is the most direct way to lose them; as it induces God, who dispensed them for our benefit, to resume them, because that which was designed for our good, through our own perversity becomes our bane.

1. I have intimated, in the note on ^{<12011>}**2 Kings 20:11**, that the shadow was brought back on the dial of Ahaz by means of *refraction*. On this subject some farther observations may not be improper.

2. Any person may easily convince himself of the effect of *refraction* by this simple experiment: Place a vessel on the floor, and put a piece of coin on the bottom, close to that part of the vessel which is *farthest off* from yourself; then move back till you find that the edge of the vessel next to yourself fairly covers the coin, and that it is now entirely out of sight. Stand exactly in that position, and let a person pour water gently into the vessel, and you will soon find the coin to reappear, and to be entirely in sight when the vessel is full, though neither it nor you have changed your positions in the least.

By the refracting power of the atmosphere we have *several minutes* more of the solar light each day than we should otherwise have. "The atmosphere refracts the sun's rays so as to bring him in sight every clear day, before he rises in the horizon, and to keep him in view for *some minutes* after he is really set below it. For at some times of the year we see the sun *ten minutes* longer above the horizon than he would be if there were no *refractions*, and above *six minutes* every day at a mean rate."-Ferguson.

And it is entirely owing to refraction that we have any morning or evening *twilight*; without this power in the atmosphere, the heavens would be as *black as ebony* in the absence of the sun; and at his *rising* we should pass in a moment from the *deepest darkness* into the *brightest light*; and at his *setting*, from the *most intense light* to the *most profound darkness*, which

in a few days would be sufficient to destroy the visual organs of all the animals in *air, earth, or sea*.

That the rays of light can be *supernaturally refracted*, and the sun appear to be where he actually is not, we have a most remarkable instance in *Kepler*. Some Hollanders, who wintered in *Nova Zembla* in the year 1596, were surprised to find that after a continual night of three months, the sun began to rise *seventeen days* sooner than (according to computation deduced from the altitude of the pole, observed to be seventy-six degrees) he should have done; which can only be accounted for by a miracle, or by an *extraordinary refraction* of the sun's rays passing through the cold dense air in that climate. At that time the sun, as *Kepler* computes, was almost *five degrees* below the horizon when he appeared; and consequently the refraction of his rays was about *nine times* stronger than it is with us.

3. Now this might be all purely *natural*, though it was *extraordinary*, and it proves the *possibility* of what I have conjectured, even on *natural principles*; but the *foretelling* of this, and leaving the *going back or forward* to the choice of the king, and the thing occurring in the *place and time* when and where it was predicted, shows that it was *supernatural and miraculous*, though the means were purely *natural*. Yet in that climate, (LAT. *thirty-one degrees fifty minutes north*, and LONG. *thirty-five degrees twenty-five minutes east*;) where *vapours* to produce an extraordinary refraction of the solar rays could not be expected, the *collecting* or *producing* them *heightens* and *ascertains* the miracle. "But why contend that the thing was done by *refraction*? Could not God as easily have caused the *sun*, or rather the *earth*, to turn back, as to have produced this extraordinary and miraculous *refraction*?" I answer, Yes. But it is much more consistent with the wisdom and perfections of God to perform a work or accomplish an end by *simple* means, than by those that are *complex*; and had it been done in the other way, it would have required a miracle to *invert* and a miracle to *restore*; and a strong convulsion on the earth's surface to bring it ten degrees suddenly *back*, and to take it the same suddenly *forward*. The miracle, according to my supposition, was performed on the *atmosphere*, and without in the least disturbing even *that*; whereas, on the other supposition, it could not have been done without *suspending* or *interrupting* the *laws of the solar system*, and this without gaining a hair's breadth in credulity or conviction more by such stupendous interpositions than might be effected by the agency of *clouds and vapours*. The point to be gained was the *bringing back the shadow on the dial ten*

degrees: this might have been gained by the means I have here described, as well as by the other; and these means being much more *simple*, were more worthy the Divine choice than those which are more *complex*, and could not have been used without producing the necessity of working at least double or treble miracles.

4. Before I proceed to the immediate object of inquiry, I shall beg leave to make some observations on the invention and construction of DIALS in general.

SUNDIALS must have been of great antiquity, though the earliest we hear of is that of *Ahaz*; but this certainly was not the *first* of its kind, though it is the first on record. *Ahaz* began his reign about *four hundred* years before *Alexander*, and about *twelve* years after the foundation of Rome.

Anaximenes, the Milesian, who flourished about *four hundred* years before Christ, is said by *Pliny* to have been the first who made a *sundial*, the use of which he taught to the Spartans, but others give this honour to *Thales*, his countryman, who flourished *two hundred* years before him.

Aristarchus of Samos, who lived before *Archimedes*, invented a plain horizontal disc, with a *gnomon*, to distinguish the hours, and had its rim raised all around, to prevent the shadow from extending too far.

Probably all these were *rude* and *evanescent* attempts, for it does not appear that the *Romans*, who borrowed all their knowledge from the Greeks, knew any thing of a *sundial* before that set up by *Papirius Cursor*, about *four hundred* and *sixty* years after the foundation of Rome; before which time, says *Pliny*, there was no mention of any account of *time* but by the *rising* and *setting* of the *sun*. This dial was erected near the temple of *Quirinus*, but is allowed to have been very inaccurate. About *thirty* years after, the consul *Marcus Valerius Messala* brought a dial out of Sicily, which he placed on a pillar near the *rostrum*; but as it was not made for the latitude of Rome, it did not show the time exactly; however it was the only one they had for a *hundred* years, when *Martius Philippus* set up one more exact.

Since those times the science of *dialling* has been cultivated in most civilized nations, but we have no professed treatise on the subject before the time of the jesuit *Clavius*, who, in the latter part of the *sixteenth* century, demonstrated both the theory and practice of dialling; but he did this after the most rigid mathematical principles, so as to render that which

was simple in itself exceedingly obscure. Though we have useful and correct works of this kind from *Rivard, Deuteronomy Parcieux, Dom. Bedos de Celles, Joseph Blaise Garnier, Gravesande, Emerson, Martin, and Leadbetter*; yet something more specific, more simple, and more general, is a desideratum in the science of *sciaterics* or *dialling*.

Observations on the nature and structure of the sundial of Ahaz, with a diagram on its supposed form.

5. When writing on the appointment of Jehu to be king of Israel, ^{<13913>}**2 Kings 9:13**, I was struck with the manner in which the subject of the thirteenth verse was understood by the *Chaldee*: “Then they hastened and took every man his garment, and put it under him, *on the TOP of the STAIRS*;” according to the Hebrew, **twl [mh p̄rg l a el gerem hammaaloth**, which might be translated, *on the bare (naked or uncovered) steps*. This the Targumist has translated by **ay[v grdl lidrag sheaiya**, “*at the HOUR-STEPS*.” The other *versions*, knowing nothing of what was intended, have endeavoured to *guess* severally at a meaning. On turning to ^{<12311>}**2 Kings 20:11**, where the same word **hwl [m maaloth** is used, and most evidently there implies some kind of *sundial*, I found the *Chaldee* still more pointed, both in this and in the parallel place, ^{<2388>}**Isaiah 38:8**, rendering the Hebrew words **ay[v ʿba trwxb** *betsurath eben sheaiya*, “*by the shadow of the stone of hours*,” from which I was led to conclude that some kind of *gnomonic* figure, or *sundial*, was intended; and that the hours or divisions of time were shown by a *shadow, projected on stone steps, gradually ascending to a certain height*. This thought I communicated to the *Rev. Philip Garrett*, one of the preachers among the people called *Methodists*, of whose rare knowledge in the science of *gnomonics*, and ingenuity in constructing every possible variety of dials, I had already indubitable proofs, and requested him, from the principle I had laid down, to try whether such an instrument could be constructed that might serve at once as a *public tribunal*, and as a *dial*, to ascertain all the *inequalities* of the *Jewish division of time*?

A more difficult problem in the science he was never called to solve. Though several had attempted to construct dials to show the mode by which different nations measured time, and among the rest the *Jews*; yet nothing properly satisfactory has been produced, although one nearly in the same form of outline with the present may be found in *Hutton’s*

Mathematical Recreations, vol. iii., p. 337, projected on a *plane superficies*, which could not possibly show the *ascending* and *descending* of the shadow like that now before the reader, which the ingenuity of the above gentleman has brought to almost as great a degree of perfection as can reasonably be expected. And that the dial of Ahaz was constructed on a similar principle, there can be but little doubt, as the words of the original seem to express this and no other form; and so the *Chaldee* appears to have understood it; nor is it easy to conceive that one on any other principle could ascertain in all seasons the varying admeasurement of the Jewish time.

6. Having said thus much relative to the circumstances which gave birth to this dial, it may be deemed necessary to give a general view of the natural and artificial divisions of time, and then a description of the dial itself.

The most obvious *division of time* is into *day* and *night*; these are marked out by the *rising* and *setting* of the sun. Modern writers call the time from sunrise to sunset the *natural day*; the *night* is the time from sunset to *sunrise*; these days and nights are subject to great inequalities in every part of the earth, except under the equator. The most ancient division of the equatorial day was into the morning and evening; the night was divided into watches.

Hours are either equal or unequal; an *unequal* hour is the *twelfth* part of a natural day, or the *twelfth* part of the night. In *summer*, when the days are the longest, the diurnal hours are the longest, and the nocturnal hours shortest; in *winter*, on the contrary, when the days are shortest, the hours of the day are the *shortest*, and the hours of the night *longest*. The difference between the hours of the day and those of the night is greatest at the *solstices*, because then there is the greatest inequality between the length of the day and that of the night. At the *equinoxes*, when the days and nights are of an equal length, all hours, both of days and nights, are equal.

The ancient *Jews* made use of *unequal* hours; with them *sunrise* was the beginning of the *first* hour of the day, *noon* was the end of the *sixth* hour, and the *twelfth* hour ended at *sunset*.

Doctor *Long* observes, "These times might be measured by an astronomer; but how *unequal* hours can be marked for common use, is not easy to say." He farther observes that "the ancients had *sundials*; but I think unequal

hours could not be marked thereon exactly.” And in a note on this observation he remarks “The *sundials of the ancients*, to show unequal hours, were not made in the method used at present, with a gnomon *parallel* to the axis of the earth, but had a *pin* set upright upon a plane, rounded at the upper end, the shadow whereof marked their *unequal* hours in the following manner: by means of an *analemma*, or projection of the sphere, *six curves* were drawn upon the plane, to show where the shadow of the *pin* at the several hours terminated every month in the year; one curve served for two months, because the shadows are of the same length in January as in December, in February as in November, in March as in October, &c.; each *curve* was drawn long enough to take in all the hours of the longest day in the respective months, and was divided into twelve equal parts. It is easy to see that a dial made by this method, in order to show the unequal hours exactly, *ought* to have *half* as many curves, or parallel lines, as there are days in the year, but this would require so many *lines* as would make it all confusion; it is possible they had only one line for a month, and that for the middle of the month.”

The doctor is perfectly correct in observing, that “the sundials of the ancients, to show unequal hours, were not made in the method used at present, with a gnomon parallel to the axis of the earth;” because such a dial could not be of any use to those nations whose divisions of the solar hours were unequal, or more or less than sixty minutes to an hour. But the doctor is mistaken in supposing the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of constructing a sundial to show these *unequal* hours; for *eleven* lines are all that is necessary to show the hours for *every* day in the year; and *forty-four* lines would show all the *quarters*: whereas, on his plan, it would require near *eleven hundred* calculations of the *altitude of the sun*, and the same number to show where the shadow of the *gnomon* at the several hours terminated. His dial would therefore require above *one hundred and eighty* parallel lines, and nearly *eleven hundred* marks for the *hours* only; but if the quarters are inserted, *four thousand four hundred* marks would be necessary. This would require the labour of *six or eight months*, whereas the plan here adopted would not require in its calculations and construction as many hours.

7. *A description of the dial.* This dial consists of *eleven steps* placed parallel to the horizon, with a *perpendicular gnomon* fixed in the upper or middle step, which step is placed exactly *north* and *south*, and forms the *meridian* or sixth-hour line.

All the operations of this dial are determined by the *point* of the shadow projected from the gnomon on the steps of the dial.

Every day for *six months* the shadow from the point of the gnomon makes a *different angle* with the gnomon, which makes the hours of one day to differ in length from the hours of the preceding and following days. The same observations apply to the other six months in the year.

The shadow crosses each step of the dial every day in the year.

Each day in the year consists of *twelve* hours from the time of sunrise to sunset, which makes a difference of *twenty* minutes between an hour in the longest day and an hour in the shortest. The longest day, consisting of *twelve hours* of *seventy* minutes to an hour; and the shortest of *twelve* hours of *fifty* minutes to an hour; but when the sun enters *Aries* or *Libra* each hour consists of *sixty* minutes.

To be able to understand this dial, one example will be sufficient: On the 21st of March, or the 23d of September, the shadow from the print of the gnomon will enter or *ascend* the *first* step of the dial, at the first hour of the day, at the *west* side of the dial on the equinoctial line; *eleven* minutes afterwards the shadow comes in contact with the circle marked *fifteen* degrees, which is the altitude of the sun at that time; *twenty-four* minutes afterwards the shadow touches the circle of *twenty* degrees; and in *twenty-five* minutes it ascends the *second* step, at the *second* hour of the day, when the altitude of the sun is *twenty-five* degrees *eight* minutes.

In *twenty-four* minutes the shadow comes to the circle of *thirty* degrees; and *twenty-five* minutes after it arrives at the circle of *thirty-five* degrees; and in *eleven* minutes it ascends the *third* step at the *third* hour of the day, when the altitude is *thirty-six* degrees *fifty-seven* minutes. In *sixteen* minutes the point of the shadow intersects the circle of *forty* degrees; and in *forty-four* minutes it ascends the *fourth* step at the *fourth* hour of the day, when the altitude of the sun is *forty-seven* degrees *twenty-two* minutes; and in *eighteen* minutes of time it comes in contact with the circle of *fifty* degrees, &c., &c., until it arrives at the *meridian* step or line at the *sixth* hour of the day, when the altitude is *fifty-eight* degrees *ten* minutes; than the shadow *descends* the *sixth* step, and moves on to the *seventh*, &c., *descending step after step*, tracing the equinoctial line on the *east* side of the dial, intersecting the *steps* or *hour lines*, and the *circles* of *altitude*, until it leaves the dial at the *eleventh* hour of the day.

A dial of this construction is the most simple, useful, and durable that can be made; and as exclusively and completely adapted to ascertain the ancient Jewish divisions of the solar hours.

The *steps* of this dial render the construction a little more difficult than it otherwise would be if the lines were drawn on a plane superficies, which would give exactly the same divisions of the hours.

N. B. A *vertical south dial*, in lat. *thirty-one degrees fifty minutes*, (the latitude of Jerusalem,) could be of little or no use to ascertain these divisions for several months in the year. The same remark may be made respecting a *south vertical concave dial*. The sun cannot shine upon a south vertical plane, in lat. *thirty-one degrees fifty minutes* in the longest day before *fifty-three minutes past eight*, or nearly *nine*, in the morning.

With respect to the dimensions of this dial, if we suppose the height of the stile from the bottom of the *lowest* step to be *four feet*, this would allow *six inches* for the thickness of each step, and *twelve inches* for the height of the *stile* above the upper step. According to this scale the *south* end of the dial would be *ten yards*; the *north* end *sixteen yards*; and the *east* and *west* sides *eight yards two feet*. The ground-work might be *eighteen yards by twelve*, making an oblong square facing the four cardinal points of the heavens.

N. B. All the lines upon a dial-plane are *inverted*, with respect to the *cardinal* points of the heavens.

The lines which show the hours from *sunrise* to the meridian, are on the *west* side of the dial-plane; and the lines which show the hours from the meridian to *sunset* are on the *east* side of the dial-plane; the *southern* tropic, Capricorn, is on the *north* end of the dial-plane; and the *northern* tropic, Cancer, is on the *south* end of the plane.

The *narrow* end of the dial looks towards the *south*, and is marked *north*; the *wide* end looks *north*, and is marked *south*. The side which looks *west* is marked *sunrise*, and the side which looks *east* is marked *sunset*.

8. In the annexed *diagram* a transverse section of the dial is represented where the *steps* are seen at one view *ascending* and *descending to and from* the gnomon or stile on the upper or sixth step. These steps are all equal in their height, but unequal on their upper surface, as the diagram shows, and for the reasons alleged above. Each of these steps might have

been divided into parts or degrees, to mark the smaller divisions of time; and to this sort of division there appears to be a reference in the text, where it is said, *the shadow went back ten degrees*. It seems the miracle was wrought in the *afternoon*, for it is said, *The shadow was brought ten degrees BACKWARD, by which it had GONE DOWN*; so it appears that the shadow had reascended *ten degrees* on the afternoon steps; and when this was done, so that all were fully convinced of the miracle, the shadow again descended to its *true place* on the steps; and this would be the immediate consequence of dissipating the vapours which I have supposed to be the agent which God employed to produce, by *refraction*, this most extraordinary phenomenon.

A dial constructed in this way, in the *centre of a town*, or some *public place*, would serve, not only to give the *divisions of time*, but also as a place from which *proclamations* might be made; and especially from the *upper step*, where the speaker might stand by the *gnomon*, and be sufficiently elevated above the crowd below.

On such-a place I have supposed Jehu to have been proclaimed king; and to do him honour his captains *spread their garments on the steps*; the *first, second, third, fourth, and fifth*, by which he ascended, to the *sixth step*, on which the *gnomon* was placed, and where he was proclaimed and acknowledged the king of Israel; for it is said, *The captains hasted, and took every man his GARMENT, and put it under him on the TOP of the STAIRS, and blew with trumpets, saying, JEHU is KING!* ^{<12913>} **2 Kings 9:13**; where see the note.

Pietro Nonius or *Nunnex*, a celebrated Portuguese mathematician about the middle of the *sixteenth century*, proved that the shadow on a stile in a sundial *might go backward without a miracle*; which was founded on the following theorem:—

“In all countries, the zenith of which is situated between the equator and the tropic, as long as the sun passes beyond the zenith, towards the apparent or elevated pole, he arrives *twice* before noon at the same azimuth and the same thing takes place in the afternoon.”

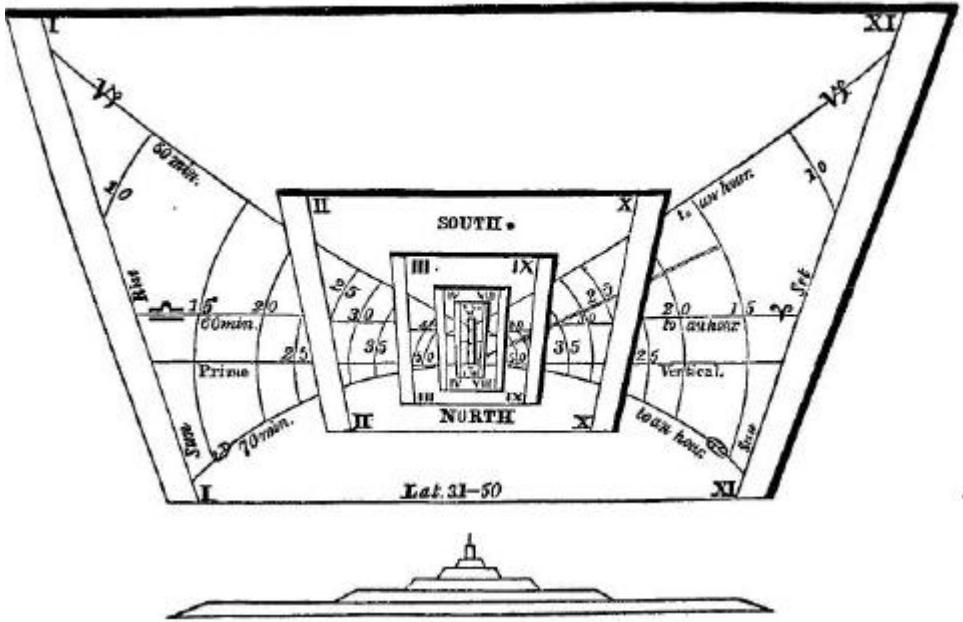
This gave rise to the demonstration that a dial might be constructed for any latitude on which the shadow shall *retrograde* or go *backward*. And it is effected in the following manner:—

Incline a plane turned directly *south* in such a manner that its zenith may fall between the tropic and equator; and nearly about the middle of the distance between these two circles. In the latitude of London, for example, which is *fifty-one* degrees *thirty-one* minutes, the plane must make an angle of about *thirty-eight* degrees. In the middle of the plane fix an upright stile of such a length that its shadow shall go beyond the plane; and if several angular lines be then drawn from the bottom of the stile towards the *south*, about the time of the *solstice*, the shadow will retrograde twice in the course of the day, as mentioned above. This is evident, since the plane is parallel to the horizontal plane, having its zenith under the same meridian, at the distance of *twelve* degrees from the equator towards the *north*; the shadows of the two stiles must consequently move in the same manner in both.

Of these principles some have endeavoured to make an unholy use, contending that what the Holy Scriptures consider to be a *miracle*, in the case of the retrogradation of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, was the effect of a mere *natural cause*, without any thing miraculous in it. On this subject Dr. *Hutton* very properly remarks: "It is very improbable, if the retrogradation which took place on the dial of that prince had been a natural effect, that it should not have been observed till the prophet announced it to him as the sign of his cure; for in that case it must have always occurred when the sun was between the tropic and the zenith." *Hutton's Mathematical Recreations*, vol. iii. p. 323.

To this we may add, that if the dial of Ahaz had been thus constructed, the effect must have been generally known; and Hezekiah would never have taken that for a miracle which he and all his courtiers must have observed as an occurrence which at particular seasons, took place twice every day. And that the matter was known publicly to have been a *miracle* we learn from this circumstance: that Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sent his ambassadors to Jerusalem *to inquire after the wonder that was done in the land*, as well as after Hezekiah's health: see ~~44231~~ **2 Chronicles 32:31**. But the miraculous interposition is so obvious, that infidelity must be driven to pitiful shifts when it is obliged to have recourse to the insinuation of imposture, in a case where the miraculous interference of God is so strikingly evident. Besides, such a dial could not be constructed for the latitude of Jerusalem without having the *north* end elevated *twenty* degrees *seven* minutes; which could not be used for the purpose which is indicated in the text. See No. 3 of the preceding observations.

SUPPOSED FORM OF THE SUNDIAL OF AHAZ



II KINGS

CHAPTER 21

Manasseh succeeds his father Hezekiah, reigns fifty-five years, and fills Jerusalem and the whole land with abominable idolatry and murder, 1-9. God denounces the heaviest judgments against him and the land, 10-15. Manasseh's acts and death, 16-18. Amon his son succeeds him, and reigns two years; is equally profligate with his father; is slain by his servants, and buried in the garden of Uzza; and Josiah his son reigns in his stead, 19-26.

NOTES ON CHAP. 21

Verse 1. Manasseh was twelve years old] He was born about three years after his father's miraculous cure; he was carried captive to Babylon, repented, was restored to his kingdom, put down idolatry, and died at the age of *sixty-seven* years. See ^{<14330>}**2 Chronicles 33:1-20**.

Verse 2. After the abominations of the heathen] He exactly copied the conduct of those nations which God had cast out of that land.

Verse 3. Made a grove] *He made Asherah*, the Babylonian *Melitta* or Roman *Venus*. See ^{<121710>}**2 Kings 17:10**, and the observations at the end of that chapter; and see here on ^{<122107>}**2 Kings 21:7**.

Worshipped all the host of heaven] All the *stars* and *planets*, but particularly the *sun* and the *moon*.

Verse 4. Built altars] He placed idolatrous altars even in the *temple*.

Verse 6. Made his son pass through the fire] Consecrated him to Moloch.

Observed times] ^{nw} ^w *veonen*; he practiced *divination* by the *clouds*; by observing their course at particular times, their different kinds, contrary directions, &c., &c.

Used enchantments] ^{vj} ^{nw} *venichesh*; he used incantations, spells, and charms.

Dealt with familiar spirits] *bwa hc* [w *veasah ob*; he was a necromancer; was a raiser of spirits, whom he endeavoured to press into his service; he had a *Python*.

And wizards] *μyn* [*dyw veyiddeonim*; the *knowing ones*, the *white witches*, and such like; see on ¹⁸⁹²⁶**Leviticus 19:26-31**, where most of these terms are particularly explained and illustrated.

Verse 7. He set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house] Every one may see that *Asherah* here must signify an *idol*, and not a *grove*; and for the proof of this see the observations at the end of the chapter. See Clarke “¹²¹²⁶**2 Kings 21:26**”.

Verse 8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel] Had they been faithful to God’s testimonies they never had gone into captivity, and should even at this day have been in possession of the promised land.

Verse 9. Seduced them to do more evil] He did all he could to pervert the national character, and totally destroy the worship of the true God; and he succeeded.

Verse 10. The Lord spake by-the prophets] The prophets were Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Isaiah. These five following verses contain the sum of what these prophets spoke. It is said that Isaiah not only prophesied in those days, but also that he was put to death by Manasseh, being *sawn asunder by a wooden saw*.

Verse 12. Both his ears shall tingle.] *hnl xt titstsahnah*; something expressive of the *sound* in what we call, from the same sensation, the *tingling* of the ears. This is the consequence of having the ears suddenly pierced with a *loud* and *shrill noise*; the ears seem to *ring* for some time after. The prophets spoke to them vehemently, so that the sound seemed to be continued even when they had left off speaking. This was a faithful and solemn testimony.

Verse 13. The line of Samaria] I will treat Jerusalem as I have treated Samaria. Samaria was taken, pillaged, ruined, and its inhabitants led into captivity; Jerusalem shall have the same *measure*.

And the plummet of the house of Ahab] The house of Ahab was totally destroyed, and not a man of his race left to sit upon the throne of Israel: so shall it be done to the house or royal family of Judah; they shall be all

finally destroyed, and not a man of their race shall any more sit on the throne of Judah; nor shall Judah have a throne to sit on. Thus Jerusalem shall have the same *weight* as well as the same *measure* as Samaria, because it has copied all the abominations which brought that kingdom to total destruction.

I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish] The Vulgate translates this clause as follows: *Delebo Jerusalem, sicut deleri solent tabulæ*; “I will blot out Jerusalem as tablets are wont to be blotted out.” This is a metaphor taken from the ancient method of writing: they traced their letters with a stile on boards thinly spread over with wax; for this purpose one end of the stile was *sharp*, the other end blunt and smooth, with which they could rub out what they had written, and so smooth the place and spread back the wax, as to render it capable of receiving any other word. Thus the Lord had written down Jerusalem, never intending that its name or its memorial should be blotted out. It was written down *The Holy City, The City of the Great King*; but now God turns the stile and blots this out; and the Holy Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, is no longer to be found! This double use of the stile is pointed out in this ancient *enigma*:—

*Deuteronomy summo planus; sed non ego planus in imo:
Versor utrinque manu, diverso et munere fungor:
Altera pars revocat, quicquid pars altera fecit.*

*“I am flat at the top, but sharp at the bottom;
I turn either end, and perform a double function:
One end destroys what the other end has made.”*

But the idea of *emptying out* and *wiping a dish* expresses the same meaning equally well. Jerusalem shall be emptied of all its wealth, and of all its inhabitants, as truly as a dish turned up is emptied of all its contents; and *it shall be turned upside down*, never to be filled again. This is true from that time to the present hour. Jerusalem is the *dish turned upside down*, the *tablet blotted out* to the present day! How great are God’s mercies! and how terrible his judgments!

Verse 14. I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance] One part (the *ten tribes*) was already forsaken, and carried into captivity; the *remnant* (the *tribe of Judah*) was now about to be forsaken.

Verse 16. Shed innocent blood very much] Like the deities he worshipped, he was *fierce* and *cruel*; an unprincipled, merciless tyrant: he slew innocent people and God's prophets.

Verse 17. Now the rest of the acts] In ^{<4331>}**2 Chronicles 33:11**, &c., we read that the Assyrians took Manasseh, bound him with fetters, and took him to Babylon; that there he repented, sought God, and was, we are not told how, restored to his kingdom; that he fortified the city of David, destroyed idolatry, restored the worship of the true God, and died in peace.

In ^{<4318>}**2 Chronicles 33:18, 19**, *His prayer unto God* is particularly mentioned. What is called his prayer, is found in the *Apocrypha*, just before the first book of the *Maccabees*. There are some good sentiments in it; but whether it be that which was made by Manasseh is more than can be proved. Even the Romish Church have not received it among the canonical books.

Are **they not written]** There are several particulars referred to here, and in ^{<4331>}**2 Chronicles 33:11-19**, which are not found in any chronicles or books which now remain, and what the *books of the seers* were, mentioned in Chronicles, we cannot tell.

Verse 18. In the garden of his own house] It was probably a burying-place made for his own family, for Amon his son is said to be buried in the same place, ^{<22126>}**2 Kings 21:26**.

Verse 19. He reigned two years in Jerusalem.] The remark of the rabbins is not wholly without foundation, that the sons of those kings who were idolaters, and who succeeded their fathers, seldom reigned more than *two* years. So *Nadab*, the son of Jeroboam, ^{<11525>}**1 Kings 15:25**; *Elah*, the son of Baasha, ^{<1168>}**1 Kings 16:8**; *Ahaziah*, the son of Ahab, ^{<12251>}**1 Kings 22:51**; and *Amon*, the son of Manasseh, as mentioned here, ^{<22119>}**2 Kings 21:19**.

Verse 23. The servants of Amon conspired] What their reason was for slaying their king we cannot tell. It does not seem to have been a popular act, for the people of the land rose up and slew the *regicides*. We hear enough of this man when we hear that he was as bad as his father was in the beginning of his reign, but did not copy his father's repentance.

Verse 26. The garden of Uzza] The family sepulchre or burying-place.

IT is said ^{<122108>}**2 Kings 21:3, 7**, that “Manasseh made a grove; and he set a graven image of the grove,” &c. **hc[rva hrvah l sp ta mcyw vaiyasem eth pesel haasherah, asher asah**: “And he put the graven image of *Asherah*, which he had made,” into the house.

Asherah, which we translate *grove*, is undoubtedly the name of an idol; and probably of one which was carved out of wood.

R. S. Jarchi, on ^{<011218>}**Genesis 12:3**, says, “that **hrva asherah** means a *tree* which was worshipped by the Gentiles;” like as the oak was worshipped by the ancient Druids in Britain.

Castel, in *Lex. Hept.* sub voce **rva**, defines **hrva asherah** thus, *Simulacrum ligneum Astartæ dicatum*; “A wooden image dedicated to *Astrate* or *Venus*.”

The *Septuagint* render the words by **αλσος**; and *Flamminius Nobilis*, on ^{<122104>}**2 Kings 23:4**, says *Rursus notat Theodoretus το αλσος esse Astartem et Venerem, et ab aliis interpretibus dictum Ashatroth*; i.e. “Again *Theodoret* observes, **αλσος** is *Astarte* and *Venus*; and by other interpreters called *Ashtaroth*.”

The *Targum* of *Ben Uzziel*, on ^{<18705>}**Deuteronomy 7:5**, **hw[dgt mhryvaw vaasheyrethem tegaddeun**; i.e., “Their groves shall ye cut down”—translates the place thus, **hwxxqt whydgys ynl yaw veilaney sigedeyhon tekatsetsun**; “And the oaks of their adoration shall ye cut down.”

From the above it is pretty evident that *idols*, not *groves*, are generally intended where **hrva asherah** and its derivatives are used.

Here follow proofs:—

In ^{<122316>}**2 Kings 23:6**, it is said that “Josiah brought out the grove from the house of the Lord.” This translation seems very absurd; for what *grove* could there be in the temple? There was none planted there, nor was there room for any. The plain meaning of **hwhy tybm hrvh ta axyw vaiyotse eth haasherah mibbeyth Jehovah**, is, “And he brought out the (goddess) *Asherah* from the house of the Lord, and burnt it,” &c.

That this is the true meaning of the place appears farther from ^{<122307>}**2 Kings 23:7**, where it is said, “He broke down the houses of the sodomites,”

($\mu\upsilon\upsilon\delta\eta\eta$ *hakkedeshim*, of the *whoremongers*.) “where the women wove hangings for the grove” ($hrval \mu\upsilon\tau b$ *bottim laasherah*, “houses or shrines for *Asherah*.”) Similar perhaps to those which the silversmiths made for *Diana*, ^{<41924>}**Acts 19:24**. It is rather absurd to suppose that the women were employed in making curtains to encompass a *grove*.

The *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions countenance the interpretation I have given above. In ^{<12236>}**2 Kings 23:6**, the former says, “He cast out the idol, [Syriac] *dechlotho*, from the house of the Lord;” and in ^{<12237>}**2 Kings 23:7**: “He threw down the houses, [Syriac] *dazoine*, of the prostitutes; and the women who wove garments, [Syriac] *ledechlotho*, for the idols which were there.” The *Arabic* is exactly the same.

From the whole it is evident that *Asherah* was no other than *Venus*; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of *whoremongers* and *prostitutes*.

I deny not that there were groves consecrated to idolatrous worship among the Gentiles, but I am sure that such are not intended in the above-cited passages; and the text, in most places, reads better when understood in this way.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 22

Josiah succeeds Amon his father, and reigns thirty-one years, 1, 2. He repairs the breaches of the temple, 3-7. Hilkiah finds the book of the law in the temple, 8. It is read by Shaphan the scribe, before the king and his servants, 9, 10. The king, greatly affected, sends to inquire of Huldah the prophetess, 11-13. She delivers an afflictive prophecy concerning the evils that were coming upon the land, 14-17. But promises Josiah that these evils shall not come in his time, 18-20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 22

Verse 1. Josiah was eight years old] He was one of the best, if not the best, of all the Jewish kings since the time of David. He began well, continued well, and ended well.

Verse 4. That he may sum the silver] As Josiah began to seek the Lord as soon as he began to reign, we may naturally conclude that the worship of God that was neglected and suppressed by his father, was immediately restored; and the people began their accustomed offerings to the temple. Ten years therefore had elapsed since these offerings began; no one had, as yet, taken account of them; nor were they applied to the use for which they were given, viz., the repairing the breaches of the temple.

Verse 8. I have found the book of the law] Was this the *autograph* of Moses? It is very probable that it was, for in the parallel place; ~~1434~~ **2**

Chronicles 34:14, it is said to be the book of *the law of the Lord by Moses*. It is supposed to be that part of Deuteronomy (xxviii., xxix., xxx., and xxxi.,) which contains the renewing of the covenant in the plains of Moab, and which contains the most terrible invectives against the corrupters of God's word and worship.

The rabbins say that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon endeavored to destroy all the copies of the law, and this only was saved by having been buried under a paving-stone. It is scarcely reasonable to suppose that this was the *only copy* of the law that was found in Judea; for even if we grant that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon had endeavored to destroy all the books of the law, yet they could not have succeeded so as to destroy the whole. Besides, Manasseh endeavoured after his conversion to *restore* every part of the

Divine worship, and in this he could have done nothing without the Pentateuch; and the succeeding reign of Amon was too short to give him opportunity to undo every thing that his penitent father had reformed. Add to all these considerations, that in the time of Jehoshaphat teaching from the law was *universal* in the land, for he set on foot an *itinerant ministry*, in order to instruct the people fully: for “he sent to his princes to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them he sent Levites and priests; and they went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught the people, having the book of the Lord with them;” see ^{<4170>}**2 Chronicles 17:7-9**. And if there be any thing wanting to show the improbability of the thing, it must be this, that the transactions mentioned here took place in the *eighteenth* year of the reign of Josiah, who had, from the time he came to the throne, employed himself in the restoration of the pure worship of God; and it is not likely that during these eighteen years he was without a copy of the Pentateuch. The simple fact seems to be this, that this was the original of the covenant renewed by Moses with the people in the plains of Moab, and which he ordered to be laid up beside the ark; (^{<0512>}**Deuteronomy 31:26**;) and now being unexpectedly found, its *antiquity*, the *occasion* of its being made, the present *circumstances* of the people, the *imperfect state* in which the reformation was as yet, after all that had been done, would all concur to produce the effect here mentioned on the mind of the pious Josiah.

Verse 14. Went unto Huldah the prophetess] This is a most singular circumstance: At this time *Jeremiah* was certainly a prophet in Israel, but it is likely he now dwelt at *Anathoth*. and could not be readily consulted; *Zephaniah* also prophesied under this reign, but probably he had not yet *begun*; *Hilkiah* was *high priest*, and the priest’s lips should retain knowledge. *Shaphan* was *scribe*, and must have been conversant in sacred affairs to have been at all fit for his office; and yet *Huldah*, a prophetess, of whom we know nothing but by this circumstance, is consulted on the meaning of the book of the law; for the secret of the Lord was neither with *Hilkiah* the high priest, *Shaphan* the scribe, nor any other of the *servants* of the *king*, or *ministers* of the *temple*! We find from this, and we have many facts in all ages to corroborate it, that a pontiff, a pope, a bishop, or a priest, may, in some cases, not possess the true knowledge of God; and that a simple woman, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the Divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them.

On this subject Dr. Priestley in his note makes the following very judicious remark:—"It pleased God to distinguish several women with the spirit of prophecy, as well as other great attainments, to show that in his sight, and especially in things of a *spiritual nature*, there is no essential pre-eminence in the male sex, though in some things the female be subject to the male."

Verse 17. My wrath shall be kindled] The decree is gone forth; Jerusalem shall be delivered into the hands of its enemies; the people will revolt more and more; towards them longsuffering is useless; the *wrath of God is kindled, and shall not be quenched*. This was a dreadful message.

Verse 19. Because thine heart was tender] Because thou hast feared the Lord, and trembled at his word and hast wept before me, I have heard thee, so far that these evils shall not come upon the land in thy lifetime.

Verse 20. Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace] During thy life *none of these calamities* shall fall upon the people, and no *adversary* shall be permitted to disturb the peace of Judea, and thou shalt die in peace with God. But was Josiah *gathered to the grave in peace*? Is it not said, ^{<1273>}**2 Kings 23:29**, that Pharaoh-nechoh slew him at Megiddo? On this we may remark, that the Assyrians and the Jews were at peace; that Josiah might feel it his duty to oppose the Egyptian king going against his friend and ally, and endeavour to prevent him from passing through his territories; and that in his endeavours to oppose him he was mortally wounded at Megiddo: but certainly was not killed *there*; for his servants put him in his second chariot and brought him to *Jerusalem*, where he died in peace. See ^{<4824>}**2 Chronicles 35:24**. So that, however we take the place here, we shall find that the words of Huldah were true: he *did die in peace, and was gathered to his fathers in peace*.

FROM the account in the above chapter, where we have this business detailed, we find that Josiah should not have meddled in the quarrel between the Egyptian and the Assyrian kings, for God had given a commission to the former against the latter; but he did it in error, and suffered for it. But this unfortunate end of this pious man does not at all impeach the credit of Huldah; he died in peace in his own kingdom. He died in peace with God, and there was neither war nor desolation in his land: nor did the king of Egypt proceed any farther against the Jews during his life; for he said, "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee, but the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste: forbear then from meddling with God, who

is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, and hearkened not to the words of Nechoh, from the mouth of God. And the archers shot at King Josiah: and the king said, Bear me away, for I am sore wounded. And his servants took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot, and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died and was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers;”

<4352> **2 Chronicles 35:21-24.**

It seems as if the Egyptian king had brought his troops by sea to Cæsarea, and wished to cross the Jordan about the southern point of the sea of Tiberias, that he might get as speedily as possible into the Assyrian dependencies; and that he took this road, for *God*, as he said, *had commanded him to make haste.*

II KINGS

CHAPTER 23

Josiah reads in the temple to the elders of Judah, the priests, the prophets, and the people, the book of the covenant which had been found, 1, 2. He makes a covenant, and the people stand to it, 3. He destroys the vessels of Baal and Asherah, and puts down the idolatrous priests; breaks down the houses of the sodomites, and the high places; defiles Topheth; takes away the horses of the sun; destroys the altars of Ahaz; breaks in pieces the images; and breaks down and burns Jeroboam's altar at Beth-el, 4-15. Fulfils the word of the prophet, who cried against the altar at Beth-el, 16-18. Destroys the high places in Samaria, slays the idolatrous priests, and celebrates a great passover, 19-23; and puts away all the dealers with familiar spirits, &c., 24. His eminent character; he is mortally wounded at Megiddo, and buried at Jerusalem, 25-30. Jehoahaz reigns in his stead, and does evil in the sight of the Lord, 31, 32. Is dethroned by Pharaoh-nechoh; and Eliakim, his brother, called also Jehoiakim, made king in his stead; the land is laid under tribute by the king of Egypt, and Jehoiakim reigns wickedly, 33-37.

NOTES ON CHAP. 23

Verse 2. The king went up into the house of the Lord] Here is another very singular circumstance. The high priest, scribes, priest, and prophets, are gathered together, with all the elders of the people, and the king himself reads the book of the covenant which had been lately found! It is strange that either the high priest, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, or some other of the prophets, who were certainly there present, did not read the sacred book! It is likely that the king considered himself a *mediator* between God and them, and therefore read and made the covenant.

Verse 3. Stood by a pillar] *He stood, dwm[h l [al haammud, "upon the stairs or pulpit."* This is what is called the *brazen scaffold* or *pulpit* which Solomon made, and on which the kings were accustomed to stand when they addressed the people. See ^{<4063>} **2 Chronicles 6:13**, and the parallel places.

Made a covenant] This was expressed, 1. In *general*. To walk after Jehovah; to have no gods besides him. 2. To take his law for the regulation of their *conduct*. 3. In *particular*. To bend their whole heart and soul to the observance of it, so that, they might not only have *religion* without, but,

piety within. To this *all the people stood up*, thus giving their consent, and binding themselves to obedience.

Verse 4. The priests of the second order] These were probably such as supplied the place of the high priest when he was prevented: from fulfilling the functions of his office. So the Chaldee understood the place *the sagan of the high priests*. But the words may refer to those of the *second course* or *order* established by David: though it does not appear that those *orders* were now in use, yet the *distinction* was continued even to the time of our Lord. We find the *course of Abia*, which was the *eighth*, mentioned ^{<1016>}**Luke 1:5**; where see the note. See Clarke “**Lu 1:5**”.

All the vessels] These *had* been used for idolatrous purposes; the king is now to destroy them; for although no longer used in this way, they might, if permitted to remain, be an incentive to idolatry at a future time.

Verse 5. The idolatrous priests] **pyrmkh** *hakkemarim*. Who these were is not well known. The *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*, call them the *priests* simply, *which the kings of Judah had ordained*. Probably they were an *order* made by the idolatrous kings of Judah, and called *kemarim*, from **rmk** *camar*, which signifies to be *scorched*, *shrivelled together*, *made dark*, or *black*, because their business was constantly to attend *sacrificial fires*, and probably they were *black garments*; hence the Jews in derision call Christian ministers *kemarim*, because of their *black clothes and garments*. Why we should *imitate*, in our *sacerdotal dress*, those priests of Baal, is strange to think and hard to tell.

Unto Baal, to the sun] Though *Baal* was certainly the *sun*, yet here they are distinguished; Baal being worshipped under different forms and attributes, *Baal-peor*, *Baal-zephon*, *Baal-zebub*, &c.

The planets] **twl zm** *mazzaloth*. The *Vulgate* translates this *the twelve signs*, i.e., the *zodiac*. This is as likely as any of the other conjectures which have been published relative to this word. See a similar word ^{<1870>}**Job 37:9; 38:32**.

Verse 6. He brought out the grove] He brought out the idol Asherah. See Clarke at the end of “^{<1213>}**2 Kings 21:26**”.

Upon the graves of the children of the people.] I believe this; means the burial-place of the *common people*.

Verse 7. The houses of the sodomites] We have already often met with these **μyvdq** *kedeshim* or *consecrated persons*. The word implies all kinds of *prostitutes*, as well as *abusers of themselves with mankind*.

Wove hangings for the grove.] For *Asherah*; curtains or tent coverings for the places where the rites of the impure goddess were performed. See Clarke at the end of “^{<R2136>}2 Kings 21:26”.

Verse 8. The gate of Joshua] The place where he, as governor of the city, heard and decided causes. Near this we find there were public altars, where sometimes the true God, at other times false gods, were honoured.

Verse 9. The priests of the high places came not up] As these priests had offered sacrifices on the *high places*, though it was to the *true God*, yet they were not thought proper to be employed *immediately* about the temple; but as they were acknowledged to belong to the *priesthood*, they had a right to their support; therefore a portion of the tithes, offerings, and unleavened bread, shew-bread, &c., was appointed to them for their support. Thus they were treated as *priests* who had some infirmity which rendered it improper for them to minister at the altar. See ^{<R2117>}Leviticus 21:17, &c., and particularly ^{<R2122>}Leviticus 21:22, 23.

Verse 10. He defiled Topheth] St. Jerome says that Topheth was a fine and pleasant place, well watered with fountains, and adorned with gardens. The valley of the son of Hinnom, or *Gehenna*, was in one part; here it appears the sacred rites of Molech were performed, and to this all the filth of the city was carried, and perpetual fires were kept up in order to consume it. Hence it has been considered a *type of hell*; and in this sense it is used in the New Testament.

It is here said that Josiah *defiled* this place *that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire*. He destroyed the *image* of Molech, and so polluted the place where he stood, or his temple, that it was rendered in every way abominable. The rabbins say that Topheth had its name from **pt** *toph*, a *drum*, because instruments of this kind were used to drown the cries of the children that were put into the burning arms of Molech, to be scorched to death. This may be as true as the following definition: “Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, was a place near Jerusalem, where the filth and offal of the city were thrown, and where a constant fire was kept up to consume the wretched remains of executed criminals. It was a human shambles, a public chopping-block, where the

arms and legs of men and women were quartered off by thousands.”
Query, On what *authority* do such descriptions rest?

Verse 11. The horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.] *Jarchi* says that those who adored the *sun* had *horses* which they mounted every morning to go out to meet the sun at his rising. Throughout the East the *horse*, because of his *swiftness* and *utility*, was dedicated to the *sun*; and the Greeks and Romans feigned that the *chariot of the sun* was drawn by *four horses*-Pyræis, Eous, Æthon, and Phlegon. See **Clarke’s note on** “<121>**2 Kings 2:11**”.

Whether these were *living* or *sculptured* horses, we cannot tell; the latter is the more *reasonable* supposition.

Verse 12. On the top of the upper chamber] Altars built on the *flat roof* of the house. Such altars were erected to the *sun, moon, stars, &c.*

Verse 13. Mount of corruption] This, says *Jarchi*, following the *Chaldee*, was the mount of *Olives*, for this is the mount **hj vmh hammishchah**, of *unction*; but because of the idolatrous purposes for which it was used, the Scripture changed the appellation to the mount **tyj vmh hammashchith**, of *corruption*.

Ashtoreth the abomination, &c.] See on <11107>**1 Kings 11:7**.

Verse 14. Filled their places with the bones of men.] This was allowed to be the utmost defilement to which any thing could be exposed.

Verse 16. And as Josiah turned himself] This verse is much more *complete* in the *Septuagint*, and in the *Hexaplar Syriac* version at Paris. I shall give the whole, making a distinction where, in those versions, any thing is added: “And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar, and polluted it: according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed [when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the feast. And turning about, *he* cast his eyes on the sepulchre of the man of God] who proclaimed these words.” See <1132>**1 Kings 13:2**, where these things were predicted, and see the notes there.

Verse 17. What title is that] There was either a *stone*, an *image*, or an *inscription* here: the old prophet no doubt took care to have the place made sufficiently remarkable.

Verse 18. The prophet that came out of Samaria] See Clarke's note on "^{<1113>}1 Kings 13:32".

Verse 19. That were in the cities of Samaria] *Israel* had now no king; and Josiah, of the blood royal of Judah, had certainly a direct right to the kingdom; he had, at this time, an especial commission from God, to reform every abuse through the whole land—all that ground that was given by the Lord as an inheritance to the *twelve sons* of Jacob. Therefore he had every right to carry his plans of reformation into the Samaritan states.

Verse 20. Slew all the priests] The lives of these, as corrupters of the people, were forfeited to the law.

Verse 22. Surely there was not holden such a passover] Not one on purer principles, more *heartily* joined in by the *people* present, more *literally consecrated*, or more *religiously* observed. The words do not apply to the number present, but to the manner and spirit. See the *particulars* and *mode* of celebrating this passover in ^{<1480>}2 Chronicles 35:1-18.

Verse 24. The workers with familiar spirits] See on ^{<1220>}2 Kings 21:5.

And the images] The *teraphim*. See Clarke's note on "^{<0131>}Genesis 31:19".

Verse 25. Like unto him was there no king] Perhaps not one from the time of David; and, morally considered, including David himself, none ever sat on the Jewish throne, so truly exemplary in his own conduct, and so thoroughly zealous in the work of God. David was a *greater* but not a *better* man than Josiah.

Verse 26. The Lord turned not] It was of no use to try this fickle and radically depraved people any longer. They were respited merely during the life of Josiah.

Verse 29. In his days Pharaoh-nechoh] See the note on the death of Josiah, See Clarke "^{<1220>}2 Kings 22:20".

Nechoh is supposed to have been the son of *Psammitichus*, king of Egypt; and the Assyrian king, whom he was now going to attack, was the famous *Nabopolassar*. What the cause of this quarrel was, is not known. Some say it was on account of *Carchemish*, a city on the Euphrates, belonging to the Egyptians, which Nabopolassar had seized. See ^{<2300>}Isaiah 10:9.

Verse 30. Dead from Megiddo] The word **tm meth** should here be considered as a participle, *dying*, for it is certain he was not *dead*: he was *mortally wounded* at Megiddo, was carried in a *dying state* to Jerusalem, and *there* he *died* and was buried. See ^{<14824>}**2 Chronicles 35:24**.

Herodotus, lib. i., c. 17, 18, 25, and lib. ii. 159, appears to refer to the same war which is here mentioned. He says that Nechoh, in the *sixth* year of his reign, went to attack the king of Assyria at *Magdolum*, gained a complete victory, and took *Cadytis*. Usher and others believe that *Magdolum* and *Megiddo* were the same place. The exact place of the battle seems to have been *Hadadrimmon*, in the valley of Megiddo, for there Zechariah tells us ^{<12121>}**2 Kings 12:11**, was the great mourning for Josiah. Compare this with ^{<14824>}**2 Chronicles 35:24, 25**.

Verse 31. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old] This was not the *eldest* son of Josiah, which is evident from this, that he was *twenty-three* years old when he began to reign; that he reigned but *three months*; that, being dethroned, his brother *Eliakim* was put in his place, who was then *twenty-five years* of age. Eliakim, therefore, was the eldest brother; but Jehoahaz was probably raised to the throne by the people, as being of a more active and martial spirit.

Verse 33. Nechoh put him in bands] But what was the cause of his putting him in bands? It is conjectured, and not without reason, that *Jehoahaz*, otherwise called *Shallum*, raised an army, met Nechoh in his return from *Carchemish*, fought, was beaten, taken prisoner, put in chains; and taken into Egypt, where he died; ^{<12234>}**2 Kings 23:34**, and ^{<14221>}**Jeremiah 22:11, 12**. *Riblah* or *Diblath*, the place of this battle, was probably a town in *Syria*, in the land or district of *Hamath*.

Verse 34. Turned his name to Jehoiakim] These names are precisely the same in signification: ELIAKIM is *God shall arise*; JEHOIAKIM, *Jehovah shall arise*; or, the *resurrection of God*; the *resurrection of Jehovah*. That is, God's rising again to show his power, justice, &c. The *change* of the name was to show Nechoh's *supremacy*, and that Jehoiakim was only his *vassal* or *viceroys*. Proofs of this mode of changing the name, when a person of greater power put another in office under himself, may be seen in the case of *Mattaniah*, changed into *Zedekiah*; *Daniel*, *Mishael*, *Hananiah*, and *Azariah*, into *Belteshazzar*, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and

Abed-nego; and *Joseph* into *Zaphnath-paaneah*. See ^{<27016>}**Daniel 1:6, 7**; ^{<01445>}**Genesis 41:45**.

Verse 35. Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold] Nechoh had placed him there as viceroy, simply to *raise* and *collect his taxes*.

Every one according to his taxation] That is, each was assessed in proportion to his property: that was the principle avowed: but there is reason to fear that this bad king was not governed by it.

Verse 37. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord] He was a most unprincipled and oppressive tyrant. *Jeremiah* gives us his character at large, ^{<12213>}**2 Kings 22:13-19**, to which the reader will do well to refer. *Jeremiah* was at that time in the land, and was an eyewitness of the abominations of this cruel king.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 24

Nebuchadnezzar brings Jehoiakim under subjection; who, after three years, rebels, 1. Bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, invade the land, 2-4. Jehoiakim dies, and Jehoiachin his son reigns in his stead, 5, 6. The Babylonians overcome the Egyptians, 7. Nebuchadnezzar takes Jehoiachin and his family, and all his treasures, and those of the temple, and all the chief people and artificers, and carries them to Babylon, 8-16; and makes Mattaniah, brother of Jehoiakim, king, who reigns wickedly, and rebels against the king of Babylon, 17-20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 24

Verse 1. Nebuchadnezzar] This man, so famous in the writings of the prophets, was son of *Nabopolassar*. He was sent by his father against the rulers of several provinces that had revolted; and he took Carchemish, and all that belonged to the Egyptians, from the Euphrates to the Nile. Jehoiakim, who was tributary to Nechoh king of Egypt, he attacked and reduced; and obliged to become tributary to Babylon. At the end of *three* years he revolted; and then a mixed army, of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, was sent against him, who ravaged the country, and took *three thousand and twenty-three* prisoners, whom they brought to Babylon, ^{<2428>}**Jeremiah 52:28**.

Verse 2. According to the word of the Lord] See what *Huldah* predicted, ^{<12216>}**2 Kings 22:16**, and see chap. 14, 15, and 16 of Jeremiah.

Verse 6. Jehoiachin his son] As this man reigned only *three months* and was a mere *vassal* to the Babylonians, his reign is scarcely to be reckoned; and therefore Jeremiah says of Jehoiakim, *He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David*, ^{<2430>}**Jeremiah 36:30**, for at that time it belonged to the king of Babylon, and Jehoiachin was a mere viceroy or governor. Jehoiachin is called *Jechonias* in ^{<4011>}**Matthew 1:11**.

Verse 7. The king of Egypt came not again] He was so crushed by the Babylonians that he was obliged to confine himself within the limits of his own states, and could no more attempt any conquests. The text tells us how much he had lost by the Babylonians. See on ^{<12401>}**2 Kings 24:1**.

Verse 8. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old] He is called *Jeconiah*, ^{<13B16>}**1 Chronicles 3:16**, and *Coniah*, ^{<2223>}**Jeremiah 22:24**. In ^{<1489>}**2 Chronicles 36:9**, he is said to be only *eight* years of age, but this must be a mistake; for we find that, having reigned only *three* months, he was carried captive to Babylon, and there he had *wives*; and it is very improbable that a child between *eight* and *nine* years of age could have *wives*; and of such a tender age, it can scarcely be said that, as a *king*, he *did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*. The place in Chronicles must be corrupted.

That he was a grievous offender against God, we learn from ^{<2224>}**Jeremiah 22:24**, which the reader may consult; and in the man's punishment, see his crimes.

Verse 12. Jehoiachin-went out] He saw that it was useless to attempt to defend himself any longer; and he therefore surrendered himself, hoping to obtain better terms.

Verse 13. He carried out thence all the treasures] It has been remarked that Nebuchadnezzar spoiled the temple *three times*.-1. He took away the greater part of those treasures when he took Jerusalem under Jehoiakim: and the vessels that he took then he placed in the temple of his god, ^{<2012>}**Daniel 1:2**. And these were the vessels which Belshazzar *profaned*, ^{<2012>}**Daniel 5:2**; and which *Cyrus* restored to *Ezra*, when he went up to Jerusalem, ^{<1502>}**Ezra 1:2**. It was at this time that he took Daniel and his companions. 2. He took the remaining part of those vessels, and broke them or cut them in pieces, when he came the second time against Jerusalem under Jeconiah; as is mentioned here, ^{<12413>}**2 Kings 24:13**. 3. He pillaged the temple, took away all the brass, the brazen pillars, brazen vessels, and vessels of gold and silver, which he found there when he besieged Jerusalem under Zedekiah, ^{<12513>}**2 Kings 25:13-17**.

Verse 14. He carried away all Jerusalem] That is, all the chief men, the nobles, and artificers. Among these there were of mighty men *seven thousand*; of craftsmen and smiths, *one thousand*.

Verse 17. Made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead] He was the son of Josiah, and brother to Jehoiakim.

Changed his name to Zedekiah.] See Clarke's note on "^{<12234>}**2 Kings 23:34**".

Verse 19. He did-evil] How astonishing is this! not one of them takes warning by the judgments of God, which fell on their sinful predecessors.

Verse 20. Zedekiah rebelled] This was in the eighth year of his reign: and he is strongly reprov'd for having violated the oath he took to the king of Babylon: see ^{<43613>}**2 Chronicles 36:13**. This was the filling up of the measure of iniquity; and now the wrath of God descends upon this devoted king, city, and people, to the uttermost. See the catastrophe in the next chapter.

II KINGS

CHAPTER 25

Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem; it is taken, after having been sorely reduced by famine, &c.; and Zedekiah, endeavouring to make his escape, is made prisoner, his sons slain before his eyes; then, his eyes being put out, he is put in chains and carried to Babylon, 1-7. Nebuzar-adan burns the temple, breaks down the walls of Jerusalem, and carries away the people captives, leaving only a few to till the ground, 8-12. He takes away all the brass, and all the vessels of the temple, 13-17. Several of the chief men and nobles found in the city, he brings to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, who puts them all to death, 18-21. Nebuchadnezzar makes Gedaliah governor over the poor people that were left, against whom Ishmael rises, and slays him, and others with him; on which the people in general, fearing the resentment of the Chaldeans, flee to Egypt, 22-26. Evil-merodach, king of Babylon, releases Jehoiachin out of prison, treats him kindly, and makes him his friend, 27-30.

NOTES ON CHAP. 25

Verse 1. In the ninth year of his reign] Zedekiah, having revolted against the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar, wearied with his treachery, and the bad faith of the Jews, determined the total subversion of the Jewish state. Having assembled a numerous army, he entered Judea on the *tenth day* of the *tenth month* of the *ninth year* of the reign of Zedekiah; this, according to the computation of Archbishop Usher, was on *Thursday, January 30, A.M. 3414*, which was a *sabbatical year*: whereon the men of Jerusalem hearing that the Chaldean army was approaching, proclaimed liberty to their servants; see ^{<2408>}**Jeremiah 34:8-10**, according to the law, ^{<0210>}**Exodus 21:2**; ^{<0510>}**Deuteronomy 15:1, 2, 12**: for Nebuchadnezzar, marching with his army against Zedekiah, having wasted all the country, and taken their strong holds, except Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem, came against the latter with all his forces. See ^{<2401>}**Jeremiah 34:1-7**. On the very day, as the same author computes, the siege and utter destruction of Jerusalem were revealed to Ezekiel the prophet, then in Chaldea, under the type of a *seething pot*; and his wife died in the evening, and he was charged not to mourn for her, because of the extraordinary calamity that had fallen upon the land. See ^{<2410>}**Ezekiel 24:1, 2, &c.**

Jeremiah, having predicted the same calamities, ^{<2401>}**Jeremiah 34:1-7**, was by the command of Zedekiah shut up in prison, ^{<2401>}**Jeremiah 32:1-16**.

Pharaoh Hophra, or *Vaphris*, hearing how Zedekiah was pressed, and fearing for the safety of his own dominions should the Chaldeans succeed against Jerusalem, determined to succour Zedekiah. Finding this, the Chaldeans raised the siege of Jerusalem, and went to meet the Egyptian army, which they defeated and put to flight. *Joseph. Antiq.*, lib. 10, cap. 10. In the interim the Jews, thinking their danger was passed, reclaimed their servants, and put them again under the yoke; ^{<4308>}**Jeremiah 34:8**, &c.

Verses 2. - 4. And the city was besieged, &c.] Nebuchadnezzar, having routed the Egyptian army, returned to Jerusalem, and besieged it so closely that, being reduced by famine, and a breach made in the wall, the Chaldeans entered it on the *ninth day of the fourth month*, (*Wednesday, July 27.*) Zedekiah and many others endeavouring to make their escape by night.

Verse 5. The army of the Chaldeans pursued] Zedekiah was taken, and brought captive to Riblah in Syria, where Nebuchadnezzar then lay, who ordered his sons to be slain before his face, and then put out his eyes; and having loaded him with chains, sent him to Babylon, (see ^{<4308>}**Jeremiah 39:4, 7; 52:7, 11.**) thus fulfilling the prophetic declarations, that *his eyes should see the eyes of the king of Babylon*, ^{<4304>}**Jeremiah 32:4; 34:3**; but *Babylon he should not see*, though he was to die there; ^{<4623>}**Ezekiel 12:13**.

Verse 8. In the fifth month] On the *seventh day of the fifth month*, (answering to *Wednesday, Aug. 24.*) Nebuzar-adan made his entry into the city; and having spent two days in making provision, on the *tenth day* of the same month, (*Saturday, Aug. 27.*) he set fire to the temple and the king's palace, and the houses of the nobility, and burnt them to the ground; ^{<4523>}**Jeremiah 52:13**, compared with ^{<4308>}**Jeremiah 39:8**. Thus the temple was destroyed in the *eleventh year* of Zedekiah, the *nineteenth* of Nebuchadnezzar, the *first* of the XLVIIIth Olympiad, in the *one hundred and sixtieth* current year of the era of Nabonassar, *four hundred and twenty-four years three months and eight days* from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone.

Verse 10. Brake down the walls] In the same *fifth month*, ^{<4008>}**Jeremiah 1:3**, the walls of Jerusalem being razed to the ground, all that were left in the city, and all that had fled over formerly to Nebuchadnezzar, and all the common people of the city, with all the king's treasures, those of the nobles, and the whole furniture of the temple, did Nebuzar-adan carry off

to Babylon. See ^{<4308>} **Jeremiah 39:8, 9; 52:14, 23.** And thus was Judah carried away out of her own land, *four hundred and sixty-eight* years after David began to reign over it; from the division of the ten tribes *three hundred and eighty-eight* years; and from the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, *one hundred and thirty-four* years; A.M. 3416, and before Christ *five hundred and ninety*. And thus ends what is called the *fifth age of the world*. See USHER'S *Annals*.

Verse 18. Seraiah the chief priest-Zephaniah] The person who is here called the *second priest* was what the Jews call *sagan*, a sort of *deputy*, who performed the functions of the high priest when he was prevented by any infirmity from attending the temple service. See on ^{<12204>} **2 Kings 23:4.**

Verse 19. And five men of them that were in the king's presence] These were principal counsellors, and confidential officers.

In ^{<4625>} **Jeremiah 52:25**, it is said he took *seven* men who were near the king's person, and the same number is found in the *Arabic* in this place; and the *Chaldee* has no less than *fifty men*; but in Jeremiah this, as well as all the rest of the *versions*, reads seven. Probably they were no more than *five* at first, or, perhaps Jeremiah reckoned with the five the *officer* that was set *over the men of war*, and the *principal scribe* of the host mentioned here, as *two* with the five; and thus made *seven* in the whole.

Verse 21. The king of Babylon smote them] He had, no doubt, found that these had counselled Zedekiah to revolt.

Verse 22. Made Gedaliah-ruler.] This was no *regal* dignity; he was only a sort of *hind* or *overseer*, appointed to regulate the *husbandmen*.

Verse 23. To Mizpah] This is said to have been situated on the *east* side of the river Jordan, and most contiguous to Babylon, and therefore the most proper for the residence of Gedaliah, because nearest to the place from which he was to receive his instructions. But there were several places of this name, and we do not exactly know where *this* was situated.

Verse 24. Gedaliah sware to them] He pledged himself in the most solemn manner to encourage and protect them.

Verse 25. Smote Gedaliah] This was at an entertainment which Gedaliah had made for them; see ^{<34401>} **Jeremiah 41:1**, &c. He was not content with this murder, but slew fourscore more, who were coming with offerings to

the temple, and took several as prisoners, among whom were some of the *king's daughters*; and set off to go to the Ammonites: but Johanan, the son of Careah, hearing of these outrages, raised a number of men, and pursued Ishmael upon which Ishmael's prisoners immediately turned and joined Johanan; so that *he*, and *eight* of his accomplices, with difficulty escaped to the Ammonites. See ^{<2410>}**Jeremiah 41:1**, &c. *Baalis*, king of the *Ammonites*, had sent Ishmael to murder Gedaliah; and of this he was informed by Johanan, who offered to prevent it, by taking away the life of this murderer. But Gedaliah could not believe that he harboured such foul designs, and therefore took no precaution to save his life. See ^{<2403>}**Jeremiah 40:13-16**.

Verse 27. And it came to pass] Nebuchadnezzar was just now dead; and Evil-merodach, his son, succeeded to the kingdom in the *thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin*: and on the *seven and twentieth day* [Jeremiah says *five* and *twentieth*] of the *twelfth month* of that year, (*Tuesday, April 15, A.M. 3442.*) he brought the long captivated Jewish king out of prison; treated him kindly; and ever after, during his life, reckoned him among the king's friends. This is particularly related in the four last verses of the book of *Jeremiah*.

Verse 30. A continual allowance given him of the king] He lived in a *regal style*, and had his *court* even in the city of Babylon, being supplied with every requisite by the munificence and friendship of the king. In about *two years* after this, Evil-merodach was slain in a conspiracy; and it is supposed that Jehoiachin, then about fifty-eight years of age, fell with his friend and protector. Thus terminates the catastrophe of the Jewish kings, people, and state; the consequence of unheard-of rebellions and provocations against the Majesty of heaven.

MASORETIC NOTES ON THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF KINGS

We have already seen that the Hebrews consider these two books as one:—

The NUMBER of verses in both is *one thousand five hundred and thirty-four*.

MASORETIC SECTIONS, *thirty-five*.

MIDDLE VERSE, ^{<12106>}**1 Kings 21:6**. *And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me, &c.*