

**JOHN WESLEYS NOTES  
ON THE WHOLE BIBLE  
THE OLD TESTAMENT**  
by John Wesley

**PREFACE**

**ABOUT ten years ago I was prevailed upon to publish Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament. When that work was begun, and indeed when it was finished, I had no design to attempt anything farther of the kind. Nay, I had a full determination, Not to do it, being throughly fatigued with the immense labour (had it been only this; tho' this indeed was but a small part of it,) of writing twice over a Quarto book containing seven or eight hundred pages.**

**2. But this was scarce published before I was importuned to write Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament. This importunity I have withstood for many years. Over and above the deep conviction I had, of my insufficiency for such a work, of my want of learning, of understanding, of spiritual experience, for an undertaking more difficult by many degrees, than even writing on the New Testament, I objected, That there were many passages in the Old, which I did not understand myself, and consequently could not explain to others, either to their satisfaction, or my own. Above all, I objected the want of time: Not only as I have a thousand other employments, but as my Day is near spent, as I am declined into the vale of years. And to this day it appears to me as a dream, a thing almost incredible, that I should be entering upon a work of this kind, when I am entering into the sixty-third year of my age.**

**3. Indeed these considerations, the last particular, still appear to me of such weight, that I cannot entertain a thought of composing a body of Notes on the whole Old Testament. All the question remaining was, "Is there extant any Exposition which is worth abridging?" Abundantly less time will suffice for this and less abilities of every kind. In considering this question, I soon turned my thought on the well-known Mark Henry. He is allowed by all competent Judges, to have been a person of strong understanding, of various learning, of solid piety, and much experience in the ways of God. And his exposition is generally clear and intelligible, the thoughts being expressed in plain words: It is also found, agreeable to the tenor of scripture, and to the analogy of faith. It is frequently full, giving a sufficient explication of the passages which require explaining. It is in many parts deep, penetrating farther into the inspired writings than most other comments do. It does not entertain us with vain speculations, but is practical throughout: and usually spiritual too teaching us how to worship God, not in form only, but in spirit and in truth.**

4. But it may be reasonably inquired, "If Mark Henry's exposition be not only plain, sound, full, and deep, but practical, yea and spiritual too, what need is there of any other? Or how is it possible to mend This? to alter it for the better?" I answer, very many who have This, have no need of any other: particularly those who believe (what runs thro' the whole work and will much recommend it to them) the doctrine of absolution, irrespective, unconditional Predestination. I do not advise these, much to trouble themselves about any other exposition than Mark Henry's: this is sufficient, thro' the assistance of the Blessed Spirit, to make private Christians wise unto salvation, and (the Lord applying his word) thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

5. But then it is manifest on the other hand, every one cannot have this exposition. It is too large a purchase: there are thousands who would rejoice to have it; but it bears too high a price. They have not Six Guineas (the London price) in the world, perhaps from one year's end to another. And if they sometimes have, yet they have it not to spare; they need it for other occasions. How much soever therefore they desire so valuable a work, they must content themselves to go without it.

6. But suppose they have money enough to purchase, yet they have not time enough to read it: the size is as unsurmountable an objection as the price itself. It is not possible for men who have their daily bread to earn by the sweat of their brows, who generally are confined to their work, from six in the morning 'till six in the evening, to find leisure for reading over six folios, each containing seven or eight hundred pages. These therefore have need of some other exposition than Mark Henry's. As excellent as it is in its kind, it is not for their purpose; seeing they have neither money to make the purchase, nor time to read it over.

7. It is very possible then to mend this work valuable as it is, at least by shortening it. As the grand objection to it is the size, that objection may be removed: and they who at present have no possibility of profiting by it, while it is of so great a bulk and so high a price, may then enjoy part at least of the same advantage with those who have more money and more leisure. Few I presume that have the whole and leisure to read it, will concern themselves with an extract. But those who cannot have all, will (for the present at least) be glad to have a part. And they who complain it is too short, may yet serve themselves of it, 'till they can procure the long work.

8. But I apprehend this valuable work may be made more valuable still, by making it plainer as well as shorter. Accordingly what is here extracted from it, (which indeed makes but a small part of the following volumes) is considerably plainer than the original. In order to this not only all the Latin sentences occasionally interspersed are omitted, but whatever phrases or words are not so

intelligible to persons of no education. Those only who frequently and familiarly converse with men that are wholly uneducated, can conceive how many expressions are mere Greek to them, which are quite natural to those who have any share of learning. It is not by reading, much less by musing alone, that we are enabled to suit our discourse to common capacities. It is only by actually talking with the vulgar, that we learn to talk in a manner they can understand. And unless we do this, what do we profit them? Do we not lose all our labour? Should we speak as angels, we should be of no more use to them, than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

9. Nay I apprehend what is extracted from Mark Henry's work, may in some sense be more sound than the original. Understand me right: I mean more conformable to that glorious declaration, God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth. And let it not be objected, That the making any alteration with regard to a point of doctrine, is a misrepresentation of the author's sense, and consequently an injury done to him. It would so, is an alteration were made of his words, so as to make them bear a different meaning; or if any words were recited as His, which he did not write. But neither of these is the case. Nothing is recited here as written by him which he did not write. Neither is any construction put upon his words, different from his own. But what he wrote in favour of Particular Redemption, is totally left out. And of this I here give express notice to the reader once for all.

10. Again. It certainly possible that a work abundantly shorter than Mark Henry's may nevertheless be considerably fuller, in some particulars. There are many words which he passes over without any explanation at all; as taking it for granted that the reader already knows the meaning of them. But this is a supposition not to be made; it is an entire mistake. For instance: What does a common man know of an Omer, or a Hin? "Why Moses explains his own meaning: "An Omer is the tenth part of an ephah." True; but what does the honest man know of an ephah? Just as much as of an Omer. I suppose that which led Mark Henry into these omissions, which otherwise are unaccountable, was the desire of not saying what others had said before, Mark Pool in particular. This is easily gathered from his own words, "Mark Pool's English Annotations are of admirable use; especially for "the explaining of scripture phrases, opening the sense and clearing "of difficulties. I have industriously declined as much as I could what "is to be found there." I wish he had not. Or at least that he had given us the same sense in other words. Indeed he adds, "Those "and other annotations are most easy to be consulted upon occasion." Yes by those that have them: but that is not the case with the generality of Mark Henry's readers. And besides they may justly expect that so large a comment will leave them no occasion to consult others.

11. It is possible likewise to penetrate deeper into the meaning of some scriptures than Mark Henry has done. Altho' in general he is far from being a superficial writer, yet he is not always the same. Indeed if he had, he must have been more than man, considering the vastness of his work. It was scarce possible for any human understanding, to furnish out such a number of folios, without sinking sometimes into trite reflections and observations, rather lively than deep. A stream that runs wide and covers a large tract of land, will be shallow in some places. If it had been confined within a moderate channel, it might have flowed deep all along.

12. Nay, it cannot be denied, that there may be an exposition of scripture more closely practical, than some parts of Mark Henry's are, as well as more spiritual. Even his exposition of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, where one would naturally have expected to find a compleat scheme of Christian practice, does not answer that expectation. Nor do I remember that he has any where given us, a satisfactory account of Spiritual Religion, of the kingdom of God within us, the fruit of Christ dwelling and reigning in the heart. This I hoped to have found particularly in the exposition of our Lord's Sermon upon the mount. But I was quite disappointed of my hope. It was not by any means what I expected.

13. I do not therefore intend the following Notes for a bare abridgment of Mark Henry's exposition. Far from it: I not only omit much more than nineteen parts out of twenty of what he has written, but make many alterations and many additions, well nigh from the beginning to the end. In particular, I every where omit the far greater part of his inferences from and improvement of the chapter. They who think these the most valuable part of the work, may have recourse to the author himself. I likewise omit great part of almost every note, the sum of which is retained: as it seems to be his aim, to say as much, whereas it is mine to say as little as possible. And I omit abundance of quaint sayings and lively antitheses; as, "God feeds his birds. Shall he not feed his babes!" "Pharaoh's princes: his pimps rather." Indeed every thing of this kind which occurred I have left quite untouched: altho' I am sensible these are the very flowers which numberless readers admire; nay which many, I doubt not, apprehend to be the chief beauties of the book. For that very reason I cannot but wish, they had never had a place therein; for this is a blemish, which is exceeding catching: he that admires it, will quickly imitate it. I used once to wonder, whence some whom I greatly esteem, had so many pretty turns in preaching. But when I read Mark Henry, my wonder ceased. I saw, they were only copying after him: altho' many of them probably without designing or even adverting to it. They generally consulted his exposition of their text, and frequently just before preaching. And hence little witticisms and a kind of archness insensibly stole upon them, and took place of that strong, manly eloquence, which they would otherwise have

learned from the inspired writers.

14. With regard to alterations, in what I take from Mark Henry, I continually alter hard words into easy, and long sentences into short. But I do not knowingly alter the sense of any thing I extract from him, I only endeavour in several places, to make it more clear and determinate. I have here and there taken the liberty of altering a word in the text. But this I have done very sparingly, being afraid of venturing too far; as being conscious of my very imperfect acquaintance with the Hebrew tongue. I have added very largely from Mark Pool, as much as seemed necessary for common readers, in order to their understanding those words or passages, which Mark Henry does not explain. Nay, from the time that I had more maturely considered Mark Pool's annotations on the Bible, (which was soon after I had gone thro' the book of Genesis) I have extracted far more from him than from Mark Henry: it having been my constant method, after reading the text, first to read and weigh what Mark Pool observed upon every verse, and afterwards to consult Mark Henry's exposition of the whole paragraph. In consequence of this, instead of short additions from Mark Pool to supply what was wanting in Mark Henry, (which was my first design) I now only make extracts from Mark Henry, to supply so far as they are capable, what was wanting in Mark Pool. I say, so far as they are capable: for I still found it needful to add to both such farther observations, as have from time to time occurred to my own mind in reading or thinking on the scriptures, together with such as I have occasionally extracted from other authors.

15. Every thinking man will now easily discern my design in the following sheets. It is not, to write sermons, essays or set discourses, upon any part of scripture. It is not to draw inferences from the text, or to shew what doctrines may be proved thereby. It is this: To give the direct, literal meaning, of every verse, of every sentence, and as far as I am able, of every word in the oracles of God. I design only, like the hand of a dial, to point every man to This: not to take up his mind with something else, how excellent soever: but to keep his eye fixt upon the naked Bible, that he may read and hear it with understanding. I say again, (and desire it may be well observed, that none may expect what they will not find) It is not my design to write a book, which a man may read separate from the Bible: but barely to assist those who fear God, in hearing and reading the bible itself, by shewing the natural sense of every part, in as few and plain words as I can.

16. And I am not without hopes, that the following notes may in some measure answer this end, not barely to unlettered and ignorant men, but also to men of education and, learning: (altho' it is true, neither these nor the Notes on the New Testament were principally designed for Them.) Sure I am, that tracts wrote in the most plain and simple manner, are of infinitely more service to

me, than those which are elaborated with the utmost skill, and set off with the greatest pomp of erudition.

17. But it is no part of my design, to save either learned or unlearned men from the trouble of thinking. If so, I might perhaps write Folios too, which usually overlay, rather than help the thought. On the contrary, my intention is, to make them think, and assist them in thinking. This is the way to understand the things of God; Meditate thereon day and night; So shall you attain the best knowledge; even to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. And this knowledge will lead you, to love Him, because he hath first loved us: yea, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. Will there not then be all that mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus? And in consequence of this, while you joyfully experience all the holy tempers described in this book, you will likewise be outwardly holy as He that hath called you is holy, in all manner of conversation.

18. If you desire to read the scripture in such a manner as may most effectually answer this end, would it not be advisable,

1. To set apart a little time, if you can, every morning and evening for that purpose?

2. At each time if you have leisure, to read a chapter out of the Old, and one out of the New Testament: is you cannot do this, to take a single chapter, or a part of one?

3. To read this with a single eye, to know the whole will of God, and a fixt resolution to do it? In order to know his will, you should,

4. Have a constant eye to the analogy of faith; the connection and harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, the New Birth, Inward and Outward Holiness.

5. Serious and earnest prayer should be constantly used, before we consult the oracles of God, seeing "scripture can only be understood thro' the same Spirit whereby "it was given." Our reading should likewise be closed with prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts.

6. It might also be of use, if while we read, we were frequently to pause, and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our hearts, and lives. This would furnish us with matter of praise, where we found God had enabled us to conform to his blessed will, and matter of humiliation and prayer, where we were conscious of having fallen short. And whatever light you then receive, should be used to the uttermost, and that immediately. Let there be no delay. Whatever you resolve, begin to execute the first

moment you can. So shall you find this word to be indeed the power of God unto present and eternal salvation. EDINBURGH, April 25, 1765.

## NOTES ON

### THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED GENESIS

THE Holy Bible, or Book, is so called by way of eminency, as it is the best book that ever was written. The great things of God's law and gospel are here written, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread farther, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages, more pure and entire than possibly they could be by tradition. That part of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, contains the acts and monuments of the church from the creation, almost to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which was about four thousand years: the truths then revealed, the laws enacted, the prophecies given, and the chief events that concerned the church. This is called a testament or covenant, because it was a declaration of the will of God concerning man in a federal way, and had its force from the designed death of the great testator, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii, 8 - 'Tis called the Old Testament with relation to the New, which doth not cancel, but crown and perfect it, by bringing in that better hope which was typified and foretold in it. This part of the Old Testament we call the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. These books were, probably, the first that ever were written; for we have no mention of any writing in all the book of Genesis, nor 'till God bid Moses write, Exod. xvii, 14. and set him his copy in the writing of the ten commandments upon the tables of stone. However, we are sure these books are the most ancient writings now extant. The first of these, which we call Genesis, Moses probably wrote in the wilderness, after he had been in the mount with God. And as he framed the tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable fabric of this book, according to the pattern shewed him in the mount: into which it is better to resolve the certainty of the things herein contained, than into any tradition which possibly might be handed down to the family of Jacob.-Genesis is a name borrowed from the Greek: it signifies the original or generation: fitly is this book so called, for it is a history of originals; the creation of the world, the entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, and especially the planting of the church, and the state of it in its early days. 'Tis also a history of generations, the generations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c. - The beginning of the New Testament is called Genesis too, Matt. i, 1, the book of the Genesis, or generation of Jesus Christ. Lord, open our eyes, that we may see the wondrous things both of thy law and gospel!

I The holy scripture, being designed to maintain and improve

natural religion, to repair the decays of it. and supply the defects of it, since the fall, lays down at first this principle of the unclouded light of nature: That this world was, in the beginning of time, created by a Being of infinite wisdom and power, who was himself before all time, and all worlds. And the first verse of the Bible gives us a surer and better, a more satisfying and useful knowledge of the origin of the universe, than all the volumes of the philosophers. We have three things in this chapter.

I. A general idea of the work of creation, ver. 1, 2.

II. A particular account of the several days work, distinctly and in order. The creation of light, the first day, ver. 3-5. Of the firmament, the second day, ver. 6-8. Of the sea, the earth and its fruits, the third day, ver. 9-13. Of the lights of heaven, the fourth day, ver. 14-19. Of the fish and fowl, the fifth day, ver. 20-23. Of the beasts, ver. 24, 25. Of man, ver. 26-28. And food for both, the sixth day, ver. 29, 30.

III. The review and approbation of the whole work, ver. 31.

1. Observe here.

1. The effect produced, The heaven and the earth - That is, the world, including the whole frame and furniture of the universe. But 'tis only the visible part of the creation that Moses designs to give an account of. Yet even in this there are secrets which cannot be fathomed, nor accounted for. But from what we see of heaven and earth, we may infer the eternal power and godhead of the great Creator. And let our make and place, as men, mind us of our duty, as Christians, which is always to keep heaven in our eye, and the earth under our feet. Observe

2. The author and cause of this great work, God. The Hebrew word is Elohim; which

(1.) seems to mean The Covenant God, being derived from a word that signifies to swear.

(2.) The plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The plural name of God in Hebrew, which speaks of him as many, tho' he be but one, was to the Gentiles perhaps a favour of death unto death, hardening them in their idolatry; but it is to us a favour of life unto life, confirming our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, which, tho' but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. Observe

3. The manner how this work was effected; God created, that is, made it out of nothing. There was not any pre-existent matter out of which the world was produced. The fish and fowl were indeed produced out of the waters, and the beasts and man out of the earth; but that earth and those waters were made out of nothing. Observe



4. When this work was produced; In the beginning - That is, in the beginning of time. Time began with the production of those beings that are measured by time. Before the beginning of time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits eternity. Should we ask why God made the world no sooner, we should but darken counsel by words without knowledge; for how could there be sooner or later in eternity?

2. Where we have an account of the first matter, and the first Mover.

1. A chaos was the first matter. 'Tis here called the earth, (tho' the earth, properly taken, was not made 'till the third day, ver. 10) because it did most resemble that which was afterwards called earth, a heavy unwieldy mass. 'Tis also called the deep, both for its vastness, and because the waters which were afterwards separated from the earth were now mixed with it. This mighty bulk of matter was it, out of which all bodies were afterwards produced. The Creator could have made his work perfect at first, but by this gradual proceeding he would shew what is ordinarily the method of his providence, and grace. This chaos, was without form and void. Tohu and Bohu, confusion and emptiness, so those words are rendered, Isaiah xxxiv, 11. 'Twas shapeless, 'twas useless, 'twas without inhabitants, without ornaments; the shadow or rough draught of things to come. To those who have their hearts in heaven, this lower world, in comparison of the upper, still appears to be confusion and emptiness. And darkness was upon the face of the deep-God did not create this darkness, (as he is said to create the darkness of affliction, Isaiah xlv, 7.) for it was only the want of light.

2. The Spirit of God was the first Mover; He moved upon the face of the waters - He moved upon the face of the deep, as the hen gathereth her chicken under her wings, and hovers over them, to warm and cherish them, Matt. xxiii, 37 as the eagle stirs up her nest, and fluttereth over her young, ('tis the same word that is here used) Deut. xxxii, 11.

3, 4, 5. We have here a farther account of the first day's work. In which observe,

1. That the first of all visible beings which God created was light, the great beauty and blessing of the universe: like the first-born, it doth, of all visible beings, most resemble its great parent in purity and power, brightness and beneficence.

2. That the light was made by the word of God's power; He said, Let there be light - He willed it, and it was done; there was light - Such a copy as exactly answered the original idea in the eternal mind.

3. That the light which God willed, he approved of. God saw the

light, that it was good - 'Twas exactly as he designed it; and it was fit to answer the end for which he designed it.

4. That God divided the light from the darkness - So put them asunder as they could never be joined together: and yet he divided time between them, the day for light, and the night for darkness, in a constant succession. Tho' the darkness was now scattered by the light, yet it has its place, because it has its use; for as the light of the morning befriends the business of the day, so the shadows of the evening befriend the repose of the night. God has thus divided between light and darkness, because he would daily mind us that this is a world of mixtures and changes. In heaven there is perpetual light, and no darkness; in hell utter darkness, and no light: but in this world they are counter-changed, and we pass daily from one to another; that we may learn to expect the like vicissitudes in the providence of God.

5. That God divided them from each other by distinguishing names. He called the light Day, and the darkness he called night - He gave them names as Lord of both. He is the Lord of time, and will be so 'till day and night shall come to an end, and the stream of time be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity.

6. That this was the first day's work, The evening and the morning were the first day - The darkness of the evening was before the light of the morning, that it might set it off, and make it shine the brighter. See note at "ver. 3"

6, 7, 8. We have here an account of the second day's work, the creation of the firmament. In which observe,

1. The command of God: Let there be a firmament - An expansion; so the Hebrew word signifies, like a sheet spread, or a curtain drawn out. This includes all that is visible above the earth, between it and the third heavens, the air, its higher, middle, and lower region, the celestial globe, and all the orbs of light above; it reaches as high as the place where the stars are fixed, for that is called here the firmament of heaven, ver. 14, 15, and as low as the place where the birds fly for that also is called the firmament of heaven, ver. 20.

2. The creation of it: and God made the firmament.

3. The design of it; to divide the waters from the waters-That is, to distinguish between the waters that are wrapt up in the clouds, and those that cover the sea; the waters in the air, and those in the earth.

4. The naming it: He called the firmament Heaven - 'Tis the visible heaven, the pavement of the holy city. The height of the heavens should mind us of God's supremacy, and the infinite distance that is between us and him; the brightness of the heavens,

and their purity, should mind us of his majesty, and perfect holiness; the vastness of the heavens, and their encompassing the earth, and influence upon it, should mind us of his immensity and universal providence. See note at "ver. 6"

9, 10, 11, 12, 13. The third day's work is related in these verses; the forming the sea and the dry land, and making the earth fruitful. Hitherto the power of the Creator had been employed about the upper part of the visible world; now he descends to this lower world, designed for the children of men, both for their habitation, and their maintenance. And here we have an account of the fitting of it for both; the building of their house, and the spreading of their table. Observe,

1. How the earth was prepared to be a habitation for man by the gathering of the waters together, and making the dry land appear. Thus, instead of that confusion which was, when earth and water were mixed in one great mass; now there is order, by such a separation as rendered them both useful.

(1.) The waters which covered the earth were ordered to retire, and to gather into one place, viz. those hollows which were fitted for their reception. The waters thus lodged in their proper place, he called Seas; for though they are many, in distant regions, yet either above ground or under ground, they have communication with each other, and so they are one, and the common receptacle of waters, into which all the rivers run.

(2.) The dry land was made to appear, and emerge out of the waters, and was called Earth. Observe,

2. How the earth was furnished for the support of man, ver. 11, 12. Present provision was made, by the immediate products of the earth, which, in obedience to God's command, was no sooner made but it became fruitful. Provision was likewise made for time to come, by the perpetuating of the several species of vegetables, every one having its seed in itself after its kind, that during the continuance of man upon the earth, food might be fetched out of the earth, for his use and benefit. See note at "ver. 9"

14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. This is the history of the fourth day's work, the creating the sun, moon and stars. Of this we have an account,

1. In general, verse 14, 15. where we have,

(1.) The command given concerning them. Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven - God had said, ver. 3 Let there be light, and there was light; but that was, as it were, a chaos of light, scattered and confused; now it was collected and made into several luminaries, and so rendered both more glorious and more serviceable.

(2.) The use they were intended to be of to this earth. [1.] They must be for the distinction of times, of day and night, summer and winter. [2.] They must be for the direction of actions: they are for

signs of the change of weather, that the husbandman may order his affairs with discretion. They do also give light upon the earth - That we may walk John xi, 9 and work John ix, 4 according as the duty of every day requires. The lights of heaven do not shine for themselves, nor for the world of spirits above, they need them not; but they shine for us, and for our pleasure and advantage. Lord, what is man that he should be thus regarded, Psalm viii, 3, 4.

2. In particular, ver. 16, 17, 18, The lights of heaven are the sun, moon and stars, and these all are the work of God's hands.

(1.) The sun is the greatest light of all, and the most glorious and useful of all the lamps of heaven; a noble instance of the Creator's wisdom, power and goodness, and an invaluable blessing to the creatures of this lower world.

(2.) The moon is a lesser light, and yet is here reckoned one of the greater lights, because, though in regard of its magnitude, it is inferior to many of the stars, yet in respect of its usefulness to the earth, it is more excellent than they.

(3.) He made the stars also - Which are here spoken of only in general; for the scriptures were written not to gratify our curiosity, but to lead us to God. Now, these lights are said to rule, ver. 16, 18; not that they have a supreme dominion as God has, but they are rulers under him. Here the lesser light, the moon, is said to rule the night; but Psalm lxxxvi, 9 the stars are mentioned as sharers in that government, the moon and stars to rule by night. No more is meant, but that they give light, Jer. xxxi, 35. The best and most honourable way of ruling is, by giving light, and doing good. See note at "ver. 14"

20, 21, 22, 23. Each day hitherto hath produced very excellent beings, but we do not read of the creation of any living creature till the fifth day. The work of creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but advanced gradually from that which was less excellent, to that which was more so. 'Twas on the fifth day that the fish and fowl were created, and both out of the waters. Observe,

1. The making of the fish and fowl at first. ver. 20, 21 God commanded them to be produced, he said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly - The fish in the waters, and the fowl out of them. This command he himself executed, God created great whales, &c.-Insects which are as various as any species of animals, and their structure as curious, were part of this day's work, some of them being allied to the fish, and others to the fowl. Notice is here taken of the various species of fish and fowl, each after their kind; and of the great numbers of both that were produced, for the waters brought forth abundantly; and in particular of great whales the largest of fishes, whose bulk and strength, are remarkable proofs of the power and greatness of the Creator. Observe, 2, The blessing of them in order to their continuance. Life is a wasting thing, its strength is not the strength

of stones; therefore the wise Creator not only made the individuals, but provided for the propagating of the several species, ver. 22. God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply - Fruitfulness is the effect of God's blessing, and must be ascribed to it; the multiplying of the fish and fowl from year to year, is still the fruit of this blessing here. See note at "ver. 20"

24, 25. We have here the first part of the sixth day's work. The sea was the day before replenished with fish, and the air with fowl; and this day are made the beasts of the earth, cattle, and the creeping things that pertain to the earth. Here, as before,

1. The Lord gave the word: he said, Let The earth bring forth - Let these creatures come into being upon the earth, and out of it, in their respective kinds.

2. He also did the work; he made them all after their kind - Not only of divers shapes, but of divers natures, manners, food, and fashions: In all which appears the manifold wisdom of the Creator. See note at "ver. 2"

26, 27, 28. We have here the second part of the sixth day's work, the creation of man, which we are in a special manner concerned to take notice of. Observe,

1. That man was made last of all the creatures, which was both an honour and a favour to him: an honour, for the creation was to advance from that which was less perfect, to that which was more so and a favour, for it was not fit he should be lodged in the palace designed for him, till it was completely fitted and furnished for his reception. Man, as soon as he was made, had the whole visible creation before him, both to contemplate, and to take the comfort of.

2. That man's creation was a mere signal act of divine wisdom and power, than that of the other creatures. The narrative of it is introduced with solemnity, and a manifest distinction from the rest. Hitherto it had been said, Let there be light, and Let there be a firmament: but now the word of command is turned into a word of consultation, Let us make man - For whose sake the rest of the creatures were made. Man was to be a creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and spirit, heaven and earth must be put together in him, and he must be allied to both worlds. And therefore God himself not only undertakes to make, but is pleased so to express himself, as if he called a council to consider of the making of him; Let us make man - The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it, and concur in it; because man, when he was made, was to be dedicated and devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

3. That man was made in God's image, and after his likeness; two words to express the same thing. God's image upon man, consists,

1. In his nature, not that of his body, for God has not a body, but that of his soul. The soul is a spirit, an intelligent, immortal spirit, an active spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of spirits, and the soul of the world.

2. In his place and authority. Let us make man in our image, and let him have dominion. As he has the government of the inferior creatures, he is as it were God's representative on earth. Yet his government of himself by the freedom of his will, has in it more of God's image, than his government of the creatures.

3. And chiefly in his purity and rectitude. God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv, 24; Colossians iii, 10. He was upright, Eccl. vii, 29. He had an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God. His understanding saw divine things clearly, and there were no errors in his knowledge: his will complied readily and universally with the will of God; without reluctance: his affections were all regular, and he had no inordinate appetites or passions: his thoughts were easily fixed to the best subjects, and there was no vanity or ungovernableness in them. And all the inferior powers were subject to the dictates of the superior. Thus holy, thus happy, were our first parents, in having the image of God upon them. But how art thou fallen, O son of the morning? How is this image of God upon man defaced! How small are the remains of it, and how great the ruins of it! The Lord renew it upon our souls by his sanctifying grace!

4. That man was made male and female, and blessed with fruitfulness. He created him male and female, Adam and Eve: Adam first out of earth, and Eve out of his side. God made but one male and one female, that all the nations of men might know themselves to be made of one blood, descendants, from one common stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another. God having made them capable of transmitting the nature they had received, said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth - Here he gave them,

1. A large inheritance; replenish the earth, in which God has set man to be the servant of his providence, in the government of the inferior creatures, and as it were the intelligence of this orb; to be likewise the collector of his praises in this lower world, and lastly, to be a probationer for a better state.

2. A numerous lasting family to enjoy this inheritance; pronouncing a blessing upon them, in the virtue of which, their posterity should extend to the utmost corners of the earth, and continue to the utmost period of time.

5. That God gave to man a dominion over the inferior creatures,

over fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air - Though man provides for neither, he has power over both, much more over every living thing that moveth upon the earth - God designed hereby to put an honour upon man, that he might find himself the more strongly obliged to bring honour to his Maker. See note at "ver. 26"

29, 30. We have here the third part of the sixth day's work, which was not any new creation, but a gracious provision of food for all flesh, Psalm 1xxxvi, 25.-Here is,

1. Food provided for man, ver. 29. herbs and fruits must be his meat, including corn, and all the products of the earth. And before the earth was deluged, much more before it was cursed for man's sake, its fruits no doubt, were more pleasing to the taste, and more strengthening and nourishing to the body.

2. Food provided for the beasts, ver. 30. Doth God take care of oxen? Yes, certainly, he provides food convenient for them; and not for oxen only that were used in his sacrifices, and man's service, but even the young lions and the young ravens are the care of his providence, they ask and have their meat from God. See note at "ver. 29"

31. We have here the approbation and conclusion of the whole work of creation. Observe,

1. The review God took of his work, he saw every thing that he had made - So he doth still; all the works of his hands are under his eye; he that made all sees all.

2. The complacency God took in his work. When we come to review our works we find to our shame, that much has been very bad; but when God reviewed his, all was very good.

1. It was good. Good, for it is all agreeable to the mind of the creator. Good, for it answers the end of its creation. Good, for it is serviceable to man, whom God had appointed Lord of the visible creation. Good, for it is all for God's glory; there is that in the whole visible creation which is a demonstration of God's being and perfections, and which tends to beget in the soul of man a religious regard to him.

2. It was very good - Of each day's work (except the second) it was said that it was good, but now it is very good. For,

1. Now man was made, who was the chief of the ways of God, the visible image of the Creator's glory,

2. Now All was made, every part was good, but all together very good. The glory and goodness, the beauty and harmony of God's works both of providence and grace, as this of creation, will best

appear when they are perfected.

**3. The time when this work was concluded. The evening and the morning were the sixth day - So that in six days God made the world. We are not to think but that God could have made the world in an instant: but he did it in six days, that he might shew himself a free agent, doing his own work, both in his own way, and in his own time; that his wisdom, power and goodness, might appear to us, and be meditated upon by us, the more distinctly; and that he might set us an example of working six days, and resting the seventh. And now as God reviewed his work, let us review our meditations upon it; let us stir up ourselves, and all that is within us, to worship him that made the, heaven, earth, and sea, and the fountains of waters. All his works in all places of his dominion bless him, and therefore bless thou the Lord, O my soul.**

**II This chapter is an appendix to the history of the creation, explaining, and enlarging on that part of it, which relates immediately to man. We have in it,**

**I. The institution of the sabbath, which was made for man, to further his holiness and comfort, ver. 1-3.**

**II. A more particular account of man's creation, as the summary of the whole work, ver. 4-7.**

**III. A description of the garden of Eden, and the placing of man in it under the obligations of a law and covenant, ver. 8-17.**

**IV. The creation of the woman, her marriage to the man, and the institution of the ordinance of marriage, ver. 18-25.**

**1, 2, 3. We have here,**

**(1.) The settlement of the kingdom of nature, in God's resting from the work of creation, ver. 1, 2. Where observe,**

**1. That the creatures made both in heaven and earth, are the hosts or armies of them, which speaks them numerous, but marshalled, disciplined, and under command. God useth them as his hosts for the defense of his people, and the destruction of his enemies.**

**2. That the heavens and the earth are finished pieces, and so are all the creatures in them. So perfect is God's work that nothing can be added to it or taken from it, Eccl iii, 14.**

**3. That after the end of the first six days, God ceased from all work of creation. He hath so ended his work, as that though in his providence he worketh hitherto, John v, 17. preserving and governing all the creatures, yet he doth not make any new species of creatures.**

**4. That the eternal God, tho' infinitely happy in himself, yet took a**



satisfaction in the work of his own hands. He did not rest as one weary, but as one well-pleased with the instances of his own goodness.

(2.) The commencement of the kingdom of grace, in the sanctification of the sabbath day, ver. 3. He rested on that day, and took a complacency in his creatures, and then sanctified it, and appointed us on that day to rest and take a complacency in the Creator; and his rest is in the fourth commandment made a reason for ours after six days labour. Observe,

1. That the solemn observation of one day in seven as a day of holy rest, and holy work, is the indispensable duty of all those to whom God has revealed his holy sabbaths.

2. That sabbaths are as ancient as the world.

3. That the sabbath of the Lord is truly honourable, and we have reason to honour it; honour it for the sake of its antiquity, its great author, and the sanctification of the first sabbath by the holy God himself, and in obedience to him, by our first parents in innocency. See note at "ver. 1"

4, 5, 6, 7. In these verses,

1. Here is a name given to the Creator, which we have not yet met with, Jehovah. The LORD in capital letters, is constantly used in our English translation, for Jehovah. This is that great and incommunicable name of God, which speaks his having his being of himself, and his giving being to all things. It properly means, He that was, and that is, and that is to come.

2. Further notice taken of the production of plants and herbs, because they were made to be food for man.

3. A more particular account of the creation of man, ver. 7. Man is a little world, consisting of heaven and earth, soul and body. Here we have all account of the original of both, and the putting of both together: The Lord God, the great fountain of being and power, formed man. Of the other creatures it is said, they were created and made; but of man, that he was formed, which notes a gradual process in the work with great accuracy and exactness. To express the creation of this new thing, he takes a new word: a word (some think) borrowed from the potter's forming his vessel upon the wheel. The body of man is curiously wrought. And the soul takes its rise from the breath of heaven. It came immediately from God; he gave it to be put into the body, Eccl xii, 7 as afterwards he gave the tables of stone of his own writing to be put into the ark. 'Tis by it that man is a living soul, that is, a living man. The body would be a worthless, useless carcase, if the soul did not animate it. See note at "ver. 4"

8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Man consisting of body and soul, a

body made out of the earth, and a rational immortal soul, we have in these verses the provision that was made for the happiness of both. That part of man, which is allied to the world of sense, was made happy, for he was put in the paradise of God; that part which is allied to the world of spirits was well provided for, for he was taken into covenant with God. Here we have,

1. A description of the garden of Eden, which was intended for the palace of this prince. The inspired penman in this history writing for the Jews first, and calculating his narratives from the infant state of the church, describes things by their outward sensible appearances, and leaves us, by farther discoveries of the divine light, to be led into the understanding of the mysteries couched under them. Therefore he doth not so much insist upon the happiness of Adam's mind, as upon that of his outward estate. The Mosaic history, as well as the Mosaic law, has rather the patterns of heavenly things, than the heavenly things themselves, Heb. ix, 23. Observe,

(1.) The place appointed for Adam's residence was a garden; not an ivory house. As clothes came in with sin, so did houses. The heaven was the roof of Adam's house, and never was any roof so curiously cieled and painted: the earth was his floor, and never was any floor so richly inlaid: the shadow of the trees was his retirement, and never were any rooms so finely hung: Solomon's in all their glory were not arrayed like them.

(2.) The contrivance and furniture of this garden was the immediate work of God's wisdom and power. The Lord God planted this garden, that is, he had planted it, upon the third day when the fruits of the earth were made. We may well suppose it to be the most accomplished place that ever the sun saw, when the All-sufficient God himself designed it to be the present happiness of his beloved creature.

(3.) The situation of this garden was extremely sweet; it was in Eden, which signifies delight and pleasure. The place is here particularly pointed out by such marks and bounds as were sufficient when Moses wrote, to specify the place to those who knew that country; but now it seems the curious cannot satisfy themselves concerning it. Let it be our care to make sure a place in the heavenly paradise, and then we need not perplex ourselves with a search after the place of the earthly paradise.

(4.) The trees wherewith this garden was planted. [1.] It had all the best and choicest trees in common with the rest of the ground. It was beautified with every tree that was pleasant to the sight - It was enriched with every tree that yielded fruit grateful to the taste, and useful to the body. But, [2.] It had two extraordinary trees peculiar to itself, on earth there were not their like.

1. There was the tree of life in the midst of the garden - Which was not so much a natural means to preserve or prolong life; but was chiefly intended to be a sign to Adam, assuring him of the continuance of life and happiness upon condition of his

perseverance in innocency and obedience.

2. There was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - So called, not because it had any virtue to beget useful knowledge, but because there was an express Revelation of the will of God concerning this tree, so that by it he might know good and evil. What is good? It is good not to eat of this tree: what is evil? To eat of this tree. The distinction between all other moral good and evil was written in the heart of man; but this, which resulted from a positive law, was written upon this tree. And in the event it proved to give Adam an experimental knowledge of good by the loss of it, and of evil by the sense of it.

(5.) The rivers wherewith this garden was watered, ver. 10-14. These four rivers, (or one river branched into four streams) contributed much both to the pleasantness and the fruitfulness of this garden. Hiddekel and Euphrates are rivers of Babylon. Havilah had gold and spices and precious stones; but Eden had that which was infinitely better, the tree of life, and communion with God.

2. The command which God gave to man in innocency, and the covenant he then took him into. Hither we have seen God; man's powerful Creator, and his bountiful benefactor; now he appears as his ruler and lawgiver. See note at "ver. 8"

16, 17. Thou shalt die - That is, thou shalt lose all the happiness thou hast either in possession or prospect; and thou shalt become liable to death, and all the miseries that preface and attend it. This was threatened as the immediate consequence of sin. In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die - Not only thou shalt become mortal, but spiritual death and the forerunners of temporal death shall immediately seize thee. See note at "ver. 17"

18, 19, 20. It is not good that man - This man, should be alone - Though there was an upper world of angels, and a lower world of brutes, yet there being none of the same rank of beings with himself, he might be truly said to be alone. And every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air God brought to Adam-Either by the ministry of angels, or by a special instinct that he might name them, and so might give a proof of his knowledge, the names he gave them being expressive of their inmost natures. See note at "ver. 18"

21, 22. This was done upon the sixth day, as was also the placing of Adam in paradise, though it be here mentioned after an account of the seventh day's rest: but what was said in general, chap. i, 27, that God made man male and female is more distinctly related here, God caused the sleep to fall on Adam, and made it a deep sleep, that so the opening of his side might be no grievance to him: while he knows no sin, God will take care he shall feel no pain. See note at "ver. 21"

23. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones - Probably it was revealed to Adam in a vision, when he was asleep, that this lovely creature, now presented to him, was a piece of himself and was to be his companion, and the wife of his covenant - In token of his acceptance of her, he gave her a name, not peculiar to her, but common to her sex; she shall be called woman, Isha, a She-man, differing from man in sex only, not in nature; made of man, and joined to man.

24. The sabbath and marriage were two ordinances instituted in innocency, the former for the preservation of the church, the latter for the preservation of mankind. It appears by Matt. xix, 4, 5, that it was God himself who said here, a man must leave all his relations to cleave to his wife; but whether he spake it by Moses or by Adam who spake, ver. 23 is uncertain: It should seem they are the words of Adam in God's name, laying down this law to all his posterity. The virtue of a divine ordinance, and the bonds of it, are stronger even than those of nature. See how necessary it is that children should take their parents consent with them in their marriage; and how unjust they are to their parents, as well as undutiful, if they marry without it; for they rob them of their right to them, and interest in them, and alienate it to another fraudulently and unnaturally.

25. They were both naked, they needed no cloaths for defense against cold or heat, for neither could be injurious to them: they needed none for ornament. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Nay, they needed none for decency, they were naked, and had no reason to be ashamed. They knew not what shame was, so the Chaldee reads it. Blushing is now the colour of virtue, but it was not the colour of innocency.

III The general contents of this chapter we have Rom. v, 12. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. More particularly, we have here,

I. The innocent tempted, ver. 1-5.

II. The tempted transgressing, ver. 6, 7, 8.

III. The transgressors arraigned, ver. 9, 10.

IV. Upon their arraignment convicted, ver. 11-13.

V. Upon their conviction sentenced, ver. 14-19.

VI. After sentence, reprieved, ver. 20, 21.

VII. Notwithstanding their reprieve, execution in part done, ver. 22-24, and were it not for the gracious intimations of redemption,

they and all their race had been left to despair.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. We have here an account of the temptation wherewith Satan assaulted our first parents, and which proved fatal to them. And here observe,

(1.) The tempter, the devil in the shape of a serpent. Multitudes of them fell; but this that attacked our first parents, was surely the prince of the devils. Whether it was only the appearance of a serpent, or a real serpent, acted and possessed by the devil, is not certain. The devil chose to act his part in a serpent, because it is a subtle creature. It is not improbable, that reason and speech were then the known properties of the serpent. And therefore Eve was not surprised at his reasoning and speaking, which otherwise she must have been.

(2.) That which the devil aimed at, was to persuade Eve to eat forbidden fruit; and to do this, he took the same method that he doth still.

1. He questions whether it were a sin or no, ver. 1,

2. He denies that there was any danger in it, ver. 4.

3. He suggests much advantage by it, ver. 5. And these are his common topics. As to the advantage, he suits the temptation to the pure state they were now in, proposing to them not any carnal pleasure, but intellectual delights.

1. Your eyes shall be opened - You shall have much more of the power and pleasure of contemplation than now you have; you shall fetch a larger compass in your intellectual views, and see farther into things than now you do.

2. You shall be as gods - As Elohim, mighty gods, not only omniscient but omnipotent too:

3. You shall know good and evil - That is, everything that is desirable to be known. To support this part of the temptation, he abuseth the name given to this tree. 'Twas intended to teach the practical knowledge of good and evil, that is, of duty and disobedience, and it would prove the experimental knowledge of good and evil, that is, of happiness and misery. But he perverts the sense of it, and wrests it to their destruction, as if this tree would give them a speculative notional knowledge of the natures, kinds, and originals of good and evil. And,

4. All this presently, In the day you eat thereof - You will find a sudden and immediate change for the better. See note at "ver. 1"

6, 7, 8. Here we see what Eve's parley with the tempter ended in: Satan at length gains his point. God tried the obedience of our first parents by forbidding them the tree of knowledge, and Satan doth as it were join issue with God, and in that very thing undertakes to

seduce them into a transgression; and here we find how he prevailed, God permitting it for wise and holy ends.

(1.) We have here the inducements that moved them to transgress. The woman being deceived, was ring-leader in the transgression, 1 Tim. ii, 14

1. She saw that the tree was - It was said of all the rest of the fruit trees wherewith the garden of Eden was planted, that they were pleasant to the sight, and good for food.

2. She imagined a greater benefit by this tree than by any of the rest, that it was a tree not only not to be dreaded, but to be desired to make one wise, and therein excelling all the rest of the trees. This she saw, that is, she perceived and understood it by what the devil had said to her. She gave also to her husband with her - 'Tis likely he was not with her when she was tempted; surely if he had, he would have interposed to prevent the sin; but he came to her when she had eaten, and was prevailed with by her to eat likewise. She gave it to him; persuading him with the same arguments that the serpent had used with her; adding this to the rest, that she herself had eaten of it, and found it so far from being deadly that it was extremely pleasant and grateful. And he did eat - This implied the unbelief of God's word, and confidence in the devil's; discontent with his present state, and an ambition of the honour which comes not from God. He would be both his own carver, and his own master, would have what he pleased, and do what he pleased; his sin was in one word disobedience, Rom. v, 19, disobedience to a plain, easy and express command, which he knew to be a command of trial. He sins against light and love, the clearest light and the dearest love that ever sinner sinned against. But the greatest aggravation of his sin was, that he involved all his posterity in sin and ruin by it. He could not but know that he stood as a public person, and that his disobedience would be fatal to all his seed; and if so, it was certainly both the greatest treachery and the greatest cruelty that ever was. Shame and fear seized the criminals, these came into the world along with sin, and still attend it. The Eyes of them both were opened - The eyes of their consciences; their hearts smote them for what they had done Now, when it was too late, they saw the happiness they were fallen from, and the misery they were fallen into. They saw God provoked, his favour forfeited, his image lost; they felt a disorder in their own spirits, which they had never before been conscious of; they saw a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and captivating them both to sin and wrath; they saw that they were naked, that is, that they were stripped, deprived of all the honours and joys of their paradise state, and exposed to all the miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God; laid open to the contempt and reproach of heaven and earth, and their own consciences. And they sewed or platted fig leaves together, and, to cover, at least, part of their shame one from another, made themselves aprons. See here what is commonly the folly of those

that have sinned: they are more solicitous to save their credit before men, than to obtain their pardon from God. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day - 'Tis supposed he came in a human shape; in no other similitude than that wherein they had seen him when he put them into paradise; for he came to convince and humble them, not to amaze and terrify them. He came not immediately from heaven in their view as afterwards on mount Sinai, but he came in the garden, as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not riding upon the wings of the wind, but walking deliberately, as one slow to anger. He came in the cool of the day, not in the night, when all fears are doubly fearful; nor did he come suddenly upon them, but they heard his voice at some distance, giving them notice of his coming; and probably it was a still small voice, like that in which he came to inquire after Elijah. And they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God - A sad change! Before they had sinned, if they heard the voice of the Lord God coming towards them, they would have run to meet him, but now God was become a terror to them, and then no marvel they were become a terror to themselves. See note at "ver. 6"

9. Where art thou? - This enquiry after Adam may be looked upon as a gracious pursuit in order to his recovery. If God had not called to him to reduce him, his condition had been as desperate as that of fallen angels.

10. I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid - Adam was afraid because he was naked; not only unarmed, and therefore afraid to contend with God, but unclothed and therefore afraid so much as to appear before him.

11. Who told thee that thou wast naked? - That is, how camest thou to be sensible of thy nakedness as thy shame? Hast thou eaten of the tree? - Tho' God knows all our sins, yet he will know them from us, and requires from us an ingenuous confession of them, not that he may be informed, but that we may be humbled. Whereof I commanded thee not to eat of it, I thy maker, I thy master, I thy benefactor, I commanded thee to the contrary. Sin appears most plain and most sinful in the glass of the commandment.

13. What is this that thou hast done? - Wilt thou own thy fault? Neither of them does this fully. Adam lays all the blame upon his wife: She gave me of the tree - Nay, he not only lays the blame upon his wife, but tacitly on God himself. The woman thou gavest me, and gavest to be with me as my companion, she gave me of the tree. Eve lays all the blame upon the serpent; the serpent beguiled me. The prisoners being found guilty by their own confession, besides the infallible knowledge of the Judge, and nothing material being offered in arrest of judgment, God

immediately proceeds to pass sentence, and in these verses he begins (where the sin began) with the serpent. God did not examine the serpent, nor ask him what he had done, but immediately sentenced him,

- (1.) Because he was already convicted of rebellion against God.
- (2.) Because he was to be for ever excluded from pardon; and why should any thing be said to convince and humble him, who was to find no place for repentance?

14. To testify a displeasure against sin, God fastens a curse upon the serpent, Thou art cursed above all cattle - Even the creeping things, when God made them, were blessed of him, chap. i, 22, but sin turned the blessing into a curse. Upon thy belly shalt thou go - No longer upon feet, or half erect, but thou shalt crawl along, thy belly cleaving to the earth. Dust thou shalt eat - Which signifies a base and despicable condition.

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman - The inferior creatures being made for man, it was a curse upon any of them to be turned against man, and man against them. And this is part of the serpent's curse.

1. A perpetual reproach is fastened upon him. Under the cover of the serpent he is here sentenced to be,
  - (1.) Degraded and accursed of God. It is supposed, pride was the sin that turned angels into devils, which is here justly punished by a great variety of mortifications couched under the mean circumstances of a serpent, crawling on his belly, and licking the dust.
  - (2.) Detested and abhorred of all mankind: even those that are really seduced into his interest, yet profess a hatred of him.
  - (3.) Destroyed and ruined at last by the great Redeemer, signified by the bruising of his head; his subtle politics shall be all baffled, his usurped power entirely crushed.

2. A perpetual quarrel is here commenced between the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the devil among men; war proclaimed between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, Rev. xii, 7. It is the fruit of this enmity,
  - (1.) That there is a continual conflict between God's people and him. Heaven and hell can never be reconciled, no more can Satan and a sanctified soul.
  - (2.) That there is likewise a continual struggle between the wicked and the good. And all the malice of persecutors against the people of God is the fruit of this enmity, which will continue while there is a godly man on this side heaven, and a wicked man on this side hell.

3. A gracious promise is here made of Christ as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. By faith in this promise, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified



and saved; and to this promise, and the benefit of it, instantly serving God day and night they hoped to come. Notice is here given them of three things concerning Christ.

- (1.) His incarnation, that he should be the seed of the woman.
- (2.) His sufferings and death, pointed at in Satan's bruising his heel, that is, his human nature.
- (3.) His victory over Satan thereby. Satan had now trampled upon the woman, and insulted over her; but the seed of the woman should be raised up in the fulness of time to avenge her quarrel, and to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to triumph over him, Colossians ii, 15.

16. We have here the sentence past upon the woman; she is condemned to a state of sorrow and a state of subjection: proper punishments of a sin in which she had gratified her pleasure and her pride.

- (1.) She is here put into a state of sorrow; one particular of which only is instanced in, that in bringing forth children, but it includes all those impressions of grief and fear which the mind of that tender sex is most apt to receive, and all the common calamities which they are liable to. It is God that multiplies our sorrows, I will do it: God, as a righteous Judge, doth it, which ought to silence us under all our sorrows; as many as they are we have deserved them all, and more: nay, God as a tender Father doth it for our necessary correction, that we may be humbled for sin, and weaned from it.
- (2.) She is here put into a state of subjection: the whole sex, which by creation was equal with man, is for sin made inferior.

17. Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife - He excused the fault, by laying it on his wife, but God doth not admit the excuse; tho' it was her fault to persuade him to eat it, it was his fault to hearken to her. Cursed is the ground for thy sake - And the effect of that curse is, Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee - The ground or earth, by the sin of man, is made subject to vanity, the several parts of it being not so serviceable to man's comfort and happiness, as they were when they were made. Fruitfulness was its blessing for man's service, chap. i, 11-29, and now barrenness was its curse for man's punishment.

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread - His business before he sinned was a constant pleasure to him; but now his labour shall be a weariness. Unto dust shalt thou return - Thy body shall be forsaken by thy soul, and become itself a lump of dust, and then it shall be lodged in the grave, and mingle with the dust of the earth.

20. God having named the man, and called him Adam, which signifies red earth, he in farther token of dominion named the woman, and called her Eve - That is, life. Adam bears the name of the dying body, Eve of the living soul. The reason of the name is

here given, some think by Moses the historian, others by Adam himself, because she was - That is, was to be the mother of all living. He had called her Isha, woman, before, as a wife; here he calls her Evah, life, as a mother. Now,

1. If this was done by divine direction, it was an instance of God's favour, and, like the new naming of Abraham and Sarah, it was a seal of the covenant, and an assurance to them, that notwithstanding their sin, he had not reversed that blessing wherewith he had blessed them, Be fruitful and multiply: it was likewise a confirmation of the promise now made, that the seed of the woman, of this woman, should break the serpent's head.

2. If Adam did of himself, it was an instance of his faith in the word of God.

21. These coats of skin had a significancy. The beasts whose skins they were, must be slain; slain before their eyes to shew them what death is. And probably 'tis supposed they were slain for sacrifice, to typify the great sacrifice which in the latter end of the world should be offered once for all. Thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure.

22. Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil - See what he has got, what advantages, by eating forbidden fruit! This is said to humble them, and to bring them to a sense of their sin and folly, that seeing themselves thus wretchedly deceived by following the devil's counsel, they might henceforth pursue the happiness God offers, in the way he prescribes.

23. He sent him forth - Bid him go out, told him he should no longer occupy and enjoy that garden; but he was not willing to part with it.

24. God drove him out - This signified the exclusion of him and his guilty race from that communion with God which was the bliss and glory of paradise. But whether did he send him when he turned him out of Eden? He might justly have chased him out of the world, Job xviii, 18, but he only chased him out of the garden: he might justly have cast him down to hell, as the angels that sinned were, when they were shut out from the heavenly paradise, 2 Pet. ii, 4, but man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was only sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. He was sent to the ground, not to the grave; to the work-house, not to the dungeon, not to the prison-house; to hold the plough, not to drag the chain: his tilling the ground would be recompensed by his eating its fruits; and his converse with the earth, whence he was taken, was improveable to good purposes, to keep him humble, and to mind him of his latter end. Observe then, That though our first parents were excluded from the privileges of their state of innocency, yet they were not abandoned to despair;

God's thoughts of love designing them for a second state of probation upon new terms. And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, a detachment of cherubim, armed with a dreadful and irresistible power, represented by flaming swords which turned every way, on that side the garden which lay next to the place whither Adam was sent, to keep the way that led to the tree of life.

IV In this chapter we have both the world and the church in Adam's family, and a specimen of the character and state of both in all ages. As all mankind were represented in Adam, so that great distinction of mankind into the children of God and the children of the wicked one, was here represented in Cain and Abel; and an early instance of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. We have here,

I. The birth, names, and callings of Cain and Abel, ver. 1, 2.

II. Their religion, and different success in it, ver. 3, 4, and part of ver. 5.

III. Cain's anger at God, and the reproof of him for that anger, ver. 5, 6, 7.

IV. Cain's murder of his brother, and the process against him for that murder. The murder committed, ver. 8. The proceedings against him.

(1.) His arraignment, ver. 9, former part.

(2.) His plea, ver. 9, latter part.

(3.) His conviction, ver. 10.

(4.) The sentence passed upon him, ver. 11, 12.

(5.) His complaint against the sentence, ver. 13, 14.

(6.) The ratification of the sentence, ver. 15.

(7.) The execution of the sentence, ver. 15, 16.

V. The family and posterity of Cain, ver. 17-24.

VI. The birth of another son and grandson of Adam, ver. 25, 26.

1. Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters, chap. v, 4. But Cain and Abel seem to have been the two eldest. Cain signifies possession; for Eve when she bare him said with joy and thankfulness, and great expectation, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

2. Abel signifies vanity. The name given to this son is put upon the whole race, Psalm xxxix, 5. Every man is at his best estate vanity; Abel, vanity. He chose that employment which did most befriend contemplation and devotion, for that hath been looked upon as the advantage of a pastoral life. Moses and David kept sheep, and in their solitudes conversed with God.

3. In process of time - At the end of days, either at the end of the

year when they kept their feast of in-gathering, or at the end of the days of the week, the seventh day; at some set time Cain and Abel brought to Adam, as the priest of the family, each of them an offering to the Lord; for which we have reason to think there was a divine appointment given to Adam, as a token of God's favour notwithstanding their apostacy.

4. And the Lord God had respect to Abel and to his offering, and shewed his acceptance of it, probably by fire from heaven but to Cain and to his offering he had not respect. We are sure there was a good reason for this difference: that Governor of the world, though an absolute sovereign, doth not act arbitrarily in dispensing his smiles and frowns.

1. There was a difference in the characters of the persons offering: Cain was a wicked man, but Abel was a righteous man, Matt. xxiii, 35.

2. There was a difference in the offerings they brought. Abel's was a more excellent sacrifice than Cain's; Cain's was only a sacrifice of acknowledgment offered to the Creator; the meat-offerings of the fruit of the ground were no more: but Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement, the blood whereof was shed in order to remission, thereby owning himself a sinner, deprecating God's wrath, and imploring his favour in a Mediator. But the great difference was, Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not. Abel offered with an eye to God's will as his rule, and in dependence upon the promise of a Redeemer. But Cain did not offer in faith, and so it turned into sin to him.

5. And Cain was wroth, and his countenance fell - Not so much out of grief as malice and rage. His sullen churlish countenance, and down-look, betrayed his passionate resentment.

7. If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? - Either,

1. If thou hadst done well, as thy brother did, thou shouldest have been accepted as he was. God is no respecter of persons; so that if we come short of acceptance with him, the fault is wholly our own. This will justify God in the destruction of sinners, and will aggravate their ruin. There is not a damned sinner in hell, but if he had done well, as he might have done, had been a glorified saint in heaven. Every mouth will shortly be stopt with this. Or,

2. If now thou do well: if thou repent of thy sin, reform thy heart and life, and bring thy sacrifice in a better manner; thou shalt yet be accepted. See how early the gospel was preached, and the benefit of it here offered even to one of the chief of sinners. He sets before him death and a curse; but, if not well - Seeing thou didst not do well, not offer in faith, and in a right manner, sin lieth at the door - That is, sin only hinders thy acceptance. All this considered, Cain had no reason to be angry with his brother, but at

himself only. Unto thee shall be his desire - He shall continue in respect to thee as an elder brother, and thou, as the first-born, shall rule over him as much as ever. God's acceptance of Abel's offering did not transfer the birth-right to him, (which Cain was jealous of) nor put upon him that dignity, and power, which is said to belong to it, chap. xlix, 3.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother - The Chaldee paraphrast adds, that Cain, when they were in discourse, maintained there was no judgment to come, and that when Abel spoke in defense of the truth, Cain took that occasion to fall upon him. The scripture tells us the reason wherefore he slew him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous; so that herein he shewed himself to be a child of the devil, as being an enemy to all righteousness. Observe, the first that dies is a saint, the first that went to the grave, went to heaven. God would secure to himself the first fruits, the first born to the dead, that first opened the womb into another world.

9. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? - God knew him to be guilty; yet he asks him, that he might draw from him a confession of his crime; for those who would be justified before God, must accuse themselves. And he said, I know not - Thus in Cain the devil was both a murderer, and a liar from the beginning. Am I my Brother's keeper? - Sure he is old enough to take care of himself, nor did I ever take charge of him. Art not thou his keeper? If he be missing, on thee be the blame, and not on me, who never undertook to keep him.

10. And he said, What hast thou done? - Thou thinkest to conceal it, but the evidence against thee is clear and uncontestable, the voice of thy brother's blood crieth - He speaks as if the blood itself were both witness and prosecutor, because God's own knowledge testified against him, and God's own justice demanded satisfaction. The blood is said to cry from the ground, the earth, which is said, ver. 11, to open her mouth to receive his brother's blood from his hand. The earth did as it were blush to see her own face stained with such blood; and therefore opened her mouth to hide that which she could not hinder.

11. And now art thou cursed from the earth -

1. He is cursed, separated to all evil, laid under the wrath of God, as it is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

2. He is cursed from the earth. Thence the cry came up to God, thence the curse came up to Cain. God could have taken vengeance by an immediate stroke from heaven: but he chose to make the earth the avenger of blood; to continue him upon the earth, and not presently to cut him off; and yet to make even that

his curse. That part of it which fell to his share, and which he had the occupation of, was made unfruitful, by the blood of Abel. Besides, A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. By this he was here condemned, to perpetual disgrace and reproach, and to perpetual disquietment and horror in his own mind. His own guilty conscience should haunt him where ever he went. Now to justify his complaint, Observe his descants upon the sentence.

1. He sees himself excluded by it from the favour of his God; and concludes, that being cursed, he was hid from God's face, and that is indeed the true nature of God's curse; damned sinners find it so, to whom it is said, Depart from me ye cursed. Those are cursed indeed that are for ever shut out from God's love and care, and from all hopes of his grace.

2. He sees himself expelled from all the comforts of this life; and concludes, ver. 14. Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth - As good have no place on earth as not have a settled place. Better rest in the grave than not rest at all. And from thy face shall I be hid - Shut out of the church, not admitted to come with the sons of God to present himself before the Lord. And it shall come to pass that every one that finds me shall slay me - Wherever he wanders he goes in peril of his life. There were none alive but his near relations, yet even of them he is justly afraid, who had himself been so barbarous to his own brother.

15. Whosoever slayeth Cain vengeance shall be taken on him seven- fold - God having said in Cain's case Vengeance is mine, I will repay; it had been a daring usurpation for any man to take the sword out of God's hand. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain - To distinguish him from the rest of mankind. What the mark was, God has not told us: therefore the conjectures of men are vain.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt on the east of Eden - Somewhere distant from the place were Adam and his religious family resided: distinguishing himself and his accursed generation from the holy seed; in the land of Nod - That is, of shaking or trembling, because of the continual restlessness of his spirit. Those that depart from God cannot find rest any where else. When Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, he never rested after.

17. And he builded a city - In token of a settled separation from the church of God. And here is an account of his posterity, at least the heirs of his family, for seven generations. His son was Enoch, of the same name, but not of the same character with that holy man that walked with God. The names of more of his posterity are mentioned, and but just mentioned, as those of the holy seed, chap. v, 1-32. They are numbered in haste, as not valued or delighted in, in comparison with God's children.

19. And Lamech took two wives - It was one of the degenerate race of Cain who first transgressed that original law of marriage, that two only should be one flesh.

1. Jabal was a famous shepherd; he delighted much in keeping cattle, and was so happy in devising methods of doing it to the best advantage, and instructing others in them, that the shepherds of those times, nay, the shepherds of after-times, called him Father; or perhaps his children after him, being brought up to the same employment: the family was a family of shepherds.

2. Jubal was a famous musician, and particularly an organist, and the first that gave rules for that noble art or science of music. When Jabal had set them in a way to be rich, Jubal put them in a way to be merry. From Jubal probably the Jubilee trumpet was so called; for the best music was that which proclaimed liberty and redemption.

22. From Tubal-Cain, probably the Heathen Vulcan came. Why Naamah is particularly named, we know not: probably they did, who lived when Moses wrote.

23. This passage is extremely obscure. We know not whom he slew, or on what occasion: neither what ground he had to be so confident of the Divine protection.

25. This is the first mention of Adam in the story of this chapter. No question the murder of Abel, and the impenitency and apostacy of Cain, were a very great grief to him and Eve, and the more because their own wickedness did now correct them, and their backsliding did reprove them. Their folly had given sin and death entrance into the world, and now they smarted by it, being by means thereof deprived of both their sons in one day, chap. xxvii, 45. When parents are grieved by their children's wickedness, they should take occasion from thence to lament that corruption of nature which was derived from them, and which is the root of bitterness. But here we have that which was a relief to our first parents in their affliction, namely, God gave them to see the rebuilding of their family which was sorely shaken and weakened by that sad event. For, they saw their seed, another instead of Abel. And Adam called his name Seth - That is, Set, settled or placed, because in his seed mankind should continue to the end of time.

26. And to Seth was born a son called Enos, which is the general name for all men, and speaks the weakness, frailty, and misery of man's state. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord - Doubtless God's name was called upon before, but now,

1. The worshippers of God began to stir up themselves to do more in religion than they had done; perhaps not more than had been done at first, but more than had been done since the defection of

**Cain. Now men began to worship God, not only in their closets and families, but in public and solemn assemblies.**

**2. The worshippers of God began to distinguish themselves: so the margin reads it. Then began men to be called by the name of the Lord, or, to call themselves by it. Now Cain and those that had deserted religion had built a city, and begun to declare for irreligion, and called themselves the sons of men. Those that adhered to God began to declare for him and his worship, and called themselves the sons of God.**

**V This chapter is the only authentic history extant of the first age of the world from the creation to the flood, containing (according to the Hebrew text) 1656 years. The genealogy here recorded is inserted briefly in the pedigree of our saviour, Luke iii, 36, 37. and is of great use to shew that Christ was the seed of the woman, that was promised. We have here an account,**

**I. Concerning Adam, ver. 1-5.**

**II. Seth, ver. 6-8.**

**III. Enos, ver. 9-11.**

**IV. Cainan, ver. 12-14.**

**V. Mahalaleel, ver. 15-17.**

**VI. Jared, ver. 18-20.**

**VII. Enoch, ver. 21-24.**

**VIII. Mathuselah, ver. 25-27.**

**IX. Lamech and his son Noah, ver. 28-32.**

**1. The first words of the chapter are the title of argument of the whole chapter; it is the book of the generations of Adam - It is the list or catalogue of the posterity of Adam, not of all, but only of the holy seed, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came; the names, ages, and deaths of those that were the successors of the first Adam in the custody of the promise, and the ancestors of the second Adam.**

**1, 2. Where we have a brief rehearsal of what was before at large related concerning the creation of man. This is what we have need frequently to hear of, and carefully to acquaint ourselves with. Observe here.**

**1. That God created man. Man is not his own maker, therefore he must not be his own master; but the author of his being must be the director of his motions, and the center of them.**



2. That there was a day in which God created man, he was not from eternity, but of yesterday; he was not the first-born, but the junior of the creation.

3. That God made him in his own likeness, righteous and holy, and therefore undoubtedly happy; man's nature resembled the divine nature more than that of any of the creatures of this lower world.

4. That God created them male and female, ver. 2, for their mutual comfort, as well as for the preservation and increase of their kind. Adam and Eve were both made immediately by the hand of God, both made in God's likeness; and therefore between the sexes there is not that great difference and inequality which some imagine.

5. That God blessed them. It is usual for parents to bless their children, so God the common Father blessed his; but earthly parents can only beg a blessing, it is God's prerogative to command it. It refers chiefly to the blessing of increase, not excluding other blessings.

2. He called their name Adam - He gave this name both to the man and the woman. Being at first one by nature, and afterwards one by marriage; it was fit they should both have the same name, in token of their union. See note - part two at - "ver. 1"

3. Seth was born in the 130th year of Adam's life, and probably the murder of Abel was not long before. Many other sons and daughters were born to Adam besides Cain and Abel before this; but no notice is taken of them, because an honourable mention must be made of his name only, in whose loins Christ and the church were. But that which is most observable here concerning Seth, is, that Adam begat him in his own likeness after his image - Adam was made in the image of God; but when he was fallen and corrupted, he begat a son in his own image, sinful and defiled, frail and mortal, and miserable like himself; not only a man like himself, consisting of body and soul; but a sinner like himself, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt. He was conceived and born in sin, Psalm li, 5. This was Adam's own likeness, the reverse of that Divine likeness in which Adam was made; but having lost it himself he could not convey it to his seed.

5. In the day Adam ate forbidden fruit, he became mortal, he began to die; his whole life after was but a forfeited condemned life, nay it was a wasting dying life; he was not only like a criminal sentenced, but as one already crucified, that dies slowly and by degrees. 6-19. We have here all that the Holy Ghost thought fit to leave upon record concerning five of the patriarchs before the flood, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared. There is nothing observable concerning any of those particularly, tho' we

have reason to think they were men of eminency, both for prudence and piety: But in general, observe how largely and expressly their generations are recorded. We are told how long they lived that lived in God's fear, and when they died, that died in his favour; but as for others it is no matter: the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot. That which is especially observable, is, that they all lived very long; not one of them died 'till he had seen the revolution of almost eight hundred years, and some of them much longer; a great while for an immortal soul to be imprisoned in an house of clay. The present life surely was not to them such a burden as commonly it is now, else they would have been weary of it; nor was the future life so clearly revealed then, as it is now under the gospel, else they would have been impatient to remove it. Some natural causes may be assigned for their long life in those first ages. It is very probable that the earth was more fruitful, the products of it more strengthening, the air more healthful, and the influences of the heavenly bodies more benign before the flood than they were after. Though man was driven out of paradise, yet the earth itself was then paradisaical; a garden in comparison with its present state: and some think, that their knowledge of the creatures and their usefulness both, for their food and medicine, together with their sobriety and temperance, contributed much to it; yet we do not find that those who were intemperate, as many were, Luke xvii, 27, as short-lived as temperate men generally are now. It must therefore chiefly be resolved into the power and providence of God; he prolonged their lives, both for the more speedy replenishing of the earth, and for the more effectual preservation of the knowledge of God and religion, then when there was no written word, but tradition was the channel of its conveyance. All the patriarchs here (except Noah) were born before Adam died, so that from him they might receive a full account of the creation, paradise, the fall, the promise, and those divine precepts which concerned religious worship and a religious life: and if any mistake arose, they might have recourse to him while he lived, as to an oracle, for the rectifying of it, and after his death to Methuselah, and others that had conversed with him; so great was the care of Almighty God to preserve in his church the knowledge of his will, and the purity of his worship. See note at "ver. 6"

22. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah - To walk with God, is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under his eye. It is to live a life of communion with God, both in ordinances and providences; it is to make God's word our rule, and his glory our end, in all our actions; it is to make it our constant care and endeavour in every thing to please God, and in nothing to offend him; it is to comply with his will, to concur with his designs, and to be workers together with him. He walked with God after he begat Methuselah, which intimates, that he did not begin to be eminent for piety 'till about that time.

24. He was not, for God took him - That is, as it is explained, Heb. xi, 5, he was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him. But why did God take him so soon? Surely because the world, which was now grown corrupt, was not worthy of him. Because his work was done, and done the sooner for his minding it so closely. He was not, for God took him - He was not any longer in this world: it was not the period of his being, but of his being here. He was not found; so the apostle explains it from the seventy; not found by his friends, who sought him, as the sons of the prophets sought Elijah, 2 Kings ii, 17. God took him body and soul to himself in the heavenly paradise, by the ministry of angels, as afterwards he took Elijah. He was changed, as those saints shall be that will be found alive at Christ's second coming.

25. Methuselah signifies, He dies, there is a sending forth, viz. of the deluge, which came the very year that Methuselah died. If his name was so intended, it was a fair warning to a careless world long before the judgment came. However, this is observable, that the longest liver that ever was, carried death in his name, that he might be minded of its coming surely, tho' it came slowly. He lived nine hundred sixty and nine years, the longest we read of that ever any man lived on earth, and yet he died: the longest liver must die at last. Neither youth nor age will discharge from that war, for that is the end of all men: none can challenge life by long prescription, nor make that a plea against the arrests of death. 'Tis commonly supposed, that Methuselah died a little before the flood; the Jewish writers say, seven days before, referring to chap. vii, 10, and that he was taken away from the evil to come.

29. This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed - Very probably there were some prophecies that went before of him, as a person that should be wonderfully serviceable to his generation.

32. And Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth - These Noah begat (the eldest of these) when he was six hundred years old. It should seem that Japheth was the eldest, chap. x, 21, but Shem is put first, because on him the covenant was entailed, as appears by chap. ix, 26, where God is called the Lord God of Shem. To him 'tis probable the birthright was given, and from him 'tis certain both Christ the head, and the church the body, were to descend; therefore he is called Shem, which signifies a name, because in his posterity the name of God should always remain, 'till He should come out of his loins, whose name is above every name; so that in putting Shem first, Christ was in effect put first, who in all things must have the pre-eminence. For the glory of God's justice, and for warning to a wicked world, before the history of the ruin of the old world we have a full account of its degeneracy, its apostacy from God, and rebellion against him. The destroying of

it was an act not of absolute sovereignty, but of necessary justice for the maintaining of the honour of God's government.

VI In this chapter we have,

I. The abounding iniquity of that wicked world, ver. 1-5. and ver. 11,

12.

II. God's just resentment of that iniquity, and his holy resolution to punish it, ver. 6, 7.

III. The special favour of God to his servant Noah.

(1.) In the character given of him, ver. 8, 9, 10.

(2.) In the communication of God's purpose to him, ver. 13-17.

(3.) In the directions he gave him to make an ark for his own safety, ver. 14, 15, 16.

(4.) In the employing of him for the preservation of the rest of the creatures, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. Lastly, Noah's obedience to the instructions given him, ver. 22.

1. Men began to multiply upon the face of the earth - This was the effect of the blessing, chap. i, 28, and yet man's corruption so abused this blessing, that it turned into a curse.

2. The sons of God - Those who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon that name, married the daughters of men - Those that were profane, and strangers to God. The posterity of Seth did not keep to themselves as they ought, but intermingled with the race of Cain: they took them wives of all that they chose - They chose only by the eye: They saw that they were fair - Which was all they looked at.

3. My spirit shall not always strive with man - The spirit then strove by Noah's preaching, 1 Pet. iii, 19, and by inward checks, but 'twas in vain with the most of men; therefore saith God, he shall not always strive, for that he also is flesh - Incurably corrupt and sensual, so that 'tis labour lost to strive with him. He also, that is, all, one as well as another; they are all sunk into the mire of flesh. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years - So long will I defer the judgment they deserve, and give them space to prevent it by their repentance and reformation. Justice said, cut them down; but mercy interceded, Lord, let them alone this year also; and so far mercy prevailed, that a reprieve was obtained for six score years.

4. There were giants, and men of renown - They carried all before them,

1. With their great bulk, as the sons of Anak, Num. xiii, 33, and,

2. With their great name, as the king of Assyria, Isaiah xxxvii, 11. Thus armed, they daringly insulted the rights of all their neighbours, and trampled upon all that is just and sacred.

5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth - Abundance of sin was committed in all places, by all sorts of people: and those sins in their own nature most gross and heinous, and provoking: and committed daringly, with a defiance of heaven. And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually - A sad sight, and very offensive to God's holy eye. This was the bitter root, the corrupt spring: all the violence and oppression, all the luxury and wantonness that was in the world, proceeded from the corruption of nature; lust conceives them, James i, 15, see Matt. xv, 19. The heart was evil, deceitful and desperately wicked; the principles were corrupt, and the habits and dispositions evil. The thoughts of the heart were so. Thought is sometimes taken for the settled judgment, and that was biased and misled; sometimes for the workings of the fancy, and those were always either vain or vile. The imagination of the thought of the heart was so, that is, their designs and devices were wicked. They did not do evil only through carelessness, but deliberately and designedly, contriving how to do mischief. 'Twas bad indeed, for it was only evil, continually evil, and every imagination was so. There was no good to be found among them, no not at any time: the stream of sin was full and strong, and constant; and God saw it. Here is God's resentment of man's wickedness. He did not see it as an unconcerned spectator, but as one injured and affronted by it; he saw it as a tender father sees the folly and stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient child, which not only angers but grieves him, and makes him wish he had been written childless.

6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth - That he had made a creature of such noble powers, and had put him on this earth, which he built and furnished on purpose to be a comfortable habitation for him; and it grieved him at his heart - These are expressions after the manner of men, and must be understood so as not to reflect upon God's immutability or felicity. It doth not speak any passion or uneasiness in God, nothing can create disturbance to the eternal mind; but it speaks his just and holy displeasure against sin and sinners: neither doth it speak any change of God's mind; for with him there is no variableness; but it speaks a change of his way. When God had made man upright, he rested and was refreshed, Exod. xxxi, 17. and his way towards him was such as shewed him well pleased with the work of his own hands; but now man was apostatized, he could not do otherwise, but shew himself displeased; so that the change was in man, not in God.

7. I will destroy man - The original word is very significant. I will wipe off man from off the earth; as dirt is wiped off from a place

which should be clean, and thrown to the dunghill. Or, I will blot out man from the earth, as those lines are blotted out of a book which displease the author, or as the name of a citizen is blotted out of the rolls of the freemen when he is disfranchised. Both man and beast the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air - These were made for man, and therefore must be destroyed with man. It repenteth me that I have made them - For the end of their creation also was frustrated: they were made that man might serve and honour God with them and therefore were destroyed, because he had served his lusts with them, and made them subject to vanity.

8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord - This vindicates God's justice in his displeasure against the world, and shews that he had examined the character of every person in it, before he pronounced it universally corrupt; for there being one good man he smiled upon him.

9. Noah was a just man - Justified before God by faith in the promised seed; for he was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, Heb. xi, 7. He was sanctified, and had right principles and dispositions implanted in him: and he was righteous in his conversation, one that made conscience of rendering to all their due, to God his due, and to men theirs. And he walked with God as Enoch had done before him: in his generation, even in that corrupt degenerate age. It is easy to be religious when religion is in fashion; but it is an evidence of strong faith to swim against the stream, and to appear for God, when no one else appears for him: so Noah did, and it is upon record to his immortal honour.

11. The earth also was corrupt before God - That is, in the matters of God's worship; either they had other gods before him, or worshipped him by images: or, they were corrupt and wicked in despite of God. The earth was also filled with violence, and injustice towards men; there was no order nor regular government, no man was safe in the possession of that which he had the most clear right to, there was nothing but murders, rapes and rapines.

12. God looked upon the earth - And was himself an eye-witness of the corruption that was in it, for all flesh had corrupted his way - It was not some particular nations that were thus wicked, but the whole world so; there was none good beside Noah.

13. The end of all flesh is come before me; I will destroy them - The ruin of this wicked world is decreed; it is come, that is, it will come surely, and come quickly.

14. I will destroy them with the earth, but make thee an ark - I will take care to preserve thee alive. This ark was like the hulk of a ship, fitted not to sail upon the waters, but to float waiting for their fall. God could have secured Noah, by the ministration of

angels without putting him to any care or pains, but he chose to employ him in making that which was to be the means of his preservation, both for the trial of his faith and obedience, and to teach us that none shall be saved by Christ, but those only that work out their salvation; we cannot do it without God, and he will not without us: both the providence of God and the grace of God crown the endeavours of the obedient and diligent. God gave him particular instructions concerning this building.

1. It must be made of Gopher-wood; Noah, doubtless, knew what sort of wood that was, though now we do not.
  2. He must make it three stories high within: and,
  3. He must divide it into cabins with partitions, places fitted for the several sorts of creatures, so as to lose no room.
  4. Exact dimensions are given him, that he might make it proportionable, and might have room enough in it to answer the intention, and no more.
  5. He must pitch it within and without: without, to shed off the rain, and to prevent the water from soaking in; within, to take away the ill smell of the beasts when kept close.
  6. He must make a little window towards the top to let in light.
  7. He must make a door in the side of it by which to go in and out.
17. And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth - I that am infinite in power, and therefore can do it; infinite in justice, and therefore will do it.

18. But with thee will I establish my covenant -  
(1.) The covenant of Providence, that the course of nature shall be continued to the end of time, not withstanding the interruption which the flood would give to it: this promise was immediately made to Noah and his sons, chap. ix, 8, &c. they were as trustees for all this part of the creation, and a great honour was thereby put upon him and his. God would be to him a God, and that out of his seed God would take to himself a people.

VII We have in this chapter,

I. God's gracious call to Noah to come into the ark, ver. 1. and to bring the creatures that were to be preserved alive, with him, ver. 2, 3. in consideration of the deluge at hand, ver. 4.

II. Noah's obedience, ver. 5. he came with his family into the ark, ver. 6,

7. and brought the creatures with him, ver. 8, 9. An account of which is repeated, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16. to which is added God's

tender care to shut him in.

III. The coming of the threatened deluge, ver. 10. the causes of it, ver. 11,

12. the prevalency of it, ver. 17, 18, 19, 20.

IV. The dreadful desolations that were made by it, in the death of every living creature upon earth, except what were in the ark, ver. 21, 22,

23.

V. The continuance of it in full sea, before it began to ebb, 150 days, ver. 24.

1. Here is a gracious invitation of Noah and his family into a place of safety, now the flood of waters was coming. For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation - Those are righteous indeed that are righteous before God; that have not only the form of godliness by which they appear righteous before men, who may easily be imposed upon; but the power of it, by which they approve themselves to God, who searcheth the heart.

2. Here are necessary orders given concerning the brute creatures that they were to be preserved alive with Noah in the ark. He must carefully preserve every species, that no tribe, no, not the least considerable, might entirely perish out of the creation. Observe in this:

(1.) God's care for man. Doth God take care for oxen? 1 Cor. ix, 9, or was it not rather for man's sake that this care was taken?

(2.) Even the unclean beasts were preserved alive in the ark, that were least valuable. For God's tender mercies are over all his works, and not only over those that are of most use.

(3.) Yet more of the clean were preserved than of the unclean.

1. Because the clean were most for the service of man; and therefore in favour to him, more of them were preserved and are still propagated. Thanks be to God there are not herds of lions as there are of oxen, nor flocks of tigers as there are of sheep.

2. Because the clean were for sacrifice to God; and therefore, in honour to him, more of them were preserved, three couple for breed, and the odd seventh for sacrifice, chap. viii, 20.

4. Yet seven days and I will cause it to rain - It shall be seven days yet before I do it, After the 120 years were expired, God grants them a reprieve of seven days longer, both to shew how slow he is to anger, and to give them some farther space for repentance. But all in vain; these seven days were trifled away after all the rest, they continued secure until the day that the flood came. While Noah told them of the judgment at a distance, they were tempted



to put off their repentance: but now he is ordered to tell them that it is at the door; that they have but one week more to turn them in, to see if that will now at last awaken them to consider the things that belong to their peace. But it is common for those that have been careless for their souls during the years of their health, when they have looked upon death at a distance, to be as careless during the days, the seven days of their sickness, when they see it approaching, their hearts being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

7. And Noah went in with his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives - And the brute creatures readily went in with him. The same hand that at first brought them to Adam to be named, now brought them to Noah to be preserved.

11. The six hundredth year of Noah's life, was 1656 years from the creation. In the second month, the seventeenth day of the month - Which is reckoned to be about the beginning of November; so that Noah had had a harvest just before, from which to victual his ark. The same day the fountains of the great deep were broken up - There needed no new creation of waters; God has laid up the deep in store-houses, Psalm xxxiii, 7, and now he broke up those stores. God had, in the creation, set bars and doors to the waters of the sea, that they might not return to cover the earth, Psalm civ; Job xxxviii, 9-11, and now he only removed these ancient mounds and fences, and the waters of the sea returned to cover the earth, as they had done at first, chap. i, 9. And the windows of heaven were opened - And the waters which were above the firmament were poured out upon the world; those treasures which God has reserved against the time of trouble, the day of battle and war, Job xxxviii, 22, 23. The rain, which ordinarily descends in drops, then came down in streams. We read, Job xxvi, 8. That God binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them; but now the bond was loosed, the cloud was rent, and such rains descended as were never known before or since.

12. It rained without intermission or abatement, forty days and forty nights - And that upon the whole earth at once.

14. And every beast after his kind - According to the phrase used in the history of the creation, chap. i, 21, 24, 25, to intimate, that just as many species as were created at first were saved now, and no more.

20. The mountains were covered - Therefore there were mountains before the flood.

21. All flesh died, all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land, every living substance - And why so? Man only had done wickedly, and justly is God's hand against

him, but these sheep what have they done? I answer,

1. We are sure God did them no wrong. He is the sovereign Lord of all life, for he is the sole fountain and author of it. He that made them as he pleased, might unmake them when he pleased, and who shall say unto him, What dost thou?

2. God did admirably serve the purposes of his own glory by their destruction, as well as by their creation. Herein his holiness and justice were greatly magnified: by this it appears that he hates sin, and is highly displeased with sinners, when even the inferior creatures, because they are the servants of man, and part of his possession, and because they have been abused to be the servants of sin, are destroyed with him. It was likewise an instance of God's wisdom. As the creatures were made for man when he was made, so they were multiplied for him when he was multiplied; and therefore, now mankind was reduced to so small a number, it was fit that the beasts should proportionable be reduced, otherwise they would have had the dominion, and would have replenished the earth, and the remnant of mankind that was left would have been overpowered by them.

VIII We have here,

I. The earth made anew, by the recess of waters, and the appearing of the dry land a second time.

(1.) The increase of the waters is stayed, ver. 1, 2.

(2.) They begin sensibly to abate, ver. 3.

(3.) After fifteen days ebbing the ark rests, ver. 4.

(4.) After sixty days ebbing the tops of the mountains appear, ver.

5.

(5.) After forty days ebbing, and twenty days before the mountains appeared, Noah begins to send out his spies, a raven and a dove to gain intelligence, ver. 6-12.

(6.) Two months after the appearing of the tops of the mountains the waters were gone, and the face of the earth was dry, ver. 13. tho' not dried so as to be fit for man 'till almost two months after, ver. 14.

II. Man placed anew upon the earth. In which,

1. Noah's discharge and departure out of the ark, ver. 15-19.

2. His sacrifice of praise which he offered to God upon his enlargement, ver. 20.

III. God's acceptance of his sacrifice; and the promise he made thereupon not to drown the world again, ver. 21, 22. And thus at length mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

1. And God remembered Noah and every living thing - This is an

expression after the manner of men, for not any of his creatures, much less any of his people are forgotten of God. But the whole race of mankind, except Noah and his family, was now extinguished, and gone into the land of forgetfulness, so that God's remembering Noah was the return of his mercy to mankind, of whom he would not make a full end. Noah himself, tho' one that had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, yet seemed to be forgotten in the ark; but at length God returned in mercy to him, and that is expressed by his remembering him.

3. The waters returned from off the earth continually - Hebrew. they were going and returning; a gradual departure. The heat of the sun exhaled much, and perhaps the subterraneous caverns soaked in more.

4. And the ark rested - upon the mountains of Ararat - Or, Armenia, whether it was directed, not by Noah's prudence, but the wise providence of God.

5. The tops of the mountains were seen - Like little islands appearing above water. They felt ground above forty days before they saw it, according to Dr. Lightfoots's computation, whence he infers that if the waters decreased proportionably, the ark drew eleven cubits in water.

7. Noah sent forth a raven through the window of the ark, which went forth, as the Hebrew phrase is, going forth and returning, that is, flying about, but returning to the ark for rest; probably not in it, but upon it. This gave Noah little satisfaction: therefore,

8. He sent forth a dove - Which returned the first time with no good news, but probably wet and dirty; but the second time she brought an olive leaf in her bill, which appeared to be fresh plucked off; a plain indication that now the trees began to appear above water. Note here, that Noah set forth the dove the second time, seven days after the first time, and the third time was after seven days too: and probably the first sending of her out was seven days after the sending forth of the raven. The olive branch is an emblem of peace.

13. Noah removed the covering of the ark - Not the whole covering, but so much as would suffice to give him a prospect of the earth about it: and behold the face of the ground was dry.

14. The earth was dried - So as to be a fit habitation for Noah.

20. And Noah builded an altar - Hitherto he had done nothing without particular instructions and commands from God but altars and sacrifices being already of Divine institution, he did not stay for a particular command thus to express his thankfulness. And he offered on the altar, of every clean beast and of every clean fowl - One, the odd seventh that we read of, ver. 2, 3.

21. And God smelled a sweet savour - Or a savour of rest from it, as it is in the Hebrew. He was well pleased with Noah's pious zeal, and these hopeful beginnings of the new world, as men are with fragrant and agreeable smells. I will not again curse the ground, Hebrew. I will not add to curse the ground any more - God had cursed the ground upon the first entrance of sin, chap. iii, 17, when he drowned it he added to that curse: but now he determines not to add to it any more. Neither will I again smite any more every living thing - That is, it was determined that whatever ruin God might bring upon particular persons, families or countries, he would never again destroy the whole world, 'till the day when time shall be no more. But the reason of this resolve is surprising; for it seems the same with the reason given for the destruction of the world, chap. vi, 5. Because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. But there is this difference: there it is said, the imagination of man's heart is evil continually, that is, his actual transgressions continually cry against him; here it is said, that it is evil from his youth or childhood; he brought it into the world with him, he was shapen and conceived in it. Now one would think it should follow, therefore that guilty race shall be wholly extinguished: No; therefore I will no more take this severe method; for he is rather to be pitied: and it is but what might be expected from such a degenerate race. So that if he be dealt with according to his deserts, one flood must succeed another 'till all be destroyed. God also promises, that the course of nature should never be discontinued. While the earth remaineth, and man upon it, there shall be summer and winter, not all winter, as had been this last year; day and night, not all night, as probably it was while the rain was descending. Here it is plainly intimated that this earth is not to remain always; it and all the works therein must shortly be burnt up. But as long as it doth remain, God's providence will carefully preserve the regular succession of times and seasons. To this we owe it, that the world stands, and the wheel of nature keeps its tack. See here how changeable the times are, and yet how unchangeable!

1. The course of nature always changing. As it is with the times, so it is with the events of time, they are subject to vicissitudes, day and night, summer and winter counterchanged. In heaven and hell it is not so; but on earth God hath set the one over against the other.

2. Yet never changed; it is constant in this inconstancy; these seasons have never ceased, nor shall cease while the sun continues such a steady measurer of time, and the moon such a faithful witness in heaven. This is God's covenant of the day and of the night, the stability of which is mentioned for the confirming our faith in the covenant of grace, which is no less inviolable, Jer. xxxiii, 20. We see God's promises to the creatures made good, and thence may infer that his promises to believers shall be so.

**IX In this chapter is,**

**I. The covenant of providence settled with Noah and his sons, ver. 1-11. In this covenant,**

**(1.) God promiseth them to take care of their lives; so that,**

**(1.) God promiseth them to take care of their lives; so that,**

**1. They should replenish the earth, ver. 1-7.**

**2. They should be safe from the insults of the brute creatures, which should stand in awe of them, ver. 2.**

**3. They should be allowed to eat flesh for the support of their lives, only they must not eat blood, ver. 3, 4.**

**4. The world should never be drowned again, ver. 8-11.**

**(2.) God requires of them to take care of one another's lives, and of their own, ver. 5, 6.**

**II. The seal of that covenant, viz. the rainbow, ver. 12-17.**

**III. A particular passage concerning Noah and his sons, which occasioned some prophecies that related to after-times.**

**(1.) Noah's sin and shame, ver. 20-21.**

**(2.) Ham's impudence and impiety, ver. 22.**

**(3.) The pious modesty of Shem and Japheth, ver. 23.**

**(4.) The curse of Canaan and the blessing of Shem and Japheth, ver. 24-27.**

**IV. The age and death of Noah, ver. 28, 29.**

**1. And God blessed Noah and his sons - He assured them of his goodwill to them, and his gracious intentions concerning them. The first blessing is here renewed, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and repeated, ver. 7; for the race of mankind was as it were to begin again. By virtue of this blessing mankind was to be both multiplied and perpetuated upon earth; so that in a little time all the habitable parts of the earth should be more or less inhabited; and tho' one generation should pass away, yet another generation should come, so that the stream of the human race should be supplied with a constant succession, and run parallel with the current of time, 'till both be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity.**

**2. He grants them power over the inferior creatures. He grants, 1. A title to them; into your hands they are delivered - For your use and benefit. 2. A dominion over them, without which the title would avail little; The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast - This revives a former grant, chap. i, 28, only with this difference, that man in innocency ruled by love, fallen man rules by fear. And thus far we have still the benefit of it,**

1. That those creatures which are any way useful to us are reclaimed, and we use them either for service or food, or both, as they are capable.
2. Those creatures that are any way hurtful to us are restrained; so that tho' now and then man may be hurt by some of them, yet they do not combine together to rise up in rebellion against man.
3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you - Hitherto man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth, fruits, herbs and roots, and all sorts of corn and milk; so was the first grant, chap. i, 29. But the flood having perhaps washed away much of the virtue of the earth, and so rendered its fruits less pleasing, and less nourishing, God now enlarged the grant, and allowed man to eat flesh, which perhaps man himself never thought of 'till now. The precepts and provisos of this charter are no less kind and gracious, and instances of God's goodwill to man. The Jewish doctors speak so often of the seven precepts of Noah, or of the sons of Noah, which they say were to be observed by all nations, that it may not be amiss to set them down. The first against the worship of idols. The second against blasphemy, and requiring to bless the name of God. The third against murder. The fourth against incest and all uncleanness. The fifth against theft and rapine. The sixth requiring the administration of justice. The seventh against eating flesh with the life. These the Jews required the observation of, from the proselytes of the gate. But the precepts here given, all concern the life of man. Man must not prejudice his own life by eating that food which is unwholesome, and prejudicial to his health.
4. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat - Blood made atonement for the soul, Lev. xvii, 11. The life of the sacrifice was accepted for the life of the sinner. Blood must not be looked upon as a common thing, but must be poured out before the Lord, 2 Sam. xxiii, 16. Mark Henry indeed has a strange conceit, That this is only a prohibition to eat flesh. This does such apparent violence to the text, that to mention it, is sufficient.
5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require - Our own lives are not so our own, that we may quit them at our own pleasure; but they are God's, and we must resign them at his pleasure. If we any way hasten our own deaths, we are accountable to God for it. Yea, At the hand of every beast will I require it - To shew how tender God was of the life of man, he will have the beast put to death that kills a man. This was confirmed by the law of Moses, Exod. xxi, 28, and it would not be unsafe to observe it still. And at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of a man - I will avenge the blood of the murdered upon the murderer. When God requires the life of a man at the hand of him that took it away unjustly, he cannot render

that, and therefore must render his own in lieu of it, which is the only way left of making restitution.

6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood - Whether upon a sudden provocation, or premeditated, (for rash anger is heart-murder as well as malice prepense, Matt. v, 21, 22), by man shall his blood be shed - That is, by the magistrate, or whoever is appointed to be the avenger of blood. Before the flood, as it should seem by the story of Cain, God took the punishment of murder into his own hands; but now he committed this judgment to men, to masters of families at first, and afterwards to the heads of countries. For in the image of God made he man - Man is a creature dear to his Creator, and therefore ought to be so to us; God put honour upon him, let us not then put contempt upon him. Such remains of God's image are still even upon fallen man, that he who unjustly kills a man, defaceth the image of God, and doth dishonour to him.

9. We have here the general establishment of God's covenant with this new world, and the extent of that covenant.

11. There shall not any more be a flood - God had drowned the world once, and still it is as provoking as ever; yet he will never drown it any more, for he deals not with us according to our sins. This promise of God keeps the sea and clouds in their decreed place, and sets them gates and bars, Hitherto they shall come, Job xxxviii, 10, 11. If the sea should flow but for a few days, as it doth twice every day for a few hours, what desolations would it make? So would the clouds, if such showers as we have sometimes seen, were continued long. But God by flowing seas, and sweeping rains, shews what he could do in wrath; and yet by preserving the earth from being deluged between both, shews what he can do in mercy, and will do in truth.

13. I set my bow in the clouds - The rainbow, 'tis likely was seen in the clouds before, but was never a seal of the covenant 'till now. Now, concerning this seal of the covenant, observe, (1.) This seal is affixed with repeated assurances of the truth of that promise, which it was designed to be the ratification of; I do set my bow in the cloud, ver. 13. It shall be seen in the cloud, ver. 14. and it shall be a token of the covenant, ver. 12, 13. And I will remember my covenant, that the waters shall no more become a flood, ver. 15. Nay, as if the eternal Mind needed a memorandum, I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant, ver. 16.

(2.) The rainbow appears when the clouds are most disposed to wet; when we have most reason to fear the rain prevailing, God shews this seal of the promise that it shall not prevail.

(3.) The rainbow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which imitates mercy remembered in the midst of wrath, and the clouds are hemmed as it were with the rainbow, that it may not

overspread the heavens, for the bow is coloured rain, or the edges of a cloud gilded. As God looks upon the bow that he may remember the covenant, so should we, that we also may be ever mindful of the covenant with faith and thankfulness.

20. And Noah began to be an husbandman - Hebrew. a man of the earth, a man dealing in the earth, that kept ground in his hand and occupied it. Sometime after his departure out of the ark he returned to his old employment, from which he had been diverted by the building of the ark first, and probably after by the building an house for himself and family. And he planted a vineyard - And when he had gathered his vintage, probably he appointed a day of mirth and feasting in his family, and had his sons and their children with him, to rejoice with him in the increase of his house, as well as in the increase of his vineyard; and we may suppose he prefaced his feast with a sacrifice to the honour of God. If that was omitted, 'twas just with God to leave him to himself, to end with the beasts that did not begin with God: but we charitably hope he did. And perhaps he appointed this feast with design in the close of it to bless his sons, as Isaac, chap. xxvii, 3, 4. That I may eat, and that my soul may bless thee.

21. And he drank of the wine and was drunk - 'Tis highly probable, he did not know the effect of it before. And he was uncovered in his tent - Made naked to his shame.

22. And Ham saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren - To have seen it accidentally and involuntarily would not have been a crime. But he pleased himself with the sight. And he told his two brethren without - In the street, as the word is, in a scornful deriding manner.

23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father - They not only would not see it themselves, but provided that no one else might see it; herein setting an example of charity, with reference to other men's sin and shame.

25. A servant of servants - That is, the meanest and most despicable servant shall he be, even to his brethren. Those who by birth were his equals, should by conquest be his lords. This certainly points at the victories obtained by Israel over the Canaanites, by which they were all either put to the sword, or put under tribute. Josh. ix, 23; Jude i, 28, 30,

33, 35, which happened not 'till about eight hundred years after this. God often visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, especially when the children inherit the fathers wicked dispositions, and imitate the father's wicked practices.

26. The God of Shem - All blessings are included in this. This was the blessing conferred on Abraham and his seed, the God of



heaven was not ashamed to be called their God, Heb. xi, 16. Shem is sufficiently recompensed for his respect to his father by this, that the Lord himself puts this honour upon him to be his God; which is a sufficient recompense for all our services and all our sufferings for his name.

27. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem - His seed shall be so numerous and so victorious, that they shall be masters of the tents of Shem, which was fulfilled when the people of the Jews, the most eminent of Shem's race, were tributaries to the Grecians first, and after to the Romans, both of Japhet's seed. This also speaks the conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them into the church; and then we should read it, God shall persuade Japheth; (for so the word signifies) and being so persuaded, he shall dwell in the tents of Shem - That is, Jews and Gentiles shall be united together in the gospel-fold: after many of the Gentiles shall have been proselyted to the Jewish religion, both shall be one in Christ, Eph. ii, 14, 15. When Japheth joins with Shem, Canaan falls before them both: when strangers become friends, enemies become servants.

X This chapter contains, the only certain account extant of the original of nations; and yet, perhaps, there is no nation, but that of the Jews, that can be confident from which of these seventy fountains (for many there are here) it derived its streams. Through the want of early records, the mixtures of people, the revolutions of nations, and distance of time, the knowledge of the lineal descent of the present inhabitants of the earth is lost: nor were any genealogies preserved but those of the Jews, for the sake of the Messiah. Only, in this chapter, we have a brief account,

I. Of the posterity of Japheth, ver. 2-5.

II. The posterity of Ham, ver. 6-20. and, in that particular notice taken of Nimrod, ver. 8-9.

III. The posterity of Shem, ver. 23-31.

2. Moses begins with Japhet's family, either because he was the eldest, or because that lay remotest from Israel, and had least concern with them, at that time when Moses wrote; and therefore he mentions that race very briefly; hastening to give account of the posterity of Ham, who were Israel's enemies, and of Shem, who were Israel's ancestors: for it is the church that the scripture designed to be the history of, and of the nations of the world only as they were some way or other interested in the affairs of Israel.

5. The posterity of Japheth were allotted to the isles of the Gentiles, which were solemnly, by lot, after a survey, divided among them, and probably this island of ours among the rest. All places beyond the sea, from Judea, are called isles, Jer. xxv, 22,

and this directs us to understand that promise, Isaiah xlii, 4, the isles shall wait for his law, of the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ.

8. Began to be mighty on the earth - That is, whereas those that went before him were content to stand upon the same level with their neighbours, Nimrod could not rest in this parity, but he would top his neighbours, and Lord over them. The same spirit that the giants before the flood were acted by, chap. vi, 4, now revived in him; so soon was that tremendous judgment, which the pride and tyranny of those mighty men brought upon the world, forgotten.

9. Nimrod was a mighty hunter - This he began with, and for this became famous to a proverb. Some think he did good with his hunting, served his country by ridding it of wild beasts, and so insinuated himself into the affections of his neighbours, and got to be their prince. And perhaps, under pretense of hunting, he gathered men under his command, to make himself master of the country. Thus he became a mighty hunter, a violent invader of his neighbour's rights and properties. And that, before the Lord - Carrying all before him, and endeavouring to make all his own by force and violence. He thought himself a mighty prince; but before the Lord, that is, in God's account, he was but a mighty hunter. Note, Great conquerors are but great hunters. Alexander and Caesar would not make such a figure in scripture history as they do in common history. The former is represented in prophecy but as a he-goat pushing, Dan. viii, 5. Nimrod was a mighty hunter against the Lord, so the seventy; that is, he set up idolatry, as Jeroboam did, for the confirming of his usurped dominion; that he might set up a new government, he set up a new religion upon the ruin of the primitive constitution of both.

10. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel - Some way or other, he got into power: and so laid the foundations of a monarchy which was afterwards a head of gold. It doth not appear that he had any right to rule by birth; but either his fitness for government recommended him, or by power and policy he gradually advanced into the throne. See the antiquity of civil government, and particularly that form of it which lodges the sovereignty in a single person.

15. The account of the posterity of Canaan, and the land they possessed is more particular than of any other in this chapter, because these were the nations that were to be subdued before Israel, and their land was to become Immanuel's land. And by this account, it appears that the posterity of Canaan was both numerous and rich, and very pleasantly seated, and yet Canaan was under a curse. Canaan here has a better land than either Shem or Japheth and yet they have a better lot, for they inherit the blessing.

21. Two things especially are observable in this account of the posterity of Shem. The description of Shem, ver. 21, we have not only his name, Shem, which signifies a name; but two titles to distinguish him by.

1. He was the father of all the children of Eber. Eber was his great grandson, but why should he be called the father of all his children, rather than of all Arphaxad's or Salah's? Probably because Abraham and his seed, not only descended from Heber, but from him were called Hebrews. Eber himself, we may suppose, was a man eminent for religion in a time of general apostasy; and the holy tongue being commonly called from him the Hebrew, it is probable he retained it in his family in the confusion of Babel, as a special token of God's favour to him.

2. He was the brother of Japheth the elder; by which it appears, that though Shem be commonly put first, yet he was not Noah's first-born, but Japheth was elder. But why should this also be put as part of Shem's description, that he was the brother of Japheth, since that had been said before? Probably this is intended to signify the union of the Gentiles with the Jews in the church. He had mentioned it as Shem's honour, that he was the father of the Hebrews; but lest Japheth's seed should therefore be looked upon as shut out from the church, he here minds us, that he was the brother of Japheth, not in birth only, but in blessing, for Japheth was to dwell in the tents of Shem. The reason of the name of Peleg, ver. 25, because, in his days, (that is, about the time of his birth) was the earth divided among the children of men that were to inhabit it; either when Noah divided it, by an orderly distribution of it, as Joshua divided the land of Canaan by lot, or when, upon their refusal to comply with that division, God, in justice, divided them by the confusion of tongues.

XI The distinction between the sons of God and the sons of men, now appeared again, when men began to multiply. According to this distinction, we have in this chapter,

I. The dispersion of the sons of men at Babel, ver. 1-9. where we have

(1.) Their presumptuous design, to build a city and a tower, ver. 1-4.

(2.) The righteous judgment of God upon them in disappointing the design, by confounding their language, and so scattering them, ver. 5-9.

II. The pedigree of the sons of God down to Abraham, ver. 10-26. with a general account of his family, and remove out of his native country, ver. 27-32.

1. And the whole earth was of one language - Now while they all understood one another, they would be the more capable of

helping one another, and the less inclinable to separate.

2. And they found a plain in the land of Shinar - A spacious plain, able to contain them all.

3. Go to, let us make brick, let us build us a city - The country being a plain, yielded neither stone nor mortar, yet that did not discourage them, but they made brick to serve instead of stone, and slime, or pitch, instead of mortar. Some think they intended hereby to secure themselves against the waters of another flood, but if they had, they would have chosen to build upon a mountain rather than upon a plain. But two things it seems they aimed at in building.

1. To make them a name: they would do something to be talked of by posterity. But they could not gain this point; for we do not find in any history the name of so much as one of these Babel - builders. Philo Judeus saith they engraved every one his name upon a brick; yet neither did that serve their purpose.

2. They did it to prevent their dispersion; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth - It was done (saith Josephus) in disobedience to that command, chap. ix, 1, replenish the earth. God orders them to scatter. No, say they, we will live and die together. In order hereunto they engage themselves and one another in this vast undertaking. That they might unite in one glorious empire, they resolve to build this city and tower, to be the metropolis of their kingdom, and the center of their unity.

5. And the Lord came down to see the city - 'Tis an expression after the manner of men, he knew it as clearly as men know that which they come upon the place to view. And the tower which the children of men builded - Which speaks,

(1.) Their weakness and frailty, it was a foolish thing for the children of men, worms of the earth, to defy heaven.

(2.) Their sinfulness, they were the sons of Adam, so it is in the Hebrew; nay, of that Adam, that sinful disobedient Adam, whose children are by nature children of disobedience.

(3.) Their distinction from the children of God, from whom those daring builders had separated themselves, and built this tower to support and perpetuate the separation.

6. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language - And if they continue one, much of the earth will be left uninhabited, and these children of men, if thus incorporated, will swallow up the little remnant of God's children, therefore it is decreed they must not be one. And now nothing will be restrained from them - And this is a reason why they must be crossed, in their design.

7. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language - This

was not spoken to the angels, as if God needed either their advice or their assistance, but God speaks it to himself, or the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost. That they may not understand one another's speech - Nor could they well join hands when their tongues were divided: so that this was a proper means, both to take them off from their building, for if they could not understand one another, they could not help one another; and to dispose them to scatter, for when they could not understand one another, they could not enjoy one another. Accordingly three things were done,

1. Their language was confounded. God, who when he made man taught him to speak, now made those builders to forget their former language; and to speak a new one, which yet was the same to those of the same tribe or family, but not to others: those of one colony could converse together, but not with those of another. We all suffer hereby to this day: in all the inconveniences we sustain by the diversity of languages, and all the trouble we are at to learn the languages we have occasion for, we smart for the rebellion of our ancestors at Babel; nay, and those unhappy controversies, which are strifes of words, and arise from our misunderstanding of one another's languages, for ought I know, are owing to this confusion of tongues. The project of some to frame an universal character in order to an universal language, how desirable soever it may seem, yet I think is but a vain thing for it is to strive against a divine sentence, by which the languages of the nations will be divided while the world stands. We may here lament the loss of the universal use of the Hebrew tongue, which from henceforth was the vulgar language of the Hebrews only, and continued so till the captivity in Babylon, where, even among them, it was exchanged for the Syriac. As the confounding of tongues divided the children of men, and scattered them abroad, so the gift of tongues bestowed upon the Apostles, Acts ii, 4-11, contributed greatly to the gathering together of the children of God, which were scattered abroad, and the uniting of them in Christ, that with one mind and mouth they might glorify God, Rom. xv, 6.

1. The imagination of a late writer, that God did not confound their tongues, but their religious worship, is grounded on criticisms concerning the meaning of the Hebrew word, which are absolutely false. Beside, would God confound their religious worship? Surely, He is a God of order, and not of confusion.

2. Their building was stopped, they left off to build the city - This was the effect of the confusion of their tongue's; for it not only disabled them from helping one another, but probably struck a damp upon their spirits, since they saw the hand of the Lord gone out against them.

3. The builders were scattered abroad from thence upon the face of the whole earth - They departed in companies after their families and after their tongues, chap. x, 5, 20, 31, to the several

countries and places allotted to them in the division that had been made, which they knew before, but would not go to take possession of, 'till now they were forced to it. Observe

1. The very thing which they feared came upon them; that dispersion which they thought to evade.

2. That it was God's work; the Lord scattered them; God's hand is to be acknowledged in all scattering providences; if the family be scattered, relations scattered, churches scattered, it is the Lord's doing.

3. That they left behind them a perpetual memorandum of their reproach in the name given to the place; it was called Babel, confusion.

4. The children of men were now finally scattered, and never will come all together again 'till the great day. when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, Matt. xxv, 31, 32.

10. Observe here,

1. That nothing is left upon record concerning those of this line, but their names and ages; the Holy Ghost seeming to hasten thro' them to the story of Abraham. How little do we know of those that are gone before us in this world, even those that lived in the same places where we live! Or indeed of those who are our contemporaries, but in distant places.

2. That there was an observable gradual decrease in the years of their lives. Shem reached to 600 years, which yet fell short of the age of the patriarchs before the flood; the three next came short of 500, the three next did not reach to 300, and after them we read not of any that attained to 200 but Terah; and not many ages after this, Moses reckoned 70 or 80 to be the utmost men ordinarily arrive at. When the earth began to be replenished, mens lives began to shorten so that the decrease is to be imputed to the wise disposal of providence, rather than to any decay of nature.

3. That Eber, from whom the Hebrews were denominated, was the longest lived of any that were born after the flood; which perhaps was the reward of his strict adherence to the ways of God.

27. Here begins the story of Abram. We have here,

1. His country: Ur of the Chaldee's - An idolatrous country, where even the children of Eber themselves degenerated.

2. His relations, mentioned for his sake, and because of their interest in he following story.

1. His father was Terah, of whom it is said, Josh. xxiv, 2, that he served other gods on the other side the flood; so early did idolatry gain footing in the world. Enough it is said, ver. 26, that when Terah was seventy years old he beget Abram, Nabor and Haran, which seems to tell us that Abram was the eldest son of Terah, and born in the 70th year; yet by comparing ver. 32, which makes Terah to die in his 205th year, with Acts vii, 4, where it is said that Abram removed from Haran when his father was dead, and chap. xii, 4, where it is said that he was but 75 years old when he removed from Haran, it appears that he was born in the

130th year of Terah, and probably was his youngest son. We have,

2. Some account of his brethren

(1.) Nahor, out of whole family both Isaac and Jacob had their wives.

(2.) Haran, the father of Lot, of whom it is here said, ver. 28, that he died before his father Terah. 'Tis likewise said that he died in Ur of the Chaldees, before that happy remove of the family out of that idolatrous country.

(3.) His wife was Sarai, who, tho' some think was the same with Iscah the daughter of Haran. Abram himself saith, she was the daughter of his father, but not the daughter of his mother, chap. xx, 12. She was ten years younger than Abram.

3. His departure out of Ur of the Chaldees, with his father Terah, and his nephew Lot, and the rest of his family, in obedience to the call of God. This chapter leaves them in Haran or Charran, a place about the mid-way between Ur and Canaan, where they dwelt 'till Terah's head was laid; probably because the old man was unable, through the infirmities of age, to proceed in his journey.

XII From henceforward Abram and his seed are almost the only subject of the sacred history. In this chapter we have,

I. God's call of Abram to the land of Canaan ver. 1, 2, 3.

II. Abram's obedience to this call, ver. 4, 5.

III. His welcome to the land of Canaan, ver. 6-9.

IV. His occasional remove into Egypt, with an account of what happened to him there. Abram's flight and fault, ver. 10-13. Sarai's danger and deliverance, ver. 14-20.

1. We have here the call by which Abram was removed out of the land of his nativity into the land of promise, which was designed both to try his faith and obedience, and also to set him apart for God. The circumstances of this call we may be somewhat helped to the knowledge of, from Stephen's speech, Acts vii, 2, where we are told, 1. That the God of glory appeared to him to give him this

call, appeared in such displays of his glory as left Abram no room to doubt. God spake to him after in divers manners: but this first time, when the correspondence was to be settled, he appeared to him as the God of glory, and spake to him. 2. That this call was given him in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and in obedience to this call, he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran or Haran about five years, and from thence, when his father was dead, by a fresh command, he removed him into the land of Canaan. Some think Haran was in Chaldea, and so was still a part of Abram's country; or he having staid there five years, began to call it his country, and to take root there, till God let him know this was not the place he was intended for. Get thee out of thy country - Now,

(1.) By this precept he was tried whether he loved God better than he loved his native soil, and dearest friends, and whether he could willingly leave all to go along with God. His country was become idolatrous, his kindred and his father's house were a constant temptation to him, and he could not continue with them without danger of being infected by them; therefore get thee out, (Hebrew.) vade tibi, get thee gone with all speed, escape for thy life, look not behind thee.

(2.) By this precept he was tried whether he could trust God farther than he saw him, for he must leave his own country to go to a land that God would shew him; he doth not say, 'tis a land that I will give thee nor doth he tell him what land it was, or what kind of land; but he must follow God with an implicit faith, and take God's word for it in the general, though he had no particular securities given him, that he should be no loser by leaving his country to follow God.

2. Here is added an encouraging promise, nay a complication of promises,

1. I will make of thee a great nation - When God took him from his own people, he promised to make him the head of another people. This promise was.

1. A great relief to Abram's burden, for he had now no child.

2. A great trial to Abram's faith, for his wife had been long barren, so that if he believe, it must be against hope, and his faith must build purely upon that power which can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham.

2. I will bless thee - Either particularly with the blessing of fruitfulness, as he had blessed Adam and Noah; or in general, I will bless thee with all manner of blessings, both of the upper and nether springs: leave thy father's house, and I will give thee a father's blessing, better than that of thy progenitors.

3. I will make thy name great - By deserting his country he lost



his name there: care not for that, (saith God) but trust me, and I will make thee a greater name than ever thou couldst have had there.

4. Thou shalt be a blessing - That is, thy life shall be a blessing to the places where thou shalt sojourn.

5. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee - This made it a kind of league offensive and defensive between God and Abram. Abram heartily espoused God's cause, and here God promiseth to interest himself in his.

6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed - This was the promise that crowned all the rest, for it points at the Messiah, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

4. So Abram departed - He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. His obedience was speedy and without delay, submissive and without dispute.

5. They took with them the souls that they had gotten - That is, the proselytes they had made, and persuaded to worship the true God, and to go with them to Canaan; the souls which (as one of the Rabbins expresseth it) they had gathered under the wings of the divine Majesty.

6. The Canaanite was then in the land - He found the country possessed by Canaanites, who were likely to be but bad neighbours; and for ought appears he could not have ground to pitch his tent on but by their permission.

7. And the Lord appeared to Abram - Probably in a vision, and spoke to him comfortable words; Unto thy seed will I give this land - No place or condition can shut us out from God's gracious visits. Abram is a sojourner, unsettled, among Canaanites, and yet here also he meets with him that lives, and sees him. Enemies may part us and our tents, us and our altars, but not us and our God.

8. And there he built an altar unto the Lord who appeared to him, and called on the name of the Lord - Now consider this,

(1.) As done upon a special occasion when God appeared to him, then and there he built an altar, with an eye to the God that appeared to him: thus he acknowledged with thankfulness God's kindness to him in making him that gracious visit and promise: and thus he testified his confidence in, and dependence upon the word which God had spoken.

(2.) As his constant practice, whithersoever he removed. As soon as Abram was got to Canaan, though he was but a stranger and sojourner there, yet he set up, and kept up, the worship of God in his family; and wherever he had a tent, God had an altar and that an altar sanctified by prayer.

10. And there was a famine in the land - Not only to punish the iniquity of the Canaanites, but to exercise the faith of Abram. Now he was tried whether he could trust the God that brought him to Canaan, to maintain him there, and rejoice in him as the God of his salvation, when the fig-tree did not blossom. And Abram went down into Egypt - See how wisely God provides, that there should be plenty in one place, when there was scarcity in another; that, as members of the great body, we may not say to one another, I have no need of you.

13. Say thou art my sister - The grace Abram was most eminent for was faith, and yet he thus fell through unbelief and distrust of the divine Providence, even after God had appeared to him twice. Alas, What will become of the willows, when the cedars are thus shaken

17. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house - Probably, those princes especially that had commended Sarai to Pharaoh. We are not told, particularly, what these plagues were; but, doubtless, there was something in the plagues themselves, or some explication added to them, sufficient to convince them that it was for Sarai's sake they were thus plagued.

18. What is this that thou hast done? - What an ill thing; how unbecoming a wife and good man! Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? - Intimating, that if he had known that, he would not have taken her. It is a fault, too common among good people, to entertain suspicions of others beyond what there is cause for. We have often found more of virtue, honour, and conscience in some people, than we thought there was; and it ought to be a pleasure to us to be thus disappointed, as Abram was here, who found Pharaoh to be a better man than he expected.

20. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him - That is, he charged them not to injure him in any thing. And he appointed them, when Abram was disposed to return home, after the famine, to conduct him safe out of the country, as his convoy.

XIII In this chapter we have a farther account of Abram;

I. In general, of his condition and behaviour in the land of promise, which was, now, the land of his pilgrimage.

- (1.) His removes, ver. 1, 3, 4, 18.
- (2.) His riches, ver. 2.
- (3.) His devotion, ver. 4, 18.

II. A particular account of a quarrel that happened between him and Lot.

- (1.) The occasion of their strife, ver. 5, 6.
- (2.) The parties concerned in the strife, with the aggravation of it, ver. 7.

(3.) The stopping of it by the prudence of Abram, ver. 8, 9.

III. Lot's departure from Abram to the plain of Sodom, ver. 10-14.

IV. God's appearance to Abram, to confirm the promise of the land of Canaan to him, ver. 14-17.

3. He went on to Bethel - Thither he went, not only because he was willing to go among his old acquaintance; but because there he had formerly had his altar. and though the altar was gone, probably he himself having taking it down when he left the place, lest it should be polluted by the idolatrous Canaanites; yet he came to the place of the altar, either to revive the remembrance of the sweet communion he had had with God at that place, or, perhaps, to pay the vows he had there made to God when he undertook his journey into Egypt.

6. The land was not able to bear them - The place was too strait for them, and they had not room for their flocks.

7. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled in the land - This made the quarrel,

1. Very dangerous; if Abram and Lot cannot agree to feed their flocks together, it is well if the common enemy do not come upon them and plunder them both.

2. Very scandalous: No doubt the eyes of all the neighbours were upon them, because of the singularity of their religion, and the extraordinary sanctity they professed; and notice would soon be taken of this quarrel, and improvement made of it to their reproach by the Canaanites and Perizzites.

10. The garden of the Lord - That is, paradise.

13. Sinners before the Lord - That is, impudent daring sinners.

16. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth - That is, they shall increase incredibly, and take them altogether; they shall be such a great multitude as no man can number. They were so in Solomon's time, 1 Kings iv, 20. Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude. This God here gives him the promise of.

17. Arise, walk through the land - Enter and take possession, survey the parcels, and it will appear better than upon a distant prospect.

18. Then Abram removed his tent - God bid him walk through the land, that is, Do not think of fixing in it, but expect to be always unsettled, and walking through it to a better Canaan; in compliance with God's will herein, he removed his tent,

conforming himself to the condition of a pilgrim. And he built there an altar - in token of his thankfulness to God for the kind visit he had made him.

XIV We have in this chapter,

I. A war with the king of Sodom and his allies, ver. 1-12.

II. Abram's rescue of Lot from captivity, ver. 13-16.

III. Abram's return from that expedition, ver. 17. with an account of what passed,

(1.) Between him and the king of Salem, ver. 18-20.

(2.) Between him and the king of Sodom, ver. 21-24. In part fulfilled, that God would make his name great.

1. We have here an account of the first war that ever we read of in scripture, in which we may observe. [1.] The parties engaged in it. The invaders were four kings; two of them no less than kings of Shinar and Elam - That is, Chaldea and Persia; yet probably not the sovereign princes of those great kingdoms, but rather the heads of some colonies which came out thence, and settled themselves near Sodom, but retained the names of the countries from which they had their original. The invaded were the kings of five cities that lay near together in the plain of Jordan, Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. [2.] The occasion of this war was, the revolt of the five kings from under the government of Chedorlaomer.

4. Twelve years they served him - The Sodomites were the posterity of Canaan, whom Noah had pronounced a servant to Shem, from whom Elam descended. Thus soon did that prophecy begin to be fulfilled. In the thirteenth year, beginning to be weary of their subjection, they rebelled - Denied their tribute, and attempted to shake off the yoke.

5. In the fourteenth year - After some pause and preparation, Chedorlaomer, in conjunction with his allies, set himself to reduce the revolters. See note at "ver. 1" (For [1.], [2.]) [3.] The progress of the war. The four kings laid the neighbouring countries waste, and enriched themselves with the spoil of them, ver. 5, 6, 7. Upon the alarm of which, the king of Sodom and his allies went out and were routed.

13. We have here an account of the only military action we ever find Abram engaged in; and this he was not prompted to by avarice or ambition, but purely by a principle of charity.

14. He armed his trained servants, born in his house - To the number of three hundred and eighteen: a great family, but a small army; about as many as Gideon's that routed the Midianites, Jude vii, 7. He drew out his trained servants, or his catechized servants;

not only instructed in the art of war, but instructed in the principles of religion; for Abram commanded his household to keep the way of the Lord.

16. His brother Lot - That is, his kinsman.

18. The Rabbins say, that Melchizedek was Shem the son of Noah, who was king and priest to those that descended from him, according to the patriarchal model. Many Christian writers have thought that this was an appearance of the Son of God himself, our Lord Jesus, known to Abram at this time by this name. But as nothing is expressly revealed concerning it, we can determine nothing. He brought forth bread and wine - For the refreshment of Abram and his soldiers, and in congratulation of their victory. This he did as a king. As priest of the most high God he blessed Abram, which we may suppose a greater refreshment to Abram than his bread and wine were.

19. Blessed be Abram, of the most high God - Observe the titles he here gives to God, which are very glorious.

1. The most high God, which speaks his absolute perfections in himself, and his sovereign dominion over all the creatures.

2. Possessor of heaven and earth - That is, rightful owner and sovereign Lord of all the creatures; because he made them.

20. And blessed be the most high God - Note,

1. In all our prayers we must praise God, and join hallelujahs with all our hosannas. These are the spiritual sacrifices we must offer up daily, and upon particular occasions.

2. God as the most high God must have the glory of all our victories. In them he shews himself higher than our enemies, and higher than we, for without him we could do nothing. And he gave him tithes of all - That is, of the spoils, Heb. vii, 4. This may be looked upon,

(1.) As a gratuity presented to Melchizedek, by way of return for his respects.

(2.) As an offering dedicated to the most high God, and therefore put into the hands of Melchizedek his priest. Jesus Christ, our great Melchizedek, is to be humbly acknowledged by every one of us as our king and priest, and not only the tithe of all, but all we have, must be given up to him.

21. Give me the souls, and take thou the substance - So the Hebrew reads it. Here he fairly begs the persons, but as freely bestows the goods on Abram. Gratitude teaches us to recompense to the utmost of our power those that have undergone fatigues, or been at expence for our service.

**22. I have lift up mine hand to the Lord that I will not take anything - Here Observe,**

**(1.) The titles he gives to God, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth - The same that Melchizedek had just now used. It is good to learn of others how to order our speech concerning God, and to imitate those who speak well in divine things.**

**(2.) The ceremony used in this oath; I have lift up my hand - In religious swearing we appeal to God's knowledge of our truth and sincerity, and imprecate his wrath if we swear falsely; and the lifting up of the hands is expressive of both. Lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich - Probably, Abram knew the king of Sodom to be a proud and scornful man, and one that would be apt to turn such a thing as this to his reproach afterwards, and when we have to do with such men, we have need to act with particular caution.**

**23. From a thread to a shoe-latchet - Not the least thing that had ever belonged to the king of Sodom.**

**XV In this chapter we have a solemn treaty between God and Abram,**

**I. A general assurance of God's kindness and goodwill to Abram, ver. 1.**

**II. A particular declaration of the purposes of his love concerning him, in two things.**

**(1.) That he would give him a numerous issue, ver. 2-7.**

**(2.) That he would give him Canaan for an inheritance, ver. 7-16.**

**1. After these things -**

**(1.) After that act of generous charity which Abram had done, in rescuing his neighbours, God made him this gracious visit.**

**(2.) After that victory which he had obtained over four kings; lest Abram should be too much elevated with that, God comes to tell him he had better things in store for him. The word of the Lord came unto Abram - That is, God manifested himself to Abram, in a vision - Which supposeth Abram awake, and some sensible token of the presence of the divine glory, saying, Fear not Abram - Abram might fear lest the four kings he had routed, should rally and fall upon him. No, saith God, fear not: fear not their revenge, nor thy neighbour's envy; I will take care of thee. I am thy shield - Or, emphatically, I am a shield to thee, present with thee, actually defending thee. The consideration of this, that God himself is, a shield to his people, to secure them from all destructive evils, a shield ready to them, and a shield round about them, should silence all perplexing fears. And thy exceeding great reward - Not only thy rewarder, but thy reward. God himself is the felicity of holy souls; He is the portion of their inheritance, and their cup.**

**3. Behold to me thou hast given no seed - Not only no son, but no seed. If he had had a daughter, from her the promised Messiah might have come, who was to be the Seed of the Woman; but he had neither son nor daughter.**

**5. And he brought him forth - It seems, early in the morning, and said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars: so shall thy seed be -**

**1. So innumerable, for so the stars seem to a common eye. Abram feared he should have no child at all, but God tells him his descendents should be so many as not to be numbered.**

**2. So illustrious, as the stars of heaven for splendour; for to them pertained the glory, Rom. ix, 4. Abram's seed according to the flesh were like the dust of the earth, chap. xiii, 16, but his spiritual seed are like the stars of heaven.**

**6. And he believed in the Lord - That is, believed the truth of that promise which God had now made him, resting upon the power, and faithfulness of him that made it: see how the apostle magnifies this faith of Abram, and makes it a standing example, Rom. iv, 19-21. He was not weak in faith; he staggered not at the promise: he was strong in faith; he was fully persuaded. The Lord work such a faith in every one of us. And he counted it to him for righteousness - That is, upon the score of this he was accepted of God, and, by faith he obtained witness that he was righteous, Heb. xi, 4. This is urged in the New Testament to prove, that we are justified by faith without the works of the law, Rom. iv, 3, Gal. iii, 6, for Abram was so justified, while he was yet uncircumcised. If Abram, that was so rich in good works, was not justified by them, but by his faith, much less can we. This faith, which was imputed to Abram for righteousness, had newly struggled with unbelief, ver. 2, and coming off, conqueror, it was thus crowned, thus honoured.**

**7. I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees - Out of the fire of the Chaldees, so some: that is, from their idolatries; for the Chaldeans worshipped the fire. Or, from their persecutions. The Jewish writers have a tradition, that Abram was cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship idols, and was miraculously delivered. It is rather a place of that name. Thence God brought him by an effectual call, brought him by a gracious violence; snatched him as a brand out of the burning. Observe how God speaks of it as that which he gloried in. I am the Lord that brought thee out - He glories in it as an act both of power and grace. To give thee this land to inherit it - Not only to possess it, but to possess it as an inheritance, which is the surest title. The providence of God hath secret, but gracious designs in all its various dispensations: we cannot conceive the projects of providence, 'till the event shews what it was driving at.**

**8. Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? - This did not proceed from distrust of God's power or promise, but he desired this,**

**1. For the strengthening of his own faith. He believed, ver. 6, but here he prays, Lord help me against my unbelief, Now, he believed, but he desired a sign, to be treasured up against an hour of temptation.**

**2. For the ratifying of the promise to his posterity, that they also might believe it.**

**9. Take me an heifer - Perhaps Abram expected some sign from heaven, but God gives him a sign upon a sacrifice. Those that would receive the assurances of God's favour, must attend instituted ordinances, and expect to meet with God in them. Observe,**

**1. God appointed that each of the beasts used for his service should be three years old, because then they were at their full growth and strength. God must be served with the best we have.**

**2. We do not read that God gave Abram particular directions how to manage these, knowing that he was well versed in the custom of sacrifices.**

**3. Abram took as God appointed him, though as yet he knew not how these things should become a sign to him. He divided the beasts in the midst, according to the ceremony used in continuing covenants, Jer. xxxiv, 18, 19, where it is said, they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts.**

**4. Abram, having prepared according to God's appointment, set himself to expect what sign God would give him by these.**

**12. And when the sun was going down - About the time of the evening oblation. Early in the morning, while the stars were yet to be seen, God had given him orders concerning the sacrifices, ver. 5, and we may suppose it was at least his morning's work to prepare them, and set them in order; which when he had done, he abode by them praying and waiting 'till towards evening. A deep sleep fell upon Abram - Not a common sleep through weariness or carelessness, but a divine extasy, that being wholly taken off from things sensible, he might be wholly taken up with the contemplation of things spiritual. The doors of the body were locked up, that the soul might be private and retired, and might act the more freely. And lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him - This was designed to strike an awe upon the spirit of Abram, and to possess him with a holy reverence. Holy fear prepares the soul for holy joy; God humbles first, and then lifts up.**



13. Thy seed shall be strangers - So they were in Canaan first, Psalm cv, 11, 12, and afterwards in Egypt: before they were lords of their own land, they were strangers in a strange land. The inconveniences of an unsettled state make a happy settlement the more welcome. Thus the heirs of heaven are first strangers on earth. And then they shall serve - So they did the Egyptians, Exod. i, 13. See how that which was the doom of the Canaanites, chap. ix, 25, proves the distress of Abram's seed: they are made to serve; but with this difference, the Canaanites serve under a curse, the Hebrews under a blessing. And they shall afflict them - See Exod. i, 11. Those that are blessed and beloved of God are often afflicted by wicked men. This persecution began with mocking, when Ishmael the son of an Egyptian, persecuted Isaac, chap. xxi, 9, and it came at last to murder, the basest of murders, that of their new born children; so that more or less it continued 400 years.

14. That nation whom they shall serve, even the Egyptians, will I judge - This points at the plagues of Egypt, by which God not only constrained the Egyptians to release Israel, but punished them for all the hardships they had put upon them. The punishing of persecutors is the judging of them; it is a righteous thing with God, and a particular act of justice, to recompense tribulation to those that trouble his people. 3. The deliverance of Abram's seed out of Egypt. And afterwards shall they come out with great substance - Either after they have been afflicted 400 years, or, after the Egyptians are judged and plagued.

15. Thou shalt go to thy fathers - At death we go to our fathers, to all our fathers that are gone before us to the state of the dead, to our godly fathers that are gone before us to the state of the blessed. The former helps to take off the terror of death, the latter puts comfort into it. Thou shalt be buried in a good old age - Perhaps mention is made of his burial here, where the land of Canaan is promised him, because a burying-place was the first possession he had in it. Old age is a blessing, if it be a good old age: theirs may be called a good old age,

1. That are old and healthful, not loaded with such distempers as make them weary of life:

2. That are old and holy, whose hoary head is found in the way of righteousness, old and useful, old and exemplary for godliness, that is indeed a good old age.

16. They shall come hither again - Hither to the land of Canaan, wherein thou now art. The reason why they must not have the land of promise in possession till the fourth generation, is because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. The righteous God has determined, that they shall not be cut off till they are arrived to such a pitch of wickedness; and therefore till it come to that, the seed of Abram must be kept out of possession.

17. When the sun was gone down the sign was given - The smoking furnace signified the affliction of his seed in Egypt: they were there in the furnace of affliction, and labouring in the very fire. They were there in the smoke, their eyes darkened that they could not see to the end of their troubles. 2. The burning lamp speaks comfort in this affliction; and this God shewed Abram at the same time with the smoking furnace. The lamp notes direction in the smoke; God's word was their lamp, a light shining in a dark place. Perhaps too this burning lamp prefigured the pillar of a cloud and fire which led them out of Egypt. 3. The passing of these between the pieces was the confirming of the covenant God now made with him. It is probable this furnace and lamp, which passed between the pieces, burned and consumed them, and so completed the sacrifice, and testified God's acceptance of it, as of Gideon's, Jude vi, 21, Manoah's, Jude xiii, 19, 20, and Solomon's, 2 Chron. vii, 1. So it intimates,

1. That God's covenants with man are made by sacrifice, Psalm l, 5, by Christ, the great sacrifice.

2. God's acceptance of our spiritual sacrifices is a token for good, and an earnest of farther favours.

18. In that same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land - He had said before, To thy seed will I give this land, but here he saith, I have given it; that is,

1. I have given the promise, the charter is sealed and delivered, and cannot be disannulled.

2. The possession is as sure in due time, as if it were now actually delivered to them. In David's time and Solomon's their jurisdiction extended to the utmost of these limits, 2 Chron. ix, 26. And it was their own fault that they were not sooner and longer in possession of all these territories. They forfeited their right by their sins, and by their own sloth and cowardice kept themselves out of possession. The present occupants are named, because their number and strength and long prescription, should be no hindrance to the accomplishment of this promise in its season; and to magnify God's love to Abram and his seed, in giving to that one nation the possession of many nations.

XVI Hagar probably was one of those maid-servants which the king of Egypt (among other gifts) bestowed upon Abram, chap. xii. 16. Concerning her we have four things in this chapter,

I. Her marriage to Abram her master, ver. 1-3.

II. Her misbehaviour towards Sarai her mistress, ver. 4-6.

**III. Her discourse with an angel that met her in her flight, ver. 7-14.**

**IV. Her delivery of a son, ver. 15, 16.**

**1. We have here the marriage of Abram to Hagar, who was his secondary wife. Herein, though he may be excused, he cannot be justified; for from the beginning it was not so: and when it was so, it seems to have proceeded from an irregular desire to build up their families, for the speedier peopling of the world. But now we must not do so? Christ has reduced this matter to the first institution, and makes the marriage union to be between one man and one woman only.**

**4. We have here the ill consequences of Abram's marriage to Hagar: a deal of mischief it made presently. Hagar no sooner perceives herself with child, but she looks scornfully upon her mistress; upbraids her perhaps with her barrenness, and insults over her. Sarai falls upon Abram, and very unjustly charges him with the injury, suspecting that he countenanced Hagar's insolence: and as one not willing to hear what Abram had to say she rashly appeals to God. The Lord judge between me and thee, as if Abram had refused to right her. When passion is upon the throne, reason is out of doors, and is neither heard nor spoken. Those are not always in the right that are most forward in appealing to God. Rash and bold imprecations are commonly evidences of guilt and a bad cause.**

**6. Thy maid is in thy hand - Though she was his wife, he would not countenance her in any thing disrespectful to Sarai. Those who would keep up peace and love, must return first answers to hard accusations; husbands and wives particularly should endeavour not to be both angry together. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her - Making her to serve with rigor; she fled from her face - She not only avoided her wrath for the present, but totally deserted her service.**

**7. Here is the first mention we have in scripture of an angel's appearance, who arrested her in her flight. It should seem she was making towards her own country, for she was in the way to Shur, which lay towards Egypt. 'Twere well if our afflictions would make us think of our home, the better county. But Hagar was now out of the way of her duty, and going farther astray, when the angel found her. It is a great mercy to be stopt in a sinful way, either by conscience or providence.**

**8. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid -**

**1. As a check to her pride. Though she was Abram's wife, yet he calls her Sarai's maid to humble her.**

**2. As a rebuke to her flight. Sarai's maid ought to be in Sarai's**

tent, and not wandering in the wilderness. Whence comest thou - Consider that thou art running away both from the duty thou wast bound to, and the privileges thou wast blest with, in Abram's tent. And Whither wilt thou go? - Thou art running thyself into sin in Egypt; if she return to that people, she will return to their gods. And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress - She acknowledges her fault in fleeing from her mistress; and yet, excuses it, that it was from the face, or displeasure, of her mistress.

9. And the angel said, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hand - Go home and humble thyself for what thou hast done amiss, and resolve for the future to behave thyself better.

10. I will multiply thy seed exceedingly - Hebrew. multiplying I will multiply it, that is, multiply it in every age, so as to perpetuate it. 'Tis supposed that the Turks at this day descended from Ishmael, and they are a great people.

11. Ishmael, that is, God will hear; and the reason is, because the Lord hath heard: he hath, and therefore he will. The experience we have had of God's seasonable kindness in distress should encourage us to hope for the like help in the like exigencies. Even there, where there is little cry of devotion, the God of pity hears the cry of affliction: tears speak as well as prayers.

12. He will be a wild man - A wild ass of a man, so the word is: rude, and bold and fearing no man; untamed, untractable, living at large, and impatient of service and restraint. His hand will be against every man - That is his sin, and every man's hand against him - That is his punishment. Note, Those that have turbulent spirits have commonly troublesome lives: they that are provoking, and injurious to others, must expect to be repaid in their own coin. And yet, he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren - Though threatened and insulted by all his neighbours, yet he shall keep his ground, and, for Abram's sake more than his own, shall be able to make his part good with them. Accordingly we read, chap. xxv, 18, that he died, as he lived, in the presence of all his brethren.

13. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her - That is, thus she made confession of his name, Thou God seest me - This should be with her, his name for ever, and this his memorial, by which she will know him, and remember him while she lives, Thou God seest me. Thou seest my sorrow and affliction. This Hagar especially refers to: when we have brought ourselves into distress by our own folly, yet God has not forsaken us. Thou seest the sincerity of my repentance. Thou seest me, if in any instance I depart from thee. This thought should always restrain us from sin, and excite us to duty, Thou God seest me. Have I here also looked after him that seeth me? - Probably she knew not who it was that

talked with her till he was departing, and then looking after him, with a reflexion like that of the two disciples, Luke xxiv, 31, 32. Here also - Not only in Abram's tent, and at his altar, but here also, in this wilderness: here, where I never expected it, where I was out of the way of my duty?

14. The well was called Beer-lahai-roi - The well of him that lives and sees me. 'Tis likely Hagar put this name upon it, and it was retained long after. This was the place where the God of glory manifested the special care he took of a poor woman in distress. Those that are graciously admitted into communion with God, and receive seasonable comforts from him, should tell others what he has done for their souls, that they also may be encouraged to seek him and trust in him.

XVII This chapter contains articles of agreement betwixt the great Jehovah, the father of mercies, and pious Abram, the father of the faithful. Mention was made of this covenant, chap. xv, 18. but here it is particularly drawn up. Here are,

I. The circumstances of the making of this covenant, the time and manner, ver. 1. and the posture Abram was in, ver. 3.

II. The covenant itself, in the particular instances.

1. That he should be the father of many nations, ver. 4. 6. and in token of that his name was changed, ver. 5.

2. That God would be a God to him and his seed, and would give them the land of Canaan, ver. 7, 8. and the seal of this part of the covenant was circumcision, ver. 9-14.

3. That he should have a son by Sarai, and in token of that her name was changed, ver. 15, 16. This promise Abraham received, ver. 17. And his request for Ishmael, (ver. 18.) was answered abundantly to his satisfaction, ver. 19-22.

III. The circumcision of Abraham and his family, according to God's appointment, ver. 23-27.

1. And when Abram was ninety nine years old - Full thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael. So long the promise of Isaac was deferred;

1. Perhaps to correct Abram's over-hasty marrying of Hagar.

2. That Abram and Sarai being so far stricken in age, God's power in this matter might be the more magnified. The Lord appeared unto Abram - In some visible display of God's immediate glorious presence with him. And said, I am the Almighty God - By this name he chose to make himself known to Abram, rather than by his name Jehovah, Exod. vi, 3. He used it to Jacob, chap. xxxv,

11. They called him by this name, chap. xxviii, 5; xliii, 14; xlvi, 24.  
3. It is the name of God that is mostly used throughout the book of Job, at least 30 times in the discourses of that book, in which Jehovah is used but once. After Moses, Jehovah is more frequently used, and this very rarely. I am El-Shaddai. It speaks the almighty power of God, either

1. As an avenger, from |wrv| he destroyed, or laid waste; so some: and they think God took this title from the destruction of the old world: Or,

2. As a benefactor, |v| for |rva| who, and |yr| it sufficeth. Our old English translation reads it here, very significantly, I am God All-sufficient. The God with whom we have to do, is self-sufficient; he hath every thing, and he needs not any thing. And he is enough to us, if we be in covenant with him; we have all in him, and we have enough in him; enough to satisfy our most enlarged desires; enough to supply the defect of every thing else, and to secure us happiness for our immortal souls. But the covenant is mutual, walk before me, and be thou perfect - That is, upright and sincere. Observe,

1. That to walk before God, is to set God always before us, and to think, and speak, and act, in every thing as those that are always under his eye. It is to have a constant regard to his word, as our rule, and to his glory, as our end, in all our actions. It is to be inward with him in all the duties of religious worship, and to be entire for him in all holy conversation.

2. That upright walking with God is the condition of our interest in his all-sufficiency. If we neglect him, or dissemble with him, we forfeit the benefit of our relation to him.

3. A continual regard to God's all-sufficiency will have a great influence upon our upright walking with him.

3. And Abram fell on his face while God talked with him - Either,

1. As one overcome by the brightness of the Divine glory: Daniel and John did so likewise. Or.

2. As one ashamed of himself, and blushing to think of the honours done to one so unworthy. He looks upon himself with humility, and upon God with reverence, and, in token of both, falls on his face.

4. The promise is here introduced with solemnity: As for me, saith the Great God, Behold, behold and admire it, behold and be assured of it, my covenant is with thee. And thou shalt be a father of many nations - This implies,

1. That his seed after the flesh should be very numerous, both in

Isaac and in Ishmael, and in the sons of Keturah. And the event answered, for there have been, and are, more of the children of men descended from Abraham, than from any one man at equal distance with him from Noah, the common root.

2. That all believers, in every age, should be looked upon as his spiritual seed, as the father of the faithful. In this sense the apostle directs us to understand this promise, Rom. iv, 16, 17. He is the father of those, in every nation, that, by faith, enter into covenant with God, and (as the Jewish writers express it) are gathered under the wings of the divine majesty.

5. In token of this, his name was changed from Abram, a high father, to Abraham, the father of a multitude. This was to confirm the faith of Abraham, while he was childless; perhaps even his own name was sometimes an occasion of grief to him; Why should he be called a high father, who was not a father at all? But now God had promised him a numerous issue, and had given him a name which signified so much; that name was his joy.

7. And I will establish my covenant - Not to be altered or revoked; not with thee only, then it would die with thee but with thy seed after thee; and it is not only thy seed after the flesh, but thy spiritual seed. It is everlasting in the evangelical meaning of it. The covenant of grace is everlasting; it is from everlasting in the counsels of it, and to everlasting in the consequences of it; and the external administration of it is transmitted, with the seal of it, to the seed of believers, and the internal administration of it by the Spirit to Christ's seed in every age. This is a covenant of exceeding great and precious promises. Here are two which indeed are all-sufficient, that God would be their God. All the privileges of the covenant, all its joys, and all its hopes, are summed up in this. A man needs desire no more than this to make him happy. What God is himself, that he will be to his people: wisdom to guide and counsel them, power to protect and support them, goodness to supply and comfort them; what faithful worshippers can expect from the God they serve, believers shall find in God as theirs. This is enough, yet not all.

8. And I will give thee Canaan for an everlasting possession - God had before promised this land to Abraham and his seed, ver. 18. But here, it is promised for an everlasting possession, as a type of heaven, that everlasting rest which remains for the people of God. This is that better country to which Abraham had an eye, and the grant of which was that which answered the vast extent of that promise, that God would be to them a God; so that if God had not designed this, he would have been ashamed to be called their God, Heb. xi, 16. As the land of Canaan was secured to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; so heaven is secured to all his spiritual seed for a possession truly everlasting. The offer of this eternal life is made in the word, and confirmed by the sacraments,

to all that are under the external administration of the covenant, and the earnest of it is given to all believers.

10. The token of the covenant, is circumcision, for the sake of which the covenant is itself called the covenant of circumcision, Acts vii, 8. It is here said to be the covenant which Abraham and his seed must keep, as a copy or counterpart, it is called a sign and seal, Rom. iv, 11, for it was.

1. A confirmation to Abraham and his seed of those promises which were God's part of the covenant, assuring them that, in due time, Canaan should be theirs: and the continuance of this ordinance, after Canaan was theirs, intimates, that that promise looked farther, to another Canaan.

2. An obligation upon Abraham and his seed to that duty which was their part of the covenant, not only to the duty of accepting the covenants and putting away the corruption of the flesh, which were primarily signified by circumcision, but in general to the observation of all God's commands. They who will have God to be to them a God, must consent to be to him a people. Now,

1. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, for all things by the law were purged with blood, Heb. ix, 22. See Exod. xxiv, 8. But the blood of Christ being shed, all bloody ordinances are now abolished. Circumcision therefore gives way to baptism.

2. It was peculiar to the males, though the women also were included in the covenant.

3. Christ having not yet offered himself for us, God would have man to enter into covenant, by the offering of some part of his own body, and no part could be better spared.

4. The ordinance was to be administered to children when they were eight days old, that they might gather some strength to be able to undergo the pain of it.

5. The children of the strangers were to be circumcised, which looked favourable upon the Gentiles, who should, in due time be brought into the family of Abraham, by faith. Here is,  
(1.) The promise made to Abraham of a son by Sarai, that son in whom the promise made to him should be fulfilled, that he should be the father of many nations, for she also shall be a mother of nations, and kings of people shall be of her, ver. 16. Note,

1. God reveals the purposes of his goodwill to his people by degrees. God had told Abraham long before, that he should have a son, but never 'till now that he should have a son by Sarai.

2. The blessing of the Lord makes fruitful, and adds no sorrow with it; no such sorrow as was in Hagar's case. I will bless her,



with the blessing of fruitfulness, and then thou shalt have a son of her.

3. Civil government and order is a great blessing to the church. It is promised not only that people, but kings of people should be of her; not a headless rout, but a well modelled, well governed society.

15. Sarah shall her name be - The same letter is added to her name that was to Abraham's. Sarai signifies my princess, as if her honour were confined to one family only: Sarah signifies a princess, viz. of multitudes.

17. Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed - It was a laughter of delight, not of distrust. Now it was that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, now he saw it and was glad, John viii, 56, for as he saw heaven in the promise of Canaan, so he saw Christ in the promise of Isaac, and said, Shall a child be born to him that is an hundred years old? - He doth not here speak of it, as at all doubtful, for we are sure he staggered not at the promise, Rom. iv, 20, but as wonderful, and that which could not be effected but by the almighty power of God.

18. And Abraham said, O that Ishmael might live before thee! - This he speaks nor as desiring that Ishmael might be preferred before the son he should have by Sarah, but as dreading lest he should be forsaken of God, he puts up this petition on his behalf. The great thing we should desire of God, for our children, is, that they may live before him, that is, that they may be kept in covenant with him, and may have grace to walk before him in their uprightness. God's answer to this prayer, is an answer of peace. Abraham could not say he sought God's face in vain.

20. As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; I have blessed him - That is, I have many blessings in store for him.

1. His posterity shall be numerous; I will multiply him exceedingly;

2. They shall be considerable; twelve princes shall he beget. We may charitably hope that spiritual blessings also were bestowed upon him, though the visible church was not brought out of his loins.

21. He names that child, Isaac - Laughter, because Abraham rejoiced in spirit when this son was promised him.

XVIII We have an account in this chapter of another interview between God and Abraham, probably within a few days after the former, as the reward of his chearful obedience to the law of circumcision. Here is,

**I. The visit which God made him, ver. 1-8**

**II. The matters discoursed of between them,**

**1. The purposes of God's love concerning Sarah, ver. 9-15.**

**2. The purposes of God's wrath concerning Sodom.**

**(1.) The discovery God made to Abraham of his design to destroy Sodom, ver. 16-22.**

**(2.) The intercession Abraham made for Sodom, ver. 23-33.**

**1. This appearance of God to Abraham seems to have had in it more of freedom and familiarity, and less of grandeur and majesty, than those we have hitherto read of, and therefore more resembles that great visit which in the fulness of time the Son of God was to make to the world. He sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day - Not so much to repose himself, as to seek an opportunity of doing good, by giving entertainment to strangers.**

**2. And lo three men - These three men were three spiritual heavenly beings, now assuming human shapes, that they might be visible to Abraham, and conversable with him. Some think they were all three created angels; others, that one of them was the Son of God. He bowed himself towards the ground - Religion doth not destroy but improve good manners, and teaches us to honour all men.**

**9. Where is Sarah thy wife? - By naming her, they gave intimation to Abraham, that tho' they seemed strangers, yet they well knew him and his family: by enquiring after her, they shewed a kind concern for the family of one, whom they found respectful to them. And by speaking of her, she over-hearing it, they drew her to listen to what was farther to be said.**

**10. I will certainly return unto thee - And visit thee. God will return to those that bid him welcome.**

**12. Sarah laughed within herself - It was not a laughter of faith, like Abraham's, chap. xvii, 17, but a laughter of doubting and distrust. The great objection which Sarah could not get over was her age. I am waxed old, and past child-bearing in a course of nature, especially having been hitherto barren, and which magnifies the difficulty, My Lord is old also. Observe here, That Sarah calls Abraham her Lord, and the Holy Ghost takes notice of it to her honour, and recommends it to the imitation of all Christian wives, 1Pe iii, 6. Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord, in token of respect and subjection.**

**17. Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do - Thus doth God in his councils express himself after the manner of men, with deliberation. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. Those that by faith live a life of communion with God, cannot but**

know more of his mind than other people. They have a better insight into what is present, and a better foresight of what is to come.

19. I know Abraham that he will command his children, and his household after him - This is a bright part of Abraham's character. He not only prayed with his family, but he taught them, as a man of knowledge; nay, he commanded them as a man in authority, and was prophet and king, as well as priest, in his own house. And he not only took care of his children, but of his household: his servants were catechized servants. Masters of families should instruct, and inspect the manners of all under their roof. And this is given as the reason why God would make known to him his purpose concerning Sodom; because he was communicative of his knowledge, and improved it for the benefit of those that were under his charge.

21. I will go down now and see - Not as if there were any thing concerning which God is in doubt; but he is pleased thus to express himself after the manner of men.

23. Abraham drew near - This expression intimates, A holy concern. A holy confidence; he drew near with an assurance of faith, drew near as a prince, Job xxxi, 37.

27. Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes - He speaks as one amazed at his own boldness, and the liberty God graciously allowed him, considering God's greatness, he is the Lord; and his own meanness, but dust and ashes. Whenever we draw near to God, it becomes us reverently to acknowledge the vast distance that there is between us and Him. He is the Lord of glory, we are worms of the earth.

30. Oh let not the Lord be angry - The importunity which believers use in their addresses to God is such, that if they were dealing with a man like themselves, they could not but fear that he would be angry with them. But he with whom we have to do is God and not man, and he is pleased when he is wrestled with. But why then did Abraham leave off asking when he had prevailed so far as to get the place spared if there were but ten righteous in it? Either,

1. Because he owned that it deserved to perish if there were not so many: as the dresser of the vineyard, who consented that the barren tree should be cut down if one year's trial more did not make it fruitful, Luke xiii, 9. Or,

2. Because God restrained his spirit from asking any farther. When God hath determined the ruin of a place, he forbids it to be prayed for, Jer. vii, 16.

33. Abraham returned into his place - To wait what the event

would be; and it proved that his prayer was heard, and yet Sodom not spared, because there were not ten righteous in it.

**XIX** We read, chap. 18. of God's coming to take a view of the state of Sodom, what its wickedness was, and what righteous there were in it: here we have the result of that enquiry.

**I.** It was found upon trial that Lot was very good, ver. 1, 2, 3. and it did not appear that there were any more of the same character.

**II.** It was found that the Sodomites were very wicked, ver. 4-11.

**III.** Special care was therefore taken for the securing of Lot and his family, ver, 12-23.

**IV.** The ruin of Sodom, and of Lot's wife, ver. 24-26. with a general repetition of the story, ver. 27-29.

**V.** A foul sin that Lot was guilty of, in committing incest with his two daughters, ver. 30-38.

**1.** And there came two - Probably two of the three that had just before been with Abraham, the two created angels who were sent to execute God's purpose concerning Sodom.

**3.** And he pressed upon them greatly - Partly because he would by no means have them to expose themselves to the perils of lodging in the streets of Sodom, and partly because he was desirous of their converse.

**4.** Here were old and young all from every quarter - The old were not past it, and the young were soon come up to it. Either they had no magistrates to protect the peaceable, or their magistrates were themselves aiding and abetting.

**8.** I have two daughters - This was unadvisedly and unjustifiably offered. It is true, of two evils we must chose the less, but of two sins we must chose neither, nor ever do evil that good may come of it.

**11.** And they smote the men with blindness - This was designed to put an end to their attempt, and to be an earnest of their utter ruin the next day.

**13.** We will destroy this place - The holy angels are ministers of God's wrath for the destruction of sinners, as well as of his mercy for the preservation and deliverance of his people.

**14.** Up, get you out this place - The manner of expression is startling. It was not time to trifle, when the destruction was just at the door. But he seemed to them as one that mocked - They thought perhaps that the assault which the Sodomites had just now made upon his house had disturbed his head, and put him into

such a fright that he knew not what he said. They that made a jest of every thing, made a jest of that, and so perished in the overthrow. Thus many who are warned of the danger they are in by sin, make a light matter of it; such will perish with their blood upon their heads.

16. Tho' Lot did not make a jest of the warning as his sons-in-law, yet he lingered, he did not make so much haste as the case required. And it might have been fatal to him, if the angels had not laid hold on his hand, and brought him forth. Herein the Lord was merciful to him, otherwise he might justly have left him to perish, since he was loath to depart. If God had not been merciful to us, our lingering had been our ruin.

17. Look not behind thee - He must not loiter by the way; stay not in all the plain - For it would all be made one dead sea: he must not take up short of the place of refuge appointed him; escape to the mountain - Such as these are the commands given to those who through grace are delivered out of a sinful state.

1. Return not to sin and Satan, for that's looking back to Sodom.

2. Rest not in the world, for that's staying in the plain. And,

3. Reach toward Christ and heaven, for that is escaping to the mountain, short of which we must not take up.

22. I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither - The very presence of good men in a place helps to keep off judgments. See what care God takes for the preservation of his people!

24. Then the Lord rained - from the Lord - God the Son, from God the Father, for the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. He that is the saviour will be the destroyer of those that reject the salvation.

25. And he overthrew the cities, and all the inhabitants of them, the plain, and all that grew upon the ground - It was an utter ruin, and irreparable; that fruitful valley remains to this day a great lake, or dead sea. Travelers say it is about thirty miles long, and ten miles broad. It has no living creature in it: it is not moved by the wind: the smell of it is offensive: things do not easily sink in it. The Greeks call it Asphaltis, from a sort of pitch which it casts up. Jordan falls into it, and is lost there. It was a punishment that answered their sin. Burning lusts against nature were justly punished with this preternatural burning.

26. But his wife looked back from behind him - Herein she disobeyed an express command. Probably she hankered after her house and goods in Sodom, and was loath to leave them. Christ intimates this to be her sin, Luke xvii, 31, 32, she too much regarded her stuff. And her looking back spoke an inclination to

go back; and therefore our saviour uses it as a warning against apostasy from our Christian profession. And she became a pillar of salt - She was struck dead in the place, yet her body did not fall down, but stood fixed and erect like a pillar or monument, not liable to waste or decay, as human bodies exposed to the air are, but metamorphosed into a metallic substance, which would last perpetually. Our communion with God consists in our gracious regard to him, and his gracious regard to us. We have here therefore the communion that was between God and Abraham in the event concerning Sodom, as before in the consultation concerning It; for communion with God is to be kept up in providences as well as in ordinances.

27. And Abraham gat up early - And to see what was become of his prayers, he went to the very place where he had stood before the Lord.

28. And he looked toward Sodom - Not as Lot's wife did, tacitly reflecting upon the divine severity, but humbly adoring it, and acquiescing in it. Here is God's favourable regard to Abraham, ver. 29. As before when Abraham prayed for Ishmael, God heard him for Isaac, so now when he prayed for Sodom, he heard for Lot.

29. God remembered Abraham, and for his sake sent Lot out of the overthrow - God will certainly give an answer of peace to the prayer of faith in his own way and time.

30. He feared to dwell in Zoar - Here is the great trouble and distress that Lot was brought into after his deliverance, ver. 29. He was frightened out of Zoar, durst not dwell there, either because he was conscious to himself that it was a refuge of his own choosing, and that therein he had foolishly prescribed to God, and therefore could not but distrust his safety in it. Probably he found it as wicked as Sodom; and therefore concluded it could not long survive it; or perhaps he observed the rise and increase of those waters, which, after the conflagration, began to overflow the plain, and which, mixing with the ruins, by degrees made the dead sea; in those waters he concluded Zoar must needs perish, (though it had escaped the fire) because it stood upon the same flat. He was now glad to go to the mountain, the place which God had appointed for his shelter. See in Lot what those bring themselves to at last, that forsake the communion of saints for secular advantages.

XX We have here,

I. Abraham's sin in denying his wife, and Abimelech's sin thereupon in taking her, ver. 1, 2.

II. God's discourse with Abimelech in a dream upon this occasion; wherein he shews him his error, ver. 3. accepts his plea, ver. 4, 5,

6. and directs him to make restitution, ver. 7.

III. Abimelech's discourse with Abraham; wherein he chides him for the cheat he had put upon him, ver. 8, 9, 10. and Abraham excuses it as well as he can, ver. 11, 12, 13.

IV. The good issue of the story; in which Abimelech restores Abraham his wife, ver. 14, 15, 16. and Abraham by prayer prevails with God for the removal of the judgment Abimelech was under, ver. 17, 18.

1. And Abraham sojourned in Gerar - We are not told upon what occasion he removed, whether terrified by the destruction of Sodom, or, as some of the Jewish writers say, because he was grieved at Lot's incest with his daughters, and the reproach which the Canaanites cast upon him for his kinsman's sake. The king of Gerar sent and took her - To his house, in order to the taking of her to his bed.

3. But God came to Abimelech in a dream - It appears by this that God revealed himself by dreams, which evidenced themselves to be divine and supernatural, not only to his servants the prophets, but even to those that were out of the pale of the church; but then usually it was with some regard to God's own people.

4. Wilt thou slay also a righteous nation - Not such a nation as Sodom.

6. I withheld thee from sinning against me - It is God that restrains men from doing the ill they would do; it is not from him that there is sin, but it is from him that there is not more sin, either by his influence on mens minds checking their inclination to sin, or by his providence taking away the opportunity. It is a great mercy to be hindered from committing sin, which God must have the glory of whoever is the instrument.

9. Thou hast done deeds that ought not to be done - Equivocation and dissimulation, however they may be palliated, are very ill things, and by no means to be admitted in any case. He takes it as a very great injury to himself and his family, that Abraham had thus exposed them to sin, What have I offended thee? - If I had been thy worst enemy, thou couldst not have done me a worse turn, nor taken a more effectual course to be avenged on me. Note, We ought to reckon, that those do us the greatest dislikedness in the world, that any way tempt us or expose us to sin, though they may pretend friendship, and offer that which is grateful enough to the corrupt nature. He challenges him to assign any just cause he had to suspect them as a dangerous people for an honest man to live among.

10. What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing - What reason hadst thou to think, that if we had known her to be thy wife, thou

wouldst have been exposed to any danger by it?

11. I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me - There are many places and persons that have more of the fear of God in them than we think they have; perhaps they are not called by our name, they do not wear our badges, they do not tie themselves to that which we have an opinion of; and therefore we conclude they have not the fear of God in their hearts!

13. When God caused me to wander from my father's house - Then we settled this matter. It may be, that God denied Abraham and Sarah the blessing of children so long to punish them for this sinful compact they had made to deny one another: if they will not own their marriage, why should God own it? But we may suppose, that alter this reproof they agreed never to do so again, and then presently we read, chap. xxi, 1, 2, that Sarah conceived.

16. Thy brother is to thee a covering of the eyes - Thou must look at no other, nor desire to be looked at by any other. Yoke-fellows must be to each other for a covering of the eyes. The marriage-covenant is a covenant with the eyes, like Job's, Job xxxi, 1.

XXI In this chapter we have,

I. Isaac, the child of promise, born into Abraham's family, ver. 1-8.

II. Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, cast out of it, ver. 9-21.

III. Abraham's league with Abimelech, ver. 22-32.

IV. His devotion to God, ver. 33, 34.

2. Sarah conceived - Sarah by faith, received strength to conceive, Heb. xi, 11. God therefore, by promise, gave that strength. Abraham was old, and Sarah old, and both as good as dead, and then the word of God took place.

4. He circumcised his son - The covenant being established with him, the seal of the covenant was administered to him.

6. And Sarah said, God has made me to laugh - He hath given me both cause to rejoice, and a heart to rejoice. And it adds to the comfort of any mercy to have our friends rejoice with us in it, See Luke i, 58. They that hear will laugh with me - Others will rejoice in this instance of God's power and goodness, and be encouraged to trust in him.

9. Sarah saw the son of the Egyptian mocking - Mocking Isaac no doubt, for it is sad, with reference to this, Gal. iv, 29, that he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the



spirit. Ishmael is here called the son of the Egyptian, because (as some think) the four hundred years affliction of the seed of Abraham by the Egyptians began now, and was to be dated from hence.

10. Cast out the bond-woman - This was a type of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, who, though they were the seed of Abraham, yet, because they submitted not to the gospel-covenant, were unchurched and disfranchised. And that, which above any thing provoked God to cast them off, was, their mocking and persecuting the gospel-church, God's Isaac, in his infancy.

11. The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight - it grieved him that Ishmael had given such provocation. And still more that Sarah insisted upon such a punishment.

13. The casting out of Ishmael was not his ruin. He shall be a nation because he is thy seed - We are not sure that it was his eternal ruin. It is presumption to say, that all these who are left out of the external dispensation of God's covenant are excluded from all his mercies. Those may be saved who are not thus honoured.

14. And Abraham rose up early in the morning - We may suppose immediately after he had in the night-visions received orders to do this.

17. God heard the voice of the lad - We read not of a word he said; but his sighs and groans, cried loud in the ears of the God of mercy. An angel was sent to comfort Hagar, who assures her, God has heard the voice of the lad where he is - Though he be in the wilderness; for wherever we are, there is a way open heavenwards; therefore lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand - God's readiness to help us when we are in trouble must not slacken, but quicken our endeavours to help ourselves. He repeats the promise concerning her son, that he should be a great nation, as a reason why she should bestir herself to help him.

31. Beer-sheba - That is, the well of the oath, in remembrance of the covenant that they swear to, that they might be ever mindful of it.

33. And Abraham planted a grove - For a shade to his tent, or perhaps an orchard of fruit trees; and there, though we cannot say he settled, for God would have him while he lived to be a stranger and a pilgrim, yet he sojourned many days. And called there on the name of the Lord - Probably in the grove he planted, which was his oratory, or house of prayer: he kept up publick worship, to which probably his neighbours resorted, and joined with him. Men should not only retain their goodness wherever they go, but do all they can to propagate it, and make others good. The everlasting God - Though God had made himself known to Abraham as his God in particular; yet he forgets not to give glory

to him as the Lord of all, the everlasting God, who was before all worlds, and will be when time and days shall be no more.

**XXII** We have here,

**I.** The strange command which God gave to Abraham, ver. 1, 2.

**II.** Abraham's strange obedience to this command, ver. 3-10.

**III.** The strange issue of this trial.

(1.) The sacrificing of Isaac was countermanded, ver. 11, 12.

(2.) Another sacrifice was provided, ver. 13, 14.

(3.) The covenant was renewed with Abraham hereupon, ver. 15-19.

**IV.** An account of some of Abraham's relations, ver. 20-24.

1. Here is the trial of Abraham's faith, whether it continued so strong, so vigourous, so victorious, after a long settlement in communion with God, as it was at first, when by it he left his country: then it appeared that he loved God better than his father; now, that he loved him better than his son. After these things - After all the other exercises he had had, all the difficulties he had gone through: now perhaps he was beginning to think the storms were blown over but after all, this encounter comes, which is stranger than any yet. God did tempt Abraham - Not to draw him to sin, so Satan tempts; but to discover his graces, how strong they were, that they might be found to praise and honour and glory. The trial itself: God appeared to him as he had formerly done, called him by name Abraham, that name which had been given him in ratification of the promise: Abraham, like a good servant, readily answered, Here am I; what saith my Lord unto his servant? Probably he expected some renewed promise, like those, chap. xv, 1; xvii, 1, but to his great amazement that which God hath to say to him is in short, Abraham, go kill thy son: and this command is given him in such aggravating language as makes the temptation abundantly more grievous. When God speaks, Abraham, no doubt, takes notice of every word, and listens attentively to it: and every word here is a sword in his bones; the trial is steel'd with trying phrases. Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that he should afflict? No, it is not; yet when Abraham's faith is to be tried, God seems to take pleasure in the aggravation of the trial.

2. And he said, take thy son - Not thy bullocks and thy lambs; how willingly would Abraham have parted with them by thousands to redeem Isaac! Not thy servant, no, not the steward of thine house. Thine only son - Thine only son by Sarah. Ishmael was lately cast out, to the grief of Abraham, and now Isaac only was left and must he go too? Yes: take Isaac, him by name, thy laughter, that son indeed. Yea, that son whom thou lovest - The

trial was of Abraham's love to God, and therefore it must be in a beloved son: in the Hebrew 'tis expressed more emphatically, and I think might very well be read thus, Take now that son of thine, that only son of thine, whom thou lovest, that Isaac. And get thee into the land of Moriah - Three days journey off: so that he might have time to consider it, and if he do it, must do it deliberately. And offer him for a burnt offering - He must not only kill his son, but kill him as a sacrifice, with all that sedateness and composedness of mind, with which he used to offer his burnt-offering.

3. The several steps of this obedience, all help to magnify it, and to shew that he was guided by prudence, and governed by faith, in the whole transaction.

(1.) He rises early - Probably the command was given in the visions of the night, and early the next morning he sets himself about it, did not delay, did not demur. Those that do the will of God heartily will do it speedily.

(2.) He gets things ready for a sacrifice, and it should seem, with his own hands, cleaves the wood for the burnt-offering.

(3.) He left his servants at some distance off, lest they should have created him some disturbance in his strange oblation. Thus when Christ was entering upon his agony in the garden, he took only three of his disciples with him.

6. Isaac's carrying the wood was a type of Christ, who carried his own cross, while Abraham, with a steady and undaunted resolution, carried the fatal knife and fire.

7. Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb? - This is,

1. A trying question to Abraham; how could he endure to think that Isaac is himself the lamb?

2. 'Tis a teaching question to us all, that when we are going to worship God, we should seriously consider whether we have every thing ready, especially the lamb for a burnt-offering. Behold, the fire is ready; that is, the Spirit's assistance, and God's acceptance: the wood is ready, the instituted ordinances designed to kindle our affections, which indeed, without the Spirit, are but like wood without fire, but the Spirit works by them. All things are now ready, but where is the lamb? Where is the heart? Is that ready to be offered up to God, to ascend to him as a burnt-offering?

8. My son, God will provide himself a lamb - This was the language either,

1. Of his obedience; we must offer the lamb which God has appointed now to be offered; thus giving him this general rule of submission to the divine will to prepare him for the application of it to himself. Or,

2. Of his faith; whether he meant it so or no, this proved to be the meaning of it; a sacrifice was provided instead of Isaac. Thus,

1. Christ the great sacrifice of atonement was of God's providing: when none in heaven or earth could have found a lamb for that burnt-offering, God himself found the ransom.

2. All our sacrifices of acknowledgement are of God's providing too; 'tis he that prepares the heart. The broken and contrite spirit is a sacrifice of God, of his providing.

9. With the same resolution and composedness of mind, he applies himself to the compleating of this sacrifice. After many a weary step, and with a heavy heart, he arrives at length at the fatal place; builds the altar, an altar of earth, we may suppose, the saddest that ever be built; lays the wood in order for Isaac's funeral pile; and now tells him the amazing news. Isaac, for ought appears, is as willing as Abraham; we do not find that he made any objection against it. God commands it to be done, and Isaac has learned to submit. Yet it is necessary that a sacrifice be bound; the great Sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, was to be offered up, must be bound, and therefore so must Isaac. Having bound him he lays him upon the altar, and his hand upon the head of the sacrifice. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth! here is an act of faith and obedience which deserves to be a spectacle to God, angels and men; Abraham's darling, the church's hope, the heir of promise, lies ready to bleed and die by his own father's hands! Now this obedience of Abraham in offering up Isaac is a lively representation,

1. Of the love of God to us, in delivering up his only begotten Son to suffer and die for us, as a sacrifice. Abraham was obliged both in duty and gratitude to part with Isaac and parted with him to a friend, but God was under no obligations to us, for we were enemies.

2. Of our duty to God in return of that love we must tread in the steps of this faith of Abraham. God, by his word, calls us to part with all for Christ, all our sins, tho' they have been as a right hand, or a right eye, or an Isaac; all those things that are rivals with Christ for the sovereignty of our heart; and we must chearfully let them all go. God, by his providence, which is truly the voice of God, calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it by a chearful resignation and submission to his holy will.

11. The Angel of the Lord - That is, God himself, the eternal Word, the Angel of the covenant, who was to be the great Redeemer and Comforter.

12. Lay not thine hand upon the lad - God's time to help his people is, when they are brought to the greatest extremity: the

more eminent the danger is, and the nearer to be put in execution, the more wonderful and the more welcome is the deliverance. Now know I that thou fearest God - God knew it before, but now Abraham had given a memorable evidence of it. He need do no more, what he had done was sufficient to prove the religious regard he had to God and his authority. The best evidence of our fearing God is our being willing to honour him with that which is dearest to us, and to part with all to him, or for him.

13. Behold a ram - Tho' that blessed Seed was now typified by Isaac, yet the offering of him up was suspended 'till the latter end of the world, and in the mean time the sacrifice of beasts was accepted, as a pledge of that expiation which should be made by that great sacrifice. And it is observable, that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterward built upon this mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii, 1, and mount Calvary, where Christ was crucified, was not far off.

14. And Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh - The Lord will provide. Probably alluding to what he had said, ver. 8. God will provide himself a lamb - This was purely the Lord's doing: let it be recorded for the generations to come; that the Lord will see; he will always have his eyes upon his people in their straits, that he may come in with seasonable succor in the critical juncture. And that he will be seen, be seen in the mount, in the greatest perplexities of his people; he will not only manifest but magnify his wisdom, power and goodness in their deliverance. Where God sees and provides, he should be seen and praised. And perhaps it may refer to God manifest in the flesh.

15. And the Angel - Christ. Called unto Abraham - Probably while the ram was yet burning. Very high expressions are here of God's favour to Abraham, above any he had yet been blessed with.

16. Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not with-held thy son, thine only son - He lays a mighty emphasis upon that, and ver. 18, praises it as an act of obedience, in it thou hast obeyed my voice. By myself have I sworn - For he could swear by no greater.

17. Multiplying I will multiply thee - Those that part with any thing for God, shall have it made up to them with unspeakable advantage. Abraham has but one son, and is willing to part with that one in obedience to God; well, saith God, thou shalt be recompensed with thousands and millions. Here is a promise,

1. Of the Spirit, In blessing I will bless thee - The Gift of the Holy Ghost; the promise of the Spirit was that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, Gal. iii, 14.

2. Of the increase of the church; that believers, his spiritual seed, should be many as the stars of heaven.

3. Of spiritual victories; Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies - Believers by their faith overcome the world, and triumph over all the powers of darkness. Probably Zacharias refers to this part of the oath, Luke i, 74. That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear. But the crown of all is the last promise,

4. Of the incarnation of Christ; In thy seed (one particular person that shall descend from thee, for he speaks not of many but of one, as the apostle observes, Gal. iii, 16.) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed - Christ is the great blessing of the world. Abraham was ready to give up his son for a sacrifice to the honour of God, and on that occasion God promised to give his son a sacrifice for the salvation of man.

20. This is recorded here, 1. To show that tho' Abraham saw his own family highly dignified with peculiar privileges, yet he did not look with contempt upon his relations, but was glad to hear of the increase and prosperity of their families. 2. To make way for the following story of the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, a daughter of this family.

XXIII Here is,

I. Abraham a mourner, for the death of Sarah, ver. 1, 2.

II. Abraham a purchaser of a burying place for Sarah.

(1.) The purchase proposed by Abraham, ver. 3, 4.

(2.) Treated of and agreed, ver. 5-16.

(3.) The purchase-money paid, ver. 16.

(4.) The premises conveyed and secured to Abraham, ver. 17, 18,

20.

(5.) Sarah's funeral, ver. 19.

2. Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep - He did not only perform the ceremonies of mourning according to the custom of those times, but did sincerely lament the great loss he had, and gave proof of the constancy of his affection. Therefore these two words are used, he came both to mourn and to weep.

4. I am a stranger and a sojourner with you - Therefore I am unprovided, and must become a suiter to you for a burying-place. This was one occasion which Abraham took to confess that he was a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth. The death of our relations should effectually mind us that we are not at home in this world. That I may bury my dead out of my sight - Death will make those unpleasant to our sight, who while they lived were the desire of our eyes. The countenance that was fresh and lively becomes pale

and ghastly, and fit to be removed into the land of darkness.

6. Thou art a prince of God among us - So the word is; not only great, but good. He called himself a stranger and a sojourner, they call him a great prince.

7. Abraham returns them thanks for their kind offer, with all possible decency and respect. Religion teaches good manners, and those abuse it that place it in rudeness and clownishness.

11. The field give I thee - Abraham thought he must be intreated to sell it, but upon the first mention, without intreaty, he freely gives it.

13. I will give thee money for the field - It was not in pride that Abraham refused the gift; but

1. In justice. Abraham was rich in silver and gold, and therefore would not take advantage of Ephron's generosity.

2. In prudence. He would pay for it, lest Ephron, when this good humour was over, should upbraid him with it.

15. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver - About fifty pounds of our money, but what is that between me and thee? - He would rather oblige his friend than have so much money.

20. A burying place - 'Tis worth noting,

1. That a burying-place was the first spot of ground Abraham was possessed of in Canaan.

2. That it was the only piece of land he was ever possessed of, tho' it was all his own in reversion. Those that have least of this earth find a grave in it.

XXIV The subjoining of Isaac's marriage to Sarah's funeral (with a particular reference to it, ver. 67.) shews us, that as one generation passeth away, another generation comes; and thus the entail of human nature is preserved. Here is,

I. Abraham's care about the marrying of his son, and the charge he gave to his servant about it, ver. 1-9.

II. The servant's journey into Abraham's country to seek a wife for his young master among his own relations, ver. 10-14.

III. The kind providence which brought him acquainted with Rebekah, whose father was Isaac's cousin german, ver. 15-28.

IV. The treaty of marriage with her relations, ver. 29-49.

V. Their consent obtained, ver. 50-60.

## **VI. The happy meeting and marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, ver. 61-67.**

**1. Abraham's pious care concerning his son was, that he should not marry with a daughter of Canaan, but with one of his kindred because he saw, the Canaanites were degenerating into great wickedness, and knew, that they were designed for ruin: would not marry his son among them, lest they should be either a snare to his soul, or, at least, a blot to his name. Yet he would not go himself among his kindred, lest he should be tempted to settle there: this caution is given, ver. 6, and repeated, ver. 8. Parents, in disposing of their children, should carefully consult their furtherance in the way to heaven.**

**2. His eldest servant - Probably Eliezer of Damascus, one whose conduct and affection he had had long experience of: he trusted him with this great affair, and not Isaac himself, because he would not have Isaac go at all into that country, but marry thither by proxy; and no proxy so fit as the steward of his house. This matter is settled between the master and the servant with a great deal of care and solemnity. The servant is bound by an oath to do his utmost to get a wife for Isaac among his relations, ver. 3, 4. Abraham swears him to it, both for his own satisfaction, and for the engagement of his servant to all possible care and diligence. Thus God swears his servants to their work, that, having sworn, they may perform it. Swearing being an ordinance, not peculiar to the church, but common to mankind, is to be performed by such signs as are the common usages of our country.**

**7. God's angels are ministering spirits, sent forth, not only for the protection, but guidance of the heirs of promise, Heb. i, 14. He shall send his angel before thee - And then thou shalt speed well.**

**11. He made his camels kneel down - Perhaps to unload them.**

**12. Send me good speed this day - We have leave to be particular in recommending our affairs to the care of Divine providence. Those that would have good speed must pray for it this day, in this affair. Thus we must, in all our ways acknowledge God.**

**14. Let it come to pass - He prays God, that he would please to make his way plain and clear before him, by the concurrence of minute circumstances in his favour. It is the comfort, as well as the belief, of a good man, that God's providence extends itself to the smallest occurrences, and admirably serves its own purposes by them. And it is our wisdom, in all our affairs, to follow providence. Yea, it is very desirable, and that which we may lawfully pray for, while, in the general, we set God's will before us as our rule, that he will, by hints of providence, direct us in the way of our duty, and give us indications what his mind is. Thus he guides his people with his eye, and leads them in a plain path.**



15. And before he had done speaking, behold Rebekah came out - Who in all respects, answered the characters he wished for in the woman that was to be his master's wife, handsome and healthful, humble and industrious, courteous and obliging to a stranger. And providence so ordered it, that she did that which exactly answered his sign. She not only gave him drink, but, which was more than could have been expected, she offered her service to give his camels drink, which was the very sign he proposed. God, in his providence, doth sometimes wonderfully own the prayer of faith, and gratify the innocent desires of his praying people even in little things, that he may shew the extent of his care, and may encourage them at all times, to seek him, and trust in him; yet we must take heed of being over bold in prescribing to God, lest the event should weaken our faith rather than strengthen it. And the concurrence of providences, and their minute circumstances, for the furtherance of our success in any business, ought to be particularly observed with wonder and thankfulness to the glory of God. We have been wanting to ourselves both in duty and comfort, by neglecting to observe providence.

27. Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham - Observe here,

1. He had prayed for good speed, and now he had sped well, he gives thanks.

2. As yet, he was not certain what the issue might prove, yet he gives thanks. When God's favours are coming towards us; we must meet them with our praises. The Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren - Those of them that were come out of Ur of the Chaldees, though they were not come to Canaan, but staid in Haran. They were not idolaters, but worshippers of the true God, and inclinable to the religion of Abraham's family.

29. We have here the making up of the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, related largely and particularly. Thus we are directed to take notice of God's providence in the little common occurrences of human life, and in them also to exercise our own prudence, and other graces: for the scripture was not intended only for the use of philosophers and statesmen, but to make us all wise and virtuous in the conduct of ourselves and families.

31. Come in thou blessed of the Lord - Perhaps, because they heard from Rebekah, of the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, they concluded him a good man, and therefore blessed of the Lord.

34. I am Abraham's servant - Abraham's name, no doubt, was well known among them, and respected; and we may suppose them not altogether ignorant of his state, for Abraham knew theirs, chap.

xxii, 20.

45. Before I had done speaking in my heart - Which perhaps he mentions, lest it should be suspected that Rebekah had overheard his prayer, and designedly humoured it; no, saith he, I spake it in my heart, so that none heard it but God, to whom thoughts are words, and from him the answer came.

50. The thing proceedeth from the Lord - Providence smiles upon it, and we have nothing to say against it. A marriage is then likely to be comfortable when it appears to proceed from the Lord.

52. He worshipped the Lord - As his good success went on, he went on to bless God: those that pray without ceasing should in every thing give thanks, and own God in every step of mercy.

55. Let her abide a few days, at least ten - They had consented to the marriage, and yet were loth to part with her. It is an instance of the vanity of this world, that there is nothing in it so agreeable but has its allay. They were pleased that they had matched a daughter of their family so well, and yet it was with reluctancy that they sent her away.

57. Call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth - As children ought not to marry without their parents consent, so parents ought not to marry them without their own. Before the matter is resolved on, ask at the damsel's mouth, she is a party principally concerned; and therefore ought to be principally consulted.

61. And her damsels - It seems then, when she went to the well for water, it was not because she had no servants at command, but because she took pleasure in the instances of humanity and industry.

63. He went out to meditate (or pray) in the field at the even tide - Some think he expected his servants about this time, and went out on purpose to meet them. But it should seem he went out to take the advantage of a silent evening, and a solitary field, for mediation and prayer. Our walks in the field are then truly pleasant, when in them we apply ourselves to meditation and prayer, we there have a free and open prospect of the heavens above us, and the earth around us, and the hosts and riches of both, by the view of which we should be led to the contemplation of the Maker and Owner of all. Merciful providences are then doubly comfortable, when they find us in the way of our duty: some think Isaac was now praying for good success in this affair, and meditating upon that which was proper to encourage his hope in God concerning it; and now when he sets himself, as it were, upon his watch-tower, to see what God would answer him, he sees the camels coming.

64. She lighted off her camel, and took a vail and covered herself

- In token of humility, modesty and subjection.

**XXV The sacred historian in this chapter,**

**I. Takes his leave of Abraham with an account,**

- (1.) Of his children by another wife, ver. 1-4.**
- (2.) Of his last will and testament, ver. 5, 6.**
- (3.) Of his age, death and burial, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.**

**II. He takes his leave of Ishmael, with a short account,**

- (1.) Of his children, ver. 12-16.**
- (2.) Of his age and death, ver. 17, 18.**

**III. He enters upon the history of Isaac;**

- (1.) His posterity, ver. 11.**
- (2.) The conception and birth of his two sons, with the oracle of God concerning them, ver. 19-26.**
- (3.) Their different characters, ver. 27, 28.**
- (4.) Esau's selling his birth-right to Jacob, ver. 29-34.**

**1. Five and thirty years Abraham lived after the marriage of Isaac, and all that is recorded concerning him during that time lies here in a very few verses: we hear no more of God's extraordinary appearances to him, or trials of him; for all the days even of the greatest saints are not eminent days, some slide on silently, and neither come nor go with observation: such were these last days of Abraham. We have here an account of his children by Keturah, another wife, which he married after the death of Sarah. He had buried Sarah, and married Isaac, the two dear companions of his life, and was now solitary; his family wanted a governess and it was not good for him to be thus alone; he therefore marries Keturah, probably the chief of his maid servants, born in his house, or bought with money. By her he had six sons, in whom the promise made to Abraham concerning the great increase of his posterity was in part fulfilled. The strength he received by the promise still remained in him, to shew how much the virtue of the promise exceeds the power of nature.**

**5. And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac - As he was bound to do in justice to Sarah his first wife, and to Rebekah who married Isaac upon the assurance of it.**

**6. He gave gifts - Or portions to the rest of his children, both to Ishmael, though at first he was sent empty away, and to his sons by Keturah. It was justice to provide for them; parents that do not that, are worse than infidels. It was prudence to settle them in places distant from Isaac, that they might not pretend to divide the inheritance with him. He did this while he yet lived, lest it should not have been done, or not so well done afterwards. In many cases it is wisdom for men to make their own hands their executors, and what they find to do, to do it while they live. These sons of the concubines were sent into the country that lay east from Canaan,**

and their posterity were called the children of the east, famous for their numbers. Their great increase was the fruit of the promise made to Abraham, that God would multiply his seed.

7. And these are the days of Abraham - He lived one hundred and seventy-five years; just a hundred years after he came to Canaan; so long he was a sojourner in a strange country.

8. He died in a good old age, an old man - So God had promised him. His death was his discharge from the burdens of his age: it was also the crown of the glory of his old age. He was full of years - A good man, though he should not die old, dies full of days, satisfied with living here, and longing to live in a better place. And was gathered to his people - His body was gathered to the congregation of the dead, and his soul to the congregation of the blessed. Death gathers us to our people. Those that are our people while we live, whether the people of God, or the children of this world, to them death will gather us.

9. Here is nothing recorded of the pomp or ceremony of his funeral; only we are told, his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him - It was the last office of respect they had to pay to their good father. Some distance there had formerly been between Isaac and Ishmael, but it seems either Abraham had himself brought them together while he lived, or at least his death reconciled them. They buried him, in his own burying-place which he had purchased and in which he had buried Sarah. Those that in life have been very dear to each other, may not only innocently, but laudably, desire to be buried together, that, in their deaths, they may not be divided, and in token of their hopes of rising together.

11. And God blessed Isaac - The blessing of Abraham did not die with him, but survived to all the children of the promise. But Moses presently digresseth from the story of Isaac, to give a short account of Ishmael, for as much as he also was a son of Abraham; and God had made some promises concerning him, which it was requisite we should know the accomplishment of. He had twelve sons, twelve princes they are called, ver. 16, heads of families, which, in process of time, became nations, numerous and very considerable. They peopled a very large continent that lay between Egypt and Assyria, called Arabia. The names of his twelve sons are recorded: Midian and Kedar we oft read of in scripture. And his posterity had not only tents in the fields wherein they grew rich in times of peace, but they had towns and castles, ver. 16, where in they fortified themselves in time of war. Their number and strength was the fruit of the promise made to Hagar concerning Ishmael, chap. xvi, 10. and to Abraham, chap. xvii, 20; xxi, 13.

17. He lived an hundred and thirty and seven years - Which is recorded to shew the efficacy of Abraham's prayer for him, chap.

xvii, 18. O that Ishmael might live before thee! Then he also was gathered to his people. And he died in the presence of all his brethren - With his friends about him. Who would not wish so to do?

20. And Isaac was forty years old - Not much is related concerning Isaac, but what had reference to his father, while he lived, and to his sons afterward; for Isaac seems not to have been a man of action, nor much tried, but to have spent his day, in quietness and silence.

21. And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife - Though God had promised to multiply his family, he prayed for it; for God's promises must not supersede but encourage our prayers, and be improved as the ground of our faith. Though he had prayed for this mercy many years, and it was not granted, yet he did not leave off praying for it.

22. The children struggled within her - The commotion was altogether extra-ordinary, and made her very uneasy: If it be so, or, since it is so, why am I thus? - Before the want of children was her trouble, now the struggle of the children is no less so. And she went to inquire of the Lord - Some think Melchizedek was now consulted as an oracle, or perhaps some Urim or Teraphim were now used to inquire of God by, as afterwards in the breast-plate of judgment. The word and prayer, by which we now inquire of the Lord, give great relief to those that are upon any account perplexed: it is a mighty ease to spread our case before the Lord, and ask council at his mouth.

23. Two nations are in thy womb - She was now big not only with two children, but two nations, which should not only in their manners greatly differ from each other, but in their interest contend with each other, and the issue of the contest should be that the elder should serve the younger, which was fulfilled in the subjection of the Edomites for many ages to the house of David.

25. Esau when he was born was red and hairy, as if he had been already a grown man, whence he had his name Esau, made, reared already. This was an indication of a very strong constitution, and gave cause to expect that he would be a very robust, daring, active man. But Jacob was smooth and tender as other children.

26. His hand took hold on Esau's heel - This signified,

1. Jacob's pursuit of the birth-right and blessing; from the first he reached forth to have caught hold of it, and if possible to have prevented his brother.

2. His prevailing for it at last: that in process of time he should gain his point. This passage is referred to Hosea xii, 3, and from hence he had his name Jacob, a supplanter.

27. Esau was an hunter - And a man that knew how to live by his wits, for he was a cunning hunter. A man of the field - All for the game, and never so well but as when he was in pursuit of it. And Jacob was a plain man - An honest man, that dealt fairly. And dwelt in tents - Either,

1. As a shepherd, loving that safe and silent employment of keeping sheep, to which also he bred up his children, chap. xlvi, 34. Or,

2. As a student, he frequented the tents of Melchizedek or Heber, as some understand it, to be taught by them divine things.

28. And Isaac loved Esau - Isaac though he was not a stirring man himself, yet he loved to have his son active. Esau knew how to please him, and shewed a great respect for him, by treating him often with venison, which won upon him more than one would have thought. But Rebekah loved him whom God loved.

29. Sod - That is, boiled.

30. Edom - That is, red.

31. Sell me this day thy birth-right - He cannot be excused in taking advantage of Esau's necessity, yet neither can Esau be excused who is profane, Heb. xii, 16, because for one morsel of meat he sold his birth-right. The birth-right was typical of spiritual privileges, those of the church of the first-born: Esau was now tried how he would value those, and he shews himself sensible only of present grievances: may he but get relief against them, he cares not for his birth-right. If we look on Esau's birth-right as only a temporal advantage, what he said had something of truth in it, that our worldly enjoyments, even those we are most fond of, will stand us in no stead in a dying hour. They will not put by the stroke of death, nor ease the pangs, nor remove the sting. But being of a spiritual nature, his undervaluing it, was the greatest profaneness imaginable. It is egregious folly to part with our interest in God, and Christ, and heaven, for the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world.

34. He did eat and drink, and rise up and went his way - Without any serious reflections upon the ill bargain he had made, or any shew of regret. Thus Esau despised his birth-right - He used no means to get the bargain revoked, made no appeal to his father about it but the bargain which his necessity had made, (supposing it were so) his profaneness confirmed, and by his subsequent neglect and contempt, he put the bargain past recall.

XXVI In this chapter we have,

I. Isaac in adversity, by reason of a famine in the land; which,

- (1.) Obliges him to change his quarters, ver 1. but,
- (2.) God visits him with direction and comfort, ver. 2-5.
- (3.) He denies his wife, and is reproved for it by Abimelech, ver. 6-11.

II. Isaac in prosperity, by the blessing of God upon him, ver. 12-14.

- (1.) The Philistines were envious at him, ver. 14-17.
- (2.) He continued industrious in his business, ver. 18-23.
- (3.) God appeared to him, and encouraged him, and he returned to his duty, ver. 24-25.
- (4.) The Philistines at length made court to him, and made a covenant with him, ver. 26-33

III. The disagreeable marriage of his son Esau was an allay to his prosperity, ver. 34. 35.

2. The Lord said, go not down into Egypt. Sojourn in this land - There was a famine in Jacob's days, and God bid him go down into Egypt, chap. xlvii, 3, 4, a famine in Isaac's days, and God bid him not go down: a famine in Abraham's days, and God left him to his liberty, directing him neither way, which (considering that Egypt was always a place of trial to God's people) some ground upon the different characters of these three patriarchs. Abraham was a man of very intimate communion with God, and to him all places and conditions were alike; Isaac a very good man, but not cut out for hardship, therefore he is forbidden to go to Egypt; Jacob inured to difficulties, strong and patient, and therefore he must go down into Egypt, that the trial of his faith might be to praise, and honour, and glory. Thus God proportions his people's trials to their strength.

5. Abraham obeyed my voice - Do thou do so too, and the promise shall be sure to thee. A great variety of words is here used to express the Divine Will to which Abraham was obedient, my voice, my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws - Which may intimate, that Abraham's obedience was universal; he obeyed the original laws of nature, the revealed laws of divine worship, particularly that of circumcision, and all the extraordinary precepts God gave him, as that of quitting his country, and that (which some think is more especially referred to) the offering up of his son, which Isaac himself had reason enough to remember. Those only shall have the benefit of God's covenant with their parents, that tread the steps of their obedience.

7. He said, she is my sister - So Isaac enters into the same temptation that his father had been once and again surprised and overcome by, viz. to deny his wife, and to give out that she was his sister! It is an unaccountable thing, that both these great and good men should be guilty of so odd a piece of dissimulation, by which they so much exposed both their own and their wives

reputation.

8. This Abimelech was not the same that was in Abraham's days, chap. xx, 2-18, for this was near an hundred years after, but that was the common name of the Philistine kings, as Caesar of the Roman emperors.

10. Lightly - Perhaps.

12. Isaac received an hundred fold - And there seems to be an emphasis laid upon the time; it was that same year when there was a famine in the land; while others scarce reaped at all, he reaped thus plentifully.

20. Esek - That is, contention.

21. Sitnah - That is, hatred.

22. He digged a well, and for that they strove not - Those that follow peace, sooner or later, shall find peace: those that study to be quiet seldom fail of being so. This well they called Rehoboth - Enlargements, room enough.

24. Fear not, I am with thee, and will bless thee - Those may remove with comfort that are sure of God's presence with them wherever they go.

28. The Lord is with thee, and thou art the blessed of the Lord, q.d. Be persuaded to overlook the injuries offered thee, for God has abundantly made up to thee the damage thou receivedst. Those whom God blesseth and favours, have reason enough to forgive those that hate them, since the worst enemy they have cannot do them any real hurt. Let there be an oath betwixt us - Whatever some of his envious subjects might mean, he and his prime ministers, whom he had now brought with him, designed no other but a cordial friendship. Perhaps Abimelech had received by tradition the warning God gave to his predecessor not to hurt Abraham, chap. xx, 7, and that made him stand in such awe of Isaac, who appeared to be as much the favourite of heaven as Abraham was.

34. He took to wife - Marrying Canaanites, who were strangers to the blessing of Abraham, and subject to the curse of Noah.

XXVII We have here,

I. Isaac's purpose to entail the blessing upon Esau, ver. 1-4.

II. Rebekah's plot to procure it for Jacob, ver. 6-17.

III. Jacob's obtaining of the blessing, ver. 18-29.

IV. Esau's resentment of this. In which,



(1.) His importunity with his father to obtain a blessing, ver. 30-40.

(2.) His enmity to his brother for defrauding him, ver. 41-46.

1. Here is Isaac's design to declare Esau his heir. The promise of the Messiah and the land of Canaan was a great trust first committed to Abraham, inclusive and typical of spiritual and eternal blessings; this by divine direction he transmitted to Isaac. Isaac being now old, and either not knowing, or not duly considering the divine oracle concerning his two sons, that the elder should serve the younger, resolves to entail all the honour and power that was wrapped up in the promise upon Esau, his eldest son. He called Esau - Tho' Esau, had greatly grieved his parents by his marriage, yet they had not expelled him, but it seems were pretty well reconciled to him.

2. I am old, and know not the day of my death - How soon I may die.

3. Take me some venison that I may; bless thee - Esau must go a hunting and bring some venison. In this he designed not so much the refreshment of his own spirits, as the receiving a fresh instance of his son's, filial duty and affection to him, before he bestowed this favour upon him. That my soul may bless thee before I die - Prayer is the work of the soul, and not of the lips only; as the soul must be employed in blessing God, Psalm ciii, 1, so it must be in blessing ourselves and others: the blessing will not go to the heart, if it do not come from the heart.

6. Rebekah is here contriving to procure the blessing for Jacob, which was designed for Esau. If the end was good, the means were bad, and no way justifiable. If it were not a wrong to Esau to deprive him of the blessing, he himself having forfeited it by selling the birth right, yet it was a wrong to Isaac, taking advantage of his infirmity, to impose upon him: it was a wrong to Jacob, whom she taught to deceive, by putting a lie in his mouth. If Rebekah, when she heard Isaac promise the blessing to Esau, had gone to him, and with humility and seriousness put him in remembrance of that which God had said concerning their sons; if she had farther shewed him how Esau had forfeited the blessing, both by selling his birth-right, and by marrying of strange wives; 'tis probable Isaac would have been prevailed with to confer the blessing upon Jacob, and needed not thus to have been cheated into it. This had been honourable and laudable, and would have looked well in history; but God left her to herself to take this indirect course, that he might have the glory of bringing good out of evil.

19. And Jacob said, I am Esau - Who would have thought this plain man could have played such a part? His mother having put him in the way of it, he applies himself to those methods which he

had never accustomed himself to, but had always conceived an abhorrence of. But lying is soon learned. I wonder how honest Jacob could so readily turn his tongue to say, I am Esau thy first-born: and when his father asked him, ver. 24. Art thou my very son Esau? to reply I am. How could he say, I have done as thou badst me, when he had received no command from his father, but was doing as his mother bid him? How could he say, Eat of my venison, when he knew it came not from the field, but from the fold? But especially I wonder how he could have the forehead to father it upon God, and to use his name in the cheat.

20. The Lord thy God brought it to me - Is this Jacob? It is certainly written not for our imitation, but our admonition, Let him that, standeth, take heed lest he fall. Now let us see how Isaac gave Jacob his blessing. 27-1. He kissed him; in token of particular affection to him. Those that are blessed of God are kissed with the kisses of his mouth, and they do by love and loyalty kiss the son, Psalm ii, 12. 2. He praised him. Upon occasion of the sweet smell of his garments he said, See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed - That is, like that of the most fragrant flowers and spices. Three things Jacob is here blessed with,

(1.) Plenty, ver. 28. Heaven and earth concurring to make him rich.

(2.) Power, ver. 29. Particularly dominion over his brethren, viz. Esau and his posterity.

(3.) Prevalency with God, and a great interest in heaven, Cursed be every one that curseth thee - Let God be a friend to all thy friends, and an enemy to all thine enemies. Now, certainly more is comprised in this blessing than appears at first; it must amount to an entail of the promise of the Messiah: that was in the patriarchal dialect the blessing; something spiritual doubtless is included in it. First, That from him should come the Messiah, that should have a sovereign dominion on earth. See Num. xxiv, 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, the star and scepter, Num. xxiv, 17. Jacob's dominion over Esau was to be only typical of this, chap. xlix, 10. Secondly, That from him should come the church that should be particularly owned and favoured by Heaven. It was part of the blessing of Abraham when he was first called to be the father of the faithful, chap. xii, 3. I will bless them that bless thee; therefore when Isaac afterwards confirmed the blessing to Jacob, he called it the blessing of Abraham, chap. xxviii, 4.

33. Isaac trembled exceedingly - Those that follow the choice of their own affections rather than the dictates of the Divine will, involve themselves in such perplexities as these. But he soon recovers himself, and ratifies the blessing he had given to Jacob, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed - He might have recalled it, but now at last he is sensible he was in an error when he designed it for Esau. Either recollecting the Divine oracle, or

having found himself more than ordinarily filled with the Holy Ghost when he gave the blessing to Jacob, he perceived that God did as it were say Amen to it.

39. Esau likewise obtained a blessing: yet it was far short of Jacob's.

1. In Jacob's blessing the dew of heaven is put first, as that which he most valued and desired: in Esau's the fatness of the earth is put first, for that was it which he had the principal regard to.

2. Esau hath these, but Jacob hath them from God's hand. God give thee the dew of heaven, ver. 28. It was enough to have the possession, but Jacob desired it by promise.

3. Jacob shall have dominion over his brethren, for the Israelites often ruled over the Edomites. Esau shall have dominion, he shall gain some power, but shall never have dominion over his brother: we never find that the Jews were sold into the hands of the Edomites, or that they oppressed them. But the great difference is, that there is nothing in Esau's blessing that points at Christ, nothing that brings either him or his into the church, and without that the fatness of the earth, and the plunder of the field, will stand him in little stead. Thus Isaac by faith blessed them both, according as their lot should be.

45. Why should I be deprived of you both? - Not only of the murdered, but of the murderer, who either by the magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God would be sacrificed to justice.

46. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth - As Esau has done. More artifice still. This was not the thing she was afraid of. But if we use guile once, we shall be very ready to use it again. It should be carefully observed, That altho' a blessing came on his posterity by Jacob's vile lying and dissimulation, yet it brought heavy affliction upon himself, and that for a long term of years. So severely did God punish him personally, for doing evil that good might come.

XXVIII We have here,

I. Jacob's parting with his parents to go to Padan-aram: the charge his father gave him, ver. 1, 2. the blessing he sent him away with, ver. 3,

4. his obedience to the orders given him, ver. 5-10. and the influence this had upon Esau, ver. 6.

II. Jacob's meeting with God, and his communion with him by the way. And there,

(1.) His vision of the ladder, ver. 11, 12.

(2.) The gracious promise God made him, ver. 13, 14, 15.

(3.) The impression this made upon him, ver. 16-19.

(4.) The vow he made to God upon this occasion, ver. 20, 21, 22.

1. Isaac blessed him, and charged him - Those that have the blessing must keep the charge annexed to it, and not think to separate what God has joined.

3, 4. Two great promises Abraham was blessed with, and Isaac here entails them both upon Jacob.

(1.) The promise of heirs, God make thee fruitful and multiply thee.

1. Through his loins that people should descend from Abraham which should be numerous as the stars of heaven.

2. Through his loins should descend from Abraham that person in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

(2.) The promise of an inheritance for those heirs, ver. 4. That thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings - (So the Hebrew) Canaan was hereby entailed upon the seed of Jacob, exclusive of the seed of Esau. Isaac was now sending Jacob away into a distant country to settle there for some time; and lest this should look like disinheriting him, he here confirms the settlement of it upon him. This promise looks as high as heaven, of which Canaan was a type. That was the better country which Jacob, with the other patriarchs, had in his eye when he confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, Heb. xi, 16. See note at "ver. 3"

5. Rebekah is here called Jacob's and Esau's mother - Jacob is named first, not only because he had always been his mother's darling, but because he was now made his father's heir, and Esau was postponed.

6. This passage comes in, in the midst of Jacob's story, to shew the influence of a good example. Esau now begins to think Jacob the better man, and disdains not to take him for his pattern in this particular instance of marrying with a daughter of Abraham.

11. The stones for his pillow, and the heavens for his canopy! Yet his comfort in the divine blessing, and his confidence in the divine protection, made him easy, even when he lay thus exposed: being sure that his God made him to dwell in safety, he could lie down and sleep upon a stone.

12. Behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached heaven, the angels ascending and descending on it, and the Lord stood above it - This might represent

1. The providence of God, by which there is a constant correspondence kept up between heaven and earth. The counsels of heaven are executed on earth, and the affairs of this earth are all known in heaven. Providence doth his work gradually and by

steps; angels are employed as ministering spirits to serve all the designs of providence, and the wisdom of God is at the upper end of the ladder, directing all the motions of second causes to his glory. The angels are active spirits, continually ascending and descending; they rest not day nor night. They ascend to give account of what they have done, and to receive orders; and descend to execute the orders they have received. This vision gave seasonable comfort to Jacob, letting him know that he had both a good guide and good guard; that though he was to wander from his father's house, yet he was the care of Providence, and the charge of the holy angels.

2. The mediation of Christ. He is this ladder: the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his divine nature; or the former is his humiliation, the latter is his exaltation. All the intercourse between heaven and earth since the fall is by this ladder. Christ is the way: all God's favours come to us, and all our services come to him, by Christ. If God dwell with us, and we with him, it is by Christ: we have no way of getting to heaven but by this ladder; for the kind offices the angels do us, are all owing to Christ, who hath reconciled things on earth and things in heaven, Colossians i, 20.

14. In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed - Christ is the great blessing of the world: all that are blessed, whatever family they are of, are blessed in him, and none of any family are excluded from blessedness in him, but those that exclude themselves.

15. Behold I am with thee - Wherever we are, we are safe, if we have God's favourable presence with us. He knew not, but God foresaw what hardships he would meet with in his uncle's service, and therefore promiseth to preserve him in all places. God knows how to give his people graces and comforts accommodated to the events that shall be, as well as to those that are. He was now going as an exile into a place far distant, but God promiseth him to bring him again to this land. He seemed to be forsaken of all his friends, but God gives him this assurance, I will not leave thee.

16. Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not - God's manifestations of himself to his people carry their own evidence along with them. God can give undeniable demonstrations of his presence, such as give abundant satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, that God is with them of a truth; satisfaction not communicable to others, but convincing to themselves. We sometimes meet with God there, where we little thought of meeting with him. He is there where we did not think he had been, is found there where we asked not for him.

17. He was afraid - So far was he from being puffed up. The more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling and

blushing before him. Those whom God is pleased to manifest himself to, are laid and kept very low in their own eyes, and see cause to fear even the Lord and his goodness, Hosea iii, 5. And said, How dreadful is this place! - That is, the appearance of God in this place is to be thought of, but with a holy awe and reverence; I shall have a respect for this place, and remember it by this token as long as I live. Not that he thought the place itself any nearer the divine visions than any other places; but what he saw there at this time was, as it were, the house of God, the residence of the Divine Majesty, and the gate of heaven, that is, the general rendezvous of the inhabitants of the upper world; as the meetings of a city were in their gates; or, the angels ascending and descending were like travelers passing and repassing through the gates of a city.

18. He set up the stone for a pillar - To mark the place again, if he came back, and erect a lasting monument of God's favour to him: and because he had not time now to build an altar here, as Abraham did in the places where God appeared to him, chap. xii, 7, he therefore poured oil on the top of this stone, which probably was the ceremony then used in dedicating their altars, as an earnest of his building an altar when he should have conveniencies for it, as afterwards he did, in gratitude to God, chap. xxxv, 7. Grants of mercy call for our returns of duty and the sweet communion we have with God ought ever to be remembered.

19. It had been called Luz, an almond-tree, but he will have it henceforth called Beth-el, the house of God. This gracious appearance of God to him made it more remarkable than all the almond-trees that flourished there.

20. And Jacob vowed a vow - By religious vows we give glory to God, and own our dependance upon him, and we lay a bond upon our own souls, to engage and quicken our obedience to him. Jacob was now in fear and distress, and in times of trouble it is seasonable to make vows, or when we are in pursuit of any special mercy, John i, 16 Psalm lxvi, 13, 14; 1 Sam. i, 11 Num. xxi, 1, 2, 3. Jacob had now had a gracious visit from heaven, God had renewed his covenant with him, and the covenant is mutual; when God ratifies his promises to us, it is proper for us to repeat our promises to him. If thou wilt be with me and keep me - We need desire no more to make us easy and happy wherever we are, but to have God's presence with us, and to be under his protection. It is comfortable in a journey to have a guide in an unknown way, a guard in a dangerous way, to be well carried, well provided for, and to have good company in any way; and they that have God with them, have all this in the best manner. Then shall the Lord be my God - Then I will rejoice in him as my God, then I will be the more strongly engaged to abide with him. And this pillar shall be God's house - That is, an altar shall be erected here to the honour

of God. And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee - To be spent either upon God's altar or upon his poor, which are both his receivers in the world. The tenth is a very fit proportion to be devoted to God, and employed for him; though as circumstances vary, it may be more or less, as God prospers us.

**XXIX** This chapter gives us an account of God's providences concerning Jacob, pursuant to the promise made him in the foregoing chapter.

**I.** How he was brought in safety to his journey's end, and directed to his relations there, who bid him welcome, ver. 1-14.

**II.** How he was comfortably disposed of in marriage, ver. 15-30.

**III.** How his family was built up in the birth of four sons, ver. 31-35.

**2.** Providence brought him to the very field where his uncle's flock's were to be watered, and there he met with Rachel that was to be his wife. The Divine Providence is to be acknowledged in all the little circumstances which concur to make a journey or other undertaking comfortable and successful. If, when we are at a loss, we meet with those seasonably that can direct us; if we meet with a disaster, and those are at hand that will help us; we must not say it was by chance, but it was by providence: our ways are ways of pleasantness, if we continually acknowledge God in them. The stone on the well's mouth was either to secure their property in it, for water was scarce, to save the well from receiving damage from the heat of the sun, or to prevent the lambs of the flock from being drowned in it.

**9.** She kept her father's sheep - She took the care of them, having servants under her that were employed about them when he understood that this was his kinswoman (probably he had heard of her name before) knowing what his errand was into that country, we may suppose it struck into his mind immediately, that this must be his wife, as one already smitten with an honest comely face (though it is likely, sun-burnt, and she in the homely dress of a shepherdess) he is wonderfully officious, and ready to serve her, ver. 10, and addresses himself to her with tears of joy, and kisses of love, ver. 11, she runs with all haste to tell her father, for she will by no means entertain her kinsman's address without her father's knowledge and approbation, ver. 12. These mutual respects at their first interview were good presages of their being a happy couple. Providence made that which seemed contingent and fortuitous to give a speedy satisfaction to Jacob's mind as soon as ever he came to the place he was bound for. Abraham's servant, when he came upon a like errand, met with the like encouragement. Thus God guides his people with his eye, Psalm

xxxii, 8. It is a groundless conceit which some of the Jewish writers have, that Jacob when he kissed Rachel wept, because he had been set upon his journey by Eliphaz the eldest son of Esau, at the command of his father, and robbed him of all his money and jewels, which his mother had given him when she sent him away: it is plain it was his passion for Rachel, and the surprise of this happy meeting that drew these tears from his eyes. Laban, though none of the best humoured men, bid him welcome, was satisfied in the account he gave of himself, and of the reason of his coming in such poor circumstances. While we avoid the extreme on the one hand of being foolishly credulous, we must take heed of falling into the other extreme of being uncharitably jealous and suspicious. Laban owned him for his kinsman, ver. 14. Thou art my bone and my flesh. Note, Those are hard-hearted indeed that are unkind to their relations, and that hide themselves from their own flesh, Isaiah lviii, 7.

15. Because thou art my brother - That is, kinsman. Should thou therefore serve me for nought? - No, what reason for that? If Jacob be so respectful as to give him his service without demanding any consideration for it, yet Laban will not be so unjust as to take advantage either of his necessity, or of his good nature. It appears by computation that Jacob was now seventy years old when he bound himself apprentice for a wife; probably Rachel was young and scarce marriageable when Jacob came first, which made him the more willing to stay for her till his seven years were expired.

20. They seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her - An age of work will be but as a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing.

25. Behold it was Leah - Jacob had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his father-in-law cheated him. Herein, how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous.

26. It must be so done in our country - We have reason to think there was no such custom in his country; but if there was, and that he resolved to observe it, he should have told Jacob so, when he undertook to serve him for his younger daughter.

27. We will give thee this also - Hereby he drew Jacob into the sin and snare, and disquiet of multiplying wives. Jacob did not design it, but to have kept as true to Rachel as his father had done to Rebekah; he that had lived without a wife to the eighty fourth year of his age could then have been very well content with one: but Laban to dispose of his two daughters without portions, and to get seven years service more out of Jacob, thus imposeth upon him, and draws him into such a strait, that he had some colourable reason for marrying them both.



31. When the Lord saw that Leah was hated - That is, loved less than Rachel, in which sense it is required that we hate father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke xiv, 26, then the Lord granted her a child, which was a rebuke to Jacob for making so great a difference between those he was equally related to; a check to Rachel, who, perhaps insulted over her sister upon that account; and a comfort to Leah, that she might not be overwhelmed with the contempt put upon her.

32. She appears very ambitious of her husband's love; she reckoned the want of it her affliction, not upbraiding him with it as his fault, nor reproaching him for it; but laying it to heart as her grief, which she had reason to bear, because she was consenting to the fraud by which she became his wife. She called her first-born Reuben, see a son, with this pleasant thought, Now will my husband love me. And her third son Levi, joined, with this expectation, Now will my husband be joined unto me. The Lord hath heard, that is, taken notice of it, that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son. Her fourth she called Judah, praise, saying, Now will I praise the Lord. And this was he, of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. And all our praises must center in Christ, both as the matter of them, and as the Mediator of them. He descended from him whose name was praise, for he is our praise. Is Christ formed in my heart? Now will I praise the Lord.

XXX In this chapter we have an account of the increase,

I. Of Jacob's family; eight children more we find registered in this chapter; Daniel and Naphtali by Bilhah, Rachel's maid, ver. 1-8. Gad and Asher by Zilpah, Leah's maid, ver. 9-13. Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah, by Leah, ver. 14-21. And last of all Joseph by Rachel, ver. 22-24.

II. Of Jacob's estate. He comes upon a new bargain with Laban, ver. 25-34. And in the six years further service he did to Laban, God wonderfully blessed him, so that his flock of all cattle became very considerable, ver. 35-43, And herein was fulfilled the blessing which Isaac dismissed him with, chap. xxviii. 3. God make thee fruitful and multiply thee.

1. Rachel envied her sister - Envy is grieving at the good of another, than which no sin is more injurious both to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. But this was not all, she said to Jacob, give me children or else I die - A child would not content her; but because Leah has more than one, she must have more too; Give me children: her heart is set upon it. Give them me, else I die, That is, I shall fret myself to death. The want of this satisfaction will shorten my days. Observe a difference between Rachel's

asking for this mercy, and Hannah's, 1 Sam. i, 10, &c. Rachel envied, Hannah wept: Rachel must have children, and she died of the second; Hannah prayed for this child, and she had four more: Rachel is importunate and peremptory, Hannah is submissive and devout, If thou wilt give me a child, I will give him to the Lord. Let Hannah be imitated, and not Rachel; and let our desires be always under the conduct and check of reason and religion.

2. And Jacob's anger was kindled - He was angry, not at the person, but at the sin: he expressed himself so as to shew his displeasure. It was a grave and pious reply which Jacob gave to Rachel, Am I in God's stead? - Can I give thee that which God denies thee? He acknowledges the hand of God in the affliction: He hath withheld the fruit of the womb. Whatever we want, it is God that with-holds it, as sovereign Lord, most wise, holy, and just, that may do what he will with his own, and is debtor to no man: that never did, nor ever can do, any wrong to any of his creatures. The key of the clouds, of the heart, of the grave, and of the womb, are four keys which God has in his hand, and which (the Rabbins say) he intrusts neither with angel nor seraphin. He also acknowledges his own inability to alter what God appointed, Am I in God's stead? What, dost thou make a God of me? There is no creature that is, or can be, to us in God's stead. God may be to us, instead of any creature, as the sun instead of the moon and stars; but the moon and all the stars will not be to us instead of the sun. No creature's wisdom, power, and love will be to us instead of God's. It is therefore our sin and folly to place that confidence in any creature, which is to be placed in God only.

3. Behold my maid, Bilhah - At the persuasion of Rachel he took Bilhah her handmaid to wife, that, according to the usage of those times, his children by her might be adopted and owned as her mistresses children. She would rather have children by reputation than none at all; children that she might call her own, though they were not so. And as an early instance of her dominion over the children born in her apartment, she takes a pleasure in giving them names, that carry in them nothing but marks of emulation with her sister. As if she had overcome her,

1. At law, she calls the first son of her handmaid, Daniel, Judgment, saying, God hath Judged me - That is, given sentence in my favour.

2. In battle, she calls the next Naphtali, Wrestlings, saying, I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed - See what roots of bitterness envy and strife are, and what mischief they make among relations!

9. Rachel had done that absurd and preposterous thing of putting her maid into her husband's bed, and now Leah (because she missed one year in bearing children) doth the same, to be even

with her. See the power of rivalry, and admire the wisdom of the divine appointment, which joins together one man and one woman only. Two sons Zilpah bare to Jacob, whom Leah looked upon herself as intitled to, in token of which she called one Gad, promising herself a little troop of children. The other she called Asher, Happy, thinking herself happy in him, and promising herself that her neighbours would think so too.

14. Reuben, a little lad of five or six years old, playing in the field, found mandrakes. It is uncertain what they were; the critics are not agreed about them: we are sure they were some rarities, either fruits or flowers that were very pleasant to the smell, So vii,

13. Some think these mandrakes were Jessamin flowers.

Whatever they were, Rachel, could not see them in Leah's hands, but she must covet them.

17. And God hearkened unto Leah - Perhaps the reason of this contest between Jacob's wives for his company, and their giving him their maids to be his wives, was the earnest desire they had to fulfil the promise made to Abraham (and now lately renewed to Jacob) that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and that, in one seed of his, the Messiah, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Two sons Leah was now blessed with; the first she called Issachar, a hire, reckoning herself well repaid for her mandrakes; nay, (which is a strange construction of the providence) rewarded for giving her maid to her husband. The other she called Zebulun, dwelling, owning God's bounty to her, God has endowed me with a good dowry. Jacob had not endowed her when he married her; but she reckons a family of children, a good dowry.

21. Mention is made, of Dinah, because of the following story concerning her, chap. xxxiv, 1-16, &c. Perhaps Jacob had other daughters, though not registered.

22. God remembered Rachel, whom he seemed to have forgotten, and hearkened to her, whose prayers had been long denied, and then she bare a son. Rachael called her son Joseph, which, in Hebrew, is a-kin to two words of a contrary signification: Asaph, abstulit, he has taken away my reproach, as if the greatest mercy she had in this son were, that she had saved her credit: and Joseph, addidit, the Lord shall add to me another son: which may be looked upon as the language of her faith; she takes this mercy as an earnest of further mercy: hath God given me this grace? I may call it Joseph, and say, he shall add more grace.

34. Laban was willing to consent to this bargain, because he thought if those few he had that were now speckled and spotted were separated from the rest, which was to be done immediately, the body of the flock which Jacob was to tend, being of one colour, either all black or all white, would produce few or none of

mixt colours, and so he should have Jacob's service for nothing, or next to nothing. According to this bargain, those few that were party-coloured were separated, and put into the hands of Laban's sons, and sent three days journey off: so great was Laban's jealousy lest any of those should mix with the rest of the flock to the advantage of Jacob.

37. Here is Jacob's policy to make his bargain more advantageous to himself than it was likely to be: and if he had not taken some course to help himself, it would have been an ill bargain indeed; which he knew Laban would never have considered, who did not consult any one's interest but his own.

1. Now Jacob's contrivances were, He set pilled sticks before the cattle where they were watered, that looking much at those unusual party-coloured sticks, by the power of imagination, they might bring forth young ones in like manner party-coloured. Probably this custom was commonly used by the shepherds of Canaan, who coveted to have their cattle of this motly colour.

2. When he began to have a flock of ring-straked and brown, he contrived to set them first, and to put the faces of the rest towards them, with the same design as he did the former. Whether this was honest policy, or no, may admit of a question. Read chap. xxxi, 7-16, and the question is resolved.

XXXI Jacob was in general, a man of devotion and integrity; yet he had more trouble than any of the patriarchs. Here is,

I. His resolution to return, ver. 1-16.

II. His clandestine departure, ver. 17-21.

III. Laban's pursuit of him in displeasure, ver. 22-25.

IV. The hot words that passed between them, ver. 26-42.

V. Their amicable agreement at last, ver. 43-55.

1. It should seem they said it in Jacob's hearing. The last chapter began with Rachel's envying Leah; this begins with Laban's sons envying Jacob. He has gotten all his glory - And what was this glory? It was a parcel of brown sheep and speckled goats, and some camels and asses. Jacob has taken away all that was our fathers - Not all, sure; what was become of those cattle which were committed to the custody of Laban's sons, and sent three days journey off?

3. The Lord said unto Jacob, Return and I will be with thee - though Jacob had met with very hard usage, yet he would not quit his place 'till God bid him. He came thither by orders from heaven, and there he would slay 'till he was ordered back. The

direction he had from heaven is more fully related in the account he gives of it to his wives, where he tells them of the dream he had about the cattle, and the wonderful increase of those of his colour; and how the angel of God in that dream instructed him that it was not by chance, nor by his own policy, that he obtained that great advantage but by the providence of God, who had taken notice of the hardships Laban had put upon him, and in performance of his promise.

4. And Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah to the field - That he might discourse with them more privately.

9. God hath taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me - Thus the righteous God paid Jacob for his hard service out of Laban's estate; as afterwards he paid the seed of Jacob for their service of the Egyptians with their spoils.

16. Whereas Jacob looked upon the wealth which God had passed over from Laban to him as his wages, they look upon it as their portions; so that both ways God forced Laban to pay his debts, both to his servant and to his daughters.

19. Laban went to shear his sheep - That part of his flock which was in the hands of his sons, three days journey off. Now, (1.) It is certain it was lawful for Jacob to leave his service suddenly: it was not only justified by the particular instructions God gave him, but warranted by the fundamental law of self-preservation which directs us, when we are in danger, to shift for our own safety, as far as we can do it without wronging our consciences.

(2.) It was his prudence to steal away unawares to Laban, lest if Laban had known, he should have hindered him, or plundered him.

(3.) It was honestly done to take no more than his own with him, the cattle of his getting. He took what providence gave him, and would not take the repair of his damages into his own hands. Yet Rachel was not so honest as her husband; she stole her father's images, and carried them away. The Hebrew calls them Teraphim. Some think they were only little representations of the ancestors of the family in statue or picture, which Rachel had a particular fondness for, and was desirous to have with her now she was going into another country. It should rather seem they were images for a religious use, penates, household gods, either worshipped, or consulted as oracles; and we are willing to hope, that she took them away, not out of covetousness much less for her own use, or out of any superstitious fear lest Laban, by consulting his teraphim, might know which way they were gone; (Jacob no doubt dwelt with his wives as a man of knowledge, and they were better taught than so) but with a design to convince her father of the folly of his regard to those as gods which could not secure themselves.

23. He took his brethren - That is, his relations, and pursues Jacob to bring him back into bondage, or, to strip him of what he had.

24. Speak not, either good or bad - That is, say nothing against his going on with his journey, for the thing proceedeth from the Lord. The same Hebraism we have, chap. xxiv, 50. The safety of good men is very much owing to the hold God has of the consciences of bad men, and the access he has to them.

27. I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp - Not as Rebekah was sent away out of the same family above one hundred and twenty years before, with prayers and blessings, but with sport and merriment; which was a sign that religion was much decayed in the family.

29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt - He supposeth that he had both right on his side, and strength on his side, either to revenge the wrong, or recover the right. Yet he owns himself under the restraint of God's power; he durst not injure one of whom he saw to be the particular care of heaven.

30. Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? - Foolish man! to call those his gods that could be stolen! Could he expect protection from them that could neither resist nor discover their invaders? Happy are they who have the Lord for their God. Enemies may steal our goods, but not our God.

31. Jacob clears himself by giving the true reason why he went away unknown to Laban; he feared lest Laban would by force take away his daughters and so oblige him to continue in his service. As to the charge of stealing Laban's gods, he pleads not guilty. He not only did not take them himself, but he did not know that they were taken.

42. Jacob speaks of God as the God of his father, intimating that he thought himself unworthy to be thus regarded, but was beloved for his father's sake. He calls him the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac: for Abraham was dead, and gone to that world where there is no fear; but Isaac was yet alive, sanctifying the Lord in his heart as his fear and his dread.

43. All his mine - That is, came by me.

44. Let us make a covenant - It was made and ratified with great solemnity, according to the usages of those times.

1. A pillar was erected, and a heap of stones raised, to perpetuate the memory of the thing, writing being then not known.

2. A sacrifice was offered, a sacrifice of peace-offerings.

**3. They did eat bread together, jointly partaking of the feast upon the sacrifice. This was in token of a hearty reconciliation.**

**Covenants of friendship were anciently ratified by the parties eating and drinking together.**

**4. They solemnly appealed to God concerning their sincerity herein;**

**(1.) As a witness, ver. 49. The Lord watch between me and thee - That is, the Lord take cognizance of every thing that shall be done on either side in violation of this league.**

**(2.) As a judge, The God of Abraham, from whom Jacob was descended, and The God of Nahor, from whom Laban was descended, the God of their father, the common ancestor from whom they were both descended, judge betwixt us. God's relation to them is thus expressed, to intimate that they worshipped one and the same God, upon which consideration there ought to be no enmity betwixt them. Those that have one God should have one heart: God is judge between contending parties, and he will judge righteously, whoever doth wrong it is at their peril.**

**5. They gave a new name to the place, ver. 47, 48. Laban called it in Syriac, and Jacob in Hebrew, The heap of witness. And ver. 49, it was called Mizpah, a watch-tower. Posterity being included in the league, care was taken that thus the memory of it should be preserved. The name Jacob gave this heap stuck by it, Galeed, not the name Laban gave it.**

**54. And Jacob swear by the fear of his father Isaac - The God whom his father Isaac feared, who had never served other gods, as Abraham and Nahor had done.**

**XXXII We have here Jacob still upon his journey towards Canaan. Never did so many memorable things occur in any march, as in this in Jacob's little family. By the way he meets,**

**I. With good tidings from his God, ver. 1, 2.**

**II. With bad tidings from his brother, to whom he sent a message to notify his return, ver. 2-7. In his distress,**

**1. He divides his company, ver. 8.**

**2. He makes his prayer to God, ver. 9-12.**

**3. He sends a present to his brother, ver. 13-23.**

**4. He wrestles with the angel, ver. 24-32.**

**1. And the Angel of God met him - In a visible appearance; whether in a vision by day, or in a dream by night, as when he saw them upon the ladder, is uncertain. They met him to bid him welcome to Canaan again; a more honourable reception than ever**

any prince had that was met by the magistrates of a city. They met him to congratulate his arrival, and his escape from Laban. They had invisibly attended him all along, but now they appeared, because he had greater dangers before him. When God designs his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts.

2. This is God's house - A good man may, with an eye of faith, see the same that Jacob saw with his bodily eyes. What need we dispute whether he has a guardian angel, when we are sure he has a guard of angels about him? To preserve the remembrance of this favour, Jacob gave a name to the place from it, Mahanaim, two hosts, or two camps probably they appeared to him in two hosts, one on either side, or one in the front, and the other in the rear, to protect him from Laban behind, and Esau before, that they might be a compleat guard. Here was Jacob's family that made one army, representing the church militant and itinerant on earth; and the angels another army, representing the church triumphant, and at rest in heaven.

4. He calls Esau his Lord, himself his servant, to intimate that he did not insist upon the prerogatives of the birth-right and blessing he had obtained for himself, but left it to God to fulfil his own purpose in his seed. He gives him a short account of himself, that he was not a fugitive and a vagabond, but though long absent had dwelt with his own relations. I have sojourned with Laban, and staid there till now: and that he was not a beggar, nor likely to be a charge to his relations; no, I have oxen and asses - This he knew would (if any thing) recommend him to Esau's good affection. And, he courts his favour; I have sent that I may find grace in thy sight - It is no disparagement to those that have the better cause to become petitioners for reconciliation, and to sue for peace as well as right.

6. He cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him - He is now weary of waiting for the days of mourning for his father, and before those come resolves to slay his brother. Out he marches with four hundred men, probably such as used to hunt with him, armed no doubt, ready to execute the word of command.

7. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed - A lively apprehension of danger, may very well consist with a humble confidence in God's power and promise.

9. He addresseth himself to God as the God of his fathers: such was the sense he had of his own unworthiness, that he did not call God his own God, but a God in covenant with his ancestors. O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac. And this he could better plead, because the covenant was entailed upon him. Thou saidst unto me, Return unto thy country - He did not rashly leave his place with Laban, out of a foolish fondness for his



native country; but in obedience to God's command.

10. I am not worthy - It is a surprising plea. One would think he should have pleaded that what was now in danger was his own against all the world, and that he had earned it dear enough; no, he pleads, Lord, I am not worthy of it. Of the least of all the mercies - Here is mercies in the plural number, an inexhaustible spring, and innumerable streams; mercies and truth, past mercies given according to the promise and farther mercies secured by the promise. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, much less am I worthy of so great a favour as this I am now suing for. Those are best prepared for the greatest mercies that see themselves unworthy of the least. For with my staff I passed over this Jordan - Poor and desolate, like a forlorn and despised pilgrim: He had no guides, no companions, no attendants. And now I am become two bands - Now I am surrounded with a numerous retinue of children and servants. Those whose latter end doth greatly increase, ought with humility and thankfulness to remember how small their beginning was.

11. Lord, deliver me from Esau, for I fear him - The fear that quickens prayer is itself pleadable. It was not a robber, but a murderer that he was afraid of: nor was it his own life only that lay at stake, but the mothers, and the childrens.

12. Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good - The best we can say to God in prayer is, what he hath said to us. God's promises as they are the surest guide of our desires in prayer, and furnish us with the best petitions, so they are the firmest ground of our hopes, and furnish us with the best pleas. Thou saidst, I will do thee good - Lord, do me good in this matter. He pleads also a particular promise, that of the multiplying of his seed. Lord, what will become of that promise, if they be all cut off?

13. Jacob having piously made God his friend by a prayer, is here prudently endeavouring to make Esau his friend by a present. He had prayed to God to deliver him from the hand of Esau - His prayer did not make him presume upon God's mercy, without the use of means.

17. He sent him also a very humble message, which he ordered his servants to deliver in the best manner. They must call Esau their Lord, and Jacob his servant: they must tell him the cattle they had was a small present which Jacob had sent him. They must especially take care to tell him that Jacob was coming after, that he might not suspect him fled. A friendly confidence in mens goodness may help to prevent the mischief designed us by their badness.

24. Very early in the morning, a great while before day. Jacob had helped his wives and children over the river, and he desired to be

private, and was left alone, that he might again spread his cares and fears before God in prayer. While Jacob was earnest in prayer, stirring up himself to take hold on God, an angel takes hold on him. Some think this was a created angel, one of those that always behold the face of our Father. Rather it was the angel of the covenant, who often appeared in a human shape, before he assumed the human nature. We are told by the prophet, Hosea xii, 4, how Jacob wrestled, he wept and made supplication; prayers and tears were his weapons. It was not only a corporal, but a spiritual wrestling by vigorous faith and holy desire.

25. The angel prevailed not against him - That is, this discouragement did not shake his faith, nor silence his prayer. It was not in his own strength that he wrestled, nor by his own strength that he prevails; but by strength derived from heaven. That of Job illustrates this, Job xxiii, 6. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; had the angel done so, Jacob had been crushed; but he would put strength in me: and by that strength Jacob had power over the angel, Hosea xii, 3. The angel put out Jacob's thigh, to shew him what he could do, and that it was God he was wrestling with, for no man could disjoint his thigh with a touch. Some think that Jacob felt little or no pain from this hurt; it is probable he did not, for he did not so much as halt 'till the struggle was over, ver. 31, and if so, that was an evidence of a divine touch indeed, which wounded and healed at the same time.

26. Let me go - The angel, by an admirable condescension, speaks Jacob fair to let him go, as God said to Moses, Exod. xxxii, 10. Let me alone. Could not a mighty angel get clear of Jacob's grapples? He could; but thus he would put an honour upon Jacob's faith and prayer. The reason the angel gives why he would be gone is because the day breaks, and therefore he would not any longer detain Jacob, who had business to do, a journey to go, a family to look after. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me - He resolves he will have a blessing, and rather shall all his bones be put out of joint, than he will go away without one. Those that would have the blessing of Christ must be in good earnest, and be importunate for it.

27. What is thy name? - Jacob (saith he) a supplanter, so Jacob signifies. Well, (saith the angel) be thou never so called any more: thou shalt be called Israel, a prince with God. He is a prince indeed, that is a prince with God; and those are truly honourable that are mighty, in prayer. Yet this was not all; having, power with God, he shall have power with men too; having prevailed for a blessing from heaven, he shall, no doubt, prevail for Esau's favour. Whatever enemies we have, if we can but make God our friend, we are well enough; they that by faith have power in heaven, have thereby as much power on earth as they have occasion for.

29. Wherefore dost thou ask after my name? - What good will it do thee to know that? The discovery of that was reserved for his death-bed, upon which he was taught to call him Shiloh. But instead of telling him his name, he gave him his blessing, which was the thing he wrestled for; he blessed him there, repeated and ratified the blessing formerly given him. See how wonderfully God condescends to countenance and crown importunate prayer? Those that resolve though God slay them, yet to trust in him, will at length be more than conquerors.

30. Peniel - That is, the face of God, because there he had seen the appearance of God, and obtained the favour of God.

31. He halted on his thigh - And some think he continued to do so to his dying day. If he did, he had no reason to complain, for the honour and comfort he obtained by his struggle was abundantly sufficient to countervail the damage, though he went limping to his grave.

XXXIII We read in the former chapter how Jacob had power with God, and prevailed; here we find what power he had with men too. Here is,

I. A friendly meeting between Jacob and Esau, ver. 1-4.

II. Their conference at their meeting. Their discourse is,

(1.) About Jacob's family, ver. 5-7.

(2.) About the present he had sent, ver. 8-11.

(3.) About the progress of their journey, ver. 12-15.

III. Jacob's settlement in Canaan, his house-ground, and altar, ver. 16-20.

3. He bowed - Though he feared Esau as an enemy, yet he did obeisance to him as an elder brother.

4. And Esau ran to meet him - Not in passion but in love. Embraced him, fell on his neck and kissed him - God hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them when and how he pleases. He can of a sudden convert enemies into friends, as he did two Sauls, one by restraining grace,

1 Sam. xxvi, 21, 25, the other by renewing grace, Acts ix, 21. And they wept - Jacob wept for joy to be thus kindly received; Esau perhaps wept for grief and shame to think of the ill design he had conceived against his brother.

5. Eleven or twelve little ones followed Jacob, the eldest of them not fourteen years old: Who are these? saith Esau. Jacob had sent him an account of the increase of his estate, but made no mention of his children, perhaps because he would not expose them to his rage, if he should meet him as an enemy. Esau therefore had

reason to ask who are those with thee? To which Jacob returns a serious answer; they are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant. Jacob speaks of his children,

1. As God's gifts; they are a heritage of the Lord.

2. As choice gifts; he hath graciously given them. Though they were many, and but slenderly provided for, yet he accounts them great blessings.

10. I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God - That is, I have seen thee reconciled to me, and at peace with me, as I desire to see God reconciled.

12. Esau offers himself to be his guide and companion, in token of sincere reconciliation. We never find that Jacob and Esau were so loving with one another as they were now. God made Esau not only not an enemy, but a friend. Esau is become fond of Jacob's company, courts him to mount Seir: let us never despair of any, nor distrust God, in whose hands all hearts are. Yet Jacob saw cause modestly to refute this offer, wherein he shews a tender concern for his own family and flocks, like a good shepherd and a good father. He must consider the children, and the flocks with young, and not lead the one or drive the other too fast. Jacob intimates to him, that it was his design to come to him to mount Seir; and we may presume he did so, after he had settled his concerns elsewhere, though that visit be not recorded.

15. Esau offers some of his men to be his guard and convoy; but Jacob humbly refuseth his offer, only desiring he would not take it amiss that he did not accept it. What needs it? He is under the Divine protection. Those are sufficiently guarded that have God for their guard, and are under a convoy of his hosts, as Jacob was. Jacob adds, only let me find grace in the sight of my Lord - Having thy favour I have all I need, all I desire from thee.

16. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth - Having in a friendly manner parted with Esau, who was gone to his own country, he comes to a place, where he rested, set up booths for his cattle, and other conveniences for himself and family. The place was afterwards known by the name of Succoth, a city in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan; it signifies booths: that when his posterity afterwards dwelt in houses of stone, they might remember that the Syrian ready to perish was their father, who was glad of booths, Deut. xxvi, 5.

18. And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem - Or rather he came safe, or in peace, to the city of Shechem. After a perilous journey, in which he had met with many difficulties, he came safe at last, into Canaan.

20. He erected an altar -

1. In thankfulness to God for the good hand of his providence over him.

2. That he might keep up religion, and the worship of God in his family. He dedicated this altar to the honour of El-elohe-israel, God-the God of Israel: to the honour of God in general, the only living and true God, the Best of beings, the First of causes: and to the honour of the God of Israel, as a God in covenant with him. God had lately called him by the name of Israel; and now he calls God the God of Israel; though he be called a prince with God, God shall still be a prince with him, his Lord and his God.

XXXIV In this chapter we have,

1. Dinah debauched, ver. 1, 2-5.

2. A treaty of marriage between her and Shechem who had defiled her, ver. 6-19.

3. The circumcision of the Shechemites, pursuant to that treaty, ver. 20-24.

4. The perfidious and bloody revenge which Simeon and Levi took upon them, ver. 25-31.

1. Dinah was then about fifteen or sixteen years of age when she went out to see the daughters of the land - Probably on some public day. She went to see; yet that was not all, she went to be seen too: she went to see the daughters of the land, but it may be with some thoughts of the sons of the land too.

7. It is called folly in Israel - According to the language of after-times, for Israel was not yet a people, but a family only.

8. Hamor communed - That is, talked. He came to treat with Jacob himself, but he turns them over to his sons. And here we have a particular account of the treaty, in which it is a shame to say the Canaanites were more honest than the Israelites.

18. Hamor and Shechem gave consent themselves to be circumcised. To this perhaps they were moved not only by the strong desire they had to bring about, this match, but by what they might have heard of the sacred and honourable intentions of this sign, in the family of Abraham, which it is probable they had some confused notions of, and of the promises confirmed by it; which made them the more desirous to incorporate with the family of Jacob.

23. Shall not their cattle and their substance be ours? - They observed that Jacob's sons were industrious, thriving people, and promised themselves and their neighbours advantage by an

alliance with them: it would improve ground and trade, and bring money into their country.

25. They slew all the males - Nothing can excuse this execrable villainy. It was true Shechem had wrought folly in Israel, in defiling Dinah: but it ought to have been considered how far Dinah herself had been accessory to it. Had Shechem abused her in her mother's tent, it had been another matter; but she went upon his ground, and struck the spark which began the fire. When we are severe upon the sinner, we ought to consider who was the tempter. It was true that Shechem had done ill; but he was endeavouring to atone for it, and was as honest and honourable afterwards as the case would admit. It was true that Shechem had done ill, but what was that to all the Shechemites? Doth one man sin, and must the innocent fall with the guilty? This was barbarous indeed. But that which above all aggravated the cruelty, was the most perfidious treachery that was in it. The Shechemites had submitted to their conditions, and had done that upon which they had promised to become one people with them. Yet they act as sworn enemies to those to whom they were lately become sworn friends, making as light of their covenant as they did of the laws of humanity. And these are the sons of Israel? Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce.

27. Tho' Simeon and Levi only were the murderers, yet others of the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city - And so became accessory to the murder.

30. Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land - That is, You have rendered my family odious among them. And what could be expected but that the Canaanites, who were numerous and formidable, would confederate against him, and he and his little family would become an easy prey to them? I shall be destroyed, I and my house - Jacob knew indeed that God had promised to preserve his house; but he might justly fear that these vile practices of his children would amount to a forfeiture, and cut off the entail. When sin is in the house, there is reason to fear ruin at the door.

31. Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot? - No, he should not; but, if he do, Must they be their own avengers? And nothing less than so many lives, and the ruin of a whole city, serve to atone for the abuse.

XXXV In this chapter we have,

I. Three communions between God and Jacob.

1. God ordered Jacob to Beth-el, and in obedience to that order, he purged his house of idols, and prepared for that journey, ver. 1-5.

2. Jacob built an altar at Beth-el to the honour of God that had

appeared to him, and in performance of his vow, ver. 6, 7.

3. God appeared to him again, and confirmed the change of his name, and the covenant with him, ver 9-13. of which appearance Jacob made a grateful acknowledgement, ver. 14, 15.

## II. Three funerals.

1. Deborah's, ver. 8.

2. Rachel's, ver. 16-20.

3. Isaac's, ver. 27-29.

III. Here is also Reuben's incest, ver. 22. and an account of Jacob's sons, ver. 23-26.

1. Arise go to Bethel - Here God minds Jacob of his vow at Bethel, and sends him thither to perform it, Jacob had said in the day of his distress, If I come again in peace, this stone shall be God's house, chap. xxviii, 22. God had performed his part, had given Jacob more than bread to eat, and raiment to put on; but it should seem he had forgotten his vow, or, at least, deferred the performance of it. And dwell there - That is, Not only go himself, but take his family with him, that they might join with him in his devotions. Put away the strange Gods - Strange God's in Jacob's family! Could such a family, that was taught the knowledge of the Lord, admit them? Could such a master, to whom God had appeared twice, and oftner, connive at them? And be clean, and change your garments - These were ceremonies signifying the purification and change of the heart.

4. And they gave to Jacob - His servants, and even the retainers to his family, gave him all the strange gods, and the ear-rings they wore either as charms, or to the honour of their gods. Jacob took care to bury their images, we may suppose, in some place unknown to them, that they might not afterwards find and return to them.

5. And the terror of God was upon the cities - Though the Canaanites were much exasperated against the sons of Jacob for their barbarous usage of the Shechemites; yet they were so restrained by a divine power, that they could not take this fair opportunity to avenge their neighbours quarrel. God governs the world more by secret terrors on men's minds than we are aware of.

7. He built an altar - And no doubt offered sacrifice upon it, perhaps the tenth of his cattle, according to his vow, I will give the tenth unto thee. And he called the place, That is, the altar, El-beth-el, the God of Beth-el. As when he made a thankful acknowledgement of the honour God had done him in calling him

Israel, he worshipped God by the name of El-elohe-israel, so now he was making a grateful recognition of God's former favour at Beth-el, he worships God by the name of El-beth-el, the God of Beth-el, because there God appeared to him.

8. There he buried Deborah, Rebekah's nurse - We have reason to think that Jacob, after he came to Canaan, while his family dwelt near Shechem, went himself to visit his father Isaac at Hebron. Rebekah probably was dead, but her old nurse (of whom mention is made chap. xxiv, 59,) survived her, and Jacob took her to his family. While they were at Beth-el she died, and died lamented, so much lamented, that the oak under which she was buried, was called Allon-bachuth, the oak of weeping.

10. God now confirmed the change of his name. It was done before by the angel that wrestled with him, chap. xxxii, 28, and here it was ratified by the divine majesty, to encourage him against the fear of the Canaanites. Who can be too hard for Israel, a prince with God?

11. He renewed and ratified the covenant with him, by the name of El-Shaddai, I am God Almighty. God All-sufficient, able to make good the promise in due time, and to support thee and provide for thee. Two things are promised him. 1. That he should be the father of a great nation: great in number, a company of nations shall be of thee - Every tribe of Israel was a nation, and all the twelve, a company of nations: great in honour and power, kings shall come out of thy loins. 2. That he should be master of a good land, ver. 12. The land that was given to Abraham and Isaac is here entailed on Jacob and his seed. These two promises had also a spiritual signification, which we may suppose Jacob himself had some notion of: for without doubt Christ is the promised seed, and heaven is the promised land; the former is the foundation, and the latter the top-stone of all God's favours.

13. And God went up from him - Or, from over him - In some visible display of glory, which had hovered over him, while he talked with him.

14. And Jacob set up a pillar - When he was going to Padan-aram he set up that stone which he had laid his head on for a pillar; but now he took time to erect one more stately, and durable, probably inserting that stone into it. And in token of his intending it for a sacred memorial of his communion with God, he poured oil, and the other ingredients of a drink-offering upon it. This stone shall be God's house, that is, shall be set up for his honour, as houses to the praise of their builders; and here he performs it. And he confirmed the name he had formerly given to the place, Beth-el, the house of God. Yet this very place afterwards lost the honour of its name, and became Beth-aven, a house of iniquity, for here it was that Jeroboam set up one of his calves. It is impossible for the



best men to entail so much as the profession and form of religion upon a place.

16. She had hard labour - Harder than usual.

17. Rachel had said when she bore Joseph, God shall give me another son, which now the midwife remembers, and tells her, her words were made good. Yet this did not avail; unless God command away fear, no one else can. We are apt in extreme perils to comfort ourselves and our friends with the hopes of a temporal deliverance, in which we may be disappointed; we had better ground our comforts on that which cannot fail us, the hope of eternal life. Rachel had passionately said, Give me children, or else I die; and now she had children (for this was her second) she died.

18. Her dying lips calls her new-born soon Benoni, the son of my sorrow. But Jacob because he would not renew the sorrowful remembrance of his mother's death every time he called his son by name, changed his name, and called him Benjamin, the son of my right hand - That is, very dear to me; set on my right hand for a right hand blessing; the support of my age, like the staff in my right hand. Jacob buried her near the place where she died. If the soul be at rest after death, the matter is not great where the body lies. In the place where the tree falls, there let it lie. The Jewish writers say, The death of Deborah and Rachel was to expiate the murder of the Shechemites, occasioned by Dinah, a daughter of the family.

20. And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave - So that it was known long after to be Rachel's sepulchre, 1 Sam. x, 2, and Providence so ordered it, that this place afterwards fell in the lot of Benjamin. Jacob set up a pillar in remembrance of his joys ver. 14, and here he set up one in remembrance of his sorrows; for as it may be of use to ourselves to keep both in mind, so it may be of use to others to transmit the memorials of both.

21. Israel, a prince with God, yet dwells in tents; the city is reserved for him in the other world.

22. When Israel dwelt in that land - As if he were then absent from his family, which might be the unhappy occasion of these disorders. Though perhaps Bilhah was the greater criminal, yet Reuben's crime was so provoking that for it he lost his birth-right and blessing, chap. xlix, 4. And Israel heard it - No more is said, that is enough; he heard it with the utmost grief and shame, horror and displeasure.

27. And Jacob came unto Isaac his father - We may suppose he had visited him before since his return, for he sore longed after his father's house, but never 'till now brought his family to settle with him, or near him. Probably he did this now upon the death of

**Rebekah, by which Isaac was left solitary.**

**28. The age and death of Isaac are here recorded, though it appears by computation that he died not 'till many years after Joseph was sold into Egypt, and much about the time that he was preferred there. Isaac, a mild quiet man, lived the longest of all the patriarchs, for he was one hundred and eighty years old: Abraham was but one hundred and seventy-five. Isaac lived about forty years after he had made his will, chap. xxvii, 2. We shall not die an hour the sooner, but abundance the better, for our timely setting of our heart and house in order. Particular notice is taken of the amicable agreement of Esau and Jacob in solemnizing their father's funeral, ver. 29, to shew how God had wonderfully changed Esau's mind, since he vowed his brother's murder, upon his father's death, chap. xxvii, 41. God has many ways of preventing ill men from doing the mischief they intended; he can either tie their hands, or turn their hearts.**

**XXXVI In this chapter we have an account of the posterity of Esau, who were from him, were called Edomites;**

**1. Because he was the son of Isaac, for whose sake this honour is put upon him.**

**2. Because the Edomites were neighbours to Israel, and their genealogy would be of use to give light to the following stories of what passed between them.**

**3. To shew the performance of the promise to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations, and of that answer which Rebekah had from the oracle she consulted, Two nations are in thy womb; and of the blessing of Isaac, Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth. Here are,**

**I. Esau's wives, ver. 1-5.**

**II. His remove to mount Seir, ver. 6-8.**

**III. The names of his sons, ver. 9-14.**

**IV. The dukes which descended of his sons, ver. 15-19.**

**V. The dukes of the Horites, ver. 20-30.**

**VI. The kings and dukes of Edom, ver. 31-43.**

**1. Who is Edom-That name perpetuated the remembrance of the foolish bargain he made, when he sold his birth-right for that red pottage.**

**6. Esau had begun to settle among his wife's relations in Seir, before Jacob came from Padan-aram, chap. xxxii, 3. Isaac it is**

likely, had sent him thither, that Jacob might have the clearer way to the possession of the promised land: yet probably during the life of Isaac, Esau had still some effects remaining in Canaan; but after his death, he wholly withdrew to mount Seir, took with him what came to his share of his father's personal estate, and left Canaan to Jacob, not only because he had the promise of it, but because he saw, if they should both continue to thrive, as they had begun, there would not be room for both.

8. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir - Whatever opposition may be made, God's word will take place, and even those that have opposed it will see themselves, some time or other, under a necessity of yielding to it. Esau had struggled for Canaan, but now he retires to mount Seir; for God's counsels shall certainly stand concerning the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation.

10. These are the names - Observe here,

1. That only the names of Esau's sons and grand-sons are recorded: not their history, for it is the church that Moses preserves the records of, not of those that were without. The elders only that lived by faith obtained a good report. Nor doth the genealogy go any farther than the third and fourth generation, the very names of all after are buried in oblivion; it is only the pedigree of the Israelites who were to be the heirs of Canaan, and of whom were to come the promised seed, and the holy seed, that is drawn out to any length, as far as there was occasion for it, even of all the tribes till Canaan was divided among them, and of the royal line 'till Christ came.

2. That the sons and grand-sons of Esau are called dukes. Probably they were military commanders, dukes or captains that had soldiers under them; for Esau and his family lived by the sword, chap. xxvii, 40.

3. We may suppose those dukes had numerous families of children and servants. God promised to multiply Jacob and to enrich him, yet Esau increases and is enriched first. God's promise to Jacob began to work late, but the effect of it remained longer, and it had its compleat accomplishment in the spiritual Israel.

20. These are the sons of Seir - In the midst of the genealogy of the Edomites is inserted the genealogy of the Horites, those Canaanites, or Hittites, (compare chap. xxvi, 34,) that were the natives of mount Seir. Mention is made of them, chap. xiv, 6, and of their interest in mount Seir before the Edomites took possession of it, Deut. ii, 12, 22. This comes in here, not only to give light to the story, but to be a standing reflexion upon the Edomites for intermarrying with them, by which it is likely they learned their way, and corrupted themselves. Esau having sold his

birth-right, and lost his blessing and entered into alliance with the Hittites, his posterity and the sons of Seir are here reckoned together. Those that treacherously desert God's church are justly numbered with those that were never in it: apostate Edomites stand on the same ground with accursed Horites. Notice is taken of one Anah, who fed the asses of Zibeon his father, ver. 20, and yet is called duke Anah, ver. 29. Those that expect to rise high should begin low. An honourable descent should not keep men from an honest employment, nor a mean employment baulk any man's preferment.

24. This Anah was not only industrious in his business, but ingenious too, and successful, for he found mules, or, (as some read it) waters, hot baths in the wilderness. Those that are diligent in their business sometimes find more advantages than they expected.

31. By degrees the Edomites worked out the Horites, and got full possession of the country. 1. They were ruled by kings who governed the whole country, and seem to have come to the throne by election, and not by lineal descent: these kings reigned in Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel - That is, before Moses's time, for he was king in Jeshurun. God had lately promised Jacob that kings shall come out of his loins: yet Esau's blood becomes royal long before any of Jacob's did. Probably it was a trial to the faith of Israel, to hear of the power of the kings of Edom, while they were bond-slaves in Egypt: but those that look for great things from God must be content to wait for them. God's time is the best time. 2. They were afterward's governed by dukes again, here named, who, I suppose, ruled all at the same time in several places in the country. They set up this form of government, either in conformity to the Horites, who had used it, ver. 29, or God's providence reduced them to it, as some conjecture, to correct them for their unkindness to Israel, in refusing them passage through their country, Num. xx, 18.

43. Mount Seir is called the land of their possession - While the Israelites dwelt in the house of bondage, and their Canaan was only the land of promise, the Edomites dwelt in their own habitations, and Seir was in their possession. The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope, while the children of God have often their all in hope, and next to nothing in hand. But, all things considered, it is better to have Canaan in promise than mount Seir in possession.

XXXVII At this chapter begins the story of Joseph, Jacob's eldest son, by his beloved wife Rachel. It is so remarkably divided between his humiliation and his exaltation, that we cannot avoid seeing something of Christ in it, who was first humbled and then exalted; it also shews the lot of Christians, who must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom. In this chapter we have,

- I. The malice his brethren bore against him: they hated him,**  
**(1.) Because he informed his father of their wickedness, ver. 1, 2.**  
**(2.) Because his father loved him, ver. 3, 4.**  
**(3.) Because he dreamed of his dominion over them, ver. 5-11.**

- II. The mischiefs his brethren designed, and did to him.**  
**(1.) His visit he made them gave an opportunity, ver. 12-17.**  
**(2.) They designed to slay him, but determined to starve him, ver. 18-24.**  
**(3.) They changed their purpose, and sold him for a slave, ver. 25-28.**  
**(4.) They made their father believe that he was torn in pieces, ver. 29-35.**  
**(5.) He was sold in Egypt to Potiphar, ver. xxxvi, And all this was working together for good.**

**2. These are the generations of Jacob - It is not a barren genealogy, as those of Esau, but a memorable useful history. Joseph brought to his father their evil report - Jacob's sons did that when they were from under his eye, which they durst not have done if they had been at home with him; but Joseph gave his father an account of their ill carriage, that he might reprove and restrain them.**

**3. He made him a coat of divers colours - Which probably was significant of farther honours intended him.**

**5. Though he was now very young, about seventeen years old, yet he was pious and devout, and this fitted him for God's gracious discoveries to him. Joseph had a great deal of trouble before him, and therefore God gave him betimes this prospect of his advancement, to support and comfort him.**

**8. Shalt thou indeed reign over us? - See here,**

**1. How truly they interpreted his dream? The event exactly answered this interpretation, chap. xlii, 6, &c.**

**2. How scornfully they resented it, Shalt thou that art but one, reign over us that are many? Thou that art the youngest, over us that are elder? The reign of Jesus Christ, our Joseph, is despised and striven against by an unbelieving world, who cannot endure to think that this man should reign over them. The dominion also of the upright in the morning of the resurrection is thought of with the utmost disdain.**

**10. His father rebuked him - Probably to lessen the offense which his brethren would take at it; yet he took notice of it more than he seemed to do.**

**18. And when they saw him afar off they conspired against him -**

**It was not in a heat, or upon a sudden provocation, that they thought to slay him, but from malice propense, and in cold blood.**

**21. And Reuben heard it - God can raise up friends for his people, even among their enemies. Reuben of all the brothers had most reason to be jealous of Joseph, for he was the first-born, and so entitled to those distinguishing favours which Jacob was conferring on Joseph, yet he proves his best friend. Reuben's temper seems to have been soft and effeminate, which had betrayed him to the sin of uncleanness, while the temper of the two next brothers, Simeon and Levi, was fierce, which betrayed them to the sin of murder, a sin which Reuben startled at the thought of. He made a proposal which they thought would effectually destroy Joseph, and yet which he designed should answer his intention of rescuing Joseph out of their hands, probably hoping thereby to recover his father's favour which he had lately lost; but God over-ruled all to serve his own purpose of making Joseph an instrument to save much people alive. Joseph was here a type of Christ. Though he was the beloved Son of his Father, and hated by a wicked world; yet the Father sent him out of his bosom to visit us; he came from heaven to earth to seek and save us; yet then malicious plots were laid against him; he came to his own, and his own not only received him not, but consulted, This is the heir, come let us kill him. This he submitted to, in pursuance of his design to save us.**

**24. They call him into a pit - To perish there with hunger and cold; so cruel were their tender mercies.**

**25. They sat down to eat bread - They felt no remorse of conscience, which if they had, would have spoiled their stomach to their meat. A great force put upon conscience commonly stupifies it, and for the time deprives it both of sense and speech.**

**26. What profit is it if we slay our brother? - It will be less guilt and more gain to sell him. They all agreed to this. And as Joseph was sold by the contrivance of Judah for twenty pieces of silver, so was our Lord Jesus for thirty, and by one of the same name too, Judas. Reuben it seems, was gone away from his brethren when they sold Joseph, intending to come round some other way to the pit, and to help Joseph out of it. But had this taken effect, what had become of God's purpose concerning his preferment, in Egypt? There are many devices of the enemies of God's people to destroy them, and of their friends to help them, which perhaps are both disappointed, as these here; but the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. Reuben thought himself undone because the child was sold; I, whither shall I go? He being the eldest, his father would expect from him an account of him; but it proved they had all been undone, if he had not been sold.**

**35. He refused to be comforted - He resolved to go down to the**

grave mourning; Great affection to any creature doth but prepare for so much the greater affliction, when it is either removed from us, or embittered to us: inordinate love commonly ends in immoderate grief.

**XXXVIII** How little reason had the Jews, who were so called from this Judah, to boast, as they did, that they were not born of fornication? John viii, 41. We have in this chapter,

**I.** Judah's marriage and issue, and the untimely death of his two eldest sons, ver. 1-11.

**II.** Judah's incest with his daughter-in-law Tamar, ver. 12-23.

**III.** His confusion when it was discovered, ver. 24-26.

**IV.** The birth of his twin sons in whom his family was built up, ver. 27-30.

1. Judah went down from his brethren - Withdrew for a time from his father's family, and got intimately acquainted with one Hirah an Adullamite. When young people that have been well educated begin to change their company, they will soon change their manners, and lose their good education. They that go down from their brethren, that forsake the society of the seed of Israel, and pick up Canaanites for their companions, are going down the hill apace.

2. He took her-To wife. His father, it should seem, was not consulted, but by his new friend Hirah.

7. And Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord - That is, in defiance of God and his law. And what came of it? Why God cut him off presently, The Lord slew him. The next brother Onan was, according to the ancient usage, married to the widow, to preserve the name of his deceased brother that died childless. This custom of marrying the brother's widow was afterward made one of the laws of Moses, Deut. xxv, 5. Onan, though he consented to marry the widow, yet to the great abuse of his own body, of the wife he had married, and the memory of his brother that was gone, he refused to raise up seed unto his brother. Those sins that dishonour the body are very displeasing to God, and the evidence of vile actions. Observe, the thing which he did displeased the Lord - And it is to be feared, thousands, especially of single persons, by this very thing, still displeased the Lord, and destroy their own souls.

11. Shelah the third son was reserved for the widow, yet with design that he should not marry so young as his brothers had done, lest he die also. Some think that Judah never intended to marry Shelah to Tamar, but unjustly suspected her to have been the death of her two former husbands, (whereas it was their own

wickedness that slew them) and then sent her to her father's house, with a charge to remain a widow. If so, it was an inexcusable piece of prevarication; however Tamar acquiesced, and waited for the issue.

14. Some excuse this by suggesting that she believed the promise made to Abraham and his seed, particularly that of the Messiah, and that she was therefore desirous to have a child by one of that family, that she might have the honour, or at least stand fair for the honour of being the mother of the Messiah. She covered her with a veil - It was the custom of harlots in those times to cover their faces, that tho' they were not ashamed, yet they might seem to be so: the sin of uncleanness did not then go so bare-faced as it now doth.

17. A kid from the flock - A goodly price at which her chastity and honour were valued! Had the consideration been thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil, it had not been a valuable consideration. The favour of God, the purity of the soul, the peace of the conscience, and the hope of heaven: are too precious to be exposed to sale at any such rates. He lost his Jewels by the bargain: He sent the kid according to his promise, to redeem his pawn, but the supposed harlot could not be found. He sent it by his friend, (who was indeed his back-friend, because he was aiding and abetting in his evil deeds) the Adullamite; who came back without the pledge. 'Tis a good account, if it be but true, of any place that which they here gave, that there is no harlot in this place, for such sinners are the scandals and plagues of any place. Judah sits down content to lose his signet and his bracelets, and forbids his friend to make any farther enquiry.

23. Lest we be shamed - Either,

1. Lest his sin should come to be known publicly, Or

2. Lest he should be laughed at as a fool for trusting a whore with his signet and his bracelets. He expresses no concern about the sin, only about the shame. There are many who are more solicitous to preserve their reputation with men, than to secure the savour of God, lest we be shamed goes farther with them than lest we be damned.

28. It should seem the birth was hard to the mother, by which she was corrected for her sin: the children also, like Jacob and Esau, struggled for the birth-right, and Pharez who got it, is ever named first, and from him Christ descended. He had his name from his breaking forth before his brother; this breach be upon thee - The Jews, as Zarah, bid fair for the birth-right, and were marked with a scarlet thread, as those that come out first; but the Gentiles, like Pharez, or a son of violence got the start of them, by that violence which the kingdom of heaven suffers, and attained to the



righteousness which the Jews came short of: yet when the fulness of time is come, all Israel shall be saved. Both these sons are named in the genealogy of our saviour, Matt. i, 3, to perpetuate the story, as an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus.

**XXXIX** At this chapter we return to the story of Joseph. We have him here,

**I.** A servant, a slave in Potiphar's house, ver. 1. and yet there greatly honoured and favoured,

(1.) By the providence of God, which made him in effect a master, ver. 2-6.

(2.) By the grace of God, which made him more than conqueror over a strong temptation, ver. 7-12.

**II.** We have him a sufferer, falsely accused, ver. 13-18. Imprisoned, ver.

19, 20. And yet his imprisonment made both honourable and comfortable by the tokens of God's special presence with him, ver. 21-23.

1. The Jews have a proverb, If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls. Joseph was sold to an officer of Pharaoh, with whom he might get acquainted with public persons, and public business, and so be fitted for the preferment he was afterwards designed for. What God intends men for, he will be sure, some way or other, to qualify them for.

2. Those that can separate us from all our friends, cannot deprive us of the gracious presence of our God. When Joseph had none of his relations with him, he had his God with him, even in the house of the Egyptian: Joseph was banished from his father's house, but the Lord was with him. It is God's presence with us that makes all we do prosperous. Those that would prosper, must therefore make God their friend; and those that do prosper, must therefore give God the praise.

6. He knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat - The servant had all the care and trouble of the estate, the master had only the enjoyment of it; an example not to be imitated by any master, unless he could be sure that he had one like Joseph for a servant.

9. How can I sin against God - Not only how shall I do it and sin against my master, my mistress, myself, my own body and soul, but against God? - Gracious souls look upon this as the worst thing in sin, that it is against God, against his nature and his dominion, against his love and his design. They that love God, for this reason hate sin.

10. He hearkened not to her, so much as to be with her. Those that would be kept from harm, must keep themselves out of harm's way.

12. When she laid hold on him, he left his garment in her hand - He would not stay to parley with the temptation, but flew out from it with the utmost abhorrence, he left his garment as one escaping for his life.

20. Where the king's prisoners were bound - Potiphar, it is likely, chose that prison because it was the worst; for there the irons entered into the soul, Psalm cv, 18, but God designed it to pave the way to his enlargement. Our Lord Jesus, like Joseph was bound, and numbered with the transgressors.

21. But the Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy. God despiseth not his prisoners, Psalm lxxix, 33. No gates nor bars can shut out his gracious presence from his people. God gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison - God can raise up friends for his people even where they little expect them. The keeper saw that God was with him, and that every thing prospered under his hand, and therefore intrusted him with the management of the affairs of the prison.

XL In this chapter things are working towards Joseph's advancement.

I. Two of Pharaoh's servants are committed to prison, and there, to Joseph's care, and so became witnesses of his extraordinary conduct, ver. 1-4.

II. They dreamed each of them a dream, which Joseph interpreted, ver. 5-19. and they verified the interpretation, ver. 20-22.

III. Joseph recommends his case to one of them whose preferment he foresaw, ver. 14, 15. but in vain, ver. 23.

1. We should not have had this story of Pharaoh's butler and baker recorded in scripture, if it had not been serviceable to Joseph's preferment. The world stands for the sake of the church, and is governed for its good. Observe,

1. Two of the great officers of Pharaoh's court having offended the king are committed to prison. Note, High places are slippery places; nothing more uncertain than the favour of princes. Those that make God's favour their happiness, and his service their business, will find him a better master than Pharaoh was, and not so extreme to mark what they do amiss. Many conjectures there are concerning the offense of these servants of Pharaoh; some make it no less than an attempt to take away his life; others no more but the casual lighting of a fly into his cup, and a little sand in his bread: whatever it was, Providence, by this means, brought

them into the prison where Joseph was.

4. The captain of the guard, which was Potiphar, charged Joseph with them - Which intimates that he began now to be reconciled to him.

6. They were sad - It was not the prison that made them sad; they were pretty well used to that, but the dream. God has more ways than one to sadden the spirits of those that are to be made sad. Those sinners that are hardy enough under outward trouble, yet God can find a way to trouble them, and take off their wheels, by wounding their spirits, and laying a load upon them.

8. Do not interpretations belong to God? - He means the God whom he worshipped, to the knowledge of whom he endeavours hereby to lead them. And if interpretations belong to God, he is a free agent, and may communicate the power to whom he pleases, therefore tell me your dreams.

14. Think on me, when it shall be well with thee - Though the respect paid to Joseph, made the prison as easy to him as a prison could be, yet none can blame him to be desirous of liberty. See what a modest representation he makes of his own case. He doth not reflect upon his brethren that sold him, only saith, I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews. Nor doth he reflect on the wrong done him in this imprisonment by his mistress that was his persecutor, and his master that was his judge, but mildly avers his own innocency. Here have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon - When we are called to vindicate ourselves, we should carefully avoid as much as may be speaking ill of others. Let us be content to prove ourselves innocent, and not fond of upbraiding others with their guilt.

20. He lifted up the head of these two prisoners-That is, arraigned and tried them; and he restored the chief butler, and hanged the chief baker.

XLI Two things providence is here bringing about.

1. The advancement of Joseph.

2. The maintenance of Jacob and his family in a time of famine; for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth, and direct the affairs of the children of men. In order to these, here is,

I. Pharaoh's dream, ver. 1-8.

II. The recommendation of Joseph to him for an interpreter, ver. 9-13.

III. The interpretation of the dreams, and the prediction of seven years plenty, and seven years famine in Egypt, with the prudent

advice given to Pharaoh thereupon, ver. 14-36.

IV. The preferment of Joseph to a place of the highest power and trust, ver. 37-45.

V. The accomplishment of Joseph's prediction, and his fidelity to his trust, ver. 46-57.

8. His spirit was troubled - It cannot but put us into a concern to receive any extraordinary message from heaven. And his magicians were puzzled; the rules of their art failed them; these dreams of Pharaoh did not fall within the compass of them. This was to make Joseph's performance by the Spirit of God the more admirable.

9. I remember my faults this day - in forgetting Joseph. Some think he means his faults against Pharaoh, for which he was imprisoned, and then he would insinuate, that through Pharaoh had forgiven him, he had not forgiven himself. God's time for the enlargement of his people will appear, at last, to be the fittest time. If the chief butler had at first used his interest for Joseph's enlargement, and had obtained, it is probable, he would have gone back to the land of the Hebrews, and then he had neither been so blessed himself, nor such a blessing to his family. But staying two years longer, and coming out upon this occasion to interpret the king's dreams, way was made for his preferment. The king can scarce allow him time, but that decency required it, to shave himself, and to change his raiment, chap. xli, 14. It is done with all possible expedition, and Joseph is brought in perhaps almost as much surprised as Peter was, Acts xii, 9, so suddenly is his captivity brought back, that he is as one that dreams, Psalm lxxvi, 1. Pharaoh immediately, without enquiring who or whence he was tells him his business, that he expected he should interpret his dream.

16.

(1.) He gives honour to God; It is not in me; God must give it. Great gifts then appear most graceful and illustrious, when those that have them use them humbly, and take not the praise of them to themselves, but give it to God,

(2.) He shews respect to Pharaoh, and hearty goodwill to him, supposing that the interpretation would be an answer of peace. Those that consult God's oracles may expect an answer of peace.

29. See the goodness of God, in sending the seven years of plenty before those of famine, that provision might be made accordingly. How wonderful wisely has Providence, that great house-keeper, ordered the affairs of this numerous family from the beginning! Great variety of seasons there have been and the produce of the earth sometimes more, and sometimes less; yet take one time with another, what was miraculous concerning the manna, is ordinarily

verified in the common course of Providence; He that gathers much has nothing over, and he that gathers little has no lack, Exod. xvi, 18.

30. See the perishing nature of our worldly enjoyments. The great increase of the years of plenty was quite lost and swallowed up in the years of famine; and the overplus of it, which seemed very much, yet did but just serve to keep men alive.

44. Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot - All the affairs of the kingdom must pass through his hand. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou - It is probable there were those about court that opposed Joseph's preferment, which occasioned Pharaoh so oft to repeat the grant, and with that solemn sanction, I am Pharaoh. He gave him his own ring as a ratification of his commission, and in token of peculiar favour; or it was like delivering him the great seal. He put fine clothes upon him instead of his prison garments, and adorned him with a chain of gold. He made him ride in the second chariot next his own, and ordered all to do obeisance to him, as to Pharaoh himself; he gave him a new name and such a name as spoke the value he had for him, Zaphnath-paaneah, a Revealer of secrets. He married him honourably to a prince's daughter. Where God had been liberal in giving wisdom and other merits, Pharaoh was not sparing in conferring honours. Now this preferment of Joseph, was, 1st, an abundant recompense for his innocent and patient suffering, a lasting instance of the equity and goodness of providence, and an encouragement to all to trust in a good God. 2ndly, It was typical of the exaltation of Christ, that great revealer of secrets, (John i, 18,) or as some translate Joseph's new name, the saviour of the world. The brightest glories of the upper world are upon him, the highest trusts lodged in his hand, and all power given him both in heaven and earth. He is gatherer, keeper, and disposer of all the stores of divine grace, and chief ruler of the kingdom of God among men. The work of ministers is to cry before him; Bow the knee; kiss the Son.

50. Two sons - In the names he gave them, he owned the divine Providence giving this happy turn to his affairs. He was made to forget his misery, but could he be so unnatural as to forget all his father's house? And he was made fruitful in the land of his affliction. It had been the land of his affliction, and, in some sense, it was still so, for his distance from his father was still his affliction. Ephraim signifies fruitfulness, and Manasseh forgetfulness.

54. The seven years of dearth began to come - Not only in Egypt, but in other lands, in all lands, that is, all the neighbouring countries.

XLII We have in this chapter,

**I. The humble application of Jacob's sons to Joseph, to buy corn, ver. 1-6.**

**II. The fright Joseph put them into, for their trial, ver. 7-20.**

**III. The conviction they were now under of their sin concerning Joseph long before, ver. 21-24.**

**IV. Their return to Canaan with corn, and the great distress their good father was in upon the account they gave him of their expedition, ver. 25-38.**

**1. Jacob saw that there was corn - That is, he saw the corn that his neighbours had bought there and brought home.**

**2. Get you down thither - Masters of families must not only pray for daily bread for their families, but must with care and industry provide it.**

**7. We may well wonder that Joseph, during the twenty years he had been in Egypt, especially during the last seven years that he had been in power there, never sent to his father to acquaint him with his circumstances; nay, 'tis strange that he who so oft went throughout all the land of Egypt, never made a step to Canaan, to visit his aged father. When he was in the borders of Egypt that lay next to Canaan, perhaps it would not have been above three or four days journey for him in his chariot. 'Tis a probable conjecture, that his whole management of himself in this affair was by special direction from heaven, that the purpose of God, concerning Jacob and his family, might be accomplished. When Joseph's brethren came, he knew them by many a good token, but they knew not him, little thinking to find him there.**

**9. He remembered the dreams, but they had forgot them. The laying up of God's oracles in our hearts will be of excellent use to us in all our conduct. Joseph had an eye to his dreams, which he knew to be divine, in his carriage towards his brethren, and aimed at the accomplishment of them, and the bringing his brethren to repentance; and both those points were gained.**

**1. He shewed himself harsh with them: the very manner of his speaking, considering the post he was in, was enough to frighten them, for he spake roughly to them - He charged them with ill designs against the government, treated them as dangerous persons, ye are spies, protesting by the life of Pharaoh that they were so. Some make that an oath, others make it no more but a vehement asseveration; however, it was more than yea, yea, and nay, nay, and therefore came of evil.**

**2. They hereupon were very submissive; they spoke to him with all respect; nay, my Lord. They modestly deny the charge, we are**

no spies; they tell him their business, they came to buy food, they give a particular account of themselves and their family, ver. 13, and that was it he wanted.

3. He clapt them all up in prison three days.

4. He concluded with them at last, that one of them should be left as a hostage, and the rest should go home and fetch Benjamin. It was a very encouraging word he said, I fear God; q.d. You may assure yourselves, I will do you no wrong, I dare not, for I know that as high as I am, there is one higher than I. With those that fear God we have reason to expect fair dealing: the fear of God will be a check upon those that are in power, to restrain them from abusing their power to oppression and tyranny:

21. We are very guilty concerning our brother - We do not read that they said this during their three days imprisonment; but now when the matter was come to some issue, and they saw themselves still embarrassed, they began to relent. Perhaps Joseph's mention of the fear of God, put them upon consideration, and extorted this reflexion.

24. He took Simeon - He chose him for the hostage, probably because he remembered him to have been his most bitter enemy, or because he observed him now to be least humbled and concerned. He bound him before their eyes, to affect them all.

28. Their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done to us? - They knew that the Egyptians abhorred a Hebrew, chap. xliii, 32, and therefore, since they could not expect to receive any kindness from them, they concluded that this was done with a design to pick a quarrel with them, the rather because the man, the Lord of the land, had charged them as spies. Their own conscience were awake, and their sins set in order before them, and this puts them into confusion. When the events of providence concerning us are surprising, it is good to inquire what it is that God has done and is doing with us?

38. My son shall not go down with you - He plainly intimates a distrust of them, remembering that he never saw Joseph since he had been with them; therefore Benjamin shall not go with you.

XLIII Here the story of Joseph's brethren is carried on.

I. Their melancholy parting with their father Jacob, in Canaan, ver. 1-14.

II. Their meeting with Joseph in Egypt, ver. 15-34.

9. Judah's conscience had lately smitten him for what he had done a great while ago against Joseph; and as an evidence of the truth

of his repentance, he is ready to undertake, as far as a man could do it, for Benjamin's security. He will not only not wrong him but will do all he can to protect him. This is such restitution as the case will admit: when he knew not how he could retrieve Joseph, he would make some amends for the irreparable injury he had done him, by doubling his care concerning Benjamin.

11. If it must be so now, take your brother - If no corn can be had but upon those terms, as good expose him to the perils of the journey, as suffer ourselves and families, and Benjamin among the rest, to perish for want of bread: it is no fault, but our wisdom and duty, to alter our resolutions when there is a good reason for so doing: constancy is a virtue, but obstinacy is not: it is God's prerogative to make unchangeable resolves.

12. Take double money - As much again as they took the time before, upon supposition that the price of corn might be risen, or that, if it should be insisted upon, they might pay a ransom for Simeon. And he sent a present of such things as the land afforded, and were scarce in Egypt, the commodities that Canaan exported.

14. God almighty give you mercy before the man! - Jacob had formerly turned an angry brother into a kind one with a present and a prayer, and here he betakes himself to the same tried method. Those that would find mercy with men must seek it of God. He concludes all with this, if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved - If I must part with them thus one after another, I acquiesce and say, The will of the Lord be done.

23. Your God, and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks - Hereby he shews that he had no suspicion of dishonesty in them: for what we get by deceit we cannot say God gives it us. He silences their farther enquiry about it: ask not how it came thither, providence brought it you, and let that satisfy you. It appears by what he said, that by his master's instructions he was brought to the knowledge of the true God, the God of the Hebrews. He directs them to look up to God, and acknowledge his providence in the good bargain they had. We must own ourselves indebted to God as our God, and the God of our fathers, (a God in covenant with us and them) for all our successes and advantages, and the kindnesses of our friends; for every creature is that to us, and no more, than God makes it to be.

26. When they brought him the present, they bowed themselves before him, and again, when they gave him an account of their father's health, they made obeisance, and called him, Thy servant, our father - Thus were Joseph's dreams fulfilled more and more; and even the father, by the sons, bowed before him. Probably Jacob had directed them, if they had occasion to speak of him to the man, the Lord of the land, to call him his servant.



29. God be gracious unto thee, my son - Joseph's favour, though he was the Lord of the land, would do him little good, unless God were gracious to him.

33. He placed his brethren according to their seniority, as if he could certainly divine. Some think they placed themselves so according to their custom; but if so, I see not why such particular notice is taken of it, especially as a thing they marvelled at.

34. They drank and were merry - Their cares and fears were now over, and they eat their bread with joy, concluding they were now upon good terms with the man, the Lord of the land. If God accept our works, our present, we have reason to be chearful.

XLIV Joseph having entertained his brethren, dismissed them: but here we have them brought back in a greater fright than any they had been in yet. Observe.

I. What method he took, both to humble them farther, and to try their affections to his brother Benjamin, by which he would be able to judge the sincerity of their repentance for what they had done against him. This he contrived to do by bringing Benjamin into distress, ver. 1-17.

II. The good success of the experiment: he found them all heartily concerned, and Judah particularly, both for the safety of Benjamin, and for the comfort of their aged father, ver. 18-34.

5. Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh? And for which he would search thoroughly - So it may be rendered.

16. God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants - Referring to the injury they had formerly done to Joseph, for which they thought God was now reckoning with them. Even in those afflictions wherein we apprehend ourselves wronged by men, yet we must own that God is righteous, and finds out our iniquity. We cannot judge what men are, by what they have been formerly, not what they will do, by what they have done. Age and experience may make men wiser and better, They that had sold Joseph, yet would not abandon Benjamin.

18. And Judah said - We have here a most pathetic speech which Judah made to Joseph on Benjamin's behalf. Either Judah was a better friend to Benjamin than the rest, and more solicitous to bring him off; or he thought himself under greater obligations to endeavour it than the rest, because he had passed his word to his father for his safe return. His address, as it is here recorded, is so very natural, and so expressive of his present passion, that we cannot but suppose Moses, who wrote it so long after, to have written it under the special direction of him that made man's mouth. A great deal of unaffected art, and unstudied rhetoric there is in this speech.

1. He addressed himself to Joseph with a great deal of respect calls him his Lord, himself and his brethren his servants, begs his patient hearing, and passeth a mighty compliment upon him, Thou art even as Pharaoh, whose favour we desire, and whose wrath we dread as we do Pharaoh's.

2. He represented Benjamin as one well worthy of his compassionate consideration, he was a little one, compared with the rest; the youngest, not acquainted with the world, nor inured to hardship, having been always brought up tenderly with his father. It made the case the more piteous that he alone was left of his mother, and his brother was dead, viz. Joseph; little did Judah think what a tender point he touched upon now. Judah knew that Joseph was sold, and therefore had reason enough to think that he was not alive.

3. He urged it closely that Joseph had himself constrained them to bring Benjamin with them, had expressed a desire to see him, had forbidden them his presence, unless they brought Benjamin with them, all which intimated, that he designed him some kindness. And must he be brought with so much difficulty to the preferment of a perpetual slavery? Was he not brought to Egypt in obedience, purely in obedience to the command of Joseph, and would not he shew him some mercy?

4. The great argument he insists upon was the insupportable grief it would be to his aged father, if Benjamin should be left behind in servitude. His father loves him, ver. 20. Thus they had pleaded against Joseph's insisting on his coming down ver. 22. If he should leave his father, his father would die, much more if he now be left behind, never to return. This the old man of whom they spake, had pleaded against his going down. If mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs, that crown of glory, with sorrow to the grave. This therefore Judah presseth with a great deal of earnestness, his life is bound up in the lad's life, when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will faint away and die immediately, or will abandon himself to such a degree of sorrow, as will, in a few days, make an end of him, And (lastly) Judah pleads, that, for his part, he could not bear to see this. Let me not see the evil that shall come on my father.

5. Judah, in honour to the justice of Joseph's sentence, and to shew his sincerity in this plea, offers himself to become a bond-man instead of Benjamin. Thus the law would be satisfied; Joseph would be no loser, for we may suppose Judah a more able bodied man than Benjamin; Jacob would better bear that than the loss of Benjamin. Now, so far was he from grieving at his father's particular fondness for Benjamin, than he is himself willing to be a bond-man to indulge it. Now, had Joseph been, as Judah supposed, an utter stranger to the family, yet even common

humanity could not but be wrought upon by such powerful reasonings as these; for nothing could be said more moving, more tender; it was enough to melt a heart of stone: but to Joseph, who was nearer a-kin to Benjamin than Judah himself, and who, at this time, felt a greater passion for him and his aged father, than Judah did, nothing could be more pleasingly nor more happily said.

Neither Jacob nor Benjamin needed an intercessor with Joseph, for he himself loved them. Upon the whole, let us take notice, (1.) How prudently Judah suppressed all mention of the crime that was charged upon Benjamin. Had he said any thing by way of acknowledgment of it, he had reflected on Benjamin's honesty. Had he said any thing by way of denial of it, he had reflected on Joseph's justice; therefore he wholly waves that head, and appeals to Joseph's pity.

(2.) What good reason dying Jacob had to say, Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, chap. xlix, 8, for he excelled them all in boldness, wisdom, eloquence, and especially tenderness for their father and family.

(3.) Judah's faithful adherence to Benjamin now in his distress was recompensed long after, by the constant adherence of the tribe of Benjamin to the tribe of Judah, when all the other ten tribes deserted it.

XLV Joseph let Judah go on without interruption, heard all he had to say, and then answered it all in one word, I am Joseph. Now he found his brethren humbled for their sins, mindful of himself (for Judah had mentioned him twice in his speech) respectful to their father, and very tender of their brother Benjamin: now they were ripe for the comfort he designed them, by making himself known to them. This was to Joseph's brethren as clear shining after rain; nay, it was to them as life from the dead. Here is,

I. Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren, and his discourse with them upon that occasion, ver. 1-15.

II. The orders Pharaoh gave to fetch Jacob and his family down to Egypt, and Joseph's dispatch of his brethren back to his father with these orders, ver. 16-24.

III. The joyful tidings of this brought to Jacob, ver. 25-28.

1. Judah and his brethren were waiting for an answer, and could not but be amazed to discover, instead of the gravity of a judge, the natural affection of a father or brother. Cause every man to go out - The private conversations of friends are the most free. When Joseph would put on love, he puts off state, which it was not fit his servants should be witnesses of. Thus Christ graciously manifests himself and his loving kindness to his people, out of the sight and hearing of the world. See note at "ver. 2" for continuation to item

2. Tears were the introduction to his discourse. He had dammed up this stream a great while, and with much ado, but now it swelled so high that he could no longer contain, but he wept aloud, so that those whom he had forbid to see him could not but hear him. These were tears of tenderness and strong affection, and with these he threw off that austerity, with which he had hitherto carried himself towards his brethren; for he could bear it no longer. This represents the Divine compassion towards returning penitents, as much as that of the father of the prodigal, Luke xv, 20 Hosea xi, 8, 9. See note at "ver. 3" for continuation to item No. 3

3. He abruptly tells them; I am Joseph - They knew him only by his Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah, his Hebrew name being lost and forgot in Egypt; but now he teaches them to call him by that, I am Joseph: nay, that they might not suspect it was another of the same name, he explains himself. I am Joseph your brother. This would both humble them yet more for their sin in selling him, and encourage them to hope for kind treatment. This word, at first, startled Joseph's brethren, they started back through fear, or at least stood still astonished: but Joseph called kindly and familiarly to them. Come near, I pray you. Thus, when Christ manifests himself to his people he encourages them to draw near to him with a true heart. Perhaps being about to speak of their selling of him, he would not speak aloud, lest the Egyptians should overhear, and it should make the Hebrews to be yet more an abomination to them; therefore he would have them come near, that he might whisper with them, which, now the tide of his passion was a little over, he was able to do, whereas, at first, he could not but cry out.

4. He endeavours to sweep their grief for the injuries they had done him, by shewing them, that, whatever they designed, God meant it for good, and had brought much good out of it. See note at "ver. 1" for start of item, ie. No. 1

5. Be not grieved or angry with yourselves - Sinners must grieve, and be angry with themselves for their sins; yea, though God, by his power, bring good out of them, for that is no thanks to the sinner: but true penitents should be greatly affected with it, when they see God bringing good out of evil. Though we must not with this consideration extenuate our own sins, and so take off the edge of our repentance; yet it may do well thus to extenuate the sins of others, and so take off the edge of our angry resentments. Thus Joseph doth here. His brethren needed not to fear that he would revenge upon them an injury which God's providence had made to turn so much to his advantage, and that of his family. Now he tells them how long the famine was likely to last, five years yet, ver. 6, and what a capacity he was in of being kind to his relations, which is the greatest satisfaction that wealth and power can give to a good man.

8. See what a favourable colour he puts upon the injury they had done him, God sent me before you - God's Israel is the particular care of God's providence. Joseph reckoned that his advancement was not so much designed to save a whole kingdom of Egyptians, as to preserve a small family of Israelites; for the Lord's portion is his people: whatever goes with others, they shall be secured. How admirable are the projects of Providence! How remote its tendencies! What wheels are there within wheels; and yet all directed by the eyes in the wheels, and the Spirit of the living Creature! See note at "ver. 1" for start of item, ie. No. [1.] [5.] He promises to take care of his father and all his family, during the rest of the years of famine.

(1.) He desires that his father might speedily be made glad with the tidings of his life and honour. His brethren must hasten to Canaan, and acquaint Jacob that his son Joseph was Lord of all Egypt - He knew it would be a refreshing oil to his hoary head, and a sovereign cordial to his spirits. He desires them to give themselves, and take with them to their father, all possible satisfaction of the truth of these surprising tidings.

12. Your eyes see that it is my mouth - If they could recollect themselves, they might remember something of his features and speech, and be satisfied. See note at "ver. 1" for

(2.) He is very earnest that his father and all his family should come to him to Egypt. Come down unto me, tarry not - He allots his dwelling in Goshen, that part of Egypt which lay towards Canaan, that they might be mindful of the country from which they were to come out. He promiseth to provide for him, I will nourish - Our Lord Jesus being, like Joseph, exalted to the highest honours and powers of the upper world, it is his will that all that are his should be with him where he is. This is his commandment, that we be with him now in faith and hope, and a heavenly conversation; and this is his promise, that we shall be for ever with him.

24. See that ye fall not out by the way - He knew they were but too apt to be quarrelsome; and what had lately passed, which revived the remembrance of what they had done formerly against their brother, might give them occasion to quarrel. Now Joseph having forgiven them all, lays this obligation upon them, not to upbraid one another. This charge our Lord Jesus has given to us, that we love one another, that we live in peace, that whatever occurs, or whatever former occurrences are remembered, we fall not out. For,

1. We are brethren, we have all one father.

2. We are his brethren; and we shame, our relation to him, who is our peace, if we fall out.

3. We are all guilty, verily guilty, and instead of quarrelling with one another, have a great deal of reason to fall out with ourselves.

4. We are forgiven of God, whom we have all offended, and therefore should be ready to forgive one another.

5. We are by the way, a way that lies through the land of Egypt, where we have many eyes upon us, that seek occasion and advantage against us; a way that leads to Canaan, where we hope to be for ever in perfect peace.

26. We have here the good news brought to Jacob. When, without any preamble, his sons came in crying Joseph is yet alive. The very mention of Joseph's name revived his sorrow, so that his heart fainted. It was a good while before he came to himself. He was in such care and fear about the rest of them, that at this time it would have been joy enough to him to hear that Simeon is released, and Benjamin is come safe home; for he had been ready to despair concerning both these; but to bear that Joseph is alive, is too good news to be true; he faints, for he believes it not.

27. When he saw the waggons his spirit revived - Now Jacob is called Israel, for he begins to recover his wonted vigour. It pleases him to think that Joseph is alive. He saith nothing of Joseph's glory, which they had told him of; it was enough to him that Joseph was alive: it pleases him to think of going to see him. Though he was old, and the journey long, yet he would go to see Joseph, because Joseph's business would not permit him to come to him. Observe, He will go see him, not I will go live with him; Jacob was old, and did not expect to live long: but I will go see him before I die, and then let me depart in peace; let my eyes be refreshed with this sight before they are closed, and then it is enough, I need no more to make me happy in this world.

XLVI Jacob is here removing to Egypt in his old age.

I. God sends him thither, ver. 1-4.

II. All his family goes with him, ver. 5-27.

III. Joseph bids him welcome, ver. 28-34.

1. And Israel came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac - He chose that place in remembrance of the communion which his father and grandfather had with God in that place. In his devotion he had an eye to God as the God of his father Isaac, that is, a God in covenant with him, for by Isaac the covenant was entailed upon him. He offered sacrifices, extraordinary sacrifices, besides those at his stated times. These sacrifices were offered,

1. By way of thanksgiving for the late blessed change of the face

of his family, for the good news he had received concerning Joseph, and the hopes he had of seeing him.

2. By way of petition for the presence of God with him in his intended journey.

3. By way of consultation. Jacob would not go on 'till he had asked God's leave.

2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night - (Probably the next night after he had offered his sacrifices.) Those who desire to keep up communion with God, shall find that it never fails on his side. If we speak to him as we ought, he will not fail to speak to us. God called him by his name, by his old name, Jacob, Jacob, to mind him of his low estate. Jacob, like one well acquainted with the visions of the Almighty, answers, Here am I - Ready to receive orders. And what has God to say to him?

3. I am God, the God of thy father - That is, I am what thou ownest me to be: thou shalt find me a God of divine wisdom and power engaged for thee: and thou shalt find me the God of thy father, true to the covenant made with him. Fear not to go down into Egypt - It seems though Jacob, upon the first intelligence of Joseph's life and glory in Egypt, resolved without any hesitation I will go and see him, yet upon second thoughts he saw difficulties in it.

1. He was old, 130 years old; it was a long journey, and he was unfit to travel.

2. He feared lest his sons should be tainted with the idolatry of Egypt, and forget the God of their fathers.

3. Probably he thought of what God had said to Abraham concerning the bondage and affliction of his seed.

4. He could not think of laying his bones in Egypt. But whatever his discouragements were, this was enough to answer them all, Fear not to go down into Egypt.

4. I will go down with thee into Egypt - Those that go where God sends them shall certainly have God with them. And I will surely bring thee up again - Tho' Jacob died in Egypt, yet this promise was fulfilled,

1. In the bringing up of his body to be buried in Canaan.

2. In the bringing up of his seed to be settled in Canaan. Whatever low and darksome valley we are called into, we may be confident if God go down with us, he will surely bring us up again. If he go with us down to death, he will surely bring us up again to glory. And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes - That is a promise

that Joseph should live as long as he lived, that he should be with him at his death, and close his eyes with all possible tenderness. Probably Jacob, in the multitude of his thoughts within him, had been wishing that Joseph might do this last office of love for him; and God thus answered him in the letter of his desire. Thus God sometimes gratifies the innocent wishes of his people, and makes not only their death happy, but the very circumstances of it agreeable.

7. All his seed - 'Tis probable they continued to live together in common with their father, and therefore when he went they all went; which perhaps they were the more willing to do, because, tho' they had heard that the land of Canaan was promised them, yet to this day they had none of it in possession. We have here a particular account of the names of Jacob's family; his sons, most of which are afterwards mentioned, as heads of houses in the several tribes. See Num. xxvi, 5, &c. Issachar called his eldest son Tola, which signifies a worm, probably because when he was born he was a little weak child, not likely to live, and yet there sprang from him a very numerous off-spring, 1Ch vii, 2. The whole number that went down into Egypt were sixty-six, to which add Joseph and his two sons, who were there before, and Jacob himself, the head of the family, and you have the number of seventy. 'Twas now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great nation, chap. xii, 2, and yet that branch of his seed, on which the promise was entailed, was as yet increased but to seventy, of which this particular account is kept, that the power of God in multiplying these seventy to so vast a multitude, even in Egypt, may be the more illustrious. When he pleases, A little one shall become a thousand.

30. Now let me die - Not but that it was farther desirable to live with Joseph, and to see his honour and usefulness; but he had so much satisfaction in this first meeting, that he thought it too much to desire or expect any more in this world.

XLVII In this chapter we have instances,

I. Of Joseph's kindness to his relations, presenting his brethren first, and then his father to Pharaoh, ver. 1-10. setting them in Goshen, and providing for them there, ver. 11, 12. paying his respects to his father when he sent for him, ver. 27-31.

II. Of Joseph's justice between prince and people in a very critical affair; selling Pharaoh's corn to his subjects with reasonable profit to Pharaoh, and yet without any wrong to them, ver. 13-26.

3. What is your occupation? - Pharaoh takes it for granted they had something to do. All that have a place in the world should have an employment in it according to their capacity, some occupation or other. Those that need not work for their bread, yet



must have something to do to keep them from idleness.

4. To sojourn in the land are we came - Not to settle there for ever; only to sojourn, while the famine prevailed so in Canaan, which lay high, that it was not habitable for shepherds, the grass being burnt up much more than in Egypt, which lay low, and where the corn chiefly failed, but there was tolerable good pasture.

8. How old art thou? - A question usually put to old men, for it is natural to us to admire old age, and to reverence it. Jacob's countenance no doubt shewed him to be old, for he had been a man of labour and sorrow. In Egypt people were not so long-lived as in Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh looks upon Jacob with wonder.

## 9. Observe

1. Jacob calls his life a pilgrimage, looking upon himself as a stranger in this world, and a traveler towards another. He reckoned himself not only a pilgrim now he was in Egypt, a strange country in which he never was before, but his life even in the land of his nativity was a pilgrimage.

2. He reckoned his life by days; for even so it is soon reckoned, and we are not sure of the continuance of it for a day to an end, but may be turned out of this tabernacle at less than an hours warning.

3. The character he gives of them was,  
(1.) That they were few. Though he had now lived 130 years, they seemed to him but as a few days, in comparison of the days of eternity, in which a thousand years are but as one day;  
(2.) That they were evil. This is true concerning man in general, Job xiv, 1, he is of few days and full of trouble: Jacob's life particularly had been made up of evil days. the pleasantest days of his life were yet before him.  
(3.) That they were short of the days of his fathers; not so many, not so pleasant as their days. Old age came sooner upon him than it had done upon some of his ancestors.

10. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh - Which was not only an act of civility but an act of piety; he prayed for him, as one having the authority of a prophet and a patriarch: and a patriarch's blessing was not a thing to be despised, no not by a potent prince.

21. He removed them to cities - He transplanted them, to shew Pharaoh's sovereign power over them, and that they might, in time, forget their titles to their lands, and be the easier reconciled to their new condition of servitude. How hard soever this seems to have been upon them, they themselves were sensible of it as a great kindness, and were thankful they were not worse used.

28. Jacob lived seventeen years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own expectation: seventeen years he had nourished Joseph, for so old he was when he was sold from him, and now, seventeen years Joseph nourished him. Observe how kindly Providence ordered Jacob's affairs; that when he was old, and least able to bear care and fatigue, he had least occasion for it, being well provided for by his son without his own forecast.

29. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die - Israel, that had power over the angel, and prevailed, yet must yield to death. He died by degrees; his candle was not blown out, but gradually burnt down, so that he saw, at some distance, the time drawing nigh. He would be buried in Canaan, not because Canaan was the land of his nativity, but in faith, because it was the land of promise, which he desired thus, as it were to keep possession of 'till the time should come when his posterity should be masters of it: and because it was a type of heaven, that better country, which he was in expectation of. When this was done, Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head - Worshipping God, as it is explained, Heb. xi, 21, giving God thanks for all his favours, and particularly for this, that Joseph was ready, to put his hand upon his eyes. Thus they that go down to the dust should, with humble thankfulness, bow before God, the God of their mercies.

XLVIII In this chapter Jacob's dying words are recorded, because he speaks by a spirit of prophecy; Abraham's and Isaac's are not. God's gifts and graces shine forth much more in some than in others upon their death-beds. Here is,

I. Joseph hearing of his father's sickness goes to visit him, and takes his two sons with him, ver. 1-2.

II. Jacob solemnly adopts his two sons, and takes them for his own, ver. 3-7.

III. He blesseth them, ver. 8-16.

IV. He explains and justifies the crossing of his hands in blessing them, ver. 17-20.

V. He leaves a particular legacy to Joseph, ver. 21-22.

3. God blessed me - And let that blessing be entailed upon them. God had promised him two things, a numerous issue, and Canaan for an inheritance. And Joseph's sons, pursuant hereunto, should each of them multiply into a tribe, and each of them have a distinct lot in Canaan, equal with Jacob's own sons. See how he blessed them by faith in that which God had said to him Heb. xi, 21.

7. Mention is made of the death and burial of Rachel, Joseph's mother, and Jacob's best beloved wife. The removal of dear

relations from us is an affliction, the remembrance of which cannot but abide with us a great while. Strong affections in the enjoyment cause long afflictions in the loss.

11. I had not thought to see thy face, (having many years given him up for lost) and lo God hath shewed me also thy seed? - See here, How these two good men own God in their comforts. Joseph saith, They are my sons whom God has given me - And to magnify the favour he adds, in this place of my banishment, slavery and imprisonment. Jacob saith here, God hath shewed me thy seed - Our comforts are then doubly sweet to us, when we see them coming from God's hand.

15. The God who fed me all my life long unto this day - As long as we have lived in this world we have had continual experience of God's goodness to us in providing for the support of our natural life. Our bodies have called for daily food, and we have never wanted food convenient. He that has fed us all our life long will not fail us at last.

16. The angel who redeemed me from all evil - A great deal of hardship he had known in his time, but God had graciously kept him from the evil of his troubles. Christ, the angel of the covenant is he that redeems us from all evil. It becomes the servants of God, when they are old and dying, to witness for our God that they have found him gracious. Joseph had placed his children so, as that Jacob's right-hand should be put on the head of Manasseh the eldest, ver. 12, 13, but Jacob would put it on the head of Ephraim the youngest, ver. 14. This displeased Joseph, who was willing to support the reputation of his first-born and would therefore have removed his father's hands, ver. 17, 18, but Jacob gave him to understand that he knew what he did, and that he did it neither by mistake nor in a humour, nor from a partial affection to one more than the other, but from a spirit of prophecy.

19. Ephraim shall he greater - When the tribes were mustered in the wilderness Ephraim was more numerous than Manasseh, and had the standard of that squadron, Num. i, 32, 33, 35-ii, 18, 20, and is named first, Psalm lxxx, 2. Joshua was of that tribe. The tribe of Manasseh was divided, one half on one side Jordan, the other half on the other side, which made it the less powerful and considerable. God, in bestowing his blessings upon his people, gives more to some than to others, more gifts, graces and comforts, and more of the good things of this life. And he often gives most to those that are least likely: he chuseth the weak things of the world, raiseth the poor out of the dust. Grace observes not the order of nature, nor doth God prefer those whom we think fittest to be preferred but as it pleaseth him.

21. I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again - This assurance was given them, and carefully preserved among them,

that they might neither love Egypt too much when it favoured them, nor fear it too much when it frowned upon them. These words of Jacob furnish us with comfort in reference to the death of our friends: But God shall be with us, and his gracious presence is sufficient to make up the loss. They leave us, but he will never fail us. He will bring us to the land of our fathers, the heavenly Canaan, whither our godly fathers are gone before us. If God be with us while we stay behind in this world, and will receive us shortly to be with them that are gone before to a better world, we ought not to sorrow as those that have no hope.

22. He bestowed one portion upon him above his brethren. The lands bequeathed are described to be those which he took out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and with his bow. He purchased them first, Josh. xxiv, 32, and it seems was afterwards disseized of them by the Amorites, but retook them by the sword, repelling force by force, and recovering his right by violence when he could not otherwise recover it. These lands he settled upon Joseph. Mention is made of this grant, John iv, 5. Pursuant to it, this parcel of ground was given to the tribe of Ephraim as their right, and the lot was never cast upon it: and in it Joseph's bones were buried, which perhaps Jacob had an eye to as much as to any thing in this settlement. It may sometimes be both just and prudent to give some children portions above the rest: but a grave is that which we can most count upon as our own in this earth.

XLIX Jacob is here upon his death-bed making his will: what he said here he could not say when he would, but as the Spirit gave him utterance, who chose this time that divine strength might be perfected in this weakness. The twelve sons of Jacob were in their day men of renown; but the twelve tribes of Israel, which descended and were denominated from them, were much more renowned, we find their names upon the gates of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi, 12. In the prospect of which their dying father saith something remarkable of each son, or of the tribe that bore his name. Here is,

I. The preface, ver. 1, 2.

II. The prediction concerning each tribe, ver. 3-28.

III. The charge repeated concerning his burial, ver. 29-32.

IV. His death, ver. 33.

1. Gather yourselves together - Let them all be sent for to see their father die, and to hear his dying words. 'Twas a comfort to Jacob, now he was dying, to see all his children about him tho' he had sometimes thought himself bereaved: 'twas of use to them to attend him in his last moments, that they might learn of him how to die, as well as how to live; what he said to each, he said in the hearing of all the rest, for we may profit by the reproofs, counsels

and comforts that are principally intended for others. That I may tell you that which shall befall you, not your persons but your posterity, in the latter days - The prediction of which would be of use to those that come after them, for confirming their faith, and guiding their way, at their return to Canaan. We cannot tell our children what shall befall them, or their families, in this world; but we can tell them from the word of God, what will befall them in the last day of all, according as they carry themselves in this world.

2. Hearken to Israel your father - Let Israel that has prevailed with God, prevail with you.

3. Reuben thou art my first-born - Jacob here puts upon him the ornaments of the birth-right, that he and all his brethren might see what he had forfeited and in that might see the evil of his sin. As the first-born he was his father's joy, being the beginning of his strength. To him belonged the excellency of dignity above his brethren, and some power over them.

4. Thou shalt not excel - A being thou shalt have as a tribe, but not an excellency. No judge, prophet, or prince, are found of that tribe, nor any person of renown only Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their impious rebellion. That tribe, as not aiming to excel, chose a settlement on the other side Jordan. The character fastened upon Reuben, for which he is laid under this mark of infamy, is, that he was unstable as water. His virtue was unstable, he had not the government of himself, and his own appetites. His honour consequently was unstable, it vanished into smoke, and became as water spilt upon the ground. Jacob charges him particularly with the sin for which he was disgraced, thou wentest up to thy father's bed - It was forty years ago that he had been guilty of this sin, yet now it is remembered against him. Reuben's sin left an indelible mark of infamy upon his family; a wound not to be healed without a scar.

5. Simeon and Levi are brethren - Brethren in disposition, but unlike their father: they were passionate and revengeful, fierce and wilful; their swords, that should have been only weapons of defense, were (as the margin reads it) weapons of violence, to do wrong to others, not to save themselves from wrong.

6. They slew a man - Shechem himself, and many others; and to effect that, they digged down a wall, broke the houses to plunder them, and murder the inhabitants. O my soul, come not thou into their secret - Hereby he professeth not only his abhorrence of such practices in general, but his innocency particularly in that matter. Perhaps he had been suspected as under-hand aiding and abetting; he therefore solemnly expresseth his detestation of the fact.

7. Cursed be their anger - Not their persons. We ought always in

the expressions of our zeal carefully to distinguish between the sinner and the sin, so as not to love or bless the sin for the sake of the person, nor to hate or curse the person for the sake of the sin. I will divide them - The Levites were scattered throughout all the tribes, and Simeon's lot lay not together, and was so strait that many of that tribe were forced to disperse themselves in quest of settlements and subsistence. This curse was afterwards turned into a blessing to the Levites; but the Simeonites, for Zimri's sin, Num. xxv, 6-14, had it bound on.

8. Judah's name signifies praise, in allusion to which he saith, Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, God was praised for him, chap. xxix, 35, praised by him, and praised in him; and therefore his brethren shall praise him. Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies - This was fulfilled in David, Psalm xviii, 40. Thy father's children shall bow down before thee - Judah was the law-giver, Psalm lx, 7. That tribe led the van through the wilderness, and in the conquest of Canaan, Jude i, 2. The prerogatives of the birth-right which Reuben had forfeited, the excellency of dignity and power, were thus conferred upon Judah. Thy brethren shall bow down before thee, and yet shall praise thee, reckoning themselves happy in having so wise and bold a commander.

9. Judah is a lion's whelp - The lion is the king of beasts, the terror of the forest when he roars; when he seizeth his prey, none can resist him; when he goes up from the prey, none dares pursue him to revenge it. By this it is foretold that the tribe of Judah should become very formidable, and should not only obtain great victories but should peaceably enjoy what was got by those victories. Judah is compared not to a lion rampant, always raging but to a lion couching, enjoying the satisfaction of his success, without creating vexation to others.

10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come - Jacob here foretels,

(1.) That the scepter should come into the tribe of Judah, which was fulfilled in David, on whose family the crown was entailed.

(2.) That Shiloh should be of this tribe; that seed in whom the earth should be blessed. That peaceable prosperous one, or, the saviour, so others translate it, shall come of Judah.

(3.) That the scepter should continue in that tribe, till the coming of the Messiah, in whom as the king of the church, and the great High-priest, it was fit that both the priesthood and the royalty should determine. Till the captivity, all along from David's time, the scepter was in Judah, and from thence governors of that tribe, or of the Levites that adhered to it, which was equivalent; till Judea became a province of the Roman empire just at the time of our saviour's birth, and was at that time taxed as one of the provinces, Luke ii, 1, and at the time of his death the Jews expressly owned, We have no king but Caesar. Hence it is

undeniably inferred against the Jews, that our Lord Jesus is he that should come, and we are to look for no other, for he came exactly at the time appointed.

(4.) That it should be a fruitful tribe, especially that it should abound with milk and wine, ver. 11, 12, vines so common, and so strong, that they should tie their asses to them, and so fruitful, that they should load their asses from them; wine as plentiful as water, so that the men of that tribe should be very healthful and lively, their eyes brisk and sparkling, their teeth white. Much of that which is here said concerning Judah is to be applied to our Lord Jesus.

1. He is the ruler of all his Father's children, and the conqueror of all his Father's enemies, and he it is that is the praise of all the saints.

2. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, as he is called with reference to this, Rev. v, 5, who having spoiled principalities and powers, went up a conqueror, and couched so as none can stir him up when he sat down on the right hand of the Father.

3. To him belongs the scepter, he is the lawgiver, and to him shall the gathering of the people be, as the desire of all nations, Haggai ii, 7, who being lifted up from the earth should draw all men unto him, John xii, 32, and in whom the children of God that are scattered abroad should meet as the center of their unity, John xi, 52.

4. In him there is plenty of all that which is nourishing and refreshing to the soul, and which maintains and cheers the divine life in it; in him we may have wine and milk, the riches of Judah's tribe, without money, and without price, Isaiah lv, 1.

13. Zebulon shall dwell at the haven of the sea - This was fulfilled, when

2 or 300 years after, the land of Canaan was divided by lot, and the border of Zebulon went up towards the sea, Josh. xix, 11.

14. Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens - The men of that tribe shall be strong and industrious, fit for and inclined to labour, particularly the toil of husbandry, like the ass that patiently carries his burden. Issachar submitted to two burdens, tillage and tribute.

16. Daniel shall judge his people - Though Daniel was one of the sons of the concubines, yet he shall be a tribe governed by Judges of his own as well as other tribes; and shall by art and policy, and surprise, gain advantages against his enemies, like a serpent suddenly biting the heel of the traveler.

18. I have waited for thy salvation, Lord - If he must break off

here, and his breath will not serve him to finish what he intended, with these words he pours out his soul into the bosom of his God, and even breaths it out. The pious ejaculations of a warm and lively devotion, though sometimes they maybe incoherent, yet they are not impertinent; that may be uttered affectionately, which doth not come in methodically. It is no absurdity, when we are speaking to men, to lift up our hearts to God. The salvation he waited for was, 1st, Christ, the promised seed, whom he had spoken of, ver. 10, now he was going to be gathered to his people, he breathes after him to whom the gathering of the people shall be. 2ndly, Heaven, the better country, which he declared plainly that he sought, Heb. xi, 13,

14, and continued seeking now he was in Egypt.

19. Concerning Gad, he alludes to his name, which signifies a troop, foresees the character of that tribe, that it should be a warlike tribe; and so we find, 1Ch xii, 8, the Gadites were men of war fit for the battle. He foresees, that the situation of that tribe on the other side Jordan would expose it to the incursions of its neighbours, the Moabites and Ammonites; and that they might not be proud of their strength and valour, he foretells that the troops of their enemies should, in many skirmishes, overcome them; yet, that they might not be discouraged by their defeats, he assures them, that they should overcome at the last, which was fulfilled, when in Saul's time and David's the Moabites and Ammonites were wholly subdued.

20. Concerning Asher, he foretells, That it should be a rich tribe, replenished not only with bread for necessity, but with fatness, with dainties, royal dainties, and these exported out of Asher, to other tribes, perhaps to other lands. The God of nature has provided for us not only necessaries but dainties, that we might call him a bountiful benefactor; yet, whereas all places are competently furnished with necessaries, only some places afford dainties. Corn is more common than spices. Were the supports of luxury as universal as the supports of life, the world would be worse than it is, and that needs not.

21. Naphtali is a hind let loose - Those of this tribe were, as the loosen'd hind, zealous for their liberty, and yet affable and courteous, their language refined, and they complaisant, giving goodly words. Among God's Israel there is to be found a great variety of dispositions, yet all contributing to the beauty and strength of the body. He closes with the blessings of his best beloved sons, Joseph and Benjamin, with these he will breathe his last.

22. Joseph is a fruitful bough, or young tree, for God had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction, as branches of a vine, or other spreading plant, running over the wall.



23. The archer have sorely grieved him - Tho' he now lived at ease and in honour, Jacob minds him of the difficulties he had formerly waded through. He had many enemies here called archers, being skilful to do mischief; they hated him, they shot their poisonous darts at him. His brethren were spiteful towards him, mocked him, stripped him, sold him, thought they had been the death of him. His mistress sorely grieved him, and shot at him, when she solicited his chastity; and then shot at him by her false accusations.

24. But his bow abode in strength - His faith did not fail; he kept his ground, and came off conqueror. The arms of his hands were made strong - That is, his other graces did their part, his wisdom, courage, patience, which are better than weapons of war: By the hands of the mighty God - Who was therefore able to strengthen him; and the God of Jacob, a God in covenant with him. From thence, from this strange method of Providence, he became the shepherd and stone, the feeder and supporter of Israel, Jacob and his family. Herein Joseph was a type of Christ: He was shot at and hated, but born up under his sufferings, and was afterwards advanced to be the shepherd and stone: and of the church in general, hell shoots its arrows against her, but heaven protects and strengthens her.

25. Even by the God of thy father Jacob, who shall help thee - Our experiences of God's power and goodness in strengthning us hitherto, are encouragements still to hope for help from him. He that has helped us, will. And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee; and he only blesseth indeed. Observe the blessings conferred on Joseph; First, Various and abundant blessings. Blessings of heaven above, rain in its season, and fair weather in its season; blessings of the deep that lies under this earth, or with subterraneous mines and springs. Blessings of the womb and the breasts are given when children are safely born and comfortably nursed. Secondly, Eminent and transcendent blessings, which prevail above the blessings of my progenitors - His father Isaac had but one blessing, and when he had given that to Jacob, he was at a loss for a blessing to bestow upon Esau; but Jacob had a blessing for each of his twelve sons, and now at the latter end, a copious one for Joseph. Thirdly, Durable and extensive blessings: unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills - Including all the products of the most fruitful hills, and lasting as long as they last. Of these blessings it is here said they shall be, so it is a promise; or, let them be, so it is a prayer, on the head of Joseph, to which let them be as a crown to adorn it, and a helmet to protect it.

27. Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf - It is plain, Jacob was guided in what he said by a spirit of prophecy, and not by natural affection, else he would have spoken with more tenderness of his beloved son Benjamin, concerning whom he only foretells, that

his posterity should be a warlike tribe, strong and daring, and that they should enrich themselves with the spoil of their enemies, that they should be active in the world, and a tribe as much feared by their neighbours as any other; in the morning he shall devour the prey which he seized and divided over night.

29. I am to be gathered unto my people - Though death separate us from our children, and our people in this world, it gathers us to our fathers, and to our people in the other world. Perhaps Jacob useth this expression concerning death, as a reason why his sons should bury him in Canaan, for (saith he) I am to be gathered unto my people, my soul must be gone to the spirits of just men made perfect, and therefore bury me with my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and their wives.

33. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding of his sons - He addressed himself to his dying work. He put himself into a posture for dying; having sat upon the bed-side to bless his sons, the spirit of prophecy bringing fresh oil to his expiring lamp, when that work was done, he gathered up his feet into the bed, that he might lie along, not only as one patiently submitting to the stroke, but as one chearfully composing himself to rest. He then freely resigned his spirits into the hand of God, the father of spirit; he yielded up the ghost; and his separated soul went to the assembly of the souls of the faithful, who after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity; he was gathered to his people.

L Here, is,

I. The preparation for Jacob's funeral, ver. 1-6.

II. The funeral itself, ver. 7-14.

III. The settling of a good understanding between Joseph and his brethren, after the death of Jacob, ver. 15-21.

IV. The age and death of Joseph, ver. 22-26.

1. And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him, and kissed him - Joseph shewed his faith in God, and love to his father, by kissing his pale and cold lips, and so giving an affectionate farewell. Probably the rest of Jacob's sons did the same, much moved, no doubt, with his dying words.

2. He ordered the body to be embalmed, not only because he died in Egypt, and that was the manner of the Egyptians, but because he was to be carried to Canaan, which would be a work of time.

3. He observed the ceremony of solemn mourning for him. Forty days were taken up in embalming the body, which the Egyptians had an art of doing so curiously, as to preserve the very features

of the face unchanged. All this time, and thirty days more, seventy in all, they either confined themselves and sat solitary, or when they went out, appeared in the habit of close mourners, according to the decent custom of the country. Even the Egyptians, many of them, out of the respect they had for Joseph, put themselves into mourning for his father.

5. He asked and obtained leave of Pharaoh to go to Canaan, to attend the funeral of his father. It was a piece of necessary respect to Pharaoh, that he would not go without leave; for we may suppose, though his charge about the corn was long since over, yet he continued a prime minister of state, and therefore would not be so long absent from his business without license.

11. The solemn mourning for Jacob gave a name to the place; Abel-mizraim - The mourning of the Egyptians: which served for a testimony against the next generation of the Egyptians, who oppressed the posterity of this Jacob, to whom their ancestors shewed such respect.

15. Joseph will peradventure hate us - While their father lived, they thought themselves safe under his shadow; but now he was dead, they feared the worst. A guilty conscience exposeth men to continual frights; those that would be fearless must keep themselves guiltless.

16. Thy father did command - Thus in humbling ourselves to Christ by faith and repentance, we may plead that it is the command of his father and our father we should do so.

17. We are the servants of the God of thy father - Not only children of the same Jacob, but worshippers of the same Jehovah. Though we must be ready to forgive all that injure us, yet we must especially take heed of bearing malice towards any that are the servants of the God of our father; those we should always treat with a peculiar tenderness, for we and they have the same master. He wept when they spake to him - These were tears of sorrow for their suspicion of him, and tears of tenderness upon their submission.

19. Am I in the place of God? - He in his great humility thought they shewed him too much respect, and faith to them in effect, as Peter to Cornelius, Stand up, I myself also am a man. Make your peace with God, and then you will find it an easy matter to make your peace with me.

20. Ye thought evil, but God meant it unto good - In order to the making Joseph a greater blessing to his family than otherwise he could have been.

21. Fear not, I will nourish you - See what an excellent spirit Joseph was of, and learn of him to render good for evil. He did

not tell them they were upon their good behaviour, and he would be kind to them if he saw they carried themselves well: no, he would not thus hold them in suspence, nor seem jealous of them, though they had been suspicious of him. He comforted them, and, to banish all their fears, he spake kindly to them. Those we love and forgive we must not only do well for, but speak kindly to.

24. I die, but God will surely visit you - To this purpose Jacob had spoken to him, chap. xlviii, 21. Thus must we comfort others with the same comforts wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God, and encourage them to rest on those promises which have been our support. Joseph was, under God, both the protector and benefactor of his brethren, and what would become of them now he was dying? Why let this be their comfort, God will surely visit you. God's gracious visits will serve to make up the loss of our best friends, and bring you out of this land - And therefore, they must not hope to settle there, nor look upon it as their rest for ever; they must set their hearts upon the land of promise, and call that their home.

25. And ye shall carry up my bones from hence - Herein he had an eye to the promise, chap. xv, 13, 14, and in God's name assures them of the performance of it. In Egypt they buried their great men very honourably, and with abundance of pomp; but Joseph prefers a plain burial in Canaan, and that deferred almost two hundred years, before a magnificent one in Egypt. Thus Joseph by faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, and the promise of Canaan, gave commandment concerning his bones, Heb. xi, 22. He dies in Egypt; but lays his bones at stake, that God will surely visit Israel, and bring them to Canaan.

26. He was put in a coffin in Egypt - But not buried till his children had received their inheritance in Canaan, Josh. xxiv, 32. If the soul do but return to its rest with God, the matter is not great, though the deserted body find not at all, or not quickly, its rest in the grave. Yet care ought to be taken of the dead bodies of the saints, in the belief of their resurrection; for there is a covenant with the dust which shall be remembered, and a commandment given concerning the bones.

NOTES ON

## THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES CALLED EXODUS

MOSES having in the first book of his history preserved the records of the church, while it existed in private families, comes, in the second book, to give us an account of its growth into a great nation. The beginning of the former book shews us how God formed the world for himself, the beginning of this shews us how he formed Israel for himself. There we have the creation of the

world in history, here the redemption of the world in type. The Greek translators called this book Exodus, which signifies a going out, because it begins with the story of the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt. This book gives us,

I. The accomplishment of the promise made before to Abraham, to chap. xix. and then,

II. The establishment of the ordinances which were afterwards observed by Israel: thence to the end. Moses in this book begins, like Caesar, to write his own commentaries; and gives us the history of those things which he was himself an eye and ear witness of. There are more types of Christ in this book than perhaps in any other book of the Old Testament. The way of man's reconciliation to God, and coming into covenant and communion with him by a Mediator, is here variously represented; and it is of great use to us for the illustration of the New Testament.

We have here,

I. God's kindness to Israel, in multiplying them exceedingly, ver. 1-7.

II. The Egyptians wickedness to them;

1. Oppressing and enslaving them, ver. 8-14.

2. Murdering their children, ver. 15-22.

1. Every man of his household - That is, children and grand-children.

3. And Benjamin - Who tho' youngest of all is placed before Daniel, Naphtali, &c. because they were the children of the hand-maidens.

5. Seventy souls - According to the computation we had, Gen. xlvi, 27, including Joseph and his two sons. This was just the number of the nations by which the earth was peopled, Gen. x, 1-32, for when God separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, Deut. xxxii, 8.

6. All that generation by degrees wore off: perhaps all Jacob's sons died much about the same time, for there was not past seven years difference in age between the eldest and the youngest of them, except Benjamin.

7. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased

abundantly - Like fishes or insects, so that they multiplied; and being generally healthful and strong, they waxed exceeding mighty, so that the land was filled with them, at least Goshen, their own allotment. This wonderful increase was the product of the promise long before made to the fathers. From the call of Abraham, when God first told him he would make him a great nation, to the deliverance of his seed out of Egypt, was 430 years; during the first 215 of which, they were increased to 70, but in the latter half, those 70 multiplied to 600, 000 fighting men.

8. There arose a new king (after several successions in Joseph's time) which knew not Joseph - All that knew him loved him, and were kind to his relations for his sake; but when he was dead he was soon forgotten, and the remembrance of the good offices he had done was either not retained or not regarded. If we work for men only, our works at farthest will die with us; if for God, they will follow us, Rev. xiv, 13.

10. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply - When men deal wickedly it is common for them to imagine that they deal wisely, but the folly of sin will at last be manifested before all men.

11. They set over them task-masters, to afflict them - With this very design. They not only made them serve, which was sufficient for Pharaoh's profit, but they made them serve with rigor, so that their lives became bitter to them; intending hereby to break their spirits, and to rob them of every thing in them that was generous: to ruin their health, and shorten their days, and so diminish their numbers: to discourage them from marrying, since their children would be born to slavery; and to oblige them to desert the Hebrews, and incorporate with the Egyptians. And 'tis to be feared the oppression they were under did bring over many of them to join with the Egyptians in their idolatrous worship; for we read, Josh. xxiv, 14, that they served other gods in Egypt; and we find, Ezek. xx, 8, that God had threatned to destroy them for it, even while they were in the land of Egypt. Treasure-cities - To keep the king's money or corn, wherein a great part of the riches of Egypt consisted.

12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied - To the grief and vexation of the Egyptians. Times of affliction, have oft been the church's growing times: Christianity spread most when it was persecuted.

15. And the king spake to the Hebrew midwives - The two chief of them. They are called Hebrew midwives, probably not because they were themselves Hebrews; for sure Pharaoh could never expect they should be so barbarous to those of their own nation, but because they were generally made use of by the Hebrews, and being Egyptians he hoped to prevail with them.

16. The stools - Seats used on that occasion.

17. But the midwives feared God - Dreaded his wrath more than Pharaoh's, and therefore saved the men-children alive.

19. I see no reason we have to doubt the truth of this; it is plain they were now under an extraordinary blessing of increase, which may well be supposed to have this effect, that the women had quick and easy labour, and the mothers and children being both lively, they seldom needed the help of midwives; this these midwives took notice of, and concluding it to be the finger of God, were thereby emboldened to disobey the king, and with this justify themselves before Pharaoh, when he called them to an account for it.

20. Therefore God dealt well with them - That is, built them up in families, and blessed their children.

II This chapter begins the story of Moses, the most remarkable type of Christ as prophet, saviour, law-giver, and mediator, in all the Old Testament. In this chapter we have,

I. The perils of his birth and infancy, ver. 1-4.

II. His preservation through those perils, and the preferment of his childhood and youth, ver. 5-10.

III. The pious choice of his riper years, which was to own the people of God,

(1.) He offered them his service, so they would have accepted it, ver. 11-14.

(2.) He retired, that he might reserve himself for farther service, ver. 15-22.

IV. The dawning of the day of Israel's deliverance, ver. 23-25.

1. And there went a man - Amram, from the place of his abode to another place. A daughter - That is, grand-daughter of Levi.

2. Bare a son - It seems just at the time of his birth that cruel law was made for the murder of all the male-children of the Hebrews, and many no doubt perished by the execution of it. Moses's parents had Miriam and Aaron, both elder than he, born to them before that edict came out. Probably his mother had little joy of her being with child of him, now this edict was in force. Yet this child proves the glory of his father's house. Observe the beauty of providence: just when Pharaoh's cruelty rose to this height, the deliverer was born. She hid him three months - In some private apartment of their own house, though probably with the hazard of their lives had he been discovered. It is said, Heb. xi, 23. That Moses's parents hid him by faith: some think they had a special

Revelation that the deliverer should spring from their loins; however, they believed the general promise of Israel's preservation, and in that faith hid their child.

3. And when she could no longer hide him, she put him in an ark of bulrushes - By the river side. God put it into their hearts to do this, to bring about his own purposes: that Moses might by this means be brought into the hands of Pharaoh's daughter, and that by his deliverance, a specimen might be given of the deliverance of God's church.

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came - Providence brings no less a person than Pharaoh's daughter just at that juncture, guides her to the place where this poor infant lay, inclines her heart to pity it, which she dares do, when none else durst. Never did poor child cry so seasonably, as this did; the babe wept, which moved her compassion, as no doubt his beauty did.

10. And he became her son - The tradition of the Jews is, that Pharaoh's daughter had no child of her own, and that she was the only child of her father, so that when he was adopted for her son, he stood fair for the crown: however, it is certain he stood fair for the best preferments of the court in due time, and in the mean time had the advantage of the best education, with the help of which, he became master of all the lawful learning of the Egyptians Acts vii, 22. Those whom God designs for great services he finds out ways for to qualify them. Moses, by having his education in a court, is the fitter to be a prince, and king in Jeshurun; by having his education in a learned court, (for such the Egyptian then was) is the fitter to be an historian; and by having his education in the court of Egypt, is the fitter to be employed as an ambassador to that court in God's name. The Jews tell us, that his father at his circumcision called him Joachim, but Pharaoh's daughter called him Moses, Drawn out of the water, so it signifies in the Egyptian language, The calling of the Jewish lawgiver by an Egyptian name is a happy omen to the Gentile world, and gives hopes of that day when it should be said, Blessed be Egypt my people, Isaiah xix, 25. And his tuition at court was an earnest of the performance of that promise, Isaiah xlix, 23. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

11. When Moses was grown he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens - He looked on their burdens as one that not only pitied them, but was resolved to venture with them, and for them.

12. He slew the Egyptian - Probably it was one of the Egyptian task-masters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew slave. By special warrant from heaven (which makes not a precedent in ordinary cases) Moses slew the Egyptian, and rescued his oppressed brother. The Jew's tradition is, that he did not slay him



with any weapon, but as Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira, with the word of his mouth.

14. He said, Who made thee a prince? - He challengeth his authority; Who made thee a prince? - A man needs no great authority for giving a friendly reproof; it is an act of kindness; yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus, when people are sick of good discourse, or a seasonable admonition, they will call it preaching, as if a man could not speak a word for God, and against sin, but he took too much upon him. Yet Moses was indeed a prince, and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it; but they stood in their own light, and thrust him away. Acts vii, 25, 27. Intendest thou to kill me? - See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions. Moses, for reproving him, is presently charged with a design to kill him.

15. Moses fled from Pharaoh - God ordered this for wise ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's deliverance. The measure of Egypt's iniquity was not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a multitude as God designed: Moses is to be farther fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, till the time to favour Israel, even the set time, come. God guided Moses to Midian, because the Midianites were of the seed of Abraham, and retained the worship of the true God; so that he might have not only a safe, but a comfortable settlement among them; and through this country he was afterwards to lead Israel, which, that he might do the better, he now had opportunity of acquainting himself with it. Hither he came, and sat down by a well; tired and thoughtful, waiting to see which way Providence would direct him. It was a great change with him, since he was but the other day at ease in Pharaoh's court.

17. Stood up and helped them - This he did, because wherever he was, as occasion offered itself, he loved to be doing justice, and appearing in the defense of such as he saw injured. He loved to be doing good: wherever the Providence of God call us, we should desire and endeavour to be useful; and when we cannot do the good we would, we must be ready to do the good we can.

18. Reul or Raguel (see Num. x, 29,) seems to have been their grandfather and father of Hobab or Jethro, their immediate father.

22. Gershom - That is, A stranger there. Now this settlement of Moses in Midian was designed by Providence. To shelter him for the present; God will find hiding places for his people in the day of their distress. It was also designed to prepare him for the services he was farther designed to. His manner of life in Midian, where he kept the flock of his father-in-law would be of use to

him, to inure him to hardship and poverty; and to inure him to contemplation and devotion. Egypt accomplished him for a scholar, a gentleman, a statesman, a soldier, all which accomplishments would be afterwards of use to him; but yet lacketh he one thing, in which the court of Egypt could not befriend him. He that was to do all by divine Revelation must know, what it was to live a life of communion with God, and in this he would be greatly furthered by the retirement of a shepherd's life in Midian. By the former he was prepared to rule in Jeshurun, but by the latter he was prepared to converse with God in mount Horeb. Those that know what it is to be alone with God, are acquainted with better delights than ever Moses tasted in the court of Pharaoh.

23. The king of Egypt died - And after him, one or two more of his sons or successors. And the children of Israel sighed by reason of bondage - Probably the murdering of their infants did not continue, that part of their affliction only attended the birth of Moses, to signalize that. And now they were content with their increase, finding that Egypt was enriched by their labour; so they might have them for their slaves, they cared not how many they were. On this therefore they were intent, to keep them all at work, and make the best hand they could of their labour. When one Pharaoh died, another rose up in his place, that was as cruel to Israel as his predecessors. And they cried - Now at last they began to think of God under their troubles, and to return to him from the idols they had served, Ezek. xx, 8. Hitherto they had fretted at the instruments of their trouble, but God was not in all their thoughts. But before God unbound them, he put it into their hearts to cry unto him. It is a sign God is coming towards us with deliverance, when he inclines us to cry to him for it.

24. And God heard their groaning - That is, he made it to appear that he took notice of their complaints. The groans of the oppressed cry loud in the ears of the righteous God, to whom vengeance belongs; especially the groans of God's children, the burdens they groan under, and the blessings they groan after. And God remembered his covenant - Which he seemed to have forgotten, but really is ever mindful of. This God had an eye to, and not to any merit of theirs in what he did for them. And God looked upon the children of Israel - Moses looked upon them and pitied them, but now God looked upon them and helped them. And God had respect unto them - A favourable respect to them as his own. The frequent repetition of the name of God intimates, that now we are to expect something great. His eyes which run to and fro through the earth, are now fixed on Israel, to shew himself strong, to shew himself a God in their behalf.

III In this chapter we have,

I. The discovery God was pleased to make of his glory to Moses

at the bush, ver. 1-5.

II. A general declaration of God's goodwill to his people, who were beloved for the Father's sake, ver. 6.

III. A particular notification of God's purpose concerning the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

1. He assures Moses it should now be done, ver. 7-9.
2. He gives him a commission to act in it as his ambassador both to Pharaoh, ver. 10, and to Israel, ver. 16.
3. He answers the objection Moses made of his own unworthiness, ver. 11, 12.
4. He gives him full instructions what to say, both to Pharaoh and to Israel, ver. 13-18.
5. He tells him before-hand what the issue would be, ver. 14-22.

1. Now Moses - The years of Moses's life are remarkably divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun. He had now finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes it is long before God calls his servants out to that work which of old he designed them for. Moses was born to be Israel's deliverer, and yet not a word is said of it to him till he is eighty years of age. Even to Horeb - Horeb and Sinai were two tops of the same mountain.

2. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him - It was an extraordinary manifestation of the divine glory; what was visible was produced by the ministry of an angel, but he heard God in it speaking to him. In a flame of fire - To shew that God was about to bring terror and destruction to his enemies, light and heat to his people, and to display his glory before all. And the bush burned, and yet was not consumed - An emblem of the church now in bondage in Egypt, burning in the brick-kilns, yet not consumed; cast down, but not destroyed.

3. I will turn aside and see - He speaks as one inquisitive, and bold in his inquiry; whatever it was, he would if possible know the meaning of it.

4. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see it, God called to him - If he had carelessly neglected it, it is likely God had departed and said nothing to him. God called and said, Moses, Moses - This which he heard could not but surprise him much more than what he saw. Divine calls are then effectual, when the spirit of God makes them particular, and calls us as by name. The

Word calls, Ho, every one; the Spirit, by the application of that, calls, Ho, such a one; I know thee by name. Here am I - Not only to hear what is said, but to do what I am bidden.

5. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet - The putting off the shoe was then what the putting off the hat is now, a token of respect and submission. The ground is holy ground, made so by this special manifestation of the divine presence. We ought to approach to God with a solemn pause and preparation; and to express our inward reverence, by a grave and reverent behaviour in the worship of God, carefully avoiding every thing that looks light, or rude.

6. I am the God of thy father - He lets him know it is God that speaks to him, to engage his reverence, faith and obedience. Thy father, thy pious father Amram, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy ancestors. Engaged to them by solemn covenant, which I am now come to perform. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God - The more we see of God, the more cause we shall see to worship him with reverence and godly fear. And even the manifestations of God's grace should increase our humble reverence of him.

8. I am come down to deliver them - When God doth something very extraordinary, he is said to come down to do it, as Isaiah lxiv, 1. This deliverance was typical of our redemption by Christ, and in that the eternal Word did indeed come down from heaven to deliver us. A large land - So it was, according to its true and ancient bounds, as they are described, Gen. xv, 18, and not according to those narrow limits, to which they were afterwards confined for their unbelief and impiety. A land flowing with milk and honey - A proverbial expression, abounding with the choicest fruits, both for necessity and delight.

10. I will send thee - And the same hand that now fetched a shepherd out of a desert to be the planter of the Jewish church, afterwards fetched fishermen from their ships to be the planters of the Christian church, that the excellency of the power might be of God.

11. Who am I? - He thinks himself unworthy of the honour and unable for the work. He thinks he wants courage, and therefore cannot go to Pharaoh: he thinks he wants conduct, and therefore cannot bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt; they are unarmed, undisciplined, quite dispirited, utterly unable to help themselves, Moses was incomparably the fittest of any man living for this work, eminent for learning, wisdom, experience, valour, faith, holiness, and yet Who am I? The more fit any person is for service, commonly the less opinion he has of himself.

12. Certainly I will be with thee - Those that are weak in

themselves, yet may do wonders being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. God's presence puts wisdom and strength into the weak and foolish, and is enough to answer all objections.

13. When they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? - What name shall I use, whereby thou mayest be distinguished from false gods, and thy people may be encouraged to expect deliverance from thee?

14. And God said - Two names God would now be known by.

1. A name that speaks what he is in himself, I am that I am - This explains his name Jehovah, and signifies, 1st, That he is self-existent; he has his being of himself, and has no dependence upon any other. And being self-existent he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible fountain of being and bliss.

2ndly, That he is eternal and unchangeable, always the same, yesterday today, and for ever: he will be what he will be, and what he is. 3rdly. That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature, and not a man that he should lie. Let Israel know this, I am hath sent me unto you.

2. A name that speaks what he is to his people. Lest that name I am should puzzle them, he is farther directed to make use of another name of God, more familiar.

15. The Lord God of our fathers hath sent me unto you - Thus God made himself known, that he might revive among them the religion of their fathers, which was much decayed, and almost lost. And that he might raise their expectations of the speedy performance of the promises made unto their fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are particularly named, because with Abraham the covenant was first made, and with Isaac and Jacob oft expressly renewed, and these three were distinguished from their brethren, and chosen to be the trustees of the covenant. This God will have to be his name for ever, and it has been, is, and will be his name, by which his worshippers know him, and distinguish him from all false gods.

18. Hath met with us - Hath appeared to us, declaring his will, that we should do what follows.

19. I am sure he will not let you go - God sends his messengers to those whose obstinacy he foresees, that it may appear he would have them turn and live.

22. Everywoman shall ask (not borrow!) jewels. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians - God sometimes makes the enemies of his people not only to be at peace with

them, but to be kind to them. And he has many ways of balancing accounts between the injured and the injurious, of righting the oppressed, and compelling those that have done wrong to make restitution.

#### IV This chapter,

I. Continues and concludes God's discourse with Moses, concerning bringing Israel out of Egypt. [1.] Moses objects the peoples unbelief, ver. 1. and God answers that objection by giving him a power to work miracles:

(1.) To turn his rod into a serpent, and then into a rod again, ver. 2-5.

(2.) To make his hand leprous, and then whole again, ver. 6-8.

(3.) To turn the water into blood, ver. 9. [2.] Moses objects his own slowness of speech, ver. 10. and begs to be excused, ver. 13.

But God answers this objection,

(1.) By promising him his presence, ver. 11, 12.

(2.) By joining Aaron in commission with him, ver. 14-16.

(3.) By putting an honour upon the very staff in his hand, ver.

17.

II. Moses's execution of his commission.

(1.) He obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt, ver.

18.

(2.) He receives further instructions from God, ver. 19, 21-23.

(3.) He hastens his departure, and takes his family with him, ver.

20.

(4.) He meets with some difficulty about the circumcising of his son, ver. 24. 26.

(5.) He has the satisfaction of meeting his brother Aaron, ver. 27, 28.

(6.) He produceth his commission before the elders of Israel, to their great joy, ver. 29-31.

1. They will not hearken to my voice-That is, they would not take his bare word, unless he shewed them some sign. He remembered how they had once rejected him, and feared it would be so again.

2. A rod - Or staff.

5. That they may believe - An imperfect sentence to be thus compleated, This thou shalt do, before them, that they may believe.

6. His hand was leprous, as snow - For whiteness. This signified, That Moses, by the power of God, should bring sore diseases upon Egypt, that at his prayer they should be removed. And that whereas the Israelites in Egypt were become leprous, polluted by sin, and almost consumed by oppression, by being taken into the

bosom of Moses they should be cleansed and cured.

8. The voice of the first sign - God's works have a voice to speak to us, which we must diligently observe.

10. O my Lord, I am not eloquent - He was a great philosopher, statesman, and divine, and yet no orator; a man of a clear head, great thought and solid judgment, but had not a voluble tongue, nor ready utterance; and therefore he thought himself unfit to speak before great men, and about great affairs. Moses was mighty in word, Acts vii, 22, and yet not eloquent: what he said was strong and nervous, and to the purpose, and distilled as the dew, Deut. xxxii, 2, though he did not deliver himself with that readiness, ease and fineness that some do.

13. Send by whom thou wilt send - By any but me.

14. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against him - Even self-diffidence when it grows into an extreme, when it either hinders us from duty, or clogs us in duty, is very displeasing to him.

15. I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth - Even Aaron that could speak well, yet could not speak to purpose, unless God were with his mouth; without the constant aids of divine grace, the best gifts will fail.

16. Instead of God - To teach and to command him.

17. Take this rod - The staff or crook he carried as a shepherd, that he might not be ashamed of that mean condition out of which God called him. This rod must be his staff of authority, and must be to him instead, both of sword and scepter.

19. The Lord said unto Moses - This seems to have been a second vision, whereby God calls him to the present execution of the command given before.

20. The rod of God - His shepherd's crook so called, as it was God's instrument in so many glorious works.

21. In thy hand - in thy power: I will harden his heart - After he has frequently harden'd it himself, wilfully shutting his eyes against the light, I will at last permit Satan to harden it effectually.

22. Thus saith the Lord - This is the first time that preface is used by any man, which afterwards is used so frequently by all the prophets: Israel is my son, my first-born - Precious in my sight, honourable, and dear to me.

23. Let my son go - Not only my servant whom thou hast no right to detain, but my son whose liberty and honour I am jealous for. If

thou refuse, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born - As men deal with God's people, let them expect to be themselves dealt with.

24. It seems the sin of Moses, was neglecting to circumcise his son, which perhaps was the effect of his being unequally yoked with a Midianite, who was too indulgent of her child, and Moses so of her. The Lord met him, and, probably, by a sword in an angel's hand, sought to kill him - This was a great change. Very lately God was conversing with him as a friend, and now coming forth against him as an enemy. In this case of necessity Zipporah herself circumcised the child without delay; whether with passionate words, expressing the dislike of the ordinance itself, or at least the administration of it to so young a child.

26. So he let him go - The destroying angel withdrew. But still Zipporah cannot forget, but will unreasonably call Moses a bloody husband, because he obliged her to circumcise the child; and upon this occasion, (it is probable) he sent them back to his father-in-law, that they might not create him any farther uneasiness. When we have any special service to do for God, we should remove that as far from us as we can, which is likely to be our hindrance: let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me.

27. In the mount of God - That is, the place where God had met with him.

28. Moses told Aaron all - Those that are fellow-servants to God in the same work, should use a mutual freedom, and endeavour, rightly and fully to understand one another.

30. Aaron did the signs - By the direction of Moses.

V Moses and Aaron here deal with Pharaoh to get leave of him to go to worship in the wilderness.

I. They demand leave in the name of God, ver. 1. and he answers their demand with a defiance of God, ver. 2.

II. They beg leave in the name of Israel, ver. 3. and he answers their request with further orders to oppress Israel, ver. 4-9. These cruel orders were,

1. Executed by the task-masters, ver. 10-14.

2. Complained of to Pharaoh, but in vain, ver. 15-19.

3. Complained of by the people to Moses, ver. 20, 21. and by him to God, ver. 22, 23.

1. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go - Moses, in treating with the elders of Israel, is directed to call God the God of their fathers; but, in treating with Pharaoh, they call him the God



of Israel, and it is the first time we find him called so in scripture. He is called the God of Israel, the person, Gen. xxxiii, 20, but here it is Israel the people. They are just beginning to be formed into a people when God is called their God. Let my people go - They were God's people, and therefore Pharaoh ought not to detain them in bondage. And he expected services and sacrifices from them, and therefore they must have leave to go where they could freely exercise their religion, without giving offense to, or receiving offense from, the Egyptians.

2. Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? - Being summoned to surrender, he thus hangs out the flag of defiance. Who is Jehovah? I neither know him nor care for him; neither value nor fear him. It is a hard name that he never heard of before, but he resolves it shall be no bugbear to him. Israel was now a despised, oppressed people, and by the character they bore he makes his estimate of their God, and concludes that he made no better figure among the gods, than his people did among the nations.

3. We pray thee, let us go three days journey into the desert - And that on a good errand, and unexceptionable: we will sacrifice to the Lord our God - As other people do to theirs; lest if we quite cast off his worship, he fall upon us - With one judgment or other, and then Pharaoh will lose his vassals.

5. The people are many - Therefore your injury to me is the greater, in attempting to make them rest from their labours.

6. The task-masters, were Egyptians, the officers were Israelites employed under them.

7. Straw - To mix with the clay, or to burn the brick with.

8. They are idle - The cities they built for Pharaoh, were witnesses for them that they were not idle; yet he thus basely misrepresents them, that he might have a pretense to increase their burdens.

9. Vain words - Those of Moses and Aaron.

14. In thy own people - For if they had given us straw, we should have fulfilled our task.

21. The Lord look upon you, and judge - They should have humbled themselves before God, but instead of that they fly in the face of their best friends. Those that are called to public service for God and their generation, must expect to be tried not only by the threats of proud enemies, but by the unjust and unkind censures of unthinking friends. To put a sword in their hand to slay us - To give them the occasion they have long sought for.

22. He expostulated with him. He knew not how to reconcile the

providence with the promise, and the commission he had received. Is this God's coming down to deliver Israel? Must I who hoped to be a blessing to them become a scourge to them? By this attempt to get them out of the pit, they are but sunk the farther into it. Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people - Even when God is coming towards his people in ways of mercy, yet sometimes he takes such methods that they may think themselves but ill-treated: when they think so, they should go to God by prayer, and that is the way to have better treatment in God's good time. Why is it that thou hast sent me - Pharaoh has done evil to this people, and not one step seems to be taken towards their deliverance. It cannot but sit very heavy upon the spirits of those whom God employs for him, to see that their labour doth no good, and much more to see that it doth hurt, eventually, though not designedly.

VI In this chapter,

I. God satisfies Moses as to his complaints, ver. 1.

II. He gives him fuller instructions what to say to the children of Israel, ver. 2-8. but to little purpose, ver. 9.

III. He sends him again to Pharaoh, ver. 10, 11. But Moses objects against that, ver. 12. upon which a strict charge is given to him and his brother, to execute their commission with vigour, ver. 13.

IV. An abstract of the genealogy of the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, to introduce that of Levi, that the pedigree of Moses and Aaron might be cleared, ver. 14-27

V. A repetition of the preceding story, ver. 28-30.

1. With a strong hand - That is, being forced to it by a strong hand, he shall let them go.

2. I am Jehovah - The same with I am that I am, the fountain of being and blessedness, and infinite perfection. The patriarchs knew this name, but they did not know him in this matter by that which this name signifies. God would now be known by his name Jehovah, that is,

1. A God performing what he had promised, and so giving being to his promises.

2. A God perfecting what he had begun, and finishing his own work. In the history of the creation God is never called Jehovah, till the heavens and the earth were finished, Gen. ii, 4. When the salvation of the saints is compleated in eternal life, then he will be known by his name Jehovah, Rev. xxii, 13, in the mean time they shall find him for their strength and support, El-shaddai, a God All-sufficient, a God that is enough.

5. I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel - He means their groaning on occasion of the late hardships put upon them. God takes notice of the increase of his people's calamities, and observes how their enemies grow upon them.
6. I will bring you out: I will rid you: I will redeem you: I will bring you into the land of Canaan; and, I will give it you - Let man take the shame of his unbelief which needs such repetitions, and let God have the glory of his condescending grace which gives us such repeated assurances. With a stretched out arm - With almighty power: A metaphor taken from a man that stretches out his arm, to put forth all his strength.
7. I will take you to me for a people - A peculiar people, and I will be to you a God - And more than this we need not ask, we cannot have, to make us happy.
8. I am the Lord - And therefore have power to dispose of lands and kingdoms as I please.
9. But they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit - That is, They were so taken up with their troubles that they did not heed him.
11. That he let the children of Israel go - God repeats his precepts, before he begins his punishments. Those that have oft been called in vain to leave their sins, yet must be called again, and again.
12. Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened to me; they gave no heed to what I have said, how then shall Pharaoh hear me? - If the anguish of their spirit makes them deaf to that which would compose and comfort them, much more will his pride and insolence, make him deaf to that which will but exasperate him. Who am of uncircumcised lips - He was conscious to himself that he had not the gift of utterance.
13. The Lord gave them a charge, both to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh - God's authority is sufficient to answer all objections, and binds us to obedience without murmuring or disputing.
14. This genealogy ends in those two great patriots, Moses and Aaron; and comes in here to shew that they were Israelites, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, whom they were sent to deliver, raised up unto them of their brethren, as Christ also should be, who was to be the prophet and priest, the Redeemer and law-giver of the house of Israel, and whose genealogy also like this was to be carefully preserved. The heads of the houses of three of the tribes are here named, agreeing with the accounts we had, Gen. xlvii, 8-27. Reuben and Simeon seem to be mentioned only for the sake of Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron

descended, and all the priests of the Jewish church.

16. The age of Levi, Kohath, and Amram, the father, grandfather, and great grandfather of Moses is here recorded; and they all lived to a great age, Levi to one hundred thirty seven, Kohath to one hundred thirty three, and Amram to one hundred thirty seven: Moses himself came much short of them, and fixed seventy or eighty for the ordinary stretch of human life. Psalm xc, 10. For now Israel was multiplied, and become a great nation, and divine Revelation was by the hand of Moses committed to writing, and no longer trusted to tradition; the two great reasons for the long lives of the patriarchs were ceased, and therefore from henceforward fewer years must serve men.

20. His father's sister - That is, kins-woman. So the Hebrew word is frequently used.

23. Aminadab - A prince of the tribe of Judah. The Levites might marry into any tribe, there being no danger of confusion or loss of inheritance thereby.

26. According to their armies - Like numerous armies, in military order, and with great power. In the close of the chapter, he returns to his narrative, from which he had broken off somewhat abruptly ver. 13, and repeats, the charge God had given him to deliver his message to Pharaoh, ver. 29.

29. Speak all that I say unto thee - As a faithful ambassador. Those that go on God's errand must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

VII In this chapter,

I. Moses applies himself to the execution of his commission, ver. 1-7.

II. The dispute between Moses and Pharaoh begins. Moses in God's name demands Israel's release, Pharaoh denies it; the contest is between the power of the great God and the power of a proud prince.

1. Moses confirms the demand he made to Pharaoh by a miracle, turning his rod into a serpent, but Pharaoh hardens his heart, ver. 8-13.

2. He chastiseth his disobedience by a plague, the first of ten, turning the waters into blood; but Pharaoh hardens his heart again, ver. 14-25.

1. I have made thee a God to Pharaoh - That is, my representative in this affair, as magistrates are called gods, because they are God's vicegerents. He was authorized to speak and act in God's

name, and endued with a divine power, to do that which is above the ordinary course of nature. And Aaron shall be thy prophet - That is, he shall speak from thee to Pharaoh, as prophets do from God to the children of men. Thou shalt as a God inflict and remove the plagues, and Aaron as a prophet shall denounce them.

7. Moses was fourscore years old - Joseph, who was to be only a servant to Pharaoh, was preferred at thirty years old; but Moses, who was to be a God to Pharaoh, was not so dignified till he was eighty years old. It is fit he should long wait for such an honour, and be long in preparing for such a service.

9. Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod - This Moses ordinarily held in his hand, and delivered it to Aaron upon occasion, for the execution of his commands.

10. And Aaron cast his rod down, and it became a serpent - This was proper not only to affect Pharaoh with wonder, but to strike a terror upon him. This first miracle, though it was not a plague, yet amounted to the threatening of a plague; if it made not Pharaoh feel, it made him fear; this is God's method of dealing with sinners he comes upon them gradually.

11. Moses had been originally instructed in the learning of the Egyptians, and was suspected to have improved in magical arts in his long retirement. The magicians are therefore sent for to vie with him. The two chief of them were Jannes and Jambres. Their rods became serpents; probably by the power of evil angels artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods, God permitting the delusion to be wrought for wise and holy ends. But the serpent which Aaron's rod was turned into, swallowed up the others, which was sufficient to have convinced Pharaoh on which side the right lay.

13. And he harden'd Pharaoh's heart - That is, permitted it to be hardened.

20. The waters that were in the river were turned into blood - This was a plague justly inflicted upon the Egyptians; for Nilus the river of Egypt was their idol; they and their land had so much benefit by that creature, that they served and worshipped it more than the creator. Also they had stained the river with the blood of the Hebrew children, and now God made that river all bloody; thus he gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy, Rev. xvi, 6. See the power of God. Every creature is that to us which he makes it to be, water or blood. See the mutability of all things under the sun, and what changes we may meet with in them. That which is water to day may be blood to morrow; what is always vain may soon become vexatious. And see what mischievous work sin makes! It is sin that turns our waters into blood.

22. And the magicians did so - By God's permission with their

enchantments; and this served Pharaoh for an excuse not to set his heart to this also, (ver. 23,) and a poor excuse it was. Could they have turned the river of blood into water again, it had been something; then they had proved their power, and Pharaoh had been obliged to them as his benefactors.

25. Seven days were fulfilled - Before this plague was removed.

VIII Three more of the plagues of Egypt are related in this chapter.

I. That of the frogs, which is,

1. Threatened, ver. 1-4.

2. Inflicted, ver. 5, 6.

3. Mimicked by the magicians, ver. 7.

4. Removed at the request of Pharaoh, ver. 8-14. who yet hardens his heart, and notwithstanding his promise, ver. 8. refused to let Israel go, ver. 15.

II. The plague of lice, ver. 16, 17. By which,

1. The magicians were baffled, ver. 18, 19. and yet,

2. Pharaoh was hardened, ver. 19.

III. That of flies:

1. Pharaoh is warned of it before, ver. 20, 21. and told that the land of Goshen should be exempt from this plague, ver. 22, 23.

2. The plague is brought, ver. 24.

3. Pharaoh treats with Moses, and humbles himself, ver. 25-29.

4. The plague is thereupon removed, ver. 31. and Pharaoh's heart hardened, ver. 32.

2. All thy borders - All the land that is within thy borders.

3. The River - Nile. Under which are comprehended all other rivers and waters.

9. Glory over me - That is, I yield to thee.

10. And he said, Tomorrow - Why not immediately? Probably he hoped that this night they would go away of themselves, and then he should get clear of the plague, without being obliged either to God or Moses. However, Moses joins issue with him upon it. Be it according to thy word - It shall be done just when thou wouldst

have it done, that thou mayst know, that whatever the magicians pretend to, there is none like unto the Lord our God - None has such a command as he has over all creatures, nor is any so ready to forgive those that humble themselves before him. The great design both of judgments and mercies, is to convince us that there is none like the Lord our God; none so wise, so mighty, so good; no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable, so valuable.

15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart - Observe he did it himself, not God, any otherwise than by not hindering.

17. The frogs were produced out of the waters, but the lice out of the dust of the earth; for out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge wherewith to correct those that rebel against him.

18. And the magicians did so - That is, endeavoured to do so.

19. This is the finger of God - The power of God. The devil's agents, when God permitted them, could do great things; but when he laid an embargo upon them, they could do nothing. The magicians inability in this instance shewed whence they had their ability in the former instances, and that they had no power against Moses but what was given them from above. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened - By himself and the devil.

20. Rise up early - Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their generation must rise early, and redeem time in the morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious devotions to the river; and shall we be for more sleep, and more slumber, when any service is to be done which would pass well in our account in the great day?

21. Flies - Or insects of various kinds; not only flies, but gnats, wasps, hornets; and those probably more pernicious than the common ones were.

22. Know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth - In every part of it. Swarms of flies, which seem to us to fly at random, shall be manifestly under the conduct of an intelligent mind. Hither they shall go, saith Moses, and thither they shall come, and the performance is punctual according to this appointment; and both compared amount to a demonstration, that he that said it, and he that did it, was the same, even a being of infinite power and wisdom.

23. A division - A wall of partition.

24. There came a grievous swarm of flies - The prince of the power of the air has gloried in being Beel-zebub, the God of flies; but here it is proved that even in that he is a pretender, and an usurper; for even with swarms of flies God fights against his

kingdom and prevails.

26. The abomination of the Egyptians - That which they abominate to see killed, because they worshipped them as gods.

27. As he shall command us - For he has not yet told us what sacrifices to offer.

28. Ye shall not go very far away - Not so far but that he might fetch them back again. It is likely he suspected that if once they left Egypt, they would never come back; and therefore when he is forced to consent that they shall go, yet he is not willing they should go out of his reach. See how ready God is to accept sinners submissions. Pharaoh only says, Intreat for me - Moses promises immediately, I will intreat the Lord for thee; and that he might see what the design of the plague was, not to bring him to ruin, but to repentance.

32. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also - Still it is his own act and deed, not God's.

IX In this chapter we have an account of three more plagues.

I. Murrain among the cattle, ver. 1-7.

II. Boils upon man and beast, ver. 8-12.

III. Hail, with thunder and lightning.

(1.) Warning is given of this plague, ver. 13-21.

(2.) It is inflicted to their great terror, ver 22-26.

(3.) Pharaoh renews his treaty with Moses, but instantly breaks his word, ver 27-35.

3. The hand of the Lord - Immediately, without the stretching out of Aaron's hand, is upon the cattle, many of which, some of all kinds, shall die by a sort of pestilence. The hand of God is to be acknowledged even in the sickness and death of cattle, or other damage sustained in them; for a sparrow falls not to the ground without our father. And his providence is to be acknowledged with thankfulness in the life of the cattle, for he preserveth man and beast, Psalm xxxvi, 6.

6. All the cattle died - All that were in the field. The creature is made subject to vanity by the sin of man, being liable, according to its capacity, both to serve his wickedness, and to share in his punishment. The Egyptians worshipped their cattle; it was among them that the Israelites learned to make a God of a calf; in that therefore this plague meets with them. But not one of the cattle of the Israelites died - Doth God take care for oxen? Yes, he doth, his providence extends itself to the meanest of his creatures.

9. A boil breaking forth with blains - A burning scab, which



quickly raised blisters and blains.

10. Ashes of the furnace - Sometimes God shews men their sin in their punishment: they had oppressed Israel in the furnaces, and now the ashes of the furnace are made as much a terror to them as ever their task-masters had been to the Israelites. This is afterwards called the botch of Egypt, Deut. xxviii, 27, as if it were some new disease, never heard of before, and known ever after by that name.

11. The magicians were forced to retreat, and could not stand before Moses - To which the apostle refers, 2 Tim. iii, 9, when he saith, that their folly was manifested unto all men.

12. Now the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart - Before he had hardened his own heart, and resisted the grace of God, and now God justly gave him up to his own heart's lusts, to strong delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him. Wilful hardness is commonly punished with judicial hardness. Let us dread this as the sorest judgment a man can be under on this side hell.

14. I will find all my plagues upon thy heart - Hitherto thou hast not felt my plagues on thy own person, the heart is put for the whole man.

16. For this cause have I raised thee up - A most dreadful message Moses is here ordered to deliver to him, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear. He must tell him, that he is marked for ruin: that he now stands as the butt at which God would shoot all the arrows of his wrath. For this cause have I raised thee up to the throne at this time, and made thee to stand the shock of the plagues hitherto, to shew in thee my power - Providence so ordered it, that Moses should have a man of such a fierce and stubborn spirit to deal with, to make it a most signal and memorable instance of the power God has to bring down the proudest of his enemies; that my name, irresistible power, and my inflexible justice, might be declared throughout all the earth - Not only to all places, but through all ages while the earth remains. This will be the event. But it by no means follows, that this was the design of God. We have numberless instances in scripture of this manner of speaking, to denote not the design, but only the event.

17. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people - Wilt thou not yet submit?

18. Since the foundation thereof - Since it was a kingdom.

29. The earth - The world, the heaven and the earth.

30. Bolled - Grown up into a stalk.

**33. Moses went out of the city - Not only for privacy in his communion with God, but to shew that he durst venture abroad into the field, notwithstanding the hail and lightning, knowing that every hail-stone had its direction from God. Peace with God makes men thunder-proof, for it is the voice of their father. And spread abroad his hands unto the Lord - An outward expression of earnest desire, and humble expectation. He prevailed with God; but he could not prevail with Pharaoh; he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart - The prayer of Moses opened and shut heaven, like Elijah's. And such is the power of God's two witnesses, Rev. xi, 6. Yet neither Moses nor Elijah, nor those two witnesses, could subdue the hard hearts of men. Pharaoh was frighted into compliance by the judgment, but, when it was over, his convictions vanished.**

**X The eighth and ninth plagues are recorded in this chapter.**

**I. Concerning the plague of locusts,**

**(1.) God instructs Moses in the meaning of these amazing dispensations of his providence, ver. 1, 2.**

**(2.) He threatens the locusts, ver. 3-6.**

**(3.) Pharaoh, at the persuasion of his servants, is willing to treat again with Moses, ver. 7, 8, 9. but they cannot agree, ver. 10,**

**11,**

**(4.) The locusts come, ver. 12-15.**

**(5.) Pharaoh cries for mercy, ver. 16, 17. whereupon Moses prays for the removal of the plague, and it is done, but Pharaoh's heart is still hardened, ver. 18-20.**

**II. Concerning the plague of darkness,**

**(1.) 'Tis inflicted, ver. 21-23.**

**(2.) Pharaoh again treats with Moses, but the treaty breaks off, ver. 24-29.**

**1. These plagues are standing monuments of the greatness of God, the happiness of the church, and the sinfulness of sin; and standing monitors to the children of men in all ages, not to provoke the Lord to jealousy, nor to strive with their Maker. The benefit of these instructions to the world doth sufficiently balance the expence.**

**3. Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? - It is justly expected from the greatest of men, that they humble themselves before the great God, and it is at their peril if they refuse to do it. Those that will not humble themselves, God will humble.**

**10. Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones - He now curses and threatens them, in case they offered to remove their little ones, telling them it was at their**

peril. Satan doth all he can to hinder those that serve God themselves, from bringing their children in to serve him. He is a sworn enemy to early piety, knowing how destructive it is to the interests of his kingdom.

13. The east-wind brought the locusts - From Arabia, where they are in great numbers: And God miraculously increased them.

15. They covered the face of the earth, and eat up the fruit of it - The earth God has given to the children of men; yet when God pleaseth he can disturb his possession even by locusts or caterpillars. Herb grows for the service of man; yet, when God pleaseth, those contemptible insect's shall not only be fellow-commoners with him, but shall eat the bread out of his mouth.

17. Pharaoh desires their prayers that this death only might be taken away, not this sin: he deprecates the plague of locusts, not the plague of a hard heart.

19. An east-wind brought the locusts and now a west-wind carried them off. Whatever point of the compass the wind is in, it is fulfilling God's word, and turns about by his counsel; the wind blows where it listeth for us, but not where it listeth for him; he directeth it under the whole heaven.

21. We may observe concerning this plague.

1. That it was a total darkness. We have reason to think, not only that the lights of heaven were clouded, but that all their fires and candles were put out by the damps or clammy vapors which were the cause of this darkness, for it is said, they saw not one another.

2. That it was darkness which might be felt, felt in its causes by their finger-ends, so thick were the fogs, felt in its effects, (some think) by their eyes which were pricked with pain, and made the more sore by their rubbing them. Great pain is spoken of as the effect of that darkness, Rev. xvi, 10, which alludes to this.

3. No doubt it was very frightful and amazing. The tradition of the Jews is, that in this darkness they were terrified by the apparition of evil spirits, or rather by dreadful sounds and murmurs which they made; and this is the plague which some think is intended (for otherwise it is not mentioned at all there) Psalm lxxviii, 49. He poured upon them the fierceness of his anger, by sending evil angels among them; for those to whom the devil has been a deceiver, he will at length be a terror to.

4. It continued three days; six nights in one; so long they were imprisoned by those chains of darkness. No man rose from his place - They were all confined to their houses; and such a terror seized them, that few of them had the courage to go from the chair to the bed, or from the bed to the chair. Thus were they silent in

darkness,

1 Sam. ii, 9. Now Pharaoh had time to consider, if he would have improved it.

23. But the children of Israel had light in their dwellings - Not only in the land of Goshen, where most of them inhabited, but in the particular dwellings which in other places the Israelites had dispersed among the Egyptians, as it appears they had by the distinction afterwards appointed to be put on their door-posts. And during these three days of darkness to the Egyptians, if God had so pleased, the Israelites by the light which they had, might have made their escape, and have asked Pharaoh no leave; but God would bring them out with a high hand, and not by stealth or in haste.

29. I will see thy face no more - Namely, after this time, for this conference did not break off till chap. xi, 8, when Moses went out in great anger and told Pharaoh how soon his proud stomach would come down; which was fulfilled chap. xii, 31, when Pharaoh became an humble supplicant to Moses to depart. So that after this interview Moses came no more till he was sent for.

XI Pharaoh had bid Moses get out of his presence, chap. x, 28. and Moses had promised this should be the last time he would trouble him, yet he refuses to say out what he had to say, before he left him. Accordingly we have in this chapter,

I. The instructions God had given to Moses, which he was now to pursue, ver. 1, 2. together with the interest Israel and Moses had in the esteem of the Egyptians, ver. 3.

II. The last message Moses delivered to Pharaoh, concerning the death of the first-born, ver. 4-8.

III. A repetition of the prediction of Pharaoh's hardening his heart, ver.

9. and the event answering it, ver. 10.

2. Let every man ask (not borrow!) of his neighbour jewels - This was the last day of their servitude, when they were to go away, and their masters, who had abused them in their work, would now have defrauded them of their wages, and have sent them away empty, and the poor Israelites were so fond of liberty that they themselves would be satisfied with that, without pay: but he that executeth righteousness and judgment for the oppressed, provided that the labourers should not lose their hire. God ordered them to demand it now at their departure, in jewels of silver, and jewels of gold; to prepare for which, God had now made the Egyptians as willing to part with them upon any terms, as before the Egyptians had made them willing to go upon any terms.

5. The death of the first-born had been threatened, chap. iv, 23, but is last executed, and less judgments tried, which, if they had done the work, would have prevented this. See how slow God is to wrath, and how willing to be met in the way of his judgments, and to have his anger turned away! That sitteth upon his throne - That is to set. The maid-servant behind the mill - The poor captive slave, employed in the hardest labour.

8. All these thy servants - Thy courtiers and great officers: The people that follow thee - That are under thy conduct: and command. When Moses had thus delivered his message, he went out from Pharaoh in great anger, though he was the meekest of all the men of the earth. Probably he expected that the very threatening of the death of the first-born should have wrought upon Pharaoh to comply; especially he having complied so far already, and having seen how exactly all Moses's predictions were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud heart would not yield, no not to save all the first-born of his kingdom. Moses hereupon was provoked to a holy indignation, being grieved, as our saviour afterwards, for the hardness of his heart, Mark iii, 5.

XII This chapter gives an account of one of the most memorable ordinances, and one of the most memorable providences of all that art recorded in the old testament.

I. None of all the ordinances of the Jewish church were more eminent than that of the passover. It consisted of three parts.

1. The killing and eating of the paschal lamb, ver. 1-6, 8-11.
2. The sprinkling of the blood upon the doorposts, peculiar to the first passover, ver. 7. with the reason for it, ver. 11-13.
3. The feast of unleavened bread for seven days after; this points rather at what was to be done after in the observance of this ordinance, ver. 14-20. This institution is communicated to the people, and they instructed in the observance.
  - (1.) Of this first passover, ver. 21-23.
  - (2.) Of the after passovers, ver. 24-27. And the Israelites obedience to these orders, ver. 28.

II. None of all the providences of God concerning the Jewish church was more illustrious, than the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

1. The first-born of the Egyptians are slain, ver. 29, 30.
2. Orders are given immediately for their discharge, ver. 31-33.
3. They begin their march,

1. Loaded with their own effects, ver. 34.
2. Enriched with the spoils of Egypt, ver. 35, 36.
3. Attended with a mixed multitude, ver. 37, 38,
4. Put to their shifts for present supply, ver. 39. This event is dated, ver. 40-42.

III. A recapitulation in the close, 1st. Of this memorable ordinance, with some additions, ver. 43-49; 2ndly. Of this memorable providence, ver.

50, 51.

1. The Lord spake - Had spoken, before the three days darkness. But the mention of it was put off to this place, that the history of the plagues might not be interrupted.

2. This shall be to you the beginning of months - They had hitherto begun their year from the middle of September, but hence-forward they were to begin it from the middle of March, at least in all their ecclesiastical computations. We may suppose that while Moses was bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, he was directing the Israelites to prepare for their departure at an hour's warning. Probably he had, by degrees, brought them near together from their dispersions, for they are here called the congregation of Israel; and to them, as a congregation, orders are here sent.

3. Take every man a lamb - In each of their families, or two or three families, if they were small, join for a lamb. The lamb was to be got ready four days before. and that afternoon they went, they were to kill it, (ver. 6,) as a sacrifice, not strictly, for it was not offered upon the altar, but as a religious ceremony, acknowledging God's goodness to them, not only in preserving them from, but in delivering them by the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. The lamb so slain they were to eat roasted (we may suppose in its several quarters) with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; they were to eat it in haste, ver. 11, and to leave none of it until the morning; for God would have them to depend upon him for their daily bread. Before they eat the flesh of the lamb, they were to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts; by which their houses were to be distinguished from the houses of the Egyptians, and so their first-born secured from the sword of the destroying angel. Dreadful work was to be made this night in Egypt; all the first-born both of man and beast were to be slain; and judgment executed upon the gods of Egypt, Num. xxxiii, 4. It is probable the idols which the Egyptians worshipped were defaced, those of metal melted, those of wood consumed, and those of stone broke to pieces. This was to be annually observed as a feast of the Lord in their generations, to which the feast of unleavened bread was

annexed, during which, for seven days, they were to eat no bread but what was unleavened, in remembrance of their being confined to such bread for many days after they came out of Egypt, ver. 14-20. There was much of the gospel in this ordinance:

(1.) The paschal lamb was typical. Christ is our passover, 1 Cor. v, 7, and is the Lamb of God, John i, 29. 2. It was to be a male of the first year; in its prime. Christ offered up himself in the midst of his days. It notes the strength and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, on whom our help was laid. 3. It was to be without blemish, noting the purity of the Lord Jesus, a lamb without spot, 1 Pet. i, 19. 4. It was to be set apart four days before, noting the designation of the Lord Jesus to be a saviour, both in the purpose and in the promise. It is observable, that as Christ was crucified at the passover, so he solemnly entered into Jerusalem four days before, the very day that the paschal lamb was set apart. 5. It was to be slain and roasted with fire, noting the exquisite sufferings of the Lord Jesus, even unto death, the death of the cross. 6. It was to be killed by the whole congregation between the two evenings, that is, between three o'clock and six. Christ suffered in the latter end of the world, Heb. ix, 26, by the hand of the Jews, the whole multitude of them, Luke xxiii, 18. 7. Not a bone of it must be broken, ver. 46, which is expressly said to be fulfilled in Christ, John xix, 33, 36.

(2.) The sprinkling of the blood was typical. 1st, It was not enough that the blood of the lamb was shed, but it must be sprinkled, noting the application of the merits of Christ's death to our souls; 2ndly, It was to be sprinkled upon the door-posts, noting the open profession we are to make of faith in Christ, and obedience to him. The mark of the beast may be received in the forehead, or in the right hand, but the seal of the lamb is always in the forehead, Rev. vii, 3. 3rdly, The blood thus sprinkled was a means of the preservation of the Israelites from the destroying angel. If the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our consciences, it will be our protection from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell.

(3.) The solemn eating of the lamb was typical of our gospel duty to Christ. 1st, The paschal lamb was killed not to be looked upon only, but to be fed upon; so we must by faith make Christ ours, as we do that which we eat, and we must receive spiritual strength and nourishment from him, as from our food, and have delight in him, as we have in eating and drinking when we are hungry or thirsty. 2ndly, It was to be all eaten: those that, by faith, feed upon Christ, must feed upon a whole Christ. They must take Christ and his yoke, Christ and his cross, as well as Christ and his crown. 3rdly, It was to be eaten with bitter herbs, in remembrance of the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt; we must feed upon Christ with brokenness of heart, in remembrance of sin. 4thly, It was to be eaten in a departing posture ver. 11, when we feed upon Christ by faith, we must sit loose to the world, and every thing in it.

(4.) The feast of unleavened bread was typical of the Christian

life,

1 Cor. v, 7, 8. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, 1st. We must keep a feast, in holy joy, continually delighting ourselves in Christ Jesus; If true believers have not a continual feast, it is their own fault. 2ndly, It must be a feast of unleavened bread, kept in charity, without the leaven of malice, and in sincerity, without the leaven of hypocrisy. All the old leaven of sin must be put far from us, with the utmost caution, if we would keep the feast of a holy life to the honour of Christ.

3rdly, It was to be an ordinance forever. As long as we live we must continue feeding upon Christ, and rejoicing in him always, with thankful mention of the great things he has done for us.

9. Raw - Half roasted, but throughly drest.

10. Ye shall burn with fire - To prevent the profane abuse of it.

11. The Lord's passover - A sign of his passing over you, when he destroyed the Egyptians.

16. An holy convocation - A solemn day for the people to assemble together.

19. A stranger - A proselyte. Heathens were not concerned in the passover.

22. Out of the door of his house - Of that house, wherein he ate the passover: Until the morning - That is, till towards morning, when they would be called for to march out of Egypt. They went out very early in the morning.

23. The destroyer - The destroying angel, whether this was a good or an evil angel, we have not light to determine.

27. The people bowed the head and worshipped - They hereby signified their submission to this institution as a law, and their thankfulness for it as a favour and privilege.

31. Rise up, and get you forth - Pharaoh had told Moses he should see his face no more, but now he sent for him; those will seek God in their distress, who before had set him at defiance. Such a fright he was now in that he gave orders by night for their discharge, fearing lest if he delay'd, he himself should fall next. And that he sent them out, not as men hated (as the Pagan historians have represented this matter) but as men feared, is plain by his request to them.

32. Bless me also - Let me have your prayers, that I may not be plagued for what is past when you are gone.

33. We be all dead men - When death comes unto our houses, it is



seasonable for us to think of our own mortality.

**34. Their kneading-troughs - Or rather, their lumps of paste unleavened.**

**37. About six hundred thousand men - The word means strong and able men fit for wars, beside women and children, which we cannot suppose to make less than twelve hundred thousand more. What a vast increase was this to arise from seventy souls, in little more than two hundred years.**

**38. And a mixed multitude went up with them - Some perhaps willing to leave their country, because it was laid waste by the plagues. But probably the greatest part was but a rude unthinking mob, that followed they knew not why: It is likely, when they understood that the children of Israel were to continue forty years in the wilderness, they quitted them, and returned to Egypt again. And flocks and herds, even very much cattle - This is taken notice of, because it was long ere Pharaoh would give them leave to remove their effects, which were chiefly cattle.**

**39. Thrust out - By importunate entreaties.**

**40. It was just four hundred and thirty years from the promise made to Abraham (as the Apostle explains it, Gal. iii, 17,) at his first coming into Canaan, during all which time the Hebrews, were sojourners in a land that was not theirs, either Canaan or Egypt. So long the promise God made to Abraham lay dormant and unfulfilled, but now, it revived, and things began to work towards the accomplishment of it. The first day of the march of Abraham's seed towards Canaan was four hundred and thirty years (it should seem, to a day) from the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii, 2. I will make of thee a great nation.**

**42. This first passover night was a night of the Lord, much to be observed; but the last passover night, in which Christ was betrayed, was a night of the Lord, much more to be observed, when a yoke heavier than that of Egypt was broke from off our necks, and a land better than that of Canaan set before us. That was a temporal deliverance, to be celebrated in their generations; this an eternal redemption to be celebrated world without end.**

**45. An hired servant - Unless he submit to be circumcised.**

**47. All the congregation of Israel must keep it - Though it was observed in families apart, yet it is looked upon as the act of the whole congregation. And so the new testament passover, the Lord's supper, ought not to be neglected by any that are capable of celebrating it.**

**48. No stranger that was uncircumcised might eat of it. Neither may any now approach the Lord's supper who have not first**

submitted to baptism; nor shall any partake of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, who are not first circumcised in heart. Any stranger that was circumcised might eat of the passover, even servants. Here is an indication of favour to the poor Gentiles, that the stranger, if circumcised, stands upon the same level with the home-born Israelite; one law for both. This was a mortification to the Jews, and taught them that it was their dedication to God, not their descent from Abraham, that entitled them to their privileges.

**XIII** In this chapter we have,

**I.** The commands God gave to Israel,

1. To sanctify all their first-born to him, ver. 1,
2. To remember their deliverance out of Egypt, ver. 3,
4. and in remembrance of it to keep the feast of unleavened bread, ver. 5-8.
3. To transmit the knowledge of it to their children, ver. 8-10.
4. To set apart to God the firstlings of their cattle, ver. 11-13. and to explain that also to their children, ver. 14-16.

**II.** The care God took of Israel when he had brought them out of Egypt.

1. Choosing their way for them, ver. 17, 18
2. Guiding them in the way, ver. 20-22. And their care of Joseph's bones, ver. 19.
2. Sanctify to me all the first-born - The parents were not to look upon themselves as interested in their first-born, till they had first solemnly presented them to God, and received them back from him again. It is mine - By a special right, being by my singular favour preserved from the common destruction.
5. When the Lord shall bring you into the land, thou shalt keep this service - 'Till then they were not obliged to keep the passover, without a particular command from God.
7. There shall no leavened bread be seen in all thy quarters - Accordingly the Jews usage was, before the feast of the passover, to cast all the leavened bread out of their houses; either they burnt it, or buried it, or broke it small, and threw it into the wind; they searched diligently with lighted candles in all the corners of their houses, lest any leaven should remain. The strictness enjoined in this matter was designed,
1. To make the feast the more solemn, and consequently the more taken notice of by the children, who would ask, why is so much

**ado made?**

**2. To teach us how solicitous we should be to put away from us all sin.**

**9. Upon thy hand, between thine eyes - Proverbial expressions; denoting things which are never out of our thoughts.**

**13. Thou shalt redeem - The price of the redemption was fixed by the law.**

**16. For frontlets between thine eyes - As conspicuous as any thing fixt to thy forehead, or between thine eyes.**

**18. There were many reasons why God led them through the way of the wilderness of the red sea. The Egyptians were to be drowned in the Red-sea, the Israelites were to be humbled, and proved in the wilderness. Deut. viii, 2. God had given it to Moses for a sign, chap. iii, 12, ye shall serve God in this mountain. They had again and again told Pharaoh that they must go three days journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice, and therefore it was requisite they should march that way, else they had justly been exclaimed against as dissemblers. Before they entered the lifts with their enemies, matters must be settled between them and their God; laws must be given, ordinances instituted, covenants sealed; and for the doing of this it was necessary they should retire into the solitudes of a wilderness, the only closet for such a crowd; the high road would be no proper place for these transactions. The reason why God did not lead them the nearest way, which would have brought them in a few days to the land of the Philistines, was because they were not yet fit for war, much less for war with the Philistines. Their spirits were broke with slavery; the Philistines were formidable enemies; it was convenient they should begin with the Amalekites, and be prepared for the wars of Canaan, by experiencing the difficulties of the wilderness. God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle brings up her young ones, Deut. xxxii, 11, teaching them by degrees to fly. They went up harnessed - They went up by five in a rank, so some; in five squadrons, so others. They marched like an army with banners, which added much to strength and honour.**

**21. And the Lord went before them in a pillar - In the two first stages, it was enough that God directed Moses whither to march; he knew the country, and the road; but now they are come to the edge of the wilderness, they would have occasion for a guide, and a very good guide they had, infinitely wise, kind, and faithful, the Lord went up before them; The Shechinah or appearance of the divine Majesty, which was a precious manifestation of the eternal Word, who in the fulness of time was to be made flesh, and dwell among us. Christ was with the church in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x, 9. What a satisfaction to Moses and the pious Israelites, to be sure**

that they were under a divine conduct? They need not fear missing their way who were thus led, nor being lost who were thus directed; they need not fear being benighted, who were thus illuminated, nor being robbed, who were thus protected. And they who make the glory of God their end, and the word of God their rule, the spirit of God the guide of their affections, and the providence of God the guide of their affairs, may be confident that the Lord goes before them, as truly is he went before Israel in the wilderness, though not so sensibly. They had sensible effects of God's going before them in this pillar. For, It led them the way in that vast howling wilderness, in which there was no road, no track, no way-marks through which they had no guides. When they marched, this pillar went before them, at the rate that they could follow, and appointed the place of their encampment, as infinite Wisdom saw fit; which eased them from care, and secured them from danger, both in moving, and in resting. It sheltered them from the heat by day, which at sometimes of the year was extreme: And it gave them light by night when they had occasion for it.

22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud, - No not when they seemed to have less occasion for it: it never left them 'till it brought them to the borders of Canaan. It was a cloud which the wind could not scatter. There was something spiritual in this pillar of cloud and fire.

1. The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in this cloud, 1 Cor. x, 2. By coming under this cloud they signified their putting themselves under the conduct and command of Moses. Protection draws allegiance; this cloud was the badge of God's protection, and so became the bond of their allegiance. Thus they were initiated, and admitted under that government, now when they were entering upon the wilderness.

2. And it signifies the special conduct and protection which the church of Christ is under in this world.

XIV Here is,

I. The extreme distress that Israel was in at the Red-sea.

1. Notice given of it to Moses before, ver. 1-4.

2. The cause of it was Pharaoh's pursuit of them, ver. 5-9. 3, Israel was in a consternation upon it, ver. 10-12.

4. Moses endeavours to encourage them, ver. 13, 14.

II. The wonderful deliverance that God wrought for them.

1. Moses is instructed concerning it, ver. 15-18.

**2. Lines that could not be forced are set between the camp of Israel and Pharaoh's camp, ver. 19, 20.**

**3. By the divine power the Red-sea is divided, ver. 21. and is made,**

**1. A lane to the Israelites, who marched safely through it, ver. 22-29. But.**

**2. To the Egyptians it was made,**

**1. An ambush into which they were drawn, ver. 23-25. And,**

**2. A grave in which they were all buried, ver. 26-28.**

**III. The impressions this made upon the Israelites, ver. 30, 31.**

**2. They were got to the edge of the wilderness, chap. xiii, 20, and one stage or two would have brought them to Horeb, the place appointed for their serving God, but instead of going forward, they are ordered to turn short off, on the right-hand from Canaan, and to march towards the Red-sea. When they were at Etham, there was no sea in their way to obstruct their passage; but God himself orders them into straits, which might give them an assurance, that when his purposes were served, he would bring them out of those straits. Before Pi-hahiroth - Or the straits of Hiroth, two great mountains, between which they marched. Migdol and Baal-zephon were cities of Egypt and probably garrison'd.**

**3. They are entangled - Inclosed with mountains, and garrisons, and deserts.**

**5. And it was told the king that the people fled - He either forgot, or would not own that they had departed with his consent; and therefore was willing it should be represented to him as a revolt from their allegiance.**

**7. Captains over every one of them - Or rather over all of them; distributing the command of them to his several Captains.**

**8. With an high hand - Boldly, resolutely.**

**9. Chariots and horsemen - It should seem he took no foot with him, because the king's business required haste.**

**10. They were sore afraid - They knew the strength of the enemy, and their own weakness; numerous indeed they were, but all foot, unarmed, undisciplined, dispirited, by long servitude, and now pent up, so that they could not escape. On one hand was Pi-hahiroth, a range of craggy rocks unpassable; on the other hand were Migdol and Baal-zephon, forts upon the frontiers of Egypt; before them was the sea, behind them were the Egyptians; so that**

there was no way open for them but upwards, and thence their deliverance came.

13. Moses answered not these fools according to their folly: Instead of chiding he comforts them, and with an admirable pretense of mind, not disheartened either by the threatenings of Egypt, or the tremblings of Israel, stills their murmuring, Fear ye not, It is our duty, when we cannot get out of our troubles, yet to get above our fears, so that they may only serve to quicken our prayers and endeavours, but may not prevail to silence our faith and hope. Stand still, and think not to save yourselves either by fighting or flying; wait God's orders, and observe them; Compose yourselves, by an entire confidence in God, into a peaceful prospect of the great salvation God is now about to work for you. Hold your peace, you need not so much as give a shout against the enemy: the work shall be done without any concurrence of yours. In times of great difficulty, it is our wisdom to keep our spirits calm, quiet, and sedate, for then we are in the best frame both to do our own work, and to consider the work of God.

15. Wherefore criest thou unto me - Moses though he was assured of a good issue, yet did not neglect prayer. We read not of one word he said in prayer, but he lifted up his heart to God, and God well understood, and took notice of. Moses's silent prayer prevailed more with God, than Israel's loud out-cries. But is God displeased with Moses for praying? No, he asks this question, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Wherefore shouldst thou press thy petition any farther, when it is already granted? Moses has something else to do besides praying, he is to command the hosts of Israel. Speak to them that they go forward - Some think Moses had prayed not so much for their deliverance, he was assured of that; as for the pardon of their murmurings, and God's ordering them to go forward, was an intimation of the pardon. Moses bid them stand still and expect orders from God: and now orders are given. They thought they must have been directed either to the right hand, or to the left; no, saith God, speak to them to go forward, directly to the sea-side; as if there had lain a fleet of transport ships ready for them to embark in. Let the children of Israel go as far as they can upon dry ground, and then God will divide the sea. The same power could have congealed the waters for them to pass over, but infinite wisdom chose rather to divide the waters for them to pass through, for that way of salvation is always pitched upon which is most humbling.

19. The angel of God - Whose ministry was made use of in the pillar of cloud and fire, went from before the camp of Israel, where they did not now need a guide; there was no danger of missing their way through the sea, and came behind them, where now they needed a guard, the Egyptians being just ready to seize the hindmost of them. There it was of use to the Israelites, not only to protect them, but to light them through the sea; and at the

same time it confounded the Egyptians, so that they lost sight of their prey, just when they were ready to lay hands on it. The word and providence of God have a black and dark side towards sin and sinners, but a bright and pleasant side towards those that are Israelites indeed.

21. We have here the history of that work of wonder which is so often mentioned both in the Old and New Testament. An instance of God's almighty power in dividing the sea, and opening a passage through the waters. It was a bay, or gulf, or arm of the sea, two or three leagues over. The God of nature has not tied himself to its laws, but when he pleases dispenseth with them, and then the fire doth not burn, nor the water flow. They went through the sea to the opposite shore; they walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the pillar of cloud being their rereward, the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. Moses and Aaron it is likely ventured first, into this untrodden path, and then all Israel after them; and this march through the paths of the great waters would make their march afterwards through the wilderness less formidable. This march through the sea was in the night, and not a moon-shine night, for it was seven days after the full moon, so that they had no light but what they had from the pillar of fire. This made it the more awful, but where God leads us, he will light us; while we follow his conduct we shall not want his comforts.

23. And the Egyptians went in after them into the midst of the sea - They thought, why might they not venture where Israel did? They were more advantageously provided with chariots and horses, while the Israelites were on foot.

24. The Lord - Called the angel before, looked - With indignation, upon the Egyptians, and troubled the Egyptians - With terrible winds and lightnings and thunders, chap. xv, 10, Psalm lxxvii, 18, 19. Also with terror of mind.

25. They had driven furiously, but now they drove heavily, and found themselves embarrassed at every step; the way grew deep, their hearts grew sad, their wheels dropt off, and the axle-trees failed. They had been flying upon the back of Israel as the hawk upon the dove; but now they cried, Let us flee from the face of Israel.

26. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea - And give a signal to the waters to close again, as before upon the word of command they had opened to the right and the left. He did so, and immediately the waters returned to their place, and overwhelmed all the host of the Egyptians. Pharaoh and his servants, that had hardened one another in sin, now fell together, and not one escaped. An ancient tradition saith, That Pharaoh's magicians Jannes and Jambres perished with the rest. Now God

got him honour upon Pharaoh, a rebel to God, and a slave to his own barbarous passions; perfectly lost to humanity, virtue, and all true honour; here he lies buried in the deep, a perpetual monument of divine justice: here he went down to the pit, though he was the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

28. After them - That is, after the Israelites.

30. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore - The Egyptians were very curious in preserving the bodies of their great men, but here the utmost contempt is poured upon all the grandees of Egypt; see how they lie heaps upon heaps, as dung upon the face of the earth.

31. And Israel feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses - Now they were ashamed of their distrusts and murmurings; and in the mind they were in, they would never again despair of help from heaven; no not in the greatest straits! They would never again quarrel with Moses; nor talk of returning to Egypt. How well were it for us, if we were, always in as good a frame, as we are in sometimes!

XV In this chapter,

I. Israel looks back upon Egypt with a song of praise for their deliverance. Here is,

1. The song itself, ver. 1-19.

2. The solemn singing of it, ver. 20, 21.

II. Israel marches forward in the wilderness, ver. 22. Their discontent at the waters of Marah, ver. 23, 24. and the relief granted them, ver. 25,

26. Their satisfaction in the waters of Elim, ver. 27.

1. Then sang Moses - Moses composed this song, and sang it with the children of Israel. Doubtless he wrote it by inspiration, and sang it on the spot. By this instance it appears that the singing of psalms, as an act of religious worship, was used in the church of Christ before the giving of the ceremonial law, therefore it is no part of it, nor abolished with it: singing is as much the language of holy joy, as praying is of holy desire. I will sing unto the Lord - All our joy must terminate in God, and all our praises be offered up to him, for he hath triumphed - All that love God triumph in his triumphs.

2. Israel rejoiceth in God, as their strength, song, and salvation - Happy therefore the people whole God is the Lord: They are weak themselves, but he strengthens them, his grace is their strength: they are oft in sorrow, but in him they have comfort, he is their



song: sin and death threaten them, but he is, and will be, their salvation. He is their fathers God - This they take notice of, because being conscious of their own unworthiness, they had reason to think that what God had now done for them was for their fathers sake, Deut. iv, 37.

3. The Lord is a man of war - Able to deal with all those that strive with their maker.

4. He hath cast - With great force, as an arrow out of a bow, so the Hebrew word signifies.

7. In the greatness of thine excellency - By thy great and excellent power.

8. With the blast of thy nostrils - By thine anger: The depths were congealed - Stood still, as if they had been frozen: In the heart of the sea - The midst of it.

9. My lust - My desire both of revenge and gain.

11. The gods - So called: Idols, or Princes: Glorious in holiness - In justice, mercy and truth: Fearful in praises - To be praised with reverence.

12. The earth swallowed them - Their dead bodies sunk into the sands on which they were thrown, which sucked them in.

13. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the People - Out of the bondage of Egypt, and out of the perils of the Red-sea. Thou hast guided them to thy holy habitation - Thou hast put them into the way to it, and wilt in due time bring them to the end of that way.

17. Thou shalt bring them in - If he thus bring them out of Egypt, he will bring them into Canaan; for has he begun, and will he not make an end? Thou wilt plant them in the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in - It is good dwelling where God dwells, in his church on earth, and in his church in heaven. In the mountains - In the mountainous country of Canaan: The sanctuary which thy hands have established - Will as surely establish as if it was done already.

18. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever - They had now seen an end of Pharaoh's reign, but time itself shall not put a period to Jehovah's reign, which like himself is eternal.

20. Miriam (or Mary, it is the same name) presided in an assembly of the women, who (according to the common usage of those times) with timbrels and dances, sung this song. Moses led the psalm, and gave it out for the men, and then Miriam for the women. Famous victories were wont to be applauded by the daughters of Israel, 1 Sam. xviii, 6, 7, so was this. When God

brought Israel out of Egypt, it is said, Micah vi, 4, he sent before them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; though we read not of any thing remarkable that Miriam did but this. But those are to be reckoned great blessings to a people, that go before them in praising God.

21. And Miriam answered them - The men: They sung by turns, or in parts.

23. The name of it was called Marah - That is, Bitterness.

25. And he cried unto the Lord - It is the greatest relief of the cares of magistrates and ministers, when those under their charge make them uneasy, that they may have recourse to God by prayer; he is the guide of the church's guides, and to the chief shepherd, the under shepherds must on all occasions apply themselves: And the Lord directed Moses to a tree, which he cast into the waters, and they were made sweet - Some think this wood had a peculiar virtue in it for this purpose, because it is said, God shewed him the tree. God is to be acknowledged, not only in the creating things useful for man, but in discovering their usefulness. But perhaps this was only a sign, and not a means of the cure, no more than the brazen serpent. There he made a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them - That is, there he put them upon trial, admitted them as probationers for his favour. In short he tells them, ver. 26, what he expected from them, and that was, in one word, obedience. They must diligently hearken to his voice, and give ear to his commandments, and must take care, in every thing, to do that which was right in God's sight, and to keep all his statutes. Then I will put none of these diseases upon thee - That is, I will not bring upon thee any of the plagues of Egypt. This intimates, that if they were disobedient, the plagues which they had seen inflicted on their enemies should be brought on them. But if thou wilt be obedient, thou shalt be safe, the threatening is implied, but the promise is expressed, I am the Lord that healeth thee - And will take care of thee wherever thou goest.

XVI This chapter gives us an account of the victualling of the camp of Israel.

I. Their complaint for want of bread, ver. 1-3.

II. The notice God gave them of the provision he intended to make for them, ver. 4-12.

III. The sending of the manna, ver. 13-15.

IV. The laws and orders concerning it.

1. That they should gather it daily, ver. 16-21.

2. That they should gather a double portion on the sixth day, ver. 22-26.

3. That they should expect none on the seventh day, ver. 27-31,

4. That they should preserve a pot of it for a memorial, ver 32.

1. A month's provision, it seems, the host of Israel took with them out of Egypt, when they came thence on the 15th day of the first month, which, by the 15th day of the second month, was all spent.

2. Then the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron - God's viceregents among them.

3. They so undervalue their deliverance, that they wish, they had died in Egypt, nay, and died by the hand of the Lord too. That is, by some of the plagues which cut off the Egyptians; as if it were not the hand of the Lord, but of Moses only, that brought them into this wilderness. 'Tis common for people to say of that pain, or sickness, which they see not second causes of, It is what pleaseth God, as if that were not so likewise which comes by the hand of man, or some visible accident. We cannot suppose they had any great plenty in Egypt, how largely soever they now talk of the flesh-pots, nor could they fear dying for want in the wilderness while they had their flocks and herds with them; but discontent magnifies what is past, and vilifies what is present, without regard to truth or reason. None talk more absurdly than murmurers.

4. Man being made out of the earth, his Maker has wisely ordered him food out of the earth, Psalm civ, 14. But the people of Israel typifying the church of the first-born that are written in heaven, receiving their charters, laws and commissions from heaven, from heaven also they received their food. See what God designed in making this provision for them, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no - Whether they will trust me, and whether they would serve him, and be ever faithful to so good a master.

5. They shall prepare - Lay up, grind, bake or boil.

6. The Lord - And not we, (as you suggest) by our own counsel.

10. The glory of the Lord - An extra-ordinary and sudden brightness.

12. And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God - This gave proof of his power as the Lord, and his particular favour to them as their God; when God plagued the Egyptians, it was to make them know that he is the Lord; when he provided for the Israelites, it was to make them know that he was their God.

13. The quails came up, and covered the camp - So tame that they might take up as many of them as they pleased. Next morning he rained manna upon them, which was to be continued to them for

their daily bread.

15. What is this? Manna descended from the clouds. It came down in dew melted, and yet was itself of such a consistency as to serve for nourishing strengthening food, without any thing else: It was pleasant food; the Jews say it was palatable to all, according as their tastes were. It was wholesome food, light of digestion. By this spare and plain diet we are all taught a lesson of temperance, and forbidden to desire dainties and varieties.

16. An omer - The tenth part of an ephah: Near six pints, wine-measure.

19. Let no man leave 'till morning - But let them learn to go to bed and sleep quietly, though they had not a bit of bread in their tent, nor in all their camp, trusting God with the following day to bring them their daily bread. Never was there such a market of provisions as this, where so many hundred thousand men were daily furnished without money, and without price: never was there such an open house kept as God kept in the wilderness for 40 years together, nor such free and plentiful entertainment given. And the same wisdom, power and goodness that now brought food daily out of the clouds, doth in the constant course of nature bring food yearly out of the earth, and gives us all things richly to enjoy.

23. Here is a plain intimation of the observing a seventh day sabbath, not only before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, but before the bringing of Israel out of Egypt and therefore from the beginning. If the sabbath had now been first instituted, how could Moses have understood what God said to him, ver. 4, concerning a double portion to be gathered on the sixth day, without making any express mention of the sabbath? And how could the people so readily take the hint, ver. 22, even to the surprize of the rulers, before Moses had declared that it was done with regard to the sabbath, if they had not had some knowledge of the sabbath before? The setting apart of one day in seven for holy work, and in order to that for holy rest, was a divine appointment ever since God created man upon the earth.

34. An omer of this manna was laid up in a golden pot as we are told, Heb. ix, 4, and kept before the testimony, or the ark, when it was afterwards made, The preservation of this manna from waste and corruption, was a standing miracle; and therefore the more proper memorial of this miraculous food. The manna is called spiritual meat, 1 Cor. x, 3, because it was typical of spiritual blessings. Christ himself is the true manna, the bread of life, of which that was a figure, John vi, 49-51. The word of God is the manna by which our souls are nourished, Matt. iv, 4. The comforts of the Spirit are hidden manna, Rev. ii, 17. These comforts from heaven as the manna did, are the support of the

divine life in the soul while we are in the wilderness of this world: it is food for Israelites, for those only that follow the pillar of cloud and fire: it is to be gathered; Christ in the word is to be applied to the soul, and the means of grace used: we must every one of us gather for ourselves. There was manna enough for all, enough for each, and none had too much; so in Christ there is a complete sufficiency, and no superfluity. But they that did eat manna hungered again, died at last, and with many of them God was not well pleased: whereas they that feed on Christ by faith shall never hunger, and shall die no more, and with them God will be for ever well pleased. The Lord evermore give us this bread!

XVII In this chapter are recorded,

I. The watering of the host of Israel.

- (1.) In the wilderness they wanted water, ver. 1.
- (2.) In their want they chide with Moses, ver. 2, 3.
- (3.) Moses cried to God, ver. 4.
- (4.) God ordered him to smite the rock, and fetch water out of it; and he did so, ver. 5, 6.
- (5.) The place named from it, ver. 7.

II. The defeating of the host of Amalek.

- (1.) The victory obtained by the prayer of Moses, ver. 8-12.
- (2.) By the sword of Joshua, ver. 13
- (3.) A record kept of it, ver. 14-16.

1. They journeyed according to the commandment of the Lord, led by the pillar of cloud and fire, and yet they came to a place where there was no water for them to drink - We may be in the way of our duty, and yet meet with troubles, which Providence brings us into for the trial of our faith.

5. Go on before the people - Though they spake of stoning him. He must take his rod with him, not to summon some plague to chastise them, but to fetch water for their supply. O the wonderful patience and forbearance of God towards provoking sinners! He maintains those that are at war with him, and reaches out the hand of his bounty to those that lift up the heel against him. If God had only shewed Moses a fountain of water in the wilderness, as he did to Hagar, not far from hence, Gen. xxi, 19, that had been a great favour; but that he might shew his power as well as his pity, and make it a miracle of mercy, he gave them water out of a rock. He directed Moses whither to go, appointed him to take of the elders of Israel with him, to be witnesses of what was done, ordered him to smite the rock, which he did, and immediately water came out of it in great abundance, which ran throughout the camp in streams and rivers, Psalm lxxviii, 15, 16, and followed them wherever they went in that wilderness: God shewed his care of his people in giving them water when they wanted it; his own power in fetching it out of a rock, and put an honour upon Moses

in appointing the water to flow out upon his smiting of the rock. This fair water that came out of the rock is called honey and oil, Deut. xxxii, 13, because the people's thirst made it doubly pleasant; coming when they were in extreme want. It is probable that the people digged canals for the conveyance of it, and pools for the reception of it. Let this direct us to live in a dependance,

1. Upon God's providence even in the greatest straits and difficulties;

2. And upon Christ's grace; that rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x, 4. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to rivers of living waters, John vii, 38, 39; iv, 14. These flow from Christ. And nothing will supply the needs and satisfy the desires of a soul but water out of this rock. A new name was upon this occasion given to the place, preserving the remembrance of their murmuring, Massah - Temptation, because they tempted God, Meribah - Strife, because they chide with Moses.

8. Then Amalek came and fought with Israel - The Amalekites were the posterity of Esau, who hated Jacob because of the birth-right and blessing. They did not boldly front them as a generous enemy, but without any provocation given, basely fell upon their rear, and smote them that were faint and feeble.

9. I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my land - See how God qualifies his people for, and calls them to various services for the good of his church; Joshua fights, Moses prays, and both minister to Israel. This rod Moses held up, not so much to Israel as to animate them; as to God by way of appeal to him; Is not the battle the Lord's? Is not he able to help, and engaged to help? Witness this rod! Moses was not only a standard-bearer, but an intercessor, pleading with God for success and victory.

10. Hur is supposed to have been the husband of Miriam.

11. And when Moses held vp his hand in prayer (so the Chaldee explains it) Israel prevailed, but when he let down his hand from prayer, Amalek prevailed - To convince Israel that the hand of Moses (with whom they had just now been chiding) contributed more to their safety than their own hands; the success rises and falls, as Moses lifts up or lets down his hand. The church's cause is ordinarily more or less successful, according as the church's friends are more or less fervent in prayer.

13. Though God gave the victory, yet it is said Joshua discomfited Amalek, because Joshua was a type of Christ, and of the same name, and in him it is that we are more than conquerors.

15. And Moses built an altar, and called it Jehovah-niffi - The Lord is my banner. The presence and power of Jehovah was the banner under which they were lifted, by which they were

animated, and kept together, and therefore which they erected in the day of their triumph. In the name of our God we must always lift up our banners: He that doth all the work should have all the praise. Write this for a memorial - This is the first mention of writing we find in scripture; and perhaps the command was not given till after the writing of the law on tables of stone.

**XVIII** This chapter is concerning Moses himself, and the affairs of his own family.

**I.** Jethro his father-in-law brings him his wife and children, ver. 1-6.

**II.** Moses entertains his father-in-law with great respect, ver. 7. with good discourse, ver. 8-11. with a sacrifice and a feast, ver. 12.

**III.** Jethro adviseth him about the management of his business as a judge in Israel, to take other Judg. in to his assistance, ver. 13-23. and Moses after some time takes his counsel, ver. 24-26. They part, ver.

27.

1. Jethro to congratulate the happiness of Israel, and particularly the honour of Moses his son-in-law; comes to rejoice with them, as one that had a true respect both for them and for their God. And also to bring Moses's wife and children to him. It seems he had sent them back, probably from the inn where his wife's lothness to have her son circumcised had like to have cost him his life, chap. iv, 25.

3. The name of one was Gershom - A stranger, designing thereby not only a memorial of his own condition, but a memorandum to this son of his, for we are all strangers upon earth.

4. The name of the other was Eliezer - My God a help: it looks back to his deliverance from Pharaoh, when he made his escape after the slaying of the Egyptian; but if this were the son that was circumcised in the inn, I would rather translate it, The Lord is mine help, and will deliver me from the sword of Pharaoh, which he had reason to expect would be drawn against him, when he was going to fetch Israel out of bondage.

11. Now know I that JEHOVAH is greater than all gods - That the God of Israel is greater than all pretenders; all deities, that usurp divine honours: he silenceth them, subdues them all, and is himself the only living and true God. He is also higher than all princes and potentates, who also are called gods, and has both an incontestable authority over them, and an irresistible power to control them; he manages them all as he pleaseth, and gets honour upon them how great soever they are. Now know I: he knew it

before, but now he knew it better; his faith grew up to a full assurance, upon this fresh evidence; for wherein they dealt proudly - The magicians or idols of Egypt, or Pharaoh and his grandees, opposing God, and setting up in competition with him, he was above them. The magicians were baffled, Pharaoh humbled, his powers broken, and Israel rescued out of their hands.

12. And Jethro took a burnt offering for God - And probably offered it himself, for he was a priest in Midian, and a worshipper of the true God, and the priesthood was not yet settled in Israel. And they did eat bread before God - Soberly, thankfully, in the fear of God; and their talk such as became saints. Thus we must eat and drink to the glory of God; as those that believe God's eye is upon us.

13. Moses sat to judge the people - To answer enquiries; to acquaint them with the will of God in doubtful cases, and to explain the laws of God that were already given.

15. The people came to inquire of God - And happy was it for them that they had such an oracle to consult. Moses was faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them that consulted him, and made them know the statutes of God, and his laws - His business was not to make laws, but to make known God's laws: his place was but that of a servant.

16. I judge between one and another - And if the people were as quarrelsome one with another as they were with God, he had many causes brought before him, and the more because their trials put them to no expence.

17. Not good - Not convenient either for thee or them.

19. Be thou for them to God-ward - That was an honour which it was not fit any other should share with him in. Also whatever concerned the whole congregation must pass through his hand, ver. 20. But, he appointed Judg. in the several tribes and families, which should try causes between man and man, and determine them, which would be done with less noise, and more dispatch than in the general assembly. Those whose gifts and stations are most eminent may yet be greatly furthered in their work by the assistance of those that are every way their inferiors. This is Jethro's advice; but he adds two qualifications to his counsel. (1.) That great care should be taken in the choice of the persons who should be admitted into this trust; it was requisite that they should be men of the best character.

1. For judgment and resolution, able men: men of good sense, that understood business; and bold men, that would not be daunted by frowns or clamours. Clear heads and stout hearts make good Judges.



2. For piety, such as fear God, who believe there is a God above them, whose eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable, and whose judgment they stand in awe of. Conscientious men, that dare not do an ill thing, though they could do it never so secretly and securely.

3. For honesty, men of truth, whose word one may take, and whose fidelity one may rely upon.

4. For a generous contempt of worldly wealth, hating covetousness, not only not seeking bribes, or aiming to enrich themselves, but abhorring the thought of it.

(2.) That he should attend God's direction in the case, ver. 23. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so - Jethro knew that Moses had a better counsellor than he was, and to his counsel he refers him.

24. So Moses hearkened unto the voice of his father-in-law. When he came to consider the thing, he saw the reasonableness of it, and resolved to put it in practice, which he did soon after, when he had received directions from God. Those are not so wise as they would be thought to be, who think themselves too wise to be counselled; for a wise man will hear, and will increase learning, and not slight good counsel, though given by an inferior.

27. He went into his own land - It is supposed the Kenites mentioned 1 Sam. xv, 6, were the posterity of Jethro, (compare Jude i, 16,) and they are taken under special protection, for the kindness their ancestor shewed to Israel.

XIX This chapter introduces the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, which was one of the most sensible appearances of the divine glory that ever was in this lower world. Here are,

I. The circumstances of time and place, ver. 1, 2.

II. The covenant between God and Israel settled in general. The gracious proposal God made to them, ver. 3-6. And their consent to the proposal, ver. 7, 8.

III. Notice given three days before of God's design to give the law out of a thick cloud, ver. 9. Orders given to prepare the people to receive the law, ver. 10-13. and care taken to execute those orders, ver. 14,

15.

IV. A terrible appearance of God's glory, ver. 16-20.

V. Silence proclaimed, and strict charge given to the people to observe a decorum while God spake to them, ver. 20-25.

1. In the third month after they came out of Egypt. It is computed that the law was given just fifty days after their coming out of Egypt, in remembrance of which the feast of Pentecost was observed the fiftieth day after the passover, and in compliance with which the spirit was poured out upon the apostles, at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ. Mount Sinai was a place which nature, not art, had made conspicuous, for it was the highest in all that range of mountains. Thus God put contempt upon cities and palaces, setting up his pavilion on the top of a mountain, in a barren desert. It is called Sinai, from the multitude of thorny bushes that over-spread it.

3. Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and the children of Israel - The people are called by the names both of Jacob and Israel, to mind them that they who had lately been as low as Jacob when he went to Padan-aram, were now grown as great as God made him when he came from thence, and was called Israel.

4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on Eagle's wings - An high expression of the wonderful tenderness God shewed for them. It notes great speed; God not only came upon the wing for their deliverance, but he hastened them out, as it were upon the wing. Also that he did it with great ease, with the strength as well as with the swiftness of an eagle. They that faint not, nor are weary, are said to mount up with wings as eagles, Isaiah xl, 31. Especially it notes God's particular care of them, and affection to them. Even Egypt was the nest in which these young ones were first formed as the embryo of a nation: when by the increase of their numbers they grew to some maturity, they were carried out of that nest. I brought you unto myself - They were brought not only into a state of liberty, but into covenant and communion with God. This, God aims at in all the gracious methods of his providence and grace, to bring us back to himself, from whom we have revolted, and to bring us home to himself, in whom alone we can be happy.

5. Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me - He doth not instance in any one particular favour, but expresseth it in that which was inclusive of all happiness, that he would be to them a God in covenant, and they should be to him a people. Nay you shall be a peculiar treasure: not that God was enriched by them, as a man is by his treasure, but he was pleased to value and esteem them as a man doth his treasure; they were precious in his sight. He took them under his special care and protection, as a treasure that is kept under lock and key. He distinguished them from, and dignified them above all people, as a people devoted to him, and to his service.

6. A kingdom of priests, a holy nation - All the Israelites, if compared with other people, were priests unto God, so near were they to him, so much employed in his immediate service, and such

intimate communion they had with him. The tendency of the laws given them was to distinguish them from others, and engage them for God as a holy nation. Thus all believers are, through Christ, made to our God kings and priests, Rev. i, 6, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii, 9.

7. And Moses laid before their faces all these words - He not only explained to them what God had given him in charge, but put it to their choice, whether they would accept these promises upon these terms or no. His laying it to their faces speaks his laying it to their consciences.

8. And they answered together; all that the Lord hath spoken we will do - Thus accepting the Lord to be to them a God, and giving up themselves to be to him a people.

10. Sanctify the people - As Job before sent and sanctified his sons, Job i, 5. Sanctify them, that is, call them off from their worldly business, and call them to religious exercises, meditation and prayer, that they may receive the law from God's mouth with reverence and devotion. Two things particularly were prescribed as instances of their preparation. 1st, In token of cleansing of themselves from all sinful pollutions, they must wash their clothes. Not that God regards our clothes, but while they were washing their clothes, he would have them think of washing their souls by repentance. It becomes us to appear in clean clothes when we wait upon great men; so clean hearts are required in our attendance on the great God.

2ndly, In token of their devoting themselves entirely to religious exercises upon this occasion they must abstain even from lawful enjoyments during these three days, and not come at their wives.

11. In the sight of all the people - Though they should see no manner of similitude, yet they should see so much as would convince them, that God was among them of a truth. And so high was the top of Mount Sinai, that it is supposed not only the camp of Israel, but even the countries about might discern some extraordinary appearance of glory upon it.

12. Set bounds - Probably he drew a ditch round at the foot of the hill, which none were to pass upon pain of death. This was to intimate, 1st, That awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all that worship God. 2ndly, The distance which worshippers were kept at under that dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our privilege under the gospel, having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x, 19.

13. When the trumpet soundeth long - Then let them take their places at the foot of the mount. Never was so great a congregation called together and preached to at once as this was here. No one

man's voice could have reached so many, but the voice of God did.

16. Now at length is come that memorable day, in which Israel heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire and lived, Deut. iv, 33. Never was there such a sermon preached before or since, as this, which was here preached to the church in the wilderness. For, the preacher was God himself, ver. 17, The Lord descended in fire; and ver. 18. The Lord came down upon mount Sinai. The Shechinah, or glory of the Lord, appeared in the sight of all the people; he shined forth from mount Paran with ten thousand of his saints, attended with a multitude of the holy angels. Hence the law is said to be given by the disposition of angels, Acts vii, 53. He spake from mount Sinai, hung with a thick cloud, ver. 16, covered with smoke, ver. 18, and made to quake greatly. Now it was that the earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, and the mountains skipped like rams, Psalm cxiv, 4, 7, that Sinai itself, though rough and rocky, melted from before the Lord God of Israel, Jude v, 5. The congregation was called together by the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud, ver. 16, and waxing louder and louder, ver. 19. This was done by the ministry of the angels, and made all the people tremble. The introductions to the service were thunders and lightnings, ver. 16. These have natural causes; but the scripture directs us in a particular manner to take notice of the power of God, and his terror in them. Thunder is the voice of God, and lightning the fire of God, proper to engage both the learning senses of seeing and hearing.

XX All things being prepared for the solemn promulgation of the divine law, we have in this chapter,

I. The ten commandments as God himself spake them upon Mount Sinai, ver. 1-17.

II. The impressions made upon the people, thereby, ver. 18-21.

III. Some particular instructions which God gave to Moses, relating to his worship, ver. 22-26.

1. God spake all these words - The law of the ten commandments is a law of God's making; a law of his own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the children of men by his spirit, conscience, providences; his voice in all which we ought carefully to attend to: but he never spake at any time upon any occasion so as he spake the ten commandments, which therefore we ought to hear with the more earnest heed. This law God had given to man before, it was written in his heart by nature; but sin had so defaced that writing, that it was necessary to revive the knowledge of it.

2. I am the Lord thy God - Herein, God asserts his own authority to enact this law; and proposeth himself as the sole object of that

**religious worship which is enjoined in the four first commandments. They are here bound to obedience.**

**1. Because God is the Lord, Jehovah, self-existent, independent, eternal, and the fountain of all being and power; therefore he has an incontestable right to command us.**

**2. He was their God; a God in covenant with them; their God by their own consent.**

**3. He had brought them out of the land of Egypt - Therefore they were bound in gratitude to obey him, because he had brought them out of a grievous slavery into a glorious liberty. By redeeming them, he acquired a farther right to rule them; they owed their service to him, to whom they owed their freedom. And thus, Christ, having rescued us out of the bondage of sin, is entitled to the best service we can do him. The four first commandments, concern our duty to God (commonly called the first-table.) It was fit those should be put first, because man had a Maker to love before he had a neighbour to love, and justice and charity are then only acceptable to God when they flow from the principles of piety.**

**3. The first commandment is concerning the object of our worship, Jehovah, and him only, Thou shalt have no other gods before me - The Egyptians, and other neighbouring nations, had many gods, creatures of their own fancy. This law was pre-fixed because of that transgression; and Jehovah being the God of Israel, they must entirely cleave to him, and no other, either of their own invention, or borrowed from their neighbours. The sin against this commandment, which we are most in danger of, is giving that glory to any creature which is due to God only. Pride makes a God of ourselves, covetousness makes a God of money, sensuality makes a God of the belly. Whatever is loved, feared, delighted in, or depended on, more than God, that we make a God of. This prohibition includes a precept which is the foundation of the whole law, that we take the Lord for our God, accept him for ours, adore him with humble reverence, and set our affections entirely upon him. There is a reason intimated in the last words before me. It intimates,**

**1. That we cannot have any other God but he will know it.**

**2. That it is a sin that dares him to his face, which he cannot, will not, overlook. The second commandment is concerning the ordinances of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit himself should appoint. Here is,**

**1. The prohibition; we are forbidden to worship even the true God by images, ver. 4,**

**5. First, The Jews (at least after the captivity) thought themselves**

forbidden by this to make any image or picture whatsoever. It is certain it forbids making any image of God, for to whom can we liken him? Isaiah xl, 18, 25. It also forbids us to make images of God in our fancies, as if he were a man as we are. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, not by the power of imagination. Secondly, They must not bow down to them - Shew any sign of honour to them, much less serve them by sacrifice, or any other act of religious worship. When they paid their devotion to the true God, they must not have any image before them for the directing, exciting, or assisting their devotion. Though the worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an image. The best and most ancient lawgivers among the Heathen forbad the setting up of images in their temples. It was forbidden in Rome by Numa a Pagan prince, yet commanded in Rome by the Pope, a Christian bishop. The use of images in the church of Rome, at this day, is so plainly contrary to the letter of this command, that in all their catechisms, which they put into the hand of the people, they leave out this commandment, joining the reason of it to the first, and so the third commandment they call the second, the fourth the third, &c. only to make up the number ten, they divide the tenth into two. For I the Lord Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God, especially in things of this nature. It intimates the care he has of his own institutions, his displeasure against idolaters, and that he resents every thing in his worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation - Severely punishing. Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God if the parents died in their iniquity, and the children tread in their steps, when God comes, by his judgments, to reckon with them, to bring into the account the idolatries their fathers were guilty of. Keeping mercy for thousands of persons, thousands of generations, of them that love me and keep my commandments - This intimates, that the second commandment, though in the letter of it is only a prohibition of false worship, yet includes a precept of worshipping God in all those ordinances which he hath instituted. As the first commandment requires the inward worship of love, desire, joy, hope, so this the outward worship of prayer and praise, and solemn attendance on his word. This mercy shall extend to thousands, much further than the wrath threatened to those that hate him, for that reaches but to the third or fourth generation.

7. The third commandment is concerning the manner of our worship; Where we have,

1. A strict prohibition. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain - Supposing that, having taken Jehovah for their God, they would make mention of his name, this command gives a caution not to mention it in vain, and it is still as needful as ever. We take God's name in vain, First, By hypocrisy, making profession of God's name, but not living up to that profession.

Secondly, By covenant breaking. If we make promises to God, and perform not to the Lord our vows, we take his name in vain. Thirdly, By rash swearing, mentioning the name of God, or any of his attributes, in the form of an oath, without any just occasion for it, but to no purpose, or to no good purpose. Fourthly, By false-swearing, which some think is chiefly intended in the letter of the commandment. Fifthly, By using the name of God lightly and carelessly. The profanation of the form of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also, the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless - Magistrates that punish other offenses, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this; but God, who is jealous for his honour, will not connive at it. The sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it; to obviate which suggestion, the threatening is thus expressed, God will not hold him guiltless - But more is implied, that God will himself be the avenger of those that take his name in vain; and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

8. The fourth commandment concerns the time of worship; God is to be served and honoured daily; but one day in seven is to be particularly dedicated to his honour, and spent in his service. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy; in it thou shalt do no manner of work - It is taken for granted that the sabbath was instituted before. We read of God's blessing and sanctifying a seventh day from the beginning, Gen. ii, 3, so that this was not the enacting of a new law, but the reviving of an old law. 1st. They are told what is the day, they must observe, a seventh after six days labour, whether this was the seventh by computation from the first seventh, or from the day of their coming out of Egypt, or both, is not certain. A late pious Writer seems to prove, That the sabbath was changed, when Israel came out of Egypt; which change continued till our Lord rose again: But that then the Original Sabbath was restored. And he makes it highly probable, at least, That the sabbath we observe, is the seventh day from the creation. 2ndly, How it must be observed;

1. As a day of rest; they were to do no manner of work on this day, in their worldly business.

2. As a holy day, set apart to the honour of the holy God, and to be spent in holy exercises. God, by his blessing it, had made it holy; they, by solemn blessing him, must keep it holy, and not alienate it to any other purpose than that for which the difference between it and other days was instituted. 3rdly, Who must observe it? Thou and thy son and thy daughter - The wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and present with him, and if he sanctify the sabbath, it is taken for granted she will join with him; but the rest of the family is instanced in it, children and servants must keep it according to

their age and capacity. In this, as in other instances of religion, it is expected that masters of families should take care, not only to serve the Lord themselves, but that their houses also should serve him. Even the proselyted strangers must observe a difference between this day and other days, which, if it laid some restraint upon them then, yet proved a happy indication of God's gracious design, to bring the Gentiles into the church. By the sanctification of the sabbath, the Jews declared that they worshipped the God that made the world, and so distinguished themselves from all other nations, who worshipped gods which they themselves made. God has given us an example of rest after six days work; he rested the seventh day - Took a complacency in himself, and rejoiced in the work of his hand, to teach us on that day, to take a complacency in him, and to give him the glory of his works. The sabbath begun in the finishing of the work of creation; so will the everlasting sabbath in the finishing of the work of providence and redemption; and we observe the weekly sabbath in expectation of that, as well as in remembrance of the former, in both conforming ourselves to him we worship. He hath himself blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it. He hath put an honour upon it; it is holy to the Lord, and honourable; and he hath put blessings into it which he hath encouraged us to expect from him in the religious observation of that day. Let us not profane, dishonour, and level that with common time, which God's blessing hath thus dignified and distinguished.

12. We have here the laws of the second table, as they are commonly called; the six last commandments which concern our duty to ourselves, and one another, and are a comment upon the second great commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. As religion towards God is, an essential branch of universal righteousness, so righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true religion: godliness and honesty must go together. The fifth commandment is concerning the duties we owe to our relations; that of children to their parents is only instanced in, honour thy father and thy mother, which includes,

1. an inward esteem of them, outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our carriage towards them; fear them, Lev. xix, 3, give them reverence, Heb. xii, 9. The contrary to this is mocking at them or despising them,

2. Obedience to their lawful commands; so it is expounded, Eph. vi, 1-3. Children obey your parents; come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, do not what they forbid you; and this chearfully, and from a principle of love. Though you have said you will not, yet afterwards repent and obey.

3. Submission to their rebukes, instructions and corrections, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.



**4. Disposing of themselves with the advice, direction and consent of parents, not alienating their property, but with their approbation.**

**5. endeavouring in every thing to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of support. That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee - This promise, (which is often literally fulfilled) is expounded in a more general sense Eph. vi, 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth - Those that in conscience towards God keep this and other of God's commandments, may be sure it shall be well with them, and they shall live as long on the earth as infinite wisdom sees good for, them, and what they may seem to be cut short of on earth, shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them.**

**13. Thou shalt not kill - Thou shalt not do any thing hurtful to the health, or life of thy own body, or any other's. This doth not forbid our own necessary defense, or the magistrates putting offenders to death; but it forbids all malice and hatred to any, for he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and all revenge arising therefrom; likewise anger and hurt said or done, or aimed to be done in a passion; of this our saviour expounds this commandment, Matt. v, 22.**

**14. Thou shalt not commit adultery - This commandment forbids all acts of uncleanness, with all those desires, which produce those acts and war against the soul.**

**15. Thou shalt not steal - This command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have, by sinful spending, or of the use and comfort of it by sinful sparing; and to rob others by invading our neighbour's rights, taking his goods, or house, or field, forcibly or clandestinely, over-reaching in bargains, not restoring what is borrowed or found, with-holding just debts, rents or wages; and, which is worst of all, to rob the public in the coin or revenue, or that which is dedicated to the service of religion.**

**16. Thou shalt not bear false witness - This forbids,**

**1. Speaking falsely in any matter, lying, equivocating, and any way devising and designing to deceive our neighbour.**

**2. Speaking unjustly against our neighbour, to the prejudice of his reputation; And**

**3. (which is the highest offense of both these kinds put together) Bearing false witness against him, laying to his charge things that he knows not, either upon oath, by which the third commandment, the sixth or eighth, as well as this, are broken, or in common**

converse, slandering, backbiting, tale-bearing, aggravating what is done amiss, and any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbour's.

17. Thou shalt not covet - The foregoing commands implicitly forbid all desire of doing that which will be an injury to our neighbour, this forbids all inordinate desire of having that which will be a gratification to ourselves. O that such a man's house were mine! such a man's wife mine! such a man's estate mine! This is certainly the language of discontent at our own lot, and envy at our neighbour's, and these are the sins principally forbidden here. God give us all to see our face in the glass of this law, and to lay our hearts under the government of it!

18. They removed and stood afar off - Before God began to speak, they were thrusting forward to gaze, but now they were effectually cured of their presumption, and taught to keep their distance.

19. Speak thou with us - Hereby they obliged themselves to acquiesce in the mediation of Moses, they themselves nominating him as a fit person to deal between them and God, and promising to hearken to him as to God's messenger.

20. Fear not - That is, Think not that this thunder and fire is, designed to consume you. No; it was intended,  
(1.) To prove them, to try how they could like dealing with God immediately, without a mediator, and so to convince them how admirably well God had chosen for them in putting Moses into that office. Ever since Adam fled upon hearing God's voice in the garden, sinful man could not bear either to speak to God, or hear from him immediately.  
(2.) To keep them to their duty, and prevent their sinning against God. We must not fear with amazement; but we must always have in our minds a reverence of God's majesty, a dread of his displeasure, and an obedient regard to his sovereign authority.

21. While the people continued to stand afar off - Afraid of God's wrath, Moses drew near unto the thick darkness; he was made to draw near, so the word is: Moses of himself durst not have ventured into the thick darkness if God had not called him, and encouraged him, and, as some of the Rabbins suppose, sent an angel to take him by the hand, and lead him up.

22. Moses being gone into the thick darkness where God was, God there spoke in his hearing only, all that follows from hence to the end of chap.

23, which is mostly an exposition of the ten commandments; and he was to transmit it to the people. The laws in these verses relate to God's worship. Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven - Such was his wonderful condescension; ye shall not

**make gods of silver - This repetition of the second commandment comes in here, because they were more addicted to idolatry than to any other sin.**

**24. An altar of earth - It is meant of occasional altars, such as they reared in the wilderness before the tabernacle was erected, and afterwards upon special emergencies, for present use. They are appointed to make these very plain, either of earth or of unhewn stones. That they might not be tempted to think of a graven image, they must not so much as hew the stones into shape, that they made their altars of, but pile them up as they were in the rough. In all places where I record my name - Or where my name is recorded, that is, where I am worshipped in sincerity, I will come unto thee, and will bless thee.**

**26. Neither shall thou go at by steps unto mine altar - Indeed afterwards God appointed an altar ten cubits high. But it is probable, they went not up to that by steps, but by a sloping ascent.**

**XXI The laws recorded in this chapter relate to the fifth and sixth commandments; and though not accommodated to our constitution, especially in point of servitude yet are of great use for the explanation of the moral law, and the rules of natural justice.**

**I. Here are several enlargements upon the fifth commandment, which concerns particular relations.**

**(1.) The duty of masters towards their servants, their men servants ver. 2-6. and maid-servants, ver. 7-11.**

**(2.) The punishment of disobedient children that strike their parents, ver. 15. or curse them, ver. 17.**

**II. Upon the sixth commandment, which forbids all violence offered to the person of man. Here is,**

**(1.) Concerning murder, ver. 12-14.**

**(2.) Man-stealing, ver, 16.**

**(3.) Assault and battery, ver. 18, 19.**

**(4.) Correcting a servant, ver. 20, 21**

**(5.) Hurting a woman with child, ver. 22, 23.**

**(6.) The law of retaliation, ver. 24, 25.**

**(7.) Maiming a servant, ver. 26, 27.**

**(8.) An ox goring, ver. 26-32.**

**(9.) Damage by opening a pit, ver. 33, 34. (10.) Cattle fighting, ver**

**35, 36.**

**1. The first verse is the general title of the laws contained in this and the two following chapters. Their government being purely a theocracy; that which in other states is to be settled by human**

prudence, was directed among them by a divine appointment. These laws are called judgments; because their magistrates were to give judgment according to them. In the doubtful cases that had hitherto occurred, Moses had particularly inquired of God, but now God gave him statutes in general, by which to determine particular cases. He begins with the laws concerning servants, commanding mercy and moderation towards them. The Israelites had lately been servants themselves, and now they were become not only their own masters, but masters of servants too; lest they should abuse their servants as they themselves had been abused, provision was made for the mild and gentle usage of servants.

2. If thou buy an Hebrew servant - Either sold by him or his parents through poverty, or by the Judges for his crimes, yet even such a one was to continue in slavery but seven years at the most.

6. For ever - As long as he lives, or till the year of Jubilee.

8. Who hath betrothed her to himself - For a concubine, or secondary Wife. Not that Masters always took Maid-servants on these terms.

9. After the manner of daughters - He shall give her a portion, as to a daughter.

20. Direction is given what should be done, if a servant died by his master's correction. This servant must not be an Israelite, but a Gentile slave, as the Negroes to our planters; and it is supposed that he smite him with a rod, and not with any thing that was likely to give a mortal wound, yet if he died under his hand, he should be punished for his cruelty, at the discretion of the Judges, upon consideration of circumstances.

24. Eye for eye - The execution of this law is not put into the hands of private persons, as if every man might avenge himself, which would introduce universal confusion. The tradition of the elders seems to have put this corrupt gloss upon it. But magistrates had an eye to this rule in punishing offenders, and doing right to those that are injured.

XXII The laws of this chapter relate,

I. To the eighth commandment, concerning theft, ver. 1-4  
Trespass by cattle, ver. 5. Damage by fire, ver. 6. Trusts, ver. 7-13. Borrowing cattle, ver. 14, 15. Or money, ver. 25-27.

II. To the seventh commandment. Against fornication, ver. 16, 17. Bestiality, ver. 19.

III. To the first table. Forbidding witchcraft, ver. 18. Idolatry, ver. 20. Commanding to offer the first-fruits, ver. 29. 30.

**IV. To the poor, ver. 21-24.**

**V. To the civil government, ver. 28.**

**VI. To the Jewish nation, ver. 13.**

**1. Five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep - More for an ox than for a sheep, because the owner, besides all the other profit, lost the daily labour of his ox. If we were not able to make restitution, he must be sold for a slave: the court of judgment was to do it, and it is likely the person robbed received the money. Thus with us in some cases, felons are transported to the Plantations, where only, Englishmen know what slavery is. But let it be observed, the sentence is not slavery, but banishment: nor can any Englishman be sold, unless he first indent himself to the captain that carries him over. 2. If a thief broke a house in the night, and was killed in the doing it, his blood was upon his own head. But if it were in the day-time that the thief was killed, he that killed him was accountable for it, unless it were in the necessary defense of his own life.**

**3. For he should make full restitution - This the law determined: not that he should die.**

**4. In his hand alive - Not killed, nor sold, as ver. 1, so that the owner recover it with less charge and trouble.**

**5. He that wilfully put his cattle into his neighbour's field, must make restitution of the best of his own. The Jews hence observed it as a general rule, that restitution must always be made of the best; and that no man should keep any cattle that were likely to trespass upon his neighbour, or do him any damage.**

**6. He that designed only the burning of thorns might become accessory to the burning of corn, and should not be held guiltless. If the fire did mischief, he that kindled it must answer for it, though it could not be proved that he designed the mischief. Men must suffer for their carelessness, as well as for their malice. It will make us very careful of ourselves, if we consider that we are accountable not only for the hurt we do, but for the hurt we occasion through inadvertency.**

**7. If a man deliver goods, suppose to a carrier to be conveyed, or to a warehouse-keeper to be preserved, or cattle to a farmer to be fed upon a valuable consideration, and a special confidence reposed in the person they are lodged with; in case these goods be stolen or lost, perish or be damaged, if it appear that it was not by any fault of the trustee, the owner must stand to the loss, otherwise he that has been false to his trust must be compelled to make satisfaction.**

**14. If a man (suppose) lent his team to his neighbour, if the owner**

were with it, or were to receive profit for the loan of it, whatever harm befel the cattle the owner must stand to the loss of it: but if the owner were so kind to the borrower as to lend it him gratis, and put such a confidence in him as to trust it from under his own eye, then, if any harm happened, the borrower must make it good. Learn hence to be very careful not to abuse any thing that is lent to us; it is not only unjust but base and disingenuous, we should much rather chuse to lose ourselves, than that any should sustain loss by their kindness to us.

17. If the father refused, he shall pay money - This shews how ill a thing it is, and by no means to be allowed, that children should marry without their parents consent: even here where the divine law appointed the marriage, both as a punishment to him that had done wrong, and a recompence to her that had suffered wrong, yet there was an express reservation for the father's power; if he denied his consent, it must be no marriage.

18. Witchcraft not only gives that honour to the devil which is due to God alone, but bids defiance to the divine providence, wages war with God's government, puts his work into the devil's hand expecting him to do good and evil. By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invocating or employing any evil spirit to any intent whatever, and exercising any enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person, is made felony, without benefit of clergy; also pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offense with death. This was the case in former times. But we are wiser than our fore-fathers. We believe, no witch ever did live! At least, not for these thousand years.

21. A stranger must not be abused, not wronged in judgment by the magistrates, not imposed upon in contracts, nor any advantage taken of his ignorance or necessity, no, nor must he be taunted, or upbraided with his being a stranger; for all these were vexations. For ye were strangers in Egypt - And knew what it was to be vexed and oppressed there. Those that have themselves been in poverty and distress, if Providence enrich and enlarge them, ought to shew a particular tenderness towards those that are now in such circumstances as they were in formerly, now doing to them as they then wished to be done by.

22. Ye shall not afflict the widow or fatherless child - That is, ye shall comfort and assist them, and be ready upon all occasions to shew them kindness. In making just demands from them, their condition must be considered who have lost those that should protect them: they are supposed to be unversed in business, destitute of advice, timorous, and of a tender spirit; and therefore must be treated with kindness and compassion, and no advantage taken against them, nor any hardship put upon them, which a husband or a father would have sheltered them from.

**25. If thou lend -**

**(1.) They must not receive use for money from any that borrowed for necessity. And such provision the law made for the preserving estates to their families by the year of Jubilee, that a people who had little concern in trade could not be supposed to borrow money but for necessity; therefore it was generally forbidden among themselves; but to a stranger they were allowed to lend upon usury. This law therefore in the strictness of it seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish state; but in the equity of it, it obligeth us to shew mercy to those we have advantage against, and to be content to share with those we lend to in loss as well as profit, if Providence cross them: and upon this condition it seems as lawful to receive interest for my money, which another takes pains with, and improves, as it is to receive rent for my land, which another takes pains with, and improves, for his own use.**

**(2.) They must not take a poor man's bed-clothes in pawn; but if they did, must restore them by bed-time.**

**28. Thou shalt not revile the gods - That is, the Judges and magistrates. Princes and magistrates are our fathers, whom the fifth commandment obligeth us to honour, and forbids us to revile. St. Paul applies this law to himself, and owns that he ought not to speak evil of the ruler of his people, no, not though he was then his most unrighteous persecutor, Acts xxiii, 5.**

**29. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me - And much more reason have we to give ourselves and all we have to God, who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. The first ripe of their corn they must not delay to offer; there is danger if we delay our duty, lest we wholly omit it; and by slipping the first opportunity in expectation of another, we suffer Satan to cheat us of all our time.**

**31. Ye shall be holy unto me - And one mark of that honourable distinction is appointed in their diet, which was, that they should not eat any flesh that was torn of beasts - Both because the blood was not duly taken out of it, and because the clean beast was ceremonially defiled, by the touch of the unclean.**

**XXIII This chapter concludes the acts that passed in the first session (if I may so call it) upon Mount Sinai. Here are,**

**I. Some laws of universal obligation, relating especially to the ninth commandment, against bearing false witness, ver. 1. and giving false judgement, ver. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. Also a law of doing good to our enemies, ver. 4, 5. and not oppressing strangers, ver. 9.**

**II. Some laws peculiar to the Jews: the sabbatical years, ver. 10, 11. the three annual feasts, ver. 14-17. with laws pertaining thereto.**

**III. Gracious promises of completing the mercy God had begun for them, upon condition of their obedience, that God would conduct them through the wilderness, ver 20-24. that he would prosper all they had, ver. 25, 26, that he would put them in possession of Canaan, ver. 27-31. But they must not mingle themselves with the nations, ver. 32, 33.**

**1. Thou shalt not raise, the margin reads, Thou shalt not receive a false report, for sometimes the receiver in this case is as bad as the thief; and a backbiting tongue would not do so much mischief, if it were not countenanced. Sometimes we cannot avoid hearing a false report, but we must not receive it, we must not hear it with pleasure, nor easily give credit to it.**

**2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil - General usage will never excuse us in any ill practice; nor is the broad way ever the safer for its being crowded. We must inquire what we ought to do, not what the most do; because we must be judged by our master, not our fellow servants; and it is too great a compliment, to be willing to go to hell for company.**

**7. Keep thee far from a false matter - From assisting or abetting an ill thing. Yea, keep thee far from it, dread it as a dangerous snare. I will not justify the wicked - That is, I will condemn him that unjustly condemns others.**

**9. Thou shalt not oppress the stranger - Though aliens might not inherit lands among them; yet they must have justice done them. It was an instance of the equity of our law, that if an alien be tried for any crime except treason, the one half of his jury, if he desire it, shall be foreigners; a kind provision that strangers may not be oppressed. For ye know the heart of a stranger - You know something of the griefs and fears of a stranger by sad experience.**

**10. The institution of the sabbatical year was designed,**

**1. To shew what a plentiful land that was, into which God was bringing them, that so numerous a people could have rich maintenance out of the products of so small a country, without foreign trade, and yet could spare the increase of every seventh year.**

**2. To teach them a confidence in the Divine Providence, while they did their duty, That as the sixth day's manna served for two days meat, so the sixth year's increase should serve for two years subsistence.**

**13. In all things that I have said unto you be circumspect - We are in danger of missing our way on the right hand and on the left, and it is at our peril if we do, therefore we have need to look about us. A man may ruin himself through mere carelessness, but he cannot save himself without great care and circumspection;**



particularly since idolatry was a sin they were much addicted to, and would be greatly tempted to, they must endeavour to blot out the remembrance of the gods of the heathen, and must disuse all their superstitious forms of speech, and never mention them but with detestation. In Christian schools and academies (for it is in vain to think of re-forming the play-houses) it were to be wished that the names and stories of the heathen deities or demons rather were not so commonly and familiarly used.

14. The Passover, Pentecost, and feast of Tabernacles, in spring, summer, and autumn, were the three times appointed for their attendance; not in winter, because travelling was then uncomfortable; nor in the midst of their harvest.

17. All thy males - All that were of competent years, and health and strength, and at their own disposal. 'Tis probable, servants were exempt: for none was to appear without an offering: but most of these had nothing to offer.

19. Some of the Gentiles, at the end of their harvest, seethed a kid in it's dam's milk, and sprinkled that milk-pottage in a magical way upon their gardens and fields, to make them fruitful. But Israel must abhor such foolish customs. Is not this rather forbidden, as having some appearance of cruelty?

20. Behold, I send an angel before thee - The angel of the covenant: Accordingly the Israelites in the wilderness are said to tempt Christ. It is promised that this blessed anger should keep them in the way, though it lay through a wilderness first, and afterwards through their enemies country; and thus Christ has prepared a place for his followers.

21. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not - It is at your peril if you do; for my name - My nature, my authority is in him.

25. He shall bless thy bread and thy water - And God's blessing will make bread and water more refreshing and nourishing, than a feast of fat things, and wines on the lees, without that blessing. And I will take sickness away - Either prevent it or remove it. Thy land shall not be visited with epidemical diseases, which are very dreadful, and sometimes have laid countries waste.

26. The number of thy days I will fulfill - And they shall not be cut off in the midst by untimely deaths. Thus hath godliness the promise of the life that now is.

27. I will send my fear before thee - And they that fear will soon flee. Hoseats of hornets also made way for the hosts of Israel; such mean creatures can God make use of for the chastising of his people's enemies.

**XXIV Moses as mediator between God and Israel, having received divers laws and ordinances from God in the foregoing chapters, in this chapter,**

**I. Comes down to the people, acquaints them with the laws he had received, and takes their consent to those laws, ver. 3. writes the laws, and reads them to the people, who repeat their consent, ver. 4, 7. and then by sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood ratifies the covenant between them and God, ver. 5, 6, 8.**

**II. He returns to God again, to receive farther directions. When he was dismissed from his former attendance, he was ordered to attend again, ver. 1, 2. He did so with seventy of the elders, to whom God made a discovery of his glory, ver. 9-11. Moses is ordered up into the mount, ver. 12, 13. the rest are ordered down to the people, ver. 14. The cloud of glory is seen by all the people on the top of mount Sinai, ver. 15-17. and Moses is there with God forty days and forty nights, ver. 18.**

**1. Worship ye afar off - Before they came near, they must worship. Thus we must enter into God's gates with humble and solemn adorations.**

**2. And Moses alone shall come near - Being therein a type of Christ, who as the high priest entered alone into the most holy place. In the following verses we have the solemn covenant made between God and Israel and the exchanging of the ratifications: typifying the covenant of grace between God and believers through Christ.**

**3. Moses told the people all the words of the Lord - He laid before them all the precepts, in the foregoing chapters, and put it to them, whether they were willing to submit to these laws or no? And all the people answered, All the words which the Lord hath said we will do - They had before consented in general to be under God's government; here they consent in particular to these laws now given.**

**4. And Moses wrote the words of the Lord - That there might be no mistake; as God dictated them on the mount, where, it is highly probable, God taught him the use of letters. These Moses taught the Israelites, from whom they afterwards travelled to Greece and other nations. As soon as God had separated to himself a peculiar people, he governed them by a written word, as he has done ever since, and will do while the world stands. Pillars according to the number of the tribes - These were to represent the people, the other party to the covenant; and we may suppose they were set up over against the altar, and that Moses as mediator passed to and fro between them. Probably each tribe set up and knew its own pillar, and their elders stood by it. He then appointed sacrifices to be offered upon the altar.**

6.

1. The blood of the sacrifice which the people offered was (part of it) sprinkled upon the altar, which signified the people's dedicating themselves to God, and his honour. In the blood of the sacrifices, all the Israelites were presented unto God as living sacrifices, Rom. xii, 1.

2. The blood of the sacrifice which God had owned and accepted was (the remainder of it) sprinkled, either upon the people themselves, or upon the pillars that represented them, which signified God's conferring his favour upon them, and all the fruits of that favour, and his giving them all the gifts they could desire from a God reconciled to them, and in covenant with them. This part of the ceremony was thus explained, Behold the blood of the covenant; see here how God sealed to you to be a God, and you seal to be to him a people; his promises to you, and yours to him, are yea and amen. Thus our Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant (of whom Moses was a type) having offered up himself a sacrifice upon the cross, that his blood might be indeed the blood of the covenant, sprinkled it upon the altar in his intercession (Heb. ix, 12,) and sprinkles it upon his church by his word and ordinances, and the influences and operations of the Spirit of promise by whom we are sealed.

10. They saw the God of Israel - That is, they had some glimpse of his glory, in light and fire, though they saw no manner of similitude. They saw the place where the God of Israel stood, so the seventy, something that came near a similitude, but was not; whatever they saw it was certainly something of which no image or picture could be made, and yet enough to satisfy them that God was with them of a truth. Nothing is described but that which was under his feet, for our conceptions of God are all below him. They saw not so much as God's feet, but at the bottom of the brightness they saw (such as they never saw before or after, and as the foot-stool or pedestal of it) a most rich and splendid pavement, as it had been of sapphires, azure, or sky-coloured. The heavens themselves are the pavement of God's palace, and his throne is above the firmament.

11. Upon the nobles or elders of Israel he laid not his hand - Though they were men, the splendour of his glory did not overwhelm them, but it was so moderated (Job xxxvi, 9,) and they were so strengthened (Dan. x, 19,) that they were able to bear it: nay, though they were sinful men, and obnoxious to God's justice, yet he did not lay his avenging hand upon them, as they feared he would. When we consider what a consuming fire God is, and what stubble we are before him, we shall have reason to say, in all our approaches to him, It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. They saw God, and did eat and drink; They had not

only their lives preserved, but their vigour, courage, and comfort; it cast no damp upon their joy, but rather increased it. They feasted upon the sacrifice before God, in token of their chearful consent to the covenant, their grateful acceptance of the benefits of it, and their communion with God in pursuance of that covenant.

12. Come up to the mount and be there - Expect to continue there for some time.

13. Joshua was his minister or servant, and it would be a satisfaction to him to have him with him as a companion during the six days that he tarried in the mount before God called to him. Joshua was to be his successor, and therefore thus he was honoured before the people, and thus he was prepared by being trained up in communion with God. Joshua was a type of Christ, and (as the learned Bishop Peirson well observes Moses takes him with him into the mount, because without Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, there is no looking into the secrets of heaven, nor approaching the presence of God.

16. A cloud covered the mount six days - A visible token of God's special presence there, for he so shews himself to us, as at the same time to conceal himself from us, he lets us know so much as to assure us of his power and grace, but intimates to us that we cannot find him out to perfection. During these six days Moses staid waiting upon the mountain, for a call into the presence-chamber. And on the seventh day - Probably the sabbath-day, he called unto Moses. Now the thick cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the glory of the Lord broke forth like devouring fire.

18. Moses went into the midst of the cloud - It was an extraordinary presence of mind, which the grace of God furnished him with, else he durst not have ventured into the cloud, especially when it broke out in devouring fire. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights - It should seem the six days, were not part of the forty; for during those six days, Joshua was with Moses, who did eat of the manna, and drink of the brook mentioned, Deut. ix, 21, and while they were together, it is probable Moses did eat and drink with him; but when Moses was called into the midst of the cloud, he left Joshua without, who continued to eat and drink daily while he waited for Moses's return, but from thenceforward Moses fasted.

XXV At this chapter begins an account of the instructions God gave Moses for erecting and furnishing the tabernacle. Here are,

I. Orders given for a collection to be made among the people, ver. 1-9.

II. Particular instructions,

1. Concerning the ark of the covenant, ver. 10-22.

2. The table of shew-bread, ver. 23-30.

3. The golden candlestick, ver. 31-40.

1. Doubtless when Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and abode there so long, he saw and heard glorious things, but they were things which were not lawful or possible to utter; and therefore, in the records he kept of the transactions there, he saith nothing to satisfy curiosity, but writes that only which he was to speak to the children of Israel. Probably there never was any house or temple built for sacred uses, before this tabernacle was erected by Moses. In this God kept his court, as Israel's king, and it was intended for a sign or token of his presence, that while they had that in the midst of them they might never again ask, Is the Lord among us or not? And because in the wilderness they dwelt in tents, even this royal palace was ordered to be a tabernacle too, that it might move with them. And these holy places made with hands were the figures of the true, Heb. ix, 24. The gospel-church is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, Heb. viii, 2. The body of Christ, in and by which he made atonement, was the greater and more perfect tabernacle, Heb. ix, 11. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, as in a tabernacle.

2. Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering - This offering was to be given willingly, and with the heart. It was not prescribed to them what or how much they must give, but it was left to their generosity, that they might shew their goodwill to the house of God, and the offices thereof.

4. Blue, and purple, and scarlet - Materials of those colours.

5. Shittim-wood - A kind of wood growing in Egypt and the deserts of Arabia, very durable and precious.

8. A sanctuary - A place of public and solemn worship; that I may dwell among them. Not by my essence, which is everywhere; but by my grace and glorious operations.

9. According to all that I shew thee - God shewed him an exact plan of it in little, which he must conform to in all points. And God did not only shew him the model, but gave him also particular directions how to frame the tabernacle, according to that model, in all the parts of it. When Moses was to describe the creation of the world, tho' it be such a stately and curious fabrick, yet he gave a very short and general account of it; but when he comes to describe the tabernacle, he doth it with the greatest niceness and accuracy imaginable: for God's church and instituted religion is more precious to him than all the rest of the world. And the scriptures were written not to describe to us the works of nature, (a general view of which is sufficient to lead us to the

knowledge of the Creator,) but to acquaint us with the methods of grace, and those things which are purely matters of Revelation.

10. The ark was a chest or coffer, in which the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were to be deposited. If the Jewish cubit was, as some learned men compute three inches longer than our half-yard, (twenty one inches in all) this chest or cabinet was about fifty-two inches long, thirty-one broad and thirty one deep; it was overlaid within and without with thin plates of gold; it had a crown, or cornish of gold round it; rings and staves to carry it with; and in it he must put the testimony. The tables of the law are called the testimony, because God did in them testify his will; his giving them that law was in token of his favour to them, and their acceptance of it was in token of their subjection to him. This law was a testimony to them to direct them in their duty, and would be a testimony against them if they transgressed. The ark is called the ark of the testimony, chap. xxx, 6, and the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, Num. x, 11. The tables of the law were carefully preserved in the ark, to teach us to make much of the word of God, and to hide it in our inmost thoughts, as the ark was placed in the holy of holies. It intimates likewise the care which divine providence ever did, and ever will take to preserve the records of divine Rev. in the church, so that even in the latter days there shall be seen in his temple the ark of his testament. See Rev. xi, 19.

17. The mercy-seat was the covering of the ark, made exactly to fit the dimensions of it. This propitiatory covering, as it might well be translated, was a type of Christ the great propitiation, whose satisfaction covers our transgressions, and comes between us and the curse we deserve.

18. The cherubim (Cherubim is the plural of Cherub, not Cherubims) were fixed to the mercy-seat, and of a piece with it, and spread their wings over it. It is supposed these were designed to represent the holy angels, (who always attend the Shechinah, or divine majesty,) not by any effigies of an angel, but some emblem of the angelical nature, probably one or more of those four faces spoken of Ezek. i, 10. Whatever the faces were, they looked one towards another, and both downwards towards the ark, while their wings were stretched out so as to touch one another. It notes their attendance upon the Redeemer, their readiness to do his will, their presence in the assemblies of saints, Psalm lxxviii, 17; 1 Cor. xi, 10, and their desire to look into the mysteries of the gospel, which they diligently contemplate, 1 Pet. i, 12. God is said to dwell or sit between the cherubim, on the mercy-seat, Psalm lxxx, 1, and from thence he here promiseth for the future to meet with Moses, and to commune with him. Thus he manifests himself, willing to keep up communion with us, by the mediation of Christ.

23. This table was to stand not in the holy of holies, (nothing was

in that but the ark with its appurtenances) but in the outer part of the tabernacle, called the sanctuary or holy place. This table was to be always furnished with the shew-bread, or bread of faces, twelve loaves, one for each tribe, set in two rows, six in a row. As the ark signified God's being present with them, so the twelve loaves signified their being presented to God. This bread was designed to be, a thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to them in giving them their daily bread, a token of their communion with God; this bread on God's table being made of the same corn as the bread on their own tables. And a type of the spiritual provision which is made in the church, by the gospel of Christ, for all that are made priests to our God.

31. This candlestick had many branches drawn from the main shaft, which had not only bowls to put the oil and the kindled wick in for necessity, but knops made in the form of a pomegranate and flowers for ornament. The tabernacle had no windows, all its light was candle-light, which notes the comparative darkness of that dispensation, while the sun of righteousness was not as yet risen, nor had the day-star from on high visited his church. Yet God left not himself without witness, nor them without instruction; the commandment was a lamp, and the law a light, and the prophets were branches from that lamp, which gave light in their several ages. The church is still dark, as the tabernacle was, in comparison with what it will be in heaven: but the word of God is the candlestick, a light burning in a dark place.

XXVI Moses here receives instructions,

I. Concerning the inner curtains of the tabernacle, ver. 1-6.

II. Concerning the outer curtains, ver. 7-13.

III. Concerning the cover which was to secure it from the weather, ver.

14.

IV. Concerning the boards which were to support the curtains, ver. 15-30.

V. The partition between the holy place and the most holy, ver. 31-35.

VI. The veil for the door, ver. 36-37. These particulars seem of little use to us now, yet having been of great use to Moses and Israel, and God having thought fit to preserve to us the remembrance of them, we ought not to overlook them.

1. The curtains were to be embroidered with cherubim, to intimate that the angels of God pitched their tents round about the church,

**Psalm xxxiv, 7. As there were cherubim over the mercy-seat, so there were round the tabernacle. There were to be two hangings, five breadths to each, sewed together, and the two hangings coupled together with golden clasps or tacks, so that it might be all one tabernacle, ver. 6. Thus the churches of Christ, though they are many, yet are one, being fitly joined together in holy love and by the unity of the Spirit, so growing into one holy temple in the Lord. This tabernacle was very strait and narrow, but at the preaching of the gospel, the church is bid to enlarge the place of her tent, and to stretch forth her curtains, Isaiah liv, 2.**

**14. Badger skins - So we translate it, but it should rather seem to have been some strong sort of leather, (but very fine) for we read of the best sort of shoes made of it. Ezek. xvi, 10.**

**15. Very particular directions are here given about the boards of the tabernacle, which were to bear up the curtains. These had tenons which fell into the mortaises that were made for them in silver bases. The boards were coupled together with gold rings at top and bottom, and kept firm with bars that run through golden staples in every board. Thus every thing in the tabernacle was very splendid, agreeable to that infant state of the church, when such things were proper to possess the minds of the worshippers with a reverence of the divine glory. In allusion to this, the new Jerusalem is said to be of pure gold, Rev. xxi, 18. But the builders of the gospel church said, Silver and gold have we none; and yet the glory of their building far exceeded that of the tabernacle.**

**31. The veils are here ordered to be made, one for a partition between the holy place and the most holy, which not only forbade any to enter, but so much as to look into the holiest of all. Under that dispensation divine grace was veiled, but now we behold it with open face. The apostle tells us, this veil, intimated that the ceremonial law could not make the comers thereunto perfect. The way into the holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing; life and immortality lay concealed till they were brought to light by the gospel, which was therefore signified by the rending of this veil at the death of Christ. We have now boldness to enter into the holiest in all acts of devotion by the blood of Jesus; yet such as obliges us to a holy reverence, and a humble sense of our distance. Another veil was for the outward door of the tabernacle. Through this the priests went in every day to minister in the holy-place, but not the people, Heb. ix, 6. This veil was all the defense the tabernacle had against thieves and robbers, which might easily be broken through, for it could be neither locked nor bared, and the abundance of wealth in it, one would think, might be a temptation. But by leaving it thus exposed,**

**1. The priests and Levites would be so much the more obliged to keep a strict watch upon it: and,**



**2. God would shew his care of his church on earth, though it be weak and defenseless, and continually exposed. A curtain shall be (if God please to make it so) as strong a defense, as gates of brass and bars of iron.**

**XXVII In this chapter directions are**